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Sligo 1921 - 23

The Aftermath of Revolution
Section on "History of Modern History"

M.A. in History of Modern History

Farry, Mark

November 2018
Sligo 1921-23
The Aftermath of Revolution.

Michael Farry.

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin.

Department of Modern History.

October 1998.
This thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and is entirely my own work.

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Michael Farry.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

This study would never have been completed were it not for the help and encouragement of many people who encouraged my interest in the topic and helped convince me that it was possible to bring this thesis to completion.

In the first place I wish to express my gratitude to those Sligo veterans listed in the bibliography and for their hospitality when approached, often with no prior warning. I want to thank them for sharing their experiences with me and in some cases entrusting me with valuable material. I also want to thank all those too numerous to mention who assisted me in locating veterans and those relations of activists who gave me access to statements and family papers.

I am grateful to the efficient staffs of the National Library, the National Archives, the Military Archives, UCD Archives, the Valuation Office, the Representative Church Body Library, the Grand Lodge of Freemasons Archive, the Institute of Celtic Studies and Historical Research, the Garda Museum, Sligo County Library, Sligo Town Hall, the Public Records Office, London. I wish to thank particularly the principals and Boards of Management of the primary schools who allowed me access to their records.

I wish to thank Cecil Kilpatrick, the archivist of the Orange Order, who found valuable information about that body in Sligo and Revd. Ian Henderson, Sligo, who sent me detailed figures of Methodist numbers in Sligo at the relevant period. Peter Young and Victor Laing of the Military Archives, Seamus Helferty of UCD Archives and John McTernan, now retired, of Sligo County Library were especially assiduous in ensuring that I had not overlooked any relevant material.

Present and former students, Fergus Campbell, Joost Augusteijn, Fergal McGarry, Tom Crean, Jane Leonard, Peter Hart and others gave essential help at critical times. Joe Molloy helped when technical difficulties threatened to disrupt schedules. My brothers and sisters, my close friends, my fellow teachers all deserve thanks for their unfailing interest in my studies and encouragement to complete this work.

My supervisor, Dr. David Fitzpatrick, has been an unfailing source of support, criticism and pertinent advice. His obvious belief that I could complete the study when my own belief often wavered was the source of immense assistance and reassurance.

My wife Winifred, and children Fiona, Oisin, Sinead and Aisling have been unfailing in their support and have borne stoically my preoccupation with Sligo's Civil War over the past decade. Their belief that this thesis could and would be completed helped me enormously.
SUMMARY.

This thesis examines the 1921-23 period in County Sligo using a range of contemporary sources. It first analyses the extent to which the county was politically and militarily active during the War of Independence and concludes that Sligo's contribution was much less than counties studied by Hart, Fitzpatrick and Augusteijn.

It then examines the pre-Treaty and post-Treaty period chronologically and charts the rise in the power and influence of the IRA and the tensions caused by this within the county. In Local Government in particular there were bitter divisions which involved IRA councillors allying themselves with vested local interests and attempting to control Sligo's local authorities. This split mirrored to a large degree the Treaty split. The escalation of violence is also dealt with and the good showing of the anti-Treaty candidates in East Mayo - Sligo constituency in the Pact election is demonstrated to have been a factor of the geographical distribution of the candidates.

The course of the Civil War is dealt with in four different phases and the effectiveness of the anti-Treaty side is shown to have been hampered by old animosities, poor tactics and lack of co-ordinated action. Poor organisation and morale, and difficulties with supplies, transport and numbers are shown to have been the reasons why the government forces were unable to comprehensively defeat the opposition in County Sligo.

Six thematic chapters follow the first of which shows the degree to which the physical and economic geography, of the county affected the course and conduct of the war. Military incidents were most common in and near towns and communication corridors. Fewer recruits for both sides came from the poorer areas of the county but the distribution of anti-Treaty internees and pro-government army recruits was similar over the whole county. The backgrounds of almost six hundred Sligo-born participants in the war, anti-Treaty internees and government soldiers, when fully analysed showed that social background was not a determining factor in the side taken.

Sligo suffered more during the Civil War than it did during the War of Independence. A dramatic fall in the numbers of social and sporting functions testifies to a period in which normal daily life was circumscribed country areas suffering to a greater degree than did the town of Sligo. In particular the deterioration of the transport infrastructure through destruction and lack of repairs imposed considerable hardship. The general depression in livestock prices at that time was worsened by the effect of the war and there is some evidence of a rise in the cost of foodstuffs in the period after the outbreak.
of war. The turnover of most of Sligo's co-operative creamery societies in 1923 was lower
than in 1922.

The confusion of the post-Treaty period as regards law and order and the rise of
factional strife led to a rise in lawlessness in early 1922 with petty crime, hooliganism and
robbery intermingling with agrarian agitation, intimidation of Protestants, attacks on ex-
RIC and politically motivated crime. For most of the period large areas of the county were
without effective law and order and the areas nominally under control by the government
forces seem to have suffered most.

The final chapter shows that the proportionately large Protestant community in the
county was not subjected to a co-ordinated campaign to drive them from their lands by
terror. Most Protestants remained in Sligo and urban Protestants businessmen while
understandably apprehensive about their future in the new state still appeared confident
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<td>Adj.</td>
<td>Adjutant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AD UCD</td>
<td>Archives Department, University College Dublin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>Adjutant General.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOH</td>
<td>Ancient Order of Hibernians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Batt.</td>
<td>Battalion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bde.</td>
<td>Brigade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-in-C</td>
<td>Commander in Chief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM.</td>
<td>The Connachtman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co.C</td>
<td>County Councillor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/S</td>
<td>Chief of Staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>Dáil Éireann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/E</td>
<td>Director of Engineering.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DELG</td>
<td>Dáil Éireann Local Government Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>Director of Intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHQ</td>
<td>General Headquarters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSWR</td>
<td>Great Southern and Western Railway Company.</td>
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<td>H/A</td>
<td>Home Affairs.</td>
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<td>IAOS</td>
<td>Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGC</td>
<td>Irish Grants Committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I/O.</td>
<td>Intelligence Officer.</td>
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<td>National Library of Ireland.</td>
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<td>O/C</td>
<td>Officer in Command.</td>
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<td>OMN</td>
<td>O'Malley Notebooks.</td>
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<td>RDC</td>
<td>Rural District Council.</td>
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<td>R.H.</td>
<td>Roscommon Herald.</td>
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<td>RIC</td>
<td>Royal Irish Constabulary.</td>
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<td>S.C.</td>
<td>Sligo Champion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCI RIC</td>
<td>Sligo County Inspector Royal Irish Constabulary.</td>
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<td>S.I.</td>
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<td>PRONI</td>
<td>Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.</td>
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<td>QM</td>
<td>Quartermaster.</td>
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<td>QMG</td>
<td>Quartermaster General.</td>
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<td>UIL</td>
<td>United Irish League.</td>
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<td>W.P.</td>
<td>Western People.</td>
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County Sligo: Places mentioned in the text.
"The unsavory history of the renaming of those factions as Republicans and Free Staters, of the elevation of territorial jealousy into high-minded principle, and of the civil war which pitted column against column, must await examination by some other student of Chaos."¹ Thus David Fitzpatrick ended his chapter on guerilla fighters in his pioneering study of the years 1913 to 1921 choosing as many others had done before him not to extend the scope of his study beyond the Truce and into the "unsavory history" of the Civil War. Many of the published accounts written by participants have also dealt only with the events of the War of Independence and few of the unpublished accounts by Sligo participants which I have seen, many them written for the Bureau of Military History, deal with their involvement in the Civil War. A notable exception is Frank Carty's account which deals in detail with his activities during the later conflict.²

The Irish Civil War has for long been a neglected area in Irish historical writing. The residual bitterness caused by the terrible split and its subsequent hardening into a lasting political manifestation has usually been given as the cause of this neglect: "The legacy of the conflict is still so divisive that historical research remains far behind that into the Anglo-Irish War".³ This in spite of two general works published in the 1960s on the Civil War, each from a different viewpoint, Eoin Neeson's The Civil War in Ireland 1922-23 (Cork, 1966), Calton Younger's Ireland's Civil War (London, 1968). Not until Michael Hopkinson's Green against Green: The Irish Civil War (Dublin, 1988) has there been a detached and analytical study providing a systematic guide to the politics and military operations of the period. However its concentration on these two aspects is to the detriment of any serious consideration of the war's social or economic aspects. While Hopkinson is particularly effective in analysing the military conduct of the war in the different areas he does however state his belief that local studies of the period are needed to help fill out the history of those years: "My own work on the regions is necessarily incomplete, and there is a need for detailed local studies."⁴

This thesis then sets out to fill that gap and to provide a detailed study of the Civil War period in County Sligo. While the study of the War of Independence in a local area,

² Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers p913.
⁴ Michael Hopkinson, Green against Green: The Irish Civil War (Dublin, 1988), p. xii.
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usually a county, has been common this is the first such systematic study of a county during
the period from the Truce to the end of the Civil War. Wexford has to some extent been
covered in Séamus Mac Suain's rather disjointed and undigested County Wexford's Civil
War (Wexford, 1995) and a short account of the relatively few activities in Meath during
the Civil War is included in Oliver Coogan, Politics and War in County Meath, 1913-1923. Peter Hart has also included the Civil War period in his recent work on violence and
community in County Cork 1916-1923. The period of the establishment of the Free State
and its defence against the republican opposition has also been the subject of a study by
Tom Garvin, 1922: The Birth of Irish Democracy. His treatment of the Civil War stresses
the self-rightousness and defiance of legitimate authority by the anti-Treaty side and treats
the victory of the government side as "a triumph for electoral democracy".

The limiting of such a study to a county is not ideal since obviously activities and
effects of the war did not neatly fit in with county boundaries. For instance East Mayo anti-
Treaty forces joined with Sligo forces in the attack on Collooney during the early days of
the war and Frank Carty and his guerilla band regularly operated on both sides of the Sligo/
Mayo border as anti-Treaty groups in east Sligo likewise moved into Roscommon and
Leitrim when it suited. However for many practical reasons this study is confined to
County Sligo. One possible alternative would have been to deal with the whole 3rd
Western Division area encompassing all of Sligo and parts of Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim
and later even north Fermanagh. However this division was not formed until late 1921 and
so was not an established entity in the early days of this study nor did it become one during
the course of the war. The practical advantages of using a clearly defined and long
recognised entity such as a county outweigh any slight difficulties this might entail.
However where reasonable I have been flexible in my implementation of this self-imposed
limit. For instance I have included the War of Independence deaths at the Ratra ambush in
Roscommon just outside the Sligo border as "Sligo deaths" since the IRA unit involved
was from south Sligo.

Why does Sligo county deserve the honour of being the subject of this study? The
county had not achieved a high profile in Irish history by the end of the nineteenth and
beginning of the twentieth century. Its Irish Party MPs though loyal and hard-working did

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not achieve any national prominence. It had no particular claim to be particularly active as regards anti-government or agrarian agitation. It took no substantial part in any of the great movements of the nineteenth century, preferring to follow loyally at a distance the current national movement. It was not especially agitated at the time of the land war, ranking fourth of the counties of Connacht as regards the number of agrarian outrages per ten thousand persons during the period 1 January 1879 to 31 December 1882. The Sligo figure was 32.4 as against the provincial average of 43.2 and Roscommon was the only Connacht county with fewer such incidents. On the other hand Sligo appeared always to the fore in its espousal of Irish nationalist orthodoxy. There had been little opposition to the Irish Party machine in the county since the North Sligo election of 1891 when the Parnellite candidate was defeated. None of the sitting Irish Party members had to face an election between 1895 and 1918 and local elections, while eagerly fought, had little of the violence associated with them as had similar events in Cork.\footnote{Hart, \textit{The I.R.A. and its Enemies}, p. 47.} In Fitzpatrick's measure of the intensity of nationalist organisation 1916-19 Sligo was to the fore both as regards the number of United Irish League members in 1913 and Sinn Féin members in 1919.\footnote{David Fitzpatrick, "The Geography of Irish Nationalism, 1910-1921", in \textit{Past and Present}, lxxvii (1978). Statistical Appendix, pp 432-3.} The nationalist party in the ascendant appears always to have been embraced fulsomely by the activists of Sligo eager to be to the fore in whichever appeared to be the party of the moment. County Sligo, addicted to orthodoxy, was certainly not the place where one would have expected a violent and prolonged confrontation with central law and order to occur.

In the particular context of the War of Independence Sligo has usually been seen as one of the more inactive counties. IRA headquarters had berated the Sligo IRA towards the end of the War of Independence for its lack of activity and Seán MacEoin later taunted the Sligo IRA with their lack of action.\footnote{Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, \textit{General Richard Mulcahy: Portrait of a Revolutionary} (Dublin, 1992), p. 57; Hopkinson, \textit{Green against Green}, p. 10; Calton Younger, \textit{Ireland's Civil War} (London, 1968), p. 263.} During the Civil War there was much more activity in County Sligo and it was one of the areas which gave the Free State army most trouble. The IRA in the county was never completely defeated and there were still small numbers of active guerillas operating there at the cease fire. Two of the principal leaders, William Pilkington and Frank Carty were also still at large. The Dáil constituency of Sligo and East
Mayo was the only constituency where the anti-Treaty candidates polled a majority of the votes in the June 1922 election. Thus the interest in and fascination with the Civil War in County Sligo. Why should a county which appeared noticeably lacking in bellicosity against the foreign enemy see so much activity when the foes were native? The answers to this questions should enlighten the history of the Civil War not only in County Sligo but nationally.

Though there is an introductory chapter dealing with the 1914-1921 period this thesis deals with the period from the July 1921 Truce to the end of the Civil War. This period was chosen in the belief that it forms the smallest period which can usefully be examined as a unit. The understanding of the origin and course of the Civil War depends on understanding the developments in this period. The reaction of the people and the activists to the Truce and the developments during the latter half of 1921 are vital in considering the standing and the self-image of the IRA and nationalist politicians when the Treaty was signed. In turn the reaction to the Treaty and the drift towards disagreement and faction during the post Treaty period had a major role to play in determining the extent of the divisions, the composition of the rival sides and even the duration of the war in the county.

In an attempt to assess many various aspects of the whole period this thesis has both chronological and thematic elements. The first four chapters are arranged chronologically and cover the period 1914 to 1923. Sources for these chapters include operation and intelligence files of the Claremorris, Donegal and Western Commands of the Free State army from the Military Archives as well as material in the Department of Defence files and Collins Papers in the same repository. Similar material from the Mulcahy papers in the UCD Archives and a smaller amount in the MacEoin Papers fill out the story from the army side. The recently released Moss Twomey Papers also in the UCD Archives contain much useful material from the anti-Treaty side including correspondence and reports from the 3rd Western Division. There are also small quantity of captured anti-Treaty documents in the Mulcahy Papers. Supporting material was provided by a number of statements written at different times by participants, some for the Bureau of Military History, and interviews with Sligo survivors recorded by Ernie O'Malley in the early fifties. Only one of these had taken the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War. I interviewed a number of survivors during the nineteen eighties, all except one of whom took part on the anti-Treaty side. Local newspapers are a valuable source for the whole period and Sligo was unique in
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having an anti-Treaty local newspaper, the *Connachtman*, which continued to be published until July 1922 and whose files in Sligo County Library are a valuable source of information on anti-Treaty mentality and opinions during the pre-war period and the early days of the conflict.

The first chapter looks backwards to the 1914-1921 period to ascertain and analyse the extent to which the county was politically and militarily active during that period. It examines the growth of Sinn Féin and the IRA and the scale and intensity of violence in the county and compares such developments in County Sligo with developments in counties studied by Hart, Fitzpatrick and Augusteijn. It will attempt to identify factors which were instrumental in Sligo's particular level of activity examining themes such as level of policing, cycle of retaliatory violence, strong early radical organisations and the ostracising of the RIC.

This is followed by a chapter on the Truce period when the extent to which the IRA achieved a prominent position and basked in the glory of having apparently defeated the foe is examined. It also examines the extent to which the IRA used this period to rearm and reorganise and charts the tension which this caused between the political and the military sides of the independence movement. How the signing of Treaty impacted upon the general public as well as on the activists is also dealt with as is consideration of the public arguments put forward in favour of or against the Treaty.

The following chapter on the confused post-Treaty period deals with the escalation of minor violent incidents inside the county and those national incidents in which the Sligo IRA members were involved as part of the 3rd Western Division. The important Easter meeting in Sligo which was a major test of strength and will and which threatened full scale violence in the town is dealt with. Both side's involvement in and enthusiasm for the campaign for the Pact election of June is considered and the results are assessed with a view to explaining why the constituency of East Mayo - Sligo should be the only one in the country to return an anti-Treaty majority.

The last chronological chapter, that on the course of the Civil War, deals with the war in four different phases from the initial confrontations to the harrying of the small anti-Treaty forces during the final phase. It assesses the degree of activity during the war and compare it with War of Independence activity in Sligo. It examines the tactics, actions and effectiveness of the opposing sides in each phase and attempts to explain why the
government forces were unable to comprehensively defeat the opposition at any stage. It also examines the extent to which lack of co-operation among the republicans within the 3rd Western Division hampered their effectiveness during each stage of the war. The question of why a county which was criticised for its inactivity during the War of Independence could become so active and troublesome during the Civil War is addressed during each of these chronological chapters and factors during these periods which led to the increased status and self-confidence of the Sligo IRA are described.

Six subsequent chapters explore the period from six different aspects. Firstly a chapter on local government divisions examines the origins and course of such divisions and the degree to which they were a reflection of a conflict between the centralising tendency of the Dáil Local Government Board and the parochialism of local politicians. It investigates if this was a reflection of a split between the military and political wings of the Sinn Féin movement. It also looks at the extent to which these divisions were predictors of the later Civil War divide. The Dáil Éireann Local Government Records in the National Archives and the minute books of some of the various local government bodies in Sligo County Library and Sligo Town Hall together with the local newspapers were the main sources for this chapter.

The chapter on the Geography of the Civil War in County Sligo examines the degree to which the physical and economic geography, land quality, communications and topography of the county affected the course and conduct of the war. The distribution of Civil War incidents is considered and compared with the distribution of War of Independence and agrarian incidents. The geography of almost six hundred Sligo-born participants in the war, anti-Treaty internees and government soldiers, is also considered. The Internment roll books and the Army Census of 1922 in the Military Archives were used to compile these lists of participants on each side.

Chapter seven will seek to determine the common background, if any, of the participants on either side. The background of the activists in the War of Independence and Civil War has been a source of much speculation and some research in recent years. Writers such as Rumpf, Fitzpatrick, Hart, Garvin and Augusteijn have debated at length the factors which affected the extent to which different areas became militarily active during the War of Independence and to a lesser extent, the Civil War. It has been claimed for instance that there was a clear social division between those who fought on the republican
side and those who fought on the Free State side and this thesis investigates this for County Sligo. The backgrounds of these Sligo-born participants is fully analysed in order to assess whether social background was a determining factor in the side taken. Father's occupations, valuation of land holdings and house valuation are used to examine if the Civil War split had a social basis. The Valuation Books in the Valuation Office and the manuscript census returns for 1901 and 1911 in the National Archives were used to investigate the backgrounds of the participants.

None of the three histories of the Irish Civil War deals at any length with aspects other than the military and political. This thesis deals with social and economic aspects as well and chapter eight discusses the extent to which daily life was disrupted in County Sligo by the Civil War. It looks in particular at communication systems, social functions, sport, economic activity, prices and school attendance. It also examines this disruption chronologically to discover if the disruption lessened as the war slowly dragged to its conclusion. In assessing the war's impact on the civilian population and describing the effect of the conflict on everyday life information from various sources including local newspapers, account books of local businesses and records of Sligo Agricultural Societies in the National Archives and primary school attendance registers still in the schools.

The following chapter concentrates on the question of the breakdown of law and order during the period. The success or otherwise of the rival systems of law and order which attempted to operate in the county during the Truce to Treaty period, the post Treaty period and the period of the war itself is documented. The Dáil Éireann Courts (Winding Up) Commission records in the National Archives were a vital source for this chapter together with Department of Justice records in the same place.

The final chapter deals with the effect of the trouble on one particularly vulnerable group in the county, the Protestant community. Of the Connacht counties Sligo had the highest percentage of non-Catholics, almost 9%, in 1911. Chapter ten examines the extent to which they were especially targetted either by the IRA or by unofficial elements who for whatever reason wished to injure them. Of particular interest in the light of the evidence of Peter Hart relating to County Cork, is the question of the existence of a co-ordinated campaign to drive Protestants from their land and homes in Sligo by terror during this period. The records of the Irish Grants Commission in the Public Record Office in London were one of the most important sources for this chapter. Also used to build up a picture of
the Protestant community in Sligo were membership records in the Grand Lodge of Freemasons Archive, Dublin, and records of the Sligo Constitutional Club in Sligo County Library. The Methodist Church in Sligo also supplied very useful Sligo area membership records from the period.

These ten chapters then are an attempt to deal with the immediate post-War of Independence period in County Sligo in a comprehensive and detailed manner using a variety of primary and secondary sources. It is hoped that this will enlighten this dark period when the promise and comradeship of the independence movement was fatally fractured and those who had spoken, campaigned and sometimes fought together became bitter enemies and help to explain why Sligo, relatively untroubled during the War of Independence, became an important theatre in this struggle.
To understand the post-Truce and Civil War periods in County Sligo, it is first necessary to look at the events in that county during the period 1914 - 1921. The Civil War was not a spontaneous outburst unheralded by earlier occurrences. Most of those involved in the War of Independence, either politically or militarily, were also involved in the Civil War, and it seems likely that their motivation and actions were at least partly based on their experiences during the earlier struggle. Some no doubt found the experience of being at war under arms exhilarating and were glad when the struggle resumed, others at best regarded the war as a necessary evil to be dispensed with as soon as possible. Perceptions of what had actually occurred during the War of Independence also varied. Some considered that the Volunteers had inflicted a defeat on the Crown Forces and were reluctant to accept that this victory should be followed by capitulation at the conference table. For the participants on the anti-Treaty side, the Civil War was merely a continuation of the earlier struggle for the ultimate goal of a Republic. They appeared most at home waging the same sort of guerilla war as during the War of Independence rather than a war in which they held strong posts in towns. The great change which took place over the period was surely the transition from the pre-War position with the political side of the nationalist movement supreme and apparently on the verge of achieving the goal of Home Rule to that of a country in which armed bands of Irishmen and reinforced police regularly inflicted acts of violence on each other. County Sligo, though not one of the more active counties during the War of Independence, nevertheless saw its fair share of violence which foreshadowed the more intense violence which was to be its lot during the Civil War. It is necessary to have a basic understanding of the events and trends in the county in the former period before we move on to consider the activities in the county during the latter.

Politically Sligo in 1914 was a picture of undisturbed surface uniformity. The apparent political ascendancy of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the county at the time was such according to Alex McCabe that the two Sinn Féin activists in the county were regarded as "standing jokes". McCabe who was one of these, was also an IRB member.

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1 Alex McCabe (1886-1972) was born at Keash near Ballymote, and was educated at Summerhill College and St. Patrick's Training College, Dublin where he trained as a primary teacher. He became principal of Drumnagranchy N.S., Keash but lost his job because of his political activities. Member of Supreme Council of the IRB in 1914 and
and for a time the Connacht representative on its Supreme Council. He reported finding very little support, especially from older IRB members, in his efforts to reorganise that body in Sligo. There was no strong early radical organisation in County Sligo nor was there any record of political dissent. There is no mention for instance of any Sligo involvement in support of Sinn Féin in the North Leitrim by-election of 1907. Even a political maverick such as John Jinks, Mayor of Sligo in 1914, operated as a faithful Irish Party supporter and a loyal follower of the North Sligo MP. The Irish Parliamentary Party through its constituency organisation, the United Irish League (UIL), was in control of all public bodies. Sligo was one of the best organised counties in Ireland and at the end of March 1913 ranked fourth in Ireland as regards membership per ten thousand of the UIL. Between then and early 1916 while all Connacht dropped 10% Sligo membership dropped only 3%, and the county was then ranked second. The last contested election in a Sligo constituency had taken place in 1895 and the 1918 election was to be the first occasion on which the two Nationalist MPs had to fight an election. The tardiness of the county in organising corps of Irish National Volunteers before that body was officially supported by the Irish Party is a measure of its degree of orthodoxy. A Sligo town branch was founded on 1 February 1914 but the rest of the county was slow to follow. John Jinks assumed the role of chief organiser and helped in the founding of some branches in North Sligo. South Sligo was particular resistant to change and no Volunteer branch was formed there before May. Ballymote, where Alex McCabe had been attempting to organise the IRB, did not have a Volunteer branch until the end of July. When the Irish Parliamentary Party

early supporter and organiser of Sinn Féin and the Volunteers in Sligo. Served several terms of imprisonment 1917-1921. Elected Sinn Féin TD for South Sligo in December 1918 and returned as TD for Sligo from then until 1923.

2 Alex McCabe, "Cradling a Revolution" in An tÓglach, (Christmas, 1962).

3 See Ciarán Ó Duibhir, Sinn Féin, The First Election 1908 (Manorhamilton, 1993).

4 John Jinks (1873-1934) was born in north Sligo but settled in Sligo town where he established his own business as a publican, auctioneer and undertaker. He was a member of Sligo Corporation from 1898 and presided over the inaugural meeting of Sligo branch of the Volunteers. He was generally a loyal follower of Redmond though he had supported a rival local candidate in 1909 when Thomas Scanlan was imposed by the party as North Sligo MP. See Michael Farry, Sligo 1914-1921: A Chronicle of Conflict (Trim, 1992), p. 2.


6 S.C., 7 Feb. 1914.

7 See reports in Sligo Champion during Mar./Apr. 1914; Farry, Sligo 1914-1921, pp 24 ff.

8 A letter bemoaning the "lack of enthusiasm shown in Ballymote" appeared in S.C., 23
County Sligo 1914-1921.

officially backed the movement the number of corps increased dramatically.\textsuperscript{9} The county quickly swung into line and by September 1914 Volunteer strength in Sligo had reached its apogee with 44 corps and 4,951 members.\textsuperscript{10}

With the outbreak of war and the postponement of Home Rule the apparent solid phalanx of support for the Irish Parliamentary Party began to crumble. The appointment of a prominent County Sligo unionist landowner as County Inspection Officer of the Volunteers,\textsuperscript{11} with ideas of organising coastal defences against a possible German invasion, brought expressions of dissent from some who felt that the purpose of the Volunteers was different.\textsuperscript{12} This landowner soon resigned. Tom Scanlan MP, returning to the town after Home Rule had received the Royal Assent, was heckled when he addressed a meeting on Ireland's duties to the Empire with special reference to the war effort and this resulted in "a spirited bout of fisticuffs".\textsuperscript{13} The following day Redmond made his Woodenbridge speech which precipitated the split in the Volunteers. The majority of Volunteer branches in Sligo sided with Redmond but the movement soon lost its vitality in the county. Attempts to form a county board failed and in March 1915 the County Inspector RIC reported that "the Volunteer movement appears dead". At the same time there was a decline in the activity of the UIL branches in the county. The County Inspector's report of March 1915 said that "the UIL made no show of activity" and efforts to revive the organisation in the second half of 1915 failed.\textsuperscript{14}

The old orthodoxy of the UIL and the Irish National Volunteers was in its death throes but it was not clear for some time what, if anything, was to replace it. During the early part of 1916 it was evident that what the authorities called "Sinn Féin" was becoming more active. In a review of 1916 the RIC County Inspector said that "the Sinn Féin party were very active prior to the rebellion and were gaining adherents".\textsuperscript{15} There were other

\textsuperscript{10} SCI RIC, Sept. 1914 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/94.
\textsuperscript{11} This was Major W.R. Hillas of Donnecoy, Templeboy. Letters to and from Hillas, and other Sligo material relevant to the Volunteers, are in National Library, Dublin, Maurice Moore Papers, Ms 10544.
\textsuperscript{12} Though not from three who were later to be prominent in Sinn Féin, Alex McCabe, Seamus Devins and Owen Tansy.
\textsuperscript{13} This disturbance was reported in the pro-unionist \textit{Sligo Independent}, 26 Sept. 1914 though not in the nationalist \textit{Sligo Champion}.
\textsuperscript{14} SCI RIC, Sept. 1915 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/98.
\textsuperscript{15} Reports on 1916, PRO, CO 904/120.
signs including a blistering attack on "factionists" by South Sligo MP, John O'Dowd in April 1916\footnote{S.C., 15 Apr. 1916.} and a letter from a Sligo unionist and landowner to the Irish Unionist Alliance complaining of the government's reluctance to deal with Sinn Féin, "a movement which is directed against recruiting, and is I fear doing a great deal to stop it."\footnote{W.R. Fenton, Clerk of the Peace and Crown in Sligo told J.N. Wilson at the end of February 1916 that Sinn Féiners in the county were "more numerous than people think". Two other of Wilson's interviewees mentioned Tubbercurry in particular as having a strong Sinn Féin element.} W.R. Fenton, Clerk of the Peace and Crown in Sligo told J.N. Wilson at the end of February 1916 that Sinn Féiners in the county were "more numerous than people think". Two other of Wilson's interviewees mentioned Tubbercurry in particular as having a strong Sinn Féin element.\footnote{Sir Malby Crofton to Irish Unionist Alliance, 11 Mar. 1916, PRONI, J.N. Wilson Papers D989A/8/6).}

Reaction to the 1916 rising was overshadowed by reaction to the executions. The Sligo Champion, a staunch supporter of Redmond, said "a sickening thud went through the heart of Ireland with each fresh announcement [of executions]."\footnote{J.N. Wilson notes on interviews with Sligo loyalists, 24 Feb. 1916, (PRONI, J.N. Wilson Papers, D989A/9/7).} Many of those UIL and AOH branches still functioning in the county passed resolutions of support for Redmond in conjunction with resolutions demanding the release of those interned.

When the releases came they were occasions of "cordial welcome" with even political enemies paying tribute to the ex-prisoners and to the leaders of the rising.\footnote{Editorial in S.C., 20 May 1916.} During the rest of 1916 no public displays by Sinn Féin or the Irish Volunteers were reported in the county. However all commentators reported a growth in membership and activity of those groups concomitant with a decline in support for Redmond and the Irish Party.\footnote{For example Jinks' welcome for released Cliffoney man McGarrigle, reported in S.I., 10 June 1916.}

It was the urban areas which first showed open dissent. In early 1917 a group on Sligo Corporation which had the previous year opposed Jinks for the Mayoralty openly declared their support for Sinn Féin. Many of them campaigned for Count Plunkett in North Roscommon and their leader, Sligo merchant Dudley Hanley, was unopposed for the Mayoralty in 1917. These Sligo town Sinn Féiners were generally Catholic shopkeepers and businessmen and they were prominent in promoting the cause of Sinn Féin over the next two years.\footnote{SCI RIC, June-Dec. 1916 Monthly Reports, PRO, CO 904/99-101.} Sligo Corporation granted the Freedom of Sligo to Count Plunkett and

\footnote{Hanley, a native of west Sligo, was a businessman and had been Jinks' opponent in the 1916 mayoral election. (S.C., 27 Jan. 1917).}
was the only public body in Sligo to send delegates to Plunkett’s Mansion House Conference in April 1917. Their public profile declined with the start of the violent campaign in which none of them played a prominent part and almost to a man they supported the Treaty. Early 1917 was a period of growth in the number of Sinn Féin clubs in the county, the County Inspector reporting two clubs in February but fifteen by July. At the end of April a South Sligo Sinn Féin executive was formed at a meeting attended by delegates from eight areas. The granting of the freedom of Sligo to Countess Markievicz in July saw a large number of prominent national Sinn Féin figures spend the week-end in the county attending public meetings. Public displays by Sinn Féin included the flying of flags to mark the anniversary of the Easter Rising and celebrations of the South Longford and East Clare by-election victories. Sligo Sinn Féiners had taken part in both campaigns. The Gurteen area of south Sligo in particular saw large Volunteer demonstrations after both victories, followed by arrests, trials and imprisonments.23 A column of reports from Sinn Féin clubs began in the Sligo Champion in July 1917. By September the County Inspector was reporting that “the Sinn Féin movement has spread all over the county” and at the end of December he reported forty three Sinn Féin clubs in the county. Meetings, lectures and aeraíochtai, sometimes attended by national Sinn Féin speakers, were held throughout the county. When a vacancy arose on Sligo RDC in October 1917 the nominee of the local Sinn Féin club was unopposed.24 The new political orthodoxy was by then in place.

An examination of the figures for Sinn Féin membership in County Sligo as reported by the RIC County Inspector for the period September 1917 to July 1921 reveals a steady rise with the membership peaking at around 4,300 in January 1919 and maintaining that level until July 1920. In August 1920 the figure was reported as 6,222, though having the same number of branches, and this was the figure given for each subsequent month until July 1921. This last figure is highly suspect. There seems to be no plausible explanation for the sudden and dramatic influx into the existing branches of the organisation in August 1920. Police stations had been closed down thus reducing the effectiveness of the force’s intelligence gathering and this was the period when military action began to be undertaken by the Sligo IRA.25 “Police stations are too few and the force too small to cope with the state of affairs,” the County Inspector wrote in his monthly report for June 1920. It is

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therefore likely that the figure of 6,222 is a purely notional figure used by the County Inspector to impress on his superiors the desperate situation as he saw it in County Sligo. For the same month he also reported a large increase, from just under seven hundred to over seventeen hundred, in the number of Irish Volunteers.

The figures reported by the RIC for increase in Sinn Féin membership in County Sligo are similar to those for Mayo and Tipperary. Each reported about a ten fold increase in numbers from June 1917 to January 1918 and another rise at the conscription crisis in May 1918. In Sligo's case the highest figure represented just over 10% of Catholic males. The corresponding figure for Mayo was just over 6%. In January 1919 the figures for Sinn Féin membership per ten thousand people show Sligo as the fourth best organised county in Ireland. Sinn Féin in Sligo achieved a membership higher than many of the counties which were to become more active in military terms.

The Sligo County Inspector reported waning interest in Sinn Féin at the end of 1917 but this decline was dramatically halted by the conacre campaign of February 1918. Sinn Féin took advantage of the till-more-land appeal by the government to harness agrarian unrest. Conacre was commandeered in the name of the Irish Republic by large crowds led by Volunteers or Sinn Féin officials all over the county but particularly in south Sligo. This part of the county had always been to the fore in agrarian agitation and this campaign marked the allying of the new creed of Sinn Féin with the age old hunger for land. The leader of this campaign was Alex McCabe and the Sligo town Sinn Féin leaders took no part in it. Others involved included some who later came to prominence in the IRA War of Independence campaign. The RIC County Inspector traced the start of the campaign to a speech by Laurence Ginnell at a County Sligo meeting in early January 1918 though he surmised that local Sinn Féiners had already made plans to start such a campaign. Forty eight of the fifty indictable offences in County Sligo for February 1918 were related to this

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29 Frank O'Beirne for instance, who later became O/C Collooney Battalion IRA.
30 SCI RIC, Jan. 1918 Monthly Report, CO 904/105. Ginnell was a Nationalist MP who had joined Sinn Féin after the Easter Rising and took the anti-Treaty side in 1922.
County Sligo 1914-1921.

This movement brought a large number of activists into conflict with the police in situations where there was little danger apart from arrest. Many were arrested and imprisoned and there were demonstrations to mark their trials and again to mark their release. These trials gave further chances of demonstrating opposition to the government and of making a laughing stock of the proceedings. These events marked an important stage in the radicalization of the Volunteers in terms of demonstrating the power of Sinn Féin and its ability to circumvent the forces of the government without having to resort to violence. It also began the process of alienating the RIC. After the conacre campaign the Sinn Féin party found almost immediately a new focus for action in the fight against the threat of conscription following the passing of the Conscription Bill on 16 April 1918. The county united against the threat and Sinn Féin leaders, including those from Sligo town, were to the forefront in the opposition. Neither Nationalist MP attended any anti-conscription meeting in the county. "The Nationalist party has been completely swallowed by the Sinn Féiners", reported the Sligo County Inspector in May. Sinn Féin found itself leading a campaign which included or was supported by the local nationalist newspapers, all the local government bodies, the trade unions and the Catholic clergy.

These two campaign appealing as they did to two basic instincts, life and land, were a perfect platform from which to launch an election campaign. From as early as June 1918 there are reports of clubs preparing for the election which would follow the end of the war. "The Sinn Féiners worked hard and the organisation was complete down to the last detail", the County Inspector reported. The two sitting Nationalist members were defeated comprehensively as had been widely predicted. The Sinn Féin percentage of the valid poll in North Sligo was 68% and in South Sligo 82%. What was the reason for the large difference in the Sinn Féin vote in the two constituencies? There are indications that Sinn Féin was stronger in South Sligo than in North Sligo. In February 1916 J.N. Wilson had been told that while Redmond's nominee would always be elected in North Sligo there could be a break in South Sligo. In mid-September 1918 it was said that the task of

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31 SCI RIC, Jan.-Feb. 1918 Monthly Reports, PRO, CO 904/105.
32 In particular the trial of McCabe and his associates in Feb. 1918 when the defendants smoked and sang songs during the hearing. (S.C., 2 Mar. 1918).
34 S.C., 20 & 27 April 1918.
36 Election results in S.C., 4 Jan. 1919.
electing a Sinn Féin MP for South Sligo would be light.\textsuperscript{38} It appears that the contest in South Sligo had been a foregone conclusion for some time even though the Nationalist candidate was the venerable John O'Dowd, a Fenian veteran and a founder member of the United Irish League. His opponent however was Alex McCabe, the best known Sinn Féiner in the county, thanks mainly to the publicity surrounding his part in the conacre campaign, his arrest and farcical trial. In North Sligo J.J. Clancy, although to the fore in Sinn Féin, had not been as prominent. Thomas Scanlan had still, it seems, substantial support in Sligo town where in John Jinks he had a powerful supporter. Jinks, a publican and auctioneer, was a consummate local politician, and had built up a sizable personal following which enabled him to survive the demise of the Nationalist party and continue to be prominent in Sligo politics until his death in 1934. North Sligo constituency had a larger percentage of non-Catholics than the southern constituency and this may have been a factor, though the Sligo centre of the Irish Unionist Alliance advised its supporters not to vote for either candidate.\textsuperscript{39} Catholic clergy were prominent as supporters on both sides in each constituency but in South Sligo the most prominent and active nationalist clergyman, Fr. P.J. O'Grady was one of McCabe's proposers. On the other hand in North Sligo the administrator of Sligo parish, Fr. Butler, was one of Scanlan's proposers. The percentage of the poll won by Sinn Féin in each constituency does not tell the full story. The turnout in North Sligo was 72\% and in South Sligo 62\%. The Sinn Féin candidates got almost the same percentage of the electorate (Clancy 49\%, McCabe 51\%) the difference being that more anti-Sinn Féin voters turned out in North Sligo. Intimidation may have meant that opponents of the new order were more fearful of exercising their franchise in the country areas of South Sligo than in the more anonymous town of Sligo. Fitzpatrick also mentions the fact that relatively Sinn Féin was weaker in towns: "The more rural the region, the stronger Sinn Féin tended to be."\textsuperscript{40} Of the contested constituencies in the country the Sinn Féin share of the poll in South Sligo put it at 4th highest. This with the figures for Sinn Féin membership marks Sligo as one of the most organised pro-Sinn Féin county in Ireland in 1918.

The fact of a strong anti-Sinn Féin vote in North Sligo were reinforced by the results of the Sligo Corporation election held in January 1919 under Proportional

\textsuperscript{38} Fr. P.J. O'Grady at Keash Sinn Féin meeting reported in \textit{S.C.}, 21 Sept. 1918.
\textsuperscript{39} Advertisement in \textit{S.J.}, 30 Nov. 1918.
\textsuperscript{40} David Fitzpatrick, \textit{Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921}, (Dublin, 1977), p. 159.
The percentage vote obtained by the parties was as follows: Ratepayers 37%, Sinn Féin 31%, Labour 19% and independents 13%. However all the Labour councillors and one of the independents were Sinn Féin members or supporters and a Sinn Féin mayor was elected. The figures show that there was a strong and sizable anti-Sinn Féin vote in Sligo town. There are no comparable figures from elsewhere for the period and by the time of the next electoral test, the local elections of May 1920, the hold of Sinn Féin and the Volunteers over the electorate had strengthened. In the Sligo County Council elections Sinn Féin won every seat. Three ratepayers candidates opposed Sinn Féin in the Sligo area but all failed to be elected. Four independents, including John Jinks, were also unsuccessful. One independent candidate and one independent Sinn Féin candidate withdrew before the election, the latter as a result of a visit by armed men. Those directly elected to the County Council were not prominent Volunteers but many of those who were later to be prominent IRA leaders were elected to the Rural District Councils and became chairmen of these bodies. As such they were co-opted to the County Council. Two others, both IRA officers, were co-opted. Sligo Brigade IRA wrote to the North Sligo Sinn Féin Comhairle Ceantair asking them to nominate the O/C Grange Battalion, IRA for co-option. This was done and he was co-opted. From South Sligo the O/C Ballymote Battalion was co-opted. The Council was therefore composed of some who were prominent IRA activists and many Sinn Féin politicians who never became active IRA members. This constituted a potential source of division on the Council.

At its first meeting on 21 June 1920, the newly elected Council acknowledged the authority of Dáil Éireann. On 30 June Sligo Corporation also acknowledged the authority of the Dáil. Neither body functioned to the complete satisfaction of the activists during the remainder of the War of Independence. There were times when the anti-Sinn Féin minority
County Sligo 1914-1921.

on Sligo Corporation became a majority owing to absences due to imprisonment and active service and there were attempts to bring the Corporation back under the wing of the British Local Government Board. The same factors resulted in John Jinks defeating the Sinn Féin nominee in the Sligo Mayoral election in January 1921. Dáil Éireann Local Government Department was not happy with the way Sligo Corporation maintained its allegiance and instanced two cases of communication with the enemy Local Government Board. An inspector in Sligo in October 1921 reported on the poor quality of local elected representatives and officials. Sligo County Council also had to function without its more active IRA councillors and was criticised for some of its decisions including cost cuttings exercises forced on it by the stoppage of British Local Government Board grants and the non payment of rates.

After the split in the Irish National Volunteers small groups of the breakaway Irish Volunteers existed in some areas of the county especially in Tubbercurry, Keash and Cliffoney. The County Inspector estimated their number at 252 in May 1915. Volunteers in these areas were in readiness for the rising in 1916 but did not take any action owing to the confusion caused by the countermanding order. Arrests following the

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46 See report: "To be or not to be" in S.C., 8 Jan. 1921.
50 Farry, Sligo 1914-1921, pp. 197 ff.
51 Frank Carty statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914. Charles Gildea mentions that he had organised branches of the Hibernian Rifles in the same places. This group was created by the Irish-American Alliance faction of the AOH. No mention of the Hibernian Rifles or the Irish-American Alliance AOH is made by the RIC County Inspector during this period. (Charles Gildea material in Fr. O'Kane Papers, Archdiocese of Armagh, Records Centre, Armagh: Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare, pp 40 ff.)
52 SCI RIC, May 1915 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/97. On St. Patrick's Day 1916, there were three Volunteer parades in the county. In Cliffoney, 50 Volunteers paraded, 69 paraded in Ballymote and 52 marched at a sports meeting in Mullinabreena. (Reports on St. Patrick's Day 1916, Sinn Féin Material, PRO, CO 904/23).
rising were concentrated in the Cliffoney area where fifteen were arrested, eight of these being released by early June.\textsuperscript{54} Joost Augusteijn compared figures for Tipperary, Wexford, Mayo and Derry for Volunteer membership as a percentage of Catholic males in each county. Comparing figures for Sligo with these it seems clear that in 1916 Volunteer numbers in Sligo were at a comparable level to the other counties at 0.6%. In his monthly reports for 1917 the Sligo County Inspector estimated the number of Volunteers in the County Sligo at 220 and reported no increase during the year. Reported membership in Mayo more than tripled during the year while membership in Tipperary remained static. The conacre campaign and the anti-conscription campaigns of 1918 did not result in an increase in Volunteer membership in Sligo. Comparing membership figures for January 1918 with November 1918 Sligo’s reported membership rose by 57% while Mayo’s rose by 174% and Tipperary’s by 214%.\textsuperscript{55} By early 1919 both Mayo and Tipperary had membership rates of 2.6% of Catholic males while Sligo still languished at 1.2%. It was late 1920 before there was a significant rise in the reported membership level in Sligo, up to 4.7% and this had dropped again the following January to 3.2%. By summer 1920 Mayo’s rate had risen to 7%.\textsuperscript{56} These figures indicate that Volunteer membership developed later in Sligo and did not reach the same level as in more active counties.

The earliest actions by the Volunteers nationally were aimed at securing arms and ammunition and in the light of the low membership of the Volunteers in Sligo it would be expected that few arms would have been secured. This in turn would be expected to inhibit further growth in membership and preclude effective action in the later stages of the war. The RIC reported that in February 1918 eighteen rifles, thirty nine revolvers/pistols and fourteen shotguns were in the possession of the Volunteers in County Sligo.\textsuperscript{57} This would have allowed only one third of the Sligo Volunteers at the time to be armed. Mayo Volunteers were reported as having twenty one rifles and Tipperary seventy eight rifles at the same time.\textsuperscript{58} Two arms raids only were reported in Sligo in early 1918, both by Volunteers in the Ballymote/Gurteen area of south Sligo resulting in the capture of twenty

\textsuperscript{54} S.C., 20 May 1916.
\textsuperscript{56} Augusteijn, \textit{From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{57} Irish Volunteers, Return of Arms, 28 Feb. 1917. PRO, CO 904/29.
\textsuperscript{58} Augusteijn, \textit{From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare}, p. 27.
firearms and 2000 rounds of ammunition.59 The Volunteers in Sligo as elsewhere raided private houses for arms but this source usually provided only shotguns. The main potential source of arms were the police but in Sligo the police had withdrawn from vulnerable barracks before the IRA were in a position to attack these. In a sense the IRA in Sligo "missed the boat" and by the time they had gained strength there were no easy targets.

Open illegal drilling became a popular way of demonstrating defiance by Volunteers in late 1917. In the last three months of the year six such cases "without weapons or uniforms" were reported by the RIC in County Sligo. The police did not prosecute, "No doubt they are anxious to be prosecuted in order to gain a little notoriety" said a Sligo Head Constable.60 These figures for Sligo are very low compared with those for other parts of the country. In November 1917, 334 cases were reported countrywide, 272 in Munster.61 During the first six months of 1918 there was a marked increase in the number of such cases reported elsewhere in Connacht especially in Mayo. No such increase took place in Sligo where the total number for the same period was a mere thirteen.62 Indictable offences are another measure of the activity of the Volunteers. During the period July to November 1918 the Sligo RIC County Inspector reported that the county was quiet and peaceful "but there is a widespread and deep-rooted spirit of disloyalty among a large section of the people".63 Very few indictable offences were reported by him for that period.64 Indictable offences in County Sligo were low and remained low for all of 1918 and 1919 with the exception of February 1918 when fifty offences, forty eight of them agrarian, were reported.65 The number fell the following month and remained below ten per month for the rest of the year. For all of 1919 with the exception of June, July and August when agrarian agitation raised the numbers to eight, fifteen and nine respectively, there were five or fewer indictable offences per month. It was not until January 1920 that there was a significant

59 Batt Keaney statement in author's possession; Interview with Alex McCabe, Irish Times 6-7 May 1970.
60 Illegal Drillings Midland and Connacht District, 1917, PRO, CO 904/122.
61 Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare, p. 7.
62 Jan-2, Feb-1, Mar-1, Apr-4, May-4, June-1. (SCI RIC, Monthly Reports 1920, PRO, CO 904/89-113).
63 SCI RIC, July 1918 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/106.
64 July-5, Aug-0, Sept-6, Oct-0, Nov-3.
65 The February figures of course relate to the conacre campaign then in full spate in the county. In October 1918 there were no indictable offences reported in the county. All these figures for indictable offences in Co. Sligo are from SCI RIC Monthly Reports, PRO, CO 904/105-113.
increase in Sligo. In Mayo and Tipperary the general increase in offences began in October and December 1920 respectively. In contrast a county like Cork had been experiencing serious conflict for some time. In March 1918 four rifles were seized from a barracks in Cork and ambushes of policemen were common there during 1918. The first assassination of a policeman occurred in Cork in December 1919. Ten people had been killed in Cork in the period 1917-19, six IRA members, two policemen, one soldier and one civilian. In Sligo activity during 1919 consisted of nothing more than futile attempts by the police to enforce bans on aerafochtaif, meetings and dramatic productions "likely to cause disaffection". Reports of unsuccessful attempts by the RIC to prevent after-Mass meetings in support of the Dáil Loan appeared weekly in October and November in the local press. These meetings became points of contact and conflict between republicans and police with the republican side invariably emerging victorious. The only violent confrontation occurred when the RIC attempted but failed to halt a car in which a Dáil Loan organiser and some local Volunteers were travelling from a meeting in South Sligo. This exchange of gunfire between police and Volunteers resulted in no serious injury or loss of life. In August 1919 an organiser from GHQ was sent to the county to help organise the Volunteers. He worked especially in south Sligo where, according to the Sligo Brigade O/C "their instincts are agrarian rather than military". This may have been true but the implied superiority of the O/C's own area seems to have had no basis in fact. Volunteers in north Sligo were neither more organised nor more active. Five battalions appear to have been formed in the county by the end of 1919 but there is little evidence that these operated efficiently or at all. In his December 1919 report the County Inspector said "the Irish Volunteers show no sign of activity".

By October 1919 the County Inspector was reporting a "growing feeling of hostility to the police" and "considerable political unrest" and the RIC began the evacuation of

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70 Report in *S.C.*, 22 Nov. 1919; Jim Hunt statement, Sligo Co. Library; Jim Hunt, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; P. O'Hegarty, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
71 Sligo Brigade material, NLI. Collins Papers, P 914.
County Sligo 1914-1921.

small rural police barracks in the county in September 1919.73 By November seven had been vacated, by April 1920 thirteen, and by September only eight barracks, including two in Sligo town, remained occupied of the original thirty four in the county.74 During the period May to September 1920 the local press reported many instances of intimidation in order to enforce the police boycott.75 These included public warning notices, intimidation of and attacks on those who worked for the RIC, destroying houses being occupied by policemen and burning a hackney car which had been hired by policemen. In August 1920 the County Inspector reported a "rigid boycott" of the police in the county. Shopkeepers were warned not to sell goods to the police and there are reports of police commandeering supplies in the summer of 1920. More notices warning those who were in communication with or supplying goods to the police to cease were posted in Tubbercurry in September, a sign perhaps that the boycott was not being complied with.76 According to figures compiled by the RIC the greatest number of "Outrages against Police" in County Sligo occurred during June and July 1920 with ten and thirteen being recorded for these months respectively. For August to November the number per month averaged six and thereafter it dropped to just over two per month.77 The police were never completely ostracised in the county. "Gradually the boycott lost strength and collapsed", the son of a Sligo policeman later wrote.78 John P. Jordan of north Sligo had been friendly with the RIC and supplied them with goods during the War of Independence. He had been boycotted and some property of his had been destroyed but this did not deter him. It was only after the disbandment of the RIC that he had to close his premises.79 Likewise Annie Brennan of Tubbercurry continued to supply the Auxiliaries stationed in the town with goods despite attempts at a boycott.80

To fill the void in policing, the IRA began to undertake police duties and there are

74 Farry, Sligo 1914-1921, pp 190-1.
75 Volunteer GHQ issued an official order to enforce a boycott of police on 4 June 1920.
76 Farry, Sligo 1914-1921, pp 193 ff.
77 Outrages against police, PRO, CO 904/148.
78 Cecil King's father was stationed at Collooney during this period, (C.A. King, Memorabilia, Donegal ?, 1989), pp 22-24.
79 John P. Jordan, Irish Grants Committee (IGC), PRO, CO 762/20. Interference with Jordan's property was used to lure the RIC into the ambush at Moneygold, Cliffoney in 1920.
80 Annie Brennan, IGC, PRO, CO 762/108. Some of the Auxiliaries had left without paying their accounts.
reports of petty thieves being apprehended by IRA "police" in Ballymote in mid-1920. Sinn Féin arbitration courts had been mentioned as early as October 1917 but it was not until the police withdrawal from rural barracks that these courts began to replace the Petty Sessions and Quarter Sessions courts in the county. In June 1920 the County Inspector reported that people were boycotting the Petty Sessions courts in favour of the Sinn Féin courts. He also reported that loyalists had gone before Sinn Féin courts and had had agrarian disputes settled there.\textsuperscript{81} The Irish Bulletin confirmed that loyalists had indeed sought protection from agrarian agitation from the Sinn Féin courts and had been given such protection especially in the Gurteen area.\textsuperscript{82} Land agitation had emerged again in mid-1920 especially in the south Sligo area. The usual collection of cattle drives, firing into houses and intimidation of workmen were reported in the area. This time Sinn Féin offered no support and in south Sligo as elsewhere helped suppress such agitation. By June the County Inspector could report that the agitation had almost died out and only sporadic incidents were reported for the rest of the year.\textsuperscript{83} District Courts for North and South Sligo began operating in September 1920 though only one sitting of the South Sligo court was actually held before the Truce.\textsuperscript{84} According to the County Inspector no Sinn Féin court was held in the county during February or April 1921 and the \textit{Sligo Independent} in mid-April expressed the opinion that the British courts were coming back into favour.\textsuperscript{85} The Sligo Brigade Commandant reported in June 1921 that an effort was being made to revive enemy courts in country districts.\textsuperscript{86}

Attacks on Crown Forces were officially sanctioned by Volunteer GHQ in January 1920 and this resulted in a wave of attempts to capture RIC barracks all over the country.\textsuperscript{87} In Cork for instance ten barracks were attacked during the first three months of 1920.\textsuperscript{88} It was however early June 1920 before an RIC barracks was attacked in Sligo.\textsuperscript{89} The first significant rise in the number of indictable offences in County Sligo happened in January

\textsuperscript{81} SCI RIC, June 1920 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/112.
\textsuperscript{82} Irish Bulletin, 17 June 1920.
\textsuperscript{83} SCI RIC, June 1920 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/112: Agrarian Outrages 1920-21. PRO, CO 904/121.
\textsuperscript{84} Dáil Courts files, NA, Correspondence re Sligo cases, DE6; North Sligo, DE10/57; South Sligo, DE10/58.
\textsuperscript{85} Farry, \textit{Sligo 1914-1921}, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{86} Mentioned in a letter C/S to M/D, 11 June 121, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/20.
\textsuperscript{87} Augusteijn, \textit{From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare}, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{88} Hart, \textit{The IRA and its Enemies}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{89} Farry, \textit{Sligo 1914-1921}, p. 191.
1920 when the number recorded rose to twenty and from then until June 1921 the figure fluctuated between twenty five and a high of fifty eight recorded in October 1920. These figures compare well with figures from Tipperary, Wexford and Derry. Sligo's high in October 1920 at seventy three when calculated per 100,000 population is higher than all but one of the counties studied by Augusteijn. Likewise the thirty nine offences recorded in May 1921, forty nine per 100,000 population is higher than figures for Mayo at the time, close behind figures for Wexford but significantly lower than those for Tipperary. Sligo was then at least on an equal footing with all but the most active of these counties at this time. What exactly these indictable offences were is not tabulated as a rule but for the months of November and December 1920 the Sligo County Inspector listed the offences for the benefit of his superiors. Robbery of mails - 21, Malicious injury to property - 14, Arson - 11, Larceny - 4, Robbery and Burglary - 4, Obtaining money by false pretences - 1, Murder of a policeman - 1, Malicious injury - 1, Firing at police -1, Cattle driving -1, Firing into dwellings -1, Threatening letters -3, Housebreaking and larceny -1. This list containing as it does a low proportion of offences which required direct contact with enemy forces shows that Sligo Volunteer actions at the time were low risk types. Few involved threats to life, either that of the perpetrator or of the victim and the total number of deaths in the county as a result of the conflict was small. Volunteers in Sligo were loath to directly attack members of the Crown Forces.

The period of greatest activity in Sligo was the second half of 1920. The ten deaths of Crown Forces in the county exceeds the figures for Mayo, Wexford and Derry for the period but lags far behind Tipperary and Dublin's figures. The county had participated in the general action of Easter 1920 when Sligo Custom House was raided, records destroyed and vacated barracks burned. The County Inspector said in his June 1920 report, "Owing to the large area without police supervision they [the IRA] have full scope for drilling and organising and they are taking full advantage of the opportunity". Raids for arms, raids on postal services and on trains became common. The railway line south of Ballymote was targeted very often. Official mail, items consigned to the police and Belfast goods were the

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90 Sligo figures from the SCI RIC Monthly Reports, other counties from Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare. pp. 30-32.
92 Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare, Table 1.9, p. 33.
94 SCI RIC, June. 1920 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/112.
usual target. The first attacks on police by the Sligo IRA took place in June 1920. An attack on a police barracks by Sligo town and north Sligo IRA members failed, either because an officer fell off the roof at an inopportune moment or because grenades failed to explode. The first successful ambush of police in the county took place in east Sligo on 26 July. After a short exchange of fire rifles were taken from the police who were then freed. The coastguard station at Enniscrone was captured and destroyed in the following month. Members of the Ballymote and Gurteen battalions took part in an ambush of a cycling party of police on 1 September. The extended nature of the police patrol caused confusion and what should have been a simple capture of arms became a shooting match in which one IRA member and three policemen were killed.

On 26 June an impressive operation involving IRA members from Tubbercurry, Collooney and Ballymote as well as Sligo town resulted in the rescue of Frank Carty from Sligo jail. After his rescue Carty galvanised the Tubbercurry area into action. A cycling patrol of policemen was ambushed and disarmed, a party of soldiers and police was held up and relieved of their arms and mules. Tubbercurry police barracks was sniped at on a number of occasions during August, two policemen being wounded on one occasion. A new District Inspector was appointed to the area and he proved more active than his predecessor. He was ambushed and shot dead near Tubbercurry at the end of September. Fearing reprisals, Carty had made elaborate plans for defending the town of Tubbercurry and nearby creameries. These plans proved utterly futile as lorries of Auxiliaries came from Sligo and wreaked havoc on the town. They burned business premises and private houses and destroyed two co-operative creameries in the neighbourhood. Significantly no-one was killed or wounded in these reprisals and there were no retaliatory actions by the

95 Daily Railway Situation 1920-21, PRO, CO 904/157.
96 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
97 Tom Deignan, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
98 Matt Kilcawley, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/136.
99 Jim Hunt statement, Sligo Co. Library; Jim Hunt, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
100 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/137. Frank Carty (1897-1942) was born at Clooncunny, Ballymote, the son of a small farmer. He joined the Volunteers in 1914 and became prominent in organisation in the Tubbercurry area. He was arrested for his involvement in the raid for arms on Perceval’s at Templehouse but was rescued from Sligo jail in May 1920.
IRA. At Cliffoney in North Sligo, in October, a police cycle patrol was ambushed and four policemen killed. Following this ambush widespread reprisals by Auxiliaries took place in the area. Houses belonging to known IRA activists were burned as was the Sinn Féin Hall at Cliffoney but again no civilian was killed and only one person was reported to have been injured by the Crown Forces. During this period of IRA activity three ambushes, each by a different IRA group, had taken place which involved loss of life on the police side. All were ambushes on soft targets, small cycling patrols or a single police vehicle. No police barracks suffered more than sporadic sniping even though medium sized police barracks existed close to the site of two of the ambushes, Cliffoney and Tubbercurry. David Fitzpatrick mentions "overreaction by the Volunteers to overreaction by the government to the actions of the Volunteers" as one reason for the intensification of violence during the period. While the reprisals in Sligo were extensive enough to provide fodder for republican propaganda they were not extreme or extensive enough to provoke the IRA to undertake or the public to support a deadly escalation of the conflict.

The Restoration of Order, Ireland, Act of August 1920 and the arrival of the Auxiliaries towards the end of 1920 altered the situation. The IRA could no longer move about as freely as before and were in greater danger of arrest and internment. Auxiliaries were stationed at Boyle, County Roscommon and at Coolavin in south Sligo and they made frequent large scale searches throughout the county. In April 1921 a company of Auxiliaries set up abode in Tubbercurry. Towards the end of November Frank Carty was captured while recuperating after illness and the officer who replaced him as O/C was arrested in February. At the end of 1920 three officers of the Grange Battalion including the O/C were captured with a large haul of arms, including those taken at the Cliffoney ambush while the arms were being moved to the south of the country. The loss of these

101 Frank Carty statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p913; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P 17b/133; Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137; Eugene Gilbride, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137; Bernard Conway, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137; Patrick McCannon statement in private possession.

102 See map of British reprisals in E. Rumpf & A.C. Hepburn, Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth-Century Ireland (Liverpool, 1977), p. 39. Nine are given for Sligo, none caused death or serious injury and some were very minor.

103 Fitzpatrick, Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921, p. 216.

104 Tom Scanlon blamed Linda Kearns for the capture. Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Linda Kearns statement in private possession: Eugene Gilbride,
important officers and most of the Battalion’s arms was a double blow from which the IRA in the area did not recover before the Truce. The discovery by the police of a cache of arms, including ten revolvers, in Sligo graveyard, "as a result of secret information" was another blow to the IRA in late 1920.\(^{107}\) The County Inspector claimed that eighteen prominent IRA members were arrested during December 1920.\(^{108}\) The O/C Gurteen Battalion was captured in May 1921 as a result of an escapade in which he hijacked a train and used it as a cover from which to snipe at Ballaghaderreen police barracks.\(^{109}\) To counter the mobility of the Auxiliaries the IRA began to destroy road bridges but this did not happen extensively until April/May 1921.\(^{110}\)

As a result of the success of flying columns in parts of the country GHQ issued an Organisational Memo on the setting up of flying columns on 4 October, 1920.\(^{111}\) According to Eugene Gilbride, the movement of arms and ammunition from north Sligo in November which resulted in the capture of the war material and north Sligo officers was as a result of a visit by Sligo O/C to GHQ and may have been an attempt to form a Brigade Flying Column.\(^{112}\) No Brigade Flying Column was in fact formed in Sligo. However as a result of offensive actions by the IRA and greater pressure by the Crown forces groups of active Volunteers, usually officers, went on the run in the second half of 1920. A "flying squad" was formed in the Ballymote area in December 1920 and a "shock squad" was formed in the Tubbercurry area in early January 1921.\(^{113}\) According to Jack Brennan, O/C Tubbercurry Battalion, IRA men "were moving about in twos and threes" before March 1921.\(^{114}\) In Sligo town a number of activists operated, sometimes staying in friendly houses in the town but more often staying in more remote area such as the Sligo-Leitrim border area. Tom Scanlon of the Sligo battalion said that "there were a number of men on the run...

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\(^{107}\) SCI RIC, Jan. 1921 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/114.
\(^{109}\) Jim Hunt statement, Sligo Co. Library; Jim Hunt, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
\(^{110}\) Sligo Co. Council claimed over £1000 for eight major bridges and "about twenty smaller ones" damaged or destroyed during April and May 1921. Claims Registers, Co. Sligo. PRO, CO 905/10.
\(^{112}\) Eugene Gilbride, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
\(^{113}\) Paddy Dwyer interview 28 Nov. 1987; Charles Gildea material in Fr. O’Kane Papers, Archdiocese of Armagh, Records Centre, Armagh.
\(^{114}\) Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O’Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
but there was no organised column until we formed a small column". This column consisted of thirteen or fourteen men but "they were not as well organised as they were later on" and "there was not much activity". In March 1921 an attempt was made to form a flying column in the south Sligo area comprising twenty men from the south Sligo battalions. Besides planning a raid on Ballymote barracks nothing seems to have come from this column and disheartened by bad weather and poor cooking it was disbanded: "It was decided that the men would go back to their areas and be mobilised again when the weather was better." This did not happen. By June 1921 a group of up to twenty five men was operating on the northern slopes of the Ox Mountains in the vicinity of Dromore West. Apart from some sniping of police barracks and some ambushes which proved fruitless the only significant operation by this group was the Culleens ambush of 1 July 1921. For this action they were augmented by two officers from the Tubbercurry area. These groups also co-operated in a limited number of larger operations. Members of the Gurteen Battalion IRA co-operated with the East Mayo Brigade in a failed attack on Ballaghaderreen Barracks. An ambush involving officers from IRA in north and south Sligo was set near Collooney in November 1920 but was fruitless. The Carty rescue in June 1920 involved men from many Sligo areas. The O/Cs, Collooney and Riverstown and Tubbercurry Battalions were rescued from Sligo jail at the end of June 1921 in a similar well planned operation which involved twenty men from the Sligo town IRA companies and one from Tubbercurry.

In all there may have been in the region of fifty men involved in these Sligo flying columns. The level of activity did not approach the level for the end of 1920 and the number of Crown Forces casualties in the county fell to one in the first quarter of 1921 and six in the second quarter. This lagged far behind Mayo and Tipperary but was higher than Derry and Wexford. However it does appear that while these flying columns lacked the

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115 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
116 Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
117 Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Matt Kilcawley, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136.
118 Jim Hunt statement, Sligo Co. Library; Jim Hunt, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
119 Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
120 This number is an estimate based on the sources mentioned in the previous paragraph, twenty on the Ox Mountains, ten each in Sligo town, Ballymote and Tubbercurry areas.
121 Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare, Table 1.9, p. 33.
numbers, armament, intelligence and will to take on the enemy in large ambushes or other actions some of these men cut off as they were from the community moved further along the road to treating all policemen as enemies to be killed when possible. Unlike the 1920 deaths few of the 1921 deaths occurred as a result of large scale ambushes. In March 1921 two police constables were taken by the IRA from a train at Ballisodare and shot dead in an operation directed by the Sligo Brigade O/C. One of them was killed because he had led and directed the Auxiliaries who carried out reprisals after the Cliffoney ambush. The other was killed because he happened to be accompanying the marked man. A marine was shot dead at Rosses Point in May. The Cliffoney ambush of 1920 involved thirty eight armed ambushers but at the end of June 1921 only twelve members of the local company using weapons borrowed from adjoining areas could be got to lie in wait near Cliffoney Barracks for a policeman going alone to a local shop for cigarettes. He was killed. At the Culleens ambush in July two policemen were taken prisoner and shot dead when their captors were hard pressed during the retreat into the mountains. In April 1921 a 72 year old Protestant civil bill officer of Sligo County Court was shot dead by the IRA as a spy in spite of the claim by the local IRA information officer that he was harmless. This was the only incident of a "spy" being shot dead in the county. The small number of "spies" executed in Sligo contrasts with more active counties like Cork and Tipperary where a large number of the casualties was due to the killing of individual members of the Crown Forces and of "spies".

The lack of arms and ammunition continued to be a problem for the Sligo IRA. Arms in their possession were often shared. Linda Kearns was involved in transporting arms for the IRA in Sligo: "It seemed as if a couple of flying columns were using the same material. I would bring them to Chaffpool one day and perhaps the next day back to Grange". The loss of the arms she was transporting from Grange to South Sligo has already been

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122 Michael Coleman, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
123 SCI RIC, May & June 1921 Monthly Reports, PRO, CO 904/115; Patrick McCannon statement in private possession: Daniel Waters statement in private possession.
125 Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Matt Kilcawley, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136; SCI RIC, July 1921 Monthly Report, CO 904/116.
127 Linda Kearns statement in private possession.
County Sligo 1914-1921.

mentioned. Tubbercurry Battalion had only five rifles up to August 1920 when they bought six rifles, some ammunition and gelignite from GHQ. In the Culleens ambush in 1921 each ambusher had only 25-40 rounds of ammunition. The 3rd Western Division was one of the poorest armed divisions according to a statement of munitions from late 1921. It then had 949 guns, almost 700 of which were shotguns. It had only eighty one rifles, the lowest number for any division on the list. It had two Thompson machine guns. It was also low in ammunition, twenty two rounds per rifle, seventeen rounds per revolver. A report on the Sligo area in August 1921 said that the Brigade, numbering 1500 men, had only twenty rifles.

The perceived lack of activity and results in Sligo were a cause of concern at GHQ. The Sligo O/C, William Pilkington, visited GHQ in March 1921 and was reportedly given a dressing down by Collins. As a result of this he organised an attempt involving Volunteers from many Sligo battalions to capture Collooney RIC Barracks, which proved an embarrassing failure. During the period from January 1921 to the Truce the Director of Information, GHQ, continually complained about the inefficiency of the O/C and of the Information Officer, Sligo Brigade. Dispatches were not acknowledged or replied to, he said, queries were unanswered and reports when submitted were difficult to read. As late as June 1921 the O/C, Sligo Brigade was being chastised thus: "The slovenly character of this dispatch is a disgrace and the accompanying slip of addresses is worse still". However this action by GHQ did have the effect of ensuring that both the Sligo O/C and Information Officer did submit regular reports. A report by the O/C for March 1921 enumerated only seven attempted actions. Four of these were attempted ambushes which failed because the enemy did not show up, one was the attack on Collooney Barracks

128 Frank Carty statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p913.
129 Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
130 Statement of munitions, undated, probably late 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/28.
131 Unsigned report on Sligo Area, 15 Aug. 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/23.
132 William (Billy) Pilkington was a native of Sligo town and worked in Wehrly watchmakers. He had been a member of the Volunteers since 1913. He became O/C Sligo Brigade in 1917 when J.J. O'Connell joined Volunteers headquarters.
134 The Information Officer was R.G. Bradshaw. A series of correspondence between the I/O, Sligo and the I/O, GHQ is in MA, Collins Papers, IRA Sligo Brigade, A/0747.
County Sligo 1914-1921.

which failed, one resulted in the disarming and release of an RIC District Inspector and one was the killing of a policeman in Ballymote.\(^{136}\) The Adjutant General passed the report on to the Chief of Staff with the comment "I consider this from Sligo is very poor indeed. Will you deal with it?"\(^{137}\) A report for May 1921 signed by the O/C lists four actions only, one killing of a Marine "a dangerous spy", one fight with Auxiliaries which resulted in their surrender and the capture of nine revolvers, one sniping at enemy and one ambush which did not come off. It also mentioned twenty seven raids for Belfast goods which had been carried out in the brigade area.\(^{138}\) As a result of these poor reports complaints were made to the O/C Sligo Brigade that his area was not active enough in the fight. He replied saying that he would not take responsibility for having his area more active "unless it obtained better consideration in the way of stuff from GHQ". He later explained that he thought at the time that there was plenty of "stuff" available and since "this area had money and willingness to fight" he thought such an attitude would help.\(^{139}\) The Chief of Staff replied saying that if the O/C was unable to raise the level of activity in his area he could resign and asked if he could suggest another to take his place.\(^{140}\) As a result of this communication the Battalion officers of Sligo Brigade wrote to the Chief of Staff stating their confidence in their O/C: "Taking into consideration the small amount of war material at our disposal and the extraordinary enemy force in the area very few men would accept the responsibility [Command of the Brigade]."\(^{141}\) The reply from the Chief of Staff criticised the lack of satisfactory monthly reports from Sligo and the "tendency to poor mouth and complain on your part, and it is because I realise the difficulties you are up against and that I know that such an attitude of mind cannot conquer or overcome these difficulties that I am dissatisfied." The Chief of Staff asked the Adjutant General for his opinion of this reply and he wrote "Good. This should get him if he is any good. If not I will get him the other way."\(^{142}\) This letter had a chastening effect on Pilkington and he replied: "My faults, my shortcomings, my incapacities you have emphasised and depicted very vividly and admittedly correctly. When my battalion officers read your

\(^{136}\) Sligo Brigade Report for March 1921, 5 Apr. 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P17/A/22.

\(^{137}\) A/G to C/S, 13 April 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/22.

\(^{138}\) Actions for May, Sligo Brigade, 5 June 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19.

\(^{139}\) Sligo O/C to C/S, 2 July 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/22.

\(^{140}\) C/S to Sligo O/C, 6 June 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19.

\(^{141}\) O/Cs Sligo Battalions to C/S, 24 May 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19.

\(^{142}\) C/S to Sligo O/C, 6 June 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19.
communication it will put an end to their votes of confidence in me."\textsuperscript{143} The complaints
from the Sligo O/C do seem to have had the effect of obtaining at least the promise of
some supplies from GHQ to increase the Brigade's armaments.\textsuperscript{144}

The total number of deaths directly related to the conflict in County Sligo for the
period 1920-1921 was nineteen. Seventeen of these were Crown forces including fourteen
RIC. One British soldier was killed as was one marine. One person was shot dead as a spy
by the IRA and only one IRA activist was killed.\textsuperscript{145} No civilian was killed by the British
forces as a reprisal or otherwise. These figures contrast sharply with figures from Mayo
where forty Crown Forces were killed and twenty two IRA, Tipperary 114 and fifty one,
Wexford ten and two, Derry fifteen and eight and Dublin 163 and thirty five.\textsuperscript{146} In Clare
about thirty seven policemen, nine soldiers and six Volunteers were killed as a result of
engagements and five civilians were killed as informers.\textsuperscript{147} In Cork 190 Crown Forces, 135
IRA and 167 civilians were killed during 1920-21.\textsuperscript{148} Thus by the time of the Truce Sligo
county fits in to the general picture of Connacht counties showing a moderate level of
activity and violence in the latter part of the struggle. It lagged far behind the most active
counties especially in the level of deaths recorded as a result of the war. By July 1921 the
military situation in the county had reached the stage where small groups of IRA were
surviving on the run and at times carried out spectacular actions without ever seriously
challenging the British forces.

All commentators on the period stress the gradual escalation of violence driven by
attempts by the Volunteers to obtain arms and the reaction of the Crown Forces to these
actions. As arms became more difficult to obtain attacks were made on barracks. These
attacks and the reprisals carried out by the Crown Forces resulted in a gradual lowering of
the threshold of violence. When a military stalemate resulted in 1921 a more vicious type
of violence came into evidence in some places.\textsuperscript{149} "The initiative to engage in violence

\textsuperscript{143} Sligo O/C to C/S, 2 July 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/22.
\textsuperscript{144} There is a reference to "the promise of the QMG to send on weekly consignments here
from far side [Liverpool]" in a letter from the Brigade Commandant to C/S, 2 July 1921,
and references to these consignments in QMG to C/S, 25 June 1921 and C/S to Brigade
Commandant, 29 June 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/22.
\textsuperscript{145} These figures include the casualties at Ratra, just across the Roscommon border where
the South Sligo IRA ambushed a police patrol. The lone IRA death occurred here.
\textsuperscript{146} Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare, Table 1.9, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{147} Fitzpatrick, Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921, p. 226.
\textsuperscript{148} Hart, The IRA and its Enemies, table 7, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{149} Augusteijn, From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare, pp 315-6; Fitzpatrick, The
taken in some localities set in motion a process in which action and reaction led to a spiralling severity of conflict." In Sligo there were attacks, raids, reprisals and examples of the more vicious violence. What was different was the scale and intensity of the violence. As we have seen the level of violence in Sligo never reached the level recorded in very active counties like Cork or Tipperary or even a county like Mayo. A cycle of retaliatory violence was never set in motion in Sligo. The main reasons for this included the fact that in the major reprisals after IRA ambushes there were no deaths. The IRA members found it difficult to move to the stage where they regarded every policeman as a potential victim. The initiative to engage in violence appeared later in Sligo and the violence was more muted leading to less severe reactions.

A crucial factor was the fact that County Sligo was one of the best organised counties as regards the Irish Party and the UIL. There was very little open opposition and very small groups of organised secret opposition. Political organisation, control and loyalty to the party was high and it took some time before this allegiance was shaken and moved. Thus the Irish Volunteers were slow to develop before official endorsement by the Party but spread quickly once given the seal of approval. Again Sinn Féin grew very slowly until it was clear that it was the movement which would replace the Irish Party and then it became as strong, as well disciplined and as organised as the Party had ever been. This meant that the committed military side of the movement, always destined to be a minority occupation, found it difficult to develop and flourish. David Fitzpatrick and others suggest that activity in the War of Independence was positively connected with a strong early organisation. County Sligo had no strong significant radical group in the county before 1914 and the Irish Volunteers were slow to spread and quick to decline in the county. The most important radical nationalist activists who did exist in the county were not arrested after the 1916 Rising. Those who were arrested were relatively unimportant and took little further part in the War of Independence. Speaking of War of Independence leaders elsewhere Augusteijn says: "Their prison experience in 1916 radicalized them and gave them sufficient local standing to command support" Sligo leaders such as McCabe, Carty,
Devins and Pilkington missed this experience of the 1916 internment camps and were always some distance behind those who had graduated from that university of rebellion. McCabe, the foremost radical activist before 1916, did not prove to be an effective military leader in the changed circumstances of 1919-21. The Volunteers, inactive in arms gathering at an early stage, were subsequently deficient in armaments and this limited their potential. This in turn resulted in fewer serious attacks on the Crown Forces and fewer reprisals. When attacks and deaths did take place the reprisals were limited in area and intensity. None resulted in loss of life nor was there any civilian death as a result of other Crown Forces activity. There was therefore no escalation by tit for tat killings.

The level of policing may have also played a part. The total number of police in the county in July 1921 was just over 200. This gives a figure of 394 persons per policeman. In comparison Tipperary had one policeman to every 441 inhabitants, Mayo one to 534 and Wexford one to 598. This makes Sligo a better policed county than those considered by Augusteijn. He postulates a direct connection between level of Volunteer activity and police strength: "Apparently the more targets available the more Volunteers resorted to violence". Sligo seems to contradict the trend, a well policed county with little IRA activity. However because of the late upsurge in activity in Sligo the targets, though many, had been concentrated in a few well fortified barracks rather than scattered in small rural posts and the attackers were poorly armed and poorly motivated. Augusteijn also speculates about the level of opposition, the presence of local adversaries, instancing the high level of opposition in urban Tipperary as a contributory factor in the high level of violence in that county. "The presence of local adversaries actually intensified the development to violence in certain circumstances". The necessary circumstances, a strong early base of activists and a rapid escalation of violence, did not exist in Sligo town.

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155 Figures from a report to GHQ by Sligo Brigade IRA, July 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/a/15. No figures for Easkey or Dromore West are given. The total for the other six barracks is 167. The figure given in Thom's Directory 1921 is 183 police.
156 Figures from Augusteijn, _From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare_, p. 28 based on information in PRO, HO184/61.
157 Augusteijn, _From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare_, p. 35.
158 Ibid, p. 320.
County Sligo 1914-1921.

though it had a high level of opposition to Sinn Féin.

According to many commentators a vital step on the path to the freedom of regarding all policemen and Crown Forces as legitimate targets was the ostracising of the RIC from the local community.\textsuperscript{159} This was never complete in County Sligo. When the police were concentrated in larger urban areas there were always those who befriended them. Even active Volunteers still distinguished between police who were harmful and those who were not. One Volunteer living in Ballymote continued to allow a policeman to take manure from his animal shed to use in the policeman's garden during the boycott of the RIC.\textsuperscript{160} The separation of the police from the community was not completely achieved and so the RIC never became legitimate targets in their own right. This in turn reduced the chance of an escalating spiral of violence. Only two, possibly three, members of the Crown Forces were killed in Sligo for no other reason other than that they were "enemies".

Commentators also ascribe the degree of development to the most vicious part of the struggle to the degree to which Volunteers were released from the restraining influence of their community.\textsuperscript{161} Some Tipperary Volunteers left their work and homesteads in 1919 helping to account for the level of violence there in later years. Those Sligo Volunteers who did leave home and work were few and did so at a late stage in the conflict. These were responsible for most of the killings of 1920 and 1921 in the county. The removal by arrest of some of the most prominent of the leaders in late 1920 reduced the effectiveness of the groups. Others would no doubt have taken their place, indeed the figures for deaths suggest that their places were being taken by the second quarter of 1921. Fitzpatrick and others dismiss the idea that "prevalence of violence was a function of the presence of or absence of strong willed and bellicose leaders of men".\textsuperscript{162} However it seems reasonable to assume that after the arrest of a successful leader it would take some time for a successor to establish himself. This with increased Crown Forces activity was the reason for the fall in activity of the IRA in Sligo during the first quarter of 1921.

All commentators stress that a range of factors influenced the degree to which an

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[160] Paddy Dwyer interview, 28 Nov. 1987.
\item[161] Augusteijn, \textit{From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare}, pp 318-9; Fitzpatrick, \textit{Politics and Irish Life}, pp 218-9
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
area became active in the violent struggle against the Crown Forces. No one or two factors were more important than others but the interaction of these factors determined the outcome. In County Sligo the lack of an early base of extremists, the strength of orthodox nationalism, the level of policing, led to the position the county had reached at the Truce of July 1921. The number of actions by the IRA had been few, the number of deaths small, the number of those actively involved in guerilla warfare small but some did exist and some of these had progressed to the stage where they were prepared to use the most vicious type of violence against those who did not fit into their view of nationality.
2. TRUCE AND TREATY.

The previous chapter has outlined the situation which had developed in Sligo by mid-1921. Small groups of IRA were surviving on the run and at times were able to carry out small scale actions without ever seriously challenging the British forces. The Truce which came into effect on 11 July changed this situation dramatically. Those who had been on the run could now come into the open and those who had been passive IRA members could safely proclaim their allegiance. This chapter examines how the position of the IRA changed and developed during the period of the Truce and discusses the extent to which the IRA had become the leading force in the county by the time the Treaty was signed. It also examines reactions in the county to the signing of the Treaty and considers the arguments put forward on both sides.

The Position of the IRA.

Those who emerged from the mountains and bogs regarded themselves, and sometimes were regarded, as victors over the British. The RIC County Inspector reported in July 1921: "The IRA leaders believe there will be peace and take to themselves the entire credit of same".1 "The murderers of yesterday were the statesmen of today. The world applauded them. They were recognised as righteous men who had made their land a nation again", said Irish teacher Pádraig O’Domhnalláin at a Sligo aeraíocht in October.2 Sligo TD, Seamus Devins expressed similar sentiments: "They could not forget that it was the Irish army that brought the Irish question to what it was today and it was the army that would carry them to success in the end".3 Even Alex McCabe TD who had played a minor role in the IRA and who was to take the pro-Treaty side said: "they took their guns and after twelve months hard fighting they established their rights".4 The IRA leaders were honoured guests at public events and were the recipients of rhapsodic addresses containing

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1 SCI RIC, July 1921 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/116.
2 S.C., 8 Oct. 1921. O’Domhnalláin, a native of Galway, had been one of the pioneers of the Volunteers and of Sinn Féin in Sligo but had been unsuccessful in an attempt to gain a nomination for South Sligo constituency in the 1918 election. About this time he accepted a teaching post in Dublin and left Sligo.
3 S.C., 1 Oct. 1921.
4 At Enniscrone aeraíocht. (S.C., 1 Oct. 1921).
sentiments such as the following: "Like many a brave Irishman who loved freedom dearer than life you had the minions of the oppressor ranged against you, as a result of which you were removed from home and friends and suffered the ignominy and tortures of an English convict prison". At sports meetings special events such as football matches, tugs-of-war and relay races were confined to IRA members. The local IRA played a football match against a local team at Banada aera/acht and "the gunmen came out of the struggle victorious", the Sligo Champion reported. Among the spectators were "several IRA officers in uniform all of them looking well in their dark green."

By chance the IRA in Sligo had immediately the opportunity to celebrate that most revered of Irish separatist occasions - the funeral of a dead hero. Michael Marren, O/C Ballymote Battalion, was drowned while swimming the day after the Truce came into effect. His funeral became a celebration of the Sligo IRA with an enormous throng of 2,000 Volunteers and those who wished to be associated with them, bearing the hero to his final resting place. The Volunteers marched four deep after the coffin to the cemetery and "the steady tread of marching men" was, according to newspaper reports, the dominant sound during the ten mile journey. The local newspapers carried lengthy reports including verbal tributes from IRA companies and poetic tributes of varying quality from local versifiers. The Sligo Champion recorded the fact that a patrol of British troops reversed arms and stood in tribute as the funeral cortege passed them by. This funeral, coming within a month of the Truce, was an opportunity for a public display of strength and solidarity by the IRA and helped establish it as a significant public presence in the county. The attendance of at least eleven priests at the Solemn Requiem Mass also lent a certain ecclesiastical acceptance to the IRA in the county.

From the point of view of officers the Sligo IRA was practically at full strength during the Truce period. Most of its officers had evaded imprisonment during the War of Independence. The Sligo Brigade O/C, later O/C of the 3rd Western Division, William Pilkington, had never been captured. Of the eight or so battalions organised in Sligo in late

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5 Address by Tireragh Sinn Féin Executive to Seamus Devins. (S.C., 17 Sept. 1921).
7 S.C., 27 Oct. 1921.
8 S.C., 30 July 1921.
9 The attendance included the Parish Priest of Gurteen later described as an enemy of Sinn Féin. (See below page 36)
1919 and early 1920 five of the O/Cs had been captured during the war. Two had been rescued from prison just before the truce and two others, the most active Sligo IRA leaders, Seamus Devins and Frank Carty were freed with the release of the Sinn Féin TDs in early August. By then the only battalions not led by their pre-Truce O/Cs were Gurteen, where Jim Hunt was still in prison, and Ballymote, where as we have seen the O/C had drowned. These were replaced but neither replacement had very much time to make his mark. Jim Hunt was the only one of the pre-Truce O/Cs to take the Free State side in the Civil War and his absence during the July to December period of euphoria may have had a significant influence on this decision. Likewise the Ballymote-Gurteen areas were strongholds of pro-Treaty support when the split came and this may have been due at least in part to the absence of a strong IRA leader there during the Truce period.

Towards the end of August the IRA in Sligo as elsewhere began to set up training camps. In his report on the 3rd Western Division area in November Captain T. Burke mentioned the efforts made at training by the Sligo Brigade. He had attended ten of their training camps and reported that "practically all the rank and file in addition to the officers and NCOs have been put through a course of camp training." There are references to at least sixteen IRA training camps evenly distributed throughout the county. Some were established in public buildings including a workhouse and a sanatorium, others were established in houses, often belonging to unionists, which were used with or without the owners' permission, food being requisitioned from the locals. The camps catered for numbers ranging from twenty five trainees at the smallest to one hundred and twenty at the large camp established at Clonamahon sanatorium near Collooney. IRA officers and men attended in relays. The RIC regarded these camps as breaches of the Truce but the official IRA response was that both sides were allowed to train during the Truce. The officers'
Truce and Treaty.
camp at Coolaney was attended by twenty four officers from the Collooney and Tubbercurry battalions. "The officers appeared to be very raw and lacking in training", according to the camp O/C from Dublin. The three rifles possessed by the group were in very neglected condition and their short arms were only in fair condition. Eight of the officers were reported as being outstanding in appearance, ability and initiative, the general standard among the others was low and there were two who in the opinion of the O/C should not have held office.\(^{15}\) This training had the effect of holding the IRA together and consolidating the feeling of comradeship and even professionalism. The IRA were at least behaving as a regular army as regards training.

In common with all of Connacht no divisional organisation had been established in County Sligo before the Truce. In November 1921 two officers from GHQ, T. Burke and Brian MacNeill were sent to inspect the Sligo area and parts of the adjoining counties as a preliminary to setting up such a divisional structure.\(^{16}\) Staff Captain Burke's report on the Sligo brigade is quite complimentary though he did find many shortcomings reporting that the district was "very poorly armed and prepared for war". "The QMG would fare badly in the hands of some of the local officers", he added indicating resentment with the failure of GHQ to supply arms and ammunition during the war. He regarded William Pilkington as a "promising type" and a "good militarist", Seamus Devins "means business" though "he might possibly need a little steadying influence", while Frank Carty interested himself "too much in petty local politics" but would be a suitable O/C for the proposed South Sligo Brigade. The remaining officers he regarded as very promising, "intelligent and willing to work". Organisation was poor over the whole area, "battalions in most cases seem to work out their own salvation or ruin independently and to receive but scant attention from the Brigade staffs".\(^{17}\) Burke recommended that the Divisional staff be drawn almost exclusively from the Sligo Brigade and this is what happened when the 3rd Western Division was formed soon afterwards. Brian MacNeill was the only outsider appointed to the staff, presumably to provide the steadying influence mentioned as being required. Five


\(^{16}\) Brian MacNeill was a son of Eoin MacNeill the former Chief of Staff of the Volunteers and minister in the first Dáil, Provisional Government and Free State Government.

\(^{17}\) Inspection Report T. Burke to GHQ, 17 Oct. 1921, MA, Collins Papers A/0747.
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brigades, South Sligo, North Sligo, North Roscommon, East Mayo and North Leitrim, comprised the new Division. Pilkington became divisional O/C and Devins and Carty O/Cs of North and South Sligo Brigades respectively. ¹⁸ At the end of 1921 then the IRA in Sligo had just finished a period of extensive if not intensive training and had just been conferred with a divisional structure which gave added prestige to those who six months previously had been hiding in dug outs or languishing in British jails. Added prestige also accrued from the fact that Sligo provided almost all the officers for the new division.

The Sligo IRA, thus boosted, seemed to be in no mood to occupy a subsidiary role or to defer to any civil power. A general levy or IRA rate was imposed in at least some parts of the county. According to the RIC £1 per house was demanded in the Dromore West area and in the Easkey area subscriptions were being "extorted under threats of boycott or illegal arrest." In the Tubbercurry area a calf was taken when a farmer refused to contribute voluntarily. ¹⁹ At the end of October the local papers carried the announcement from the Minister for Defence, Cathal Brugha, ordering that all IRA levies had to be voluntary. ²⁰ What effect this had on collections is not known but it was surely difficult to distinguish at local level between voluntary and compulsory levies. For instance the White Cross collection in Sligo caused controversy. ²¹ An editorial in the Connachtman expressed dissatisfaction with the contributions from those of more extensive means. It was intended that these would be revisited "to see that those who have suffered little or not at all should contribute in strict accordance with their means". ²² Prominent in the published list of contributors were Sligo Protestant businesses and businessmen. Henry Lyons contributed £20, while Arthur Jackson, Harper Campbell and Pollexfens each gave £25. ²³ Allegations were made by a Sligo Protestant that the local committee used unspecified "compulsory measures" in order to secure contributions. This was denied this but the committee promised to refund contributions to those who claimed they had given under duress. They

¹⁸ Frank Carty statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914.
¹⁹ Report 19 Oct. 1921, Alleged Truce Breaches by the IRA, PRO, CO 904/155. The same or similar incident is mentioned by the RIC County Inspector in his September report. (PRO, CO 904/116).
²⁰ S.C., 29 Oct. 1921.
²¹ The White Cross was set up in Feb. 1921 to assist republicans and their families who were suffering hardship because of their involvement in the War of Independence. The Sligo branch was established on 9 Aug. 1921 and its chairman was Michael Nevin. (S.C., 13 Aug. 1921)
²² CM., 27 Aug. 1921.
²³ S.C. & CM., 3 Sept. 1921.
also noted threateningly that they were glad "to be in a position as a result of this correspondence to form an accurate judgement of the disposition of certain of their Sligo neighbours from whom they had expected better things".\textsuperscript{24}

The military men on the republican side in Sligo seemed determined to belittle those on the same side who were perceived to have merely acted as politicians during the war. It appeared as if the IRA would brook no competition in their desire to be regarded as the saviours and leaders of the Irish people and the idea of supremacy of civil government was foreign to them. The glory was to be theirs and theirs alone. This attitude was not of course confined to County Sligo but was widespread throughout the land. Tod Andrews described how "nearly all the members of the Dáil overnight became in my eyes 'politicians'... a distinction was rapidly being drawn between 'the politicians' and the Army".\textsuperscript{25} Many Sligo IRA leaders were also of course politicians but these left people in no doubt where their prior allegiance lay. Frank Carty TD "reminded his hearers that he was not a man of words but, as perhaps others knew, a man of action (laughter and applause)".\textsuperscript{26} Seamus Devins TD, speaking at an aeraíocht in Sligo said that "he did not profess to be a public speaker. He belonged to the section who believed deeds rather than words counted."\textsuperscript{27} At a similar function in October he said that "he did not happen to belong to the side of the organisation from which the speeches came... He believed that he was elected because he represented what was now popularly known as "the gunmen" (cheers). He was not offended for having being placed in that category because they would all admit it was the gunmen who had brought things to the condition they were in now".\textsuperscript{28} R.G. Bradshaw at the same event said: "There were people in the country today who took the opportunity of the existing conditions to make their voices heard in everything that sounded nationalistic and patriotic but there were many of these voices which could not be heard when other conditions were prevailing."\textsuperscript{29} Undoubtedly the voices he referred to were those of County Council members with whom in the same month he was having a public squabble. Bradshaw was Sligo Brigade Information Officer (later I.O. 3rd Western Division) and proprietor of The

\textsuperscript{24}CM., 8 Oct. 1921. (Two persons who claimed to have contributed under duress were named in the report).
\textsuperscript{26}At Cloonacool aeraíocht 4 Sept. 1921. (S.C., 10 Sept. 1921).
\textsuperscript{27}S.C., 1 Oct. 1921.
\textsuperscript{28}He had of course not been elected having been selected as a candidate by the IRA Commandants and returned unopposed.
\textsuperscript{29}S.C., 22 Oct. 1921.
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*Connachtman* newspaper. That newspaper's editorials had repeatedly attacked the chairman of Sligo County Council in July 1921 over the question of the dismissal of a typist in the office. The typist was a son of local politician John Jinks and his appointment was acknowledged to have been blatant jobbery. He had been dismissed as part of economy measures during the War of Independence and his reinstatement was proposed and supported by a section in the Council which included prominent IRA activists who had been absent from Council meetings during the war. The IRA also interfered directly in other council matters including the ordering the Council to replace a co-opted councillor, nominating a person to fill a vacancy on the Council and opposition to the Dáil Local Government Board amalgamation scheme. Interference with local boards by the IRA was reported during the Truce period in other parts of the country, though the extent of such interference elsewhere is unclear.

These divisions came to a head at a Sligo County Council meeting in October 1921. Bradshaw, at the request of the Sligo O/C, had interviewed four applicants for the job of Council rate-collector and had nominated one whom the Council was expected to appoint. The chairman and others accused the IRA of interfering with the civil affairs of the county. Devins, Carty and Bradshaw argued that IRA interference was justified, Devins saying that "all the civil administration had fallen into the hands of the IRA" during the war. The chairman and others disputed this, pointing out that they had kept the Council functioning at considerable personal risk: "One member was heard to say that they were as good as any of the Volunteers". The Dáil Inspector blamed the IRA faction for the continued trouble and specifically mentioned Bradshaw. "Mr. Bradshaw and the IRA are out to run the business of the Council according to their own ideas," he said. Suggestions by the County Surveyor and others that the time had come for the repair of roads and bridges destroyed or damaged during the war were resisted strongly by the IRA and its supporters, and no work...
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was carried out.\textsuperscript{35} When an attempt was made to repair a south Sligo bridge the IRA prevented the work going ahead: "Mr Brennan said that as far as he was concerned the matter of the Curry bridge was settled elsewhere".\textsuperscript{36} The \textit{Sligo Champion} might have been expected to support the County Council chairman against the \textit{Connachman}'s vitriolic attacks but it kept editorial silence on the matter, not giving the divisions as much coverage as the other papers. Neither did the \textit{Sligo Independent} comment editorially though it gleefully reported in full the divisions in the County Council. Those who had carried on the struggle as politicians on Sligo County Council or Corporation found themselves isolated and ignored. The cult of the heroes who had defeated the British was being furthered. These divisions in the County Council were later reflected in the divisions over the Treaty. There is in fact no evidence of any politician in County Sligo attempting to move into the limelight during the Truce period, and it appears that the actions of the IRA were based on a combination of the general idea that the people of sound republican principles were only to be found among the ranks of the IRA, and the particular local antagonism which had already developed between politicians and IRA in Sligo.

There was no military or judicial opposition to the IRA. The RIC could do no more than observe and report the training of the IRA and the operation of the Sinn Féin courts both of which activities they regarded as breaches of the Truce. In September 1921, Sligo County Inspector RIC complained that "the constant illegal acts of the IRA who are becoming bolder and more aggressive every day show that they have no respect for the Truce". Apart from the camps and the courts there were few breaches of the truce reported by the police or in the local newspapers. On 10 August an incident occurred at Rosses Point when local IRA officer E.J. Bofin, acting as an IRA policeman, attempted to clear a public house of customers including some Marines who were stationed nearby. Shots were fired by Bofin when the Marines attempted to disarm him.\textsuperscript{37} A shot was fired at policemen from a party of drilling IRA at Mullaghmore in September.\textsuperscript{38} On 19th September hay belonging to a family friendly with policemen was burned at Cliffony. Two female

\textsuperscript{35} S.C., 10 Sept. \& 1 Oct. 1921.
\textsuperscript{36} S.C., 1 Oct. 1921. ("Brennan" was Jack Brennan O/C of the Tubbercurry Brigade).
\textsuperscript{37} The IRA liason officer reported that the Marines believed that Bofin was responsible for the killing of a Marine near Rosses Point during the War of Independence. (Statements from Marines and reply from IRA Liason Officer, Alleged Truce Breaches, PRO, CO 904/155).
\textsuperscript{38} Report by Russell, 3 Oct. 1921, Alleged Truce Breaches, PRO, CO 904/155.
members of the family previously had had their hair cropped because of this friendship and had claimed compensation at Sligo Quarter Sessions. In November 1921 three cars belonging to policemen were reported stolen by the IRA, all in the South Sligo area.

Perusal of the files of those loyalists who later claimed compensation from the British Government show few claims containing specific incidents which took place during this period. Five instances of shops having been looted by masked and armed men appear in the files in the period August to December. These are presumed to have been instances of the IRA obtaining supplies, sometimes for training camps, from those who were known not to be sympathetic. Five other loyalists claimed for instances of loss during this period usually for raids on houses resulting in the taking of some property. There is little evidence of new agrarian outrages taking place during this period but where such agitation was already in progress it generally continued unchecked. William Fenton, Clerk of the Crown and Peace, had some of his cattle maimed on 5 and 9 November. It was strongly denied in the local paper that this was the responsibility of the IRA. This lack of widespread incidents indicates that there was no general indiscipline among the IRA during this period.

The IRA seemed then to be in control in the county with no opposition apparent. However there is a marked absence of ecclesiastical approval whether it be as favourable public utterances or attendances at functions. No Sligo ecclesiastical figure is quoted in newspapers of the time as eulogising the IRA. Though eleven clerics attended the Marten funeral the Bishop did not, nor was mentioned as having been represented. Neither was there any report of a eulogy by a priest at the funeral Mass. It was left to the Catholic Bishop of Clonfert speaking at the dedication of a new church at Strandhill in August to comment favourably on the War of Independence when he said:

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40 Weekly Reports 545 & 522, Outrages against police, PRO, CO 904/150.
41 These are contained in the files of the Irish Grants Committee (IGC) in the Public Record Office, London, CO 762. These have been used extensively as a source for Chapter 10.
42 The premises were those of Richard T. Kerr-Taylor (IGC, PRO, CO 762/48), raided twice, Thomas Hunt (/202) also raided twice and Charles Graham (/90).
43 Mary Feeney (IGC, PRO, CO 762/20), John Scanlon (/20), Gilbert J. Hanly (/50), John Barlow (/54), Palmer McCloughrey (/63), Bartholomew Sweeney (/84), George R. Williams (/197).
44 S.C., 19 Nov. 1921.
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The spirit of God has been manifestly moving over this land for the past few years. I need not refer to the troubles we have had, how they were met or how they were borne but we see that we are close to the re-birth of a nation. We see the labours of prudent yet daring men no matter what their enemies say, whose love for their nation is exceeded only by their love for God. We see the people full of piety and devotion and amid all the storm and troubles of the last six years they put their faith in Christ and in Christ's blessed mother.45

The Bishop of Achonry spoke at the dedication of a new organ in Collooney in the same month but did not comment on political matters, resisting the temptation to draw parallels between the rebirth of the organ and the rebirth of the nation!46 There were some few priests in the county who had been associated with the IRA during the War of Independence and they continued to be mentioned as attending aeraíochtáí, etc during the Truce period.47 There were however some instances of public clashes between clerics and the IRA. In the two most prominent cases the perceived anti-IRA actions and utterances of the clerics involved were characterised by the IRA as pro-British and anti-national.

On Sunday 16 October 1921, a group of Volunteers from a nearby training camp marched to Gurteen Catholic Church. On previous Sundays the men had occupied the front six seats in the church but this Sunday being ladies' Sodality Sunday those seats were occupied by the sodality members. Miss O'Dowd who was in charge of the ladies refused to leave and only did so when the officer insisted. At the next battalion meeting it was decided to fine Miss O'Dowd £5 for obstructing the IRA and a notice to this effect was served on her. The Parish Priest complained to the Minister for Defence and the matter was passed via the Chief of Staff to the Adjutant General.48 He demanded that an apology be offered to the lady in question and that the officer in charge of the Mass party be dismissed.49 A long correspondence followed between Sligo Brigade O/C and the Adjutant General with the Sligo O/C claiming that the Parish Priest had been a long standing enemy

45 S.C., 20 Aug. 1921.
46 S.C., 20 Aug. 1921.
47 These included Fr. Roddy, Riverstown, and Fr. Scott, Ballyrush, both of whom had been arrested during the War of Independence, Fr. (Doc) Henry of Curry and Fr. Crehan of Cliffony. These were all curates.
48 M/D to C/S 18 Nov. and C/S to A/G 19 Oct. 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/33.
of the IRA and Sinn Féin, citing six examples of his animosity dating from 1916. He also claimed that the whole affair had been engineered by the priest who resented the IRA attendance in uniform in his church.\textsuperscript{50} The Parish Priest for his part claimed that the Gurteen IRA O/C had gone about the area saying that "he would make it hot for Fr. O'Connor", that the IRA would not allow a Christmas parochial fund raising raffle to take place and that they had picketed a fund-raising parochial dance.\textsuperscript{51}

Another republican/clerical dispute arose in the Collooney area in November 1921 when Fr. Durkin CC was accused of being motivated by "imperial sympathies" and a "feeling of prejudice against the national language of Ireland" when he preached that some people in his parish were "putting the language movement before the cause of their spiritual salvation". His Parish Priest had already raised the ire of the Gaelic League in the area by refusing them the use of the National Schools for Irish language classes: the local Irish teacher taking the remarks as a personal attack on himself replied in the columns of the \textit{Connachtman}.\textsuperscript{52} When this letter appeared all but one of the teachers who had been attending the classes absented themselves. The dispute dragged on for some time with the IRA supporting the Irish teacher and imposing a boycott on two schools where the teachers taught.\textsuperscript{53}

By December 1921 the IRA had achieved a position of dominance in the county. Almost all of its officers had been free for the whole Truce period. Its officers and men had received at least a rudimentary training and its structure had just been reorganised. Its discipline showed no sign of disintegration. The tendency of the IRA "to domineer over civilians and to despise 'politicians'", mentioned by Dorothy Macardle as developing during the Truce, was present to a large degree in County Sligo.\textsuperscript{54} The only public criticism of the IRA had come from some civilians on Sligo County Council and these had been successfully opposed by the IRA on a number of issues. As far as the Sligo IRA was concerned politics were dead and they were in charge. There had been no attempt to build up other nationalist organisations such as Sinn Féin. The number of Sinn Féin cumainn affiliated in 1921 in Sligo was forty six, seventeen in North Sligo and twenty nine in South

\textsuperscript{50} Report from HQRS Gurteen Battalion 21 Nov. 1921 in Sligo Brigade HQRS to A/G, 22 Nov. 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/33.
\textsuperscript{51} A/G to O/C Sligo Brigade, 8 Nov. 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/33.
\textsuperscript{52} Letter to the editor by Seaghan Mac Murchadha, Irish teacher, CM., 3 Dec. 1921.
\textsuperscript{53} S.C., 8 Apr. 1922.
\textsuperscript{54} Dorothy Macardle, \textit{The Irish Republic} (1968 paperback edition), p. 492.
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Sligo but there are no indications from the local papers that any of these were active in this period.\(^55\) Though there were many on the nationalist side in County Sligo who had been slighted by the IRA there was as yet no cause around which they could organise. When such a cause did arise in the shape of the Treaty the IRA was to find itself outnumbered by its opponents. The picture then is of the IRA in charge, brooking no opposition especially from mere politicians and basking in the glory of a war won. "Ireland was now a nation impregnable for we have dug ourselves in and it will take more than the British Government to dig us out", said Alex McCabe TD at the end of September.\(^56\) How were they going to react when politicians in Dublin voted to accept a settlement worked out by politicians in London which appeared to give less than the IRA believed they had already won?

Reactions to the Signing of the Treaty.

The "Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland" were signed in the early hours of Tuesday 6 December, 1921. The Irish cabinet meeting at which the Treaty was approved by four votes to three was held on Thursday 8 December. The editorial writers of the local Sligo newspapers had therefore little time to consider their response but could be expected to voice at least a tentative opinion by publication date that weekend. The *Sligo Champion* took very little time to formulate its response and reflected the generally favourable public reaction to the signing of the Treaty. In a long editorial on 10 December entitled "Peace" it greeted the settlement in terms which stressed the historic nature of the proposed settlement: "Thus ends the long period of misrule and oppression and bloodshed which began with the landing of Strongbow and his adventurers on the coast of Wexford in 1172". It offered a considered assessment stressing that Ireland would have full control over finances, trade and commerce. It mentioned possible problems with the office of Governor General but said that since he would be appointed "in like manner as the Governor General of Canada" he would in effect be appointed by mutual consent of the Irish and British governments. The north of Ireland, it accepted, would probably opt out. It pointed to what it called "the remarkable variation of the oath of allegiance" as

\(^{55}\) The total for Connacht was 306. This included 71 in Mayo and 53 in Roscommon. (Files of Dáil Éireann Secretariat 1919-1922, NA DE 2/486).

\(^{56}\) S.C., 1 Oct. 1921.
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evidence that England had abandoned her effort to hold Ireland and "withdrawn from her position of overlord".\textsuperscript{57} The \textit{Sligo Independent}, which had been under new ownership since August 1921 had traditionally seen its role as that of the voice of the unionists of Sligo but the new owner was making valiant efforts to widen its appeal. He had added the title "West of Ireland Telegraph" to its masthead and announced that the principal aim of the newspaper was to be "the advancement of agriculture, commerce and industry throughout the entire West of Ireland". It had decided to refrain from commenting editorially on any issue, "no sides will be taken by the editorial as the leading article has been abolished altogether".\textsuperscript{58} In line with this policy it offered no opinion on the Treaty but did include the following in its "Notes" on the week of the signing: "A peace treaty was signed this week between Ireland and Great Britain and has created high hopes among the people of Ireland".\textsuperscript{59}

On the other hand it took some time for the anti-Treaty element to organise and publicise its opposition. This was not due to the unavailability of a suitable medium. Sligo town had in R.G. Bradshaw, the proprietor and editor of The \textit{Connachtman} newspaper, a very active republican propagandist and later anti-Treaty activist. His newspaper was no stranger to controversy having, as we have seen, bitterly attacked the Sinn Féin County Council chairman during the Truce period. The \textit{Connachtman} in its editorial of 10 December entitled "The Peace Treaty", mentioned the division of opinion at the cabinet meeting but stated that it did not yet intend to comment on the "vital points at issue as raised by the draft Treaty".\textsuperscript{60} In its issue of the following week it finally stated its position clearly in a short editorial. It made three points. Firstly it asserted that "we have declared ourselves for the Republic founded by Pearse at Easter tide 1916. To the Republic we now reaffirm our allegiance". Secondly it said that it would not be influenced in its opinions by "whatever decision is come to by An Dáil". Thirdly it said that while it desired peace, that peace must "pay tribute and do honour to our living dead".\textsuperscript{61} It was the next week, almost three weeks after the signing of the Treaty, before this republican newspaper commented on the substantive issues in that document. It did so not by words of its own but by quoting from Sean Moylan's speech in the Dáil when he said that in place of the Republic, Ireland

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{57} \textit{S.C.}, 10 Dec. 1921.
\bibitem{58} \textit{S.I.}, 27 Aug. 1921.
\bibitem{59} \textit{S.I.}, 10 Dec. 1921.
\bibitem{60} \textit{CM.}, 10 Dec. 1921.
\bibitem{61} \textit{CM.}, 17 Dec. 1921.
\end{thebibliography}
was offered an Oath of Allegiance, a Governor General, an army entrenched in its flank, and only limited independence. "It is between the Republic and this Treaty that An Dáil must decide" the editorial concluded. 62

The response of the IRA in the country as a whole to the signing of the Treaty was, according to Michael Hopkinson, confused and undisciplined.63 This was also true of Sligo and there were local factors which added to the confusion there. The 3rd Western Division had just been formed and the names of the newly appointed officers had only been submitted to the Chief of Staff on the day after the Treaty was signed.64 Already dealing with putting this new organisational framework into action the IRA in Sligo were in no shape to offer a considered and coherent response to the Treaty. J.J. "Ginger" O'Connell, former O/C of the Sligo Brigade, then with IRA headquarters, was actually in Sligo at the time to oversee the formation of the Division.65 O'Connell met Pilkington to discuss the Treaty and reportedly was dumbfounded to hear of the Sligo men's opposition to it. On the other hand the Sligo men were "very annoyed with Ginger for we knew he had worked hard".66 It appears likely that this disagreement with one who had been previously a respected colleague unsettled the Sligo officers and made them less likely to immediately aggressively assert their opinions. There also was continued disagreement between Pilkington and Carty who was nominally under his command. Though the evidence is slight it appears that Carty, later the foremost anti-Treaty leader in the county, was initially ambivalent about his position on the Treaty. According to Martin Brennan "he (Carty) was going to vote for the Treaty but we told him what to do about it".67 This is the only evidence for Carty's original intention which may have been influenced by the animosity between himself and Pilkington. Carty's own account of his activities does not mention his reaction to the Treaty beyond merely stating that "in January 1922 I voted against the Treaty".68 No Sligo IRA Divisional officer or Brigade Commandant was publicly quoted

63 Michael Hopkinson, Green against Green - The Irish Civil War (Dublin, 1988), p. 41.
64 Dept of Organisation to C/S, 7 Dec. 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/33.
65 J.J. (Ginger) O'Connell (1887-1944) served in the US army 1912-1914 and joined the Volunteers when he returned to Ireland. He was interned after the rising and after his release lived in Sligo where his father was a schools inspector. He became O/C Sligo Brigade before joining GHQ as Director of Training in late 1919. He later became Deputy Chief of Staff of the Free State Army.
66 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, OMN, P17b/133.
67 Martin Brennan, AD UCD, OMN, P17b/133.
68 Frank Carty statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914.
on the Treaty until Jim Hunt spoke at his welcome home function from prison saying meekly "I will stand behind Alec McCabe and Tom O'Donnell and will do my part if necessary". The IRA leaders, Carty and Devins, were also TDs but neither spoke publicly on his attitude to the Treaty before the Dáil debates, neither spoke during the Dáil debates nor justified his vote immediately afterwards. The first anti-Treaty IRA voice to be publicly heard in Sligo was that of Carty, when he spoke at Tubbercurry on 23 February 1922. It can only be inferred from this that there was a degree of confusion and disorganisation among those who were soon to be on the anti-Treaty side. They may also have been waiting for guidance from a strong anti-Treaty national leadership before revealing their stance.

Many of those IRA leaders who later took the anti-Treaty side were members, in some cases chairmen, of public bodies in the county, and thus had a ready platform for expressing their views. These platforms were not used and for instance there was no reported meeting during this period of Tubbercurry District Council, whose chairman was Frank Carty, to express opposition to the Treaty. This tardiness in making a definitive response to the proposed settlement on the part of what was to be the anti-Treaty side was also evident at the Sligo Corporation meeting of 7 December. A proposal was made by an independent member that a telegram of congratulations be sent to de Valera, Griffith and Collins on the signing of the Treaty but this was successfully objected to by among others Michael Nevin, later a strong anti-Treaty voice, who did not criticise the Treaty but advocated a "wait and see" attitude. This lack of a clear anti-Treaty voice was not confined to Sligo. In County Meath for instance Navan Urban Council and Meath County Council passed motions in favour of acceptance of the Treaty in late December 1921. Unsuccessful amendments at both meetings were not out and out condemnations of the Treaty but suggestions that the body should not discuss the matter at that time. By the end of December this "wait and see" attitude had disappeared and was replaced by a strong anti-Treaty stance. Sligo Corporation discussed the Treaty at a special meeting called by

70 CM., 25 Feb. 1922.
71 The existence of the Connachtman would surely have ensured that if anti-Treaty motions had been put forward at such meetings they would have been publicised.
72 CM., 10 Dec. 1921. (Some councillors who later supported the Treaty also refused to embrace it at this meeting).
73 Oliver Coogan. Politics and War in County Meath 1913-23 (Dublin, 1983), pp 265-6
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the Mayor, John Jinks, on Thursday 29 December. He proposed a resolution approving of the Treaty and urging Dáil Éireann to ratify it. This motion was carried by a vote of fourteen to five. It was clear that there was a deep and fundamental split on the issue among what had been the Sinn Féin/Labour party on the Corporation. Two former Sinn Féin Mayors of Sligo, Hanley and Fitzpatrick voted for the Treaty while Michael Nevin led the opposition. His speech dealt only with the claim that if the Treaty was rejected war would ensue. "Let it be war", he said, "We may go down in the fight but there is one thing that will live and that is the spirit of unconquered Ireland". The ratepayers councillors supported the proposal. The Connachtman in its editorial comment on this meeting said that the councillors were "in pursuit of peace - peace regardless of principle - peace at any price" and were disregarding such fundamental matters as the Oath of Allegiance to a foreign king and the Governor General. It characterised those councillors who voted for the resolution as "One-time Unionists, constitutional Nationalists and supposed Republicans". The split in the ranks of Labour in Sligo was apparent with the Transport Union's John Lynch a strong anti-Treaty voice at the Corporation meeting. On the other hand the chairman of Sligo Trades and Labour Council, W.J. Reilly, proposed at a meeting on 3 January that the Council call on the Dáil to ratify the Treaty. While many members declared their support for ratification they protested that the resolution was "introducing politics" into the Council and the resolution was not put.

Throughout the country statutory public bodies met and debated their position on the Treaty. By 5 January 1922 a total of 328 such bodies had declared for acceptance of the Treaty and only five had declared against. There was as we have seen a reluctance on the part of Sligo public statutory bodies to discuss the Treaty and Sligo Corporation was the only such body to do so. An attempt on the part of James Gilligan, the chairman of Sligo County Council, to have that body debate the Treaty was thwarted by an unhappy coincidence. The Council meeting called by him for 31 December had to be adjourned as a mark of respect to an IRA soldier who had been accidentally shot dead that morning. Gilligan did try to carry on the meeting but there were angry scenes as councillors hurled abuse at the chairman and those who supported him. There were also numerous

75 CM., 31 Dec. 1921.
76 R.H., CM. & S.C., 7 Jan. 1922.
77 Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 35.
78 Nineteen year old Michael McCrann from Sligo town.
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interruptions from the public gallery by anti-Treaty supporters some in IRA uniform. Only three councillors supported an amendment by the chairman that the meeting should carry on.79

The momentum of public expressions of support for the Treaty grew. A meeting of County Sligo Farmers' Association at the end of December unanimously supported ratification. The chairman said that the Treaty was "a great measure which offered them complete control of their own house with opportunities for developing their own distinct civilisation according to their own ideals".80 The Skreen branch of the Farmers' Association was also reported as unanimously supporting ratification.81 The Bunninadden branch of the Irish Farmers' Union unanimously passed a resolution thanking McCabe for his pro-Treaty stand while Killaville branch of the same organisation congratulated him on his able speech in favour of the Treaty.82 A meeting of South Sligo Sinn Féin Comhairle Ceantair held on Sunday 1 January in Ballymote which was attended by delegates from twenty four cumann passed a resolution proposed by James Gilligan supporting the Treaty on a vote of forty eight to three.83 A meeting of Tubbercurry Sinn Féin club resulted in a vote of nineteen to seven for ratification and Sinn Féin clubs at Killaville, Gurteen and Cloonloo, all in south Sligo, voted to ask their TD, Alex McCabe, to vote for ratification.84 Collooney club, on the other hand, was reported as having decided to leave the matter to Dáil Éireann.85 A meeting chaired by the Parish Priest in Castleconnor, in west Sligo, supported a resolution asking the deputies to ratify the Treaty recognising that while it "does not give the full measure of freedom to Ireland . . . it gives the best terms that Ireland can obtain".86 This is apparently the only report of a County Sligo Catholic clergyman being publicly involved in a response to the Treaty there being a noticeable silence on their part and on the part of their bishops to intervene in the debate. Sligo clergy seem to have followed the practice adhered to in the rest of the country: "In the early months of 1922 a number of bishops made clear their support for the Treaty, but in general they relied upon

79 S.C. & S.I., 7 Jan. 1922. Among those who supported the adjournment were many who later supported the Treaty.
80 S.C. & S.I., 7 Jan. 1922.
81 S.C., 7 Jan. 1922.
84 W.P., 14 Jan. 1922; R.H., 7 Jan. 1922.
85 R.H., 7 & 14 Jan. 1922.
86 W.P., 7 Jan. 1922.
the voters to elect candidates who favoured it in the coming election."{87}

As the Treaty debates dragged on the *Sligo Champion* in December complained about the "long drawn out discussion" and the divisions in the Dáil and country. It claimed that ninety per cent of Irish opinion favoured ratification.{88} The editorial in the first issue of the *Sligo Champion* for 1922 was entitled "Political Insanity" and criticised the Dáil debate referring to the "dreary debate . . . tiresome reiteration of argument . . . the same contemptible quibbles and wrangles". It criticised the deputies who, it claimed, were disregarding the wishes of the people who "were powerless to enforce their will". It speculated that the chances of ratification were fifty fifty and deplored the tendency towards a bitter split in the Dáil and a more bitter split in the country. "There seems little hope that reason, good sense and true patriotism will prevail" the editorial concluded.{89} The *Connachtman* of the same date published a short editorial which referred to de Valera's "proposed alternative Treaty of Association" and proclamation to the people which was printed elsewhere in the paper, but said that it would refrain from commenting for the moment. It did of course carry reports of the arguments in the Dáil debate on the Treaty and its headlines included "Stand True to Ireland and to Your Own", "Scathing criticism of proposed 'Peace' Treaty", and "Mr. A. McCabe in favour of Treaty" relegating in its report the only Sligo TD to speak in the debate to third place behind quotes from and comments on anti-Treaty speakers.{90} The *Champion*, on the other hand, gave extensive coverage to what it called McCabe's "forceful speech".{91}

The news of ratification was received in the county with general relief but no public show of rejoicing. In Tubbercurry it was received "with calmness mingled with relief".{92} The news was received with "general satisfaction" in Gurteen{93} while in Ballymote a previous rumour that ratification was not likely to succeed caused the news to be "more gladly welcomed".{94} Though "the people were glad peace was in sight they refrained from expressing the joy in illuminations or band parades". {95} The *Sligo Champion* editorial of 14

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87 David W. Miller, *Church, State and Nation in Ireland 1898-1921* (Dublin, 1921), p. 491.
88 S.C., 24 & 31 Dec. 1921.
89 S.C., 7 Jan. 1922.
90 CM., 7 Jan. 1922.
91 S.C., 7 Jan. 1921.
92 W.P., 14 Nov. 1921.
93 R.H., 14 Jan. 1922.
94 R.H., 14 Jan. 1922.
95 R.H., 14 Jan. 1922.
February celebrated the first two Saturdays of January 1922 with the ratification of the treaty and the establishment of the Provisional Government as "the most fateful days in Irish history". There was no triumphalism in the editorial but it warned about the country being "bulldozed by political leaders" and it contained a plea that all Irishmen give their support to Griffith in his task of establishing "order out of chaos". In its editorial of the following week it found favourable omens in the handing over of Dublin Castle, the avoiding of the railway strike, hopeful words from the Protestant primate and the news that the Bank of Ireland was to loan one million pounds to the Provisional Government.

The Connachtman on the other hand searched desperately to find what it called "unmistakable evidence of dissatisfaction at the acceptance of the Treaty" in Sligo town but this consisted merely of the erection of notices on two public nationalist monuments. A placard reading "Sold again - but not for long" was hung on the 1798 memorial opposite the Sligo Independent office while the statue of former Nationalist MP, P.A. McHugh, was adorned with a sign reading "I couldn't do better". The Connachtman editorial on the ratification of the Treaty entitled "Forging the Chains" used the time honoured symbolic language of chains, shackles, seven and a half centuries, tyranny, plunder and exploitation. It made three points. Firstly it attacked the idea that the Treaty ensured more freedom than Ireland had previously enjoyed without using any substantive argument. Instead it used the metaphor of chains and claimed that the newly forged chains imposed by the Treaty though of home manufacture were designed in England and though longer than the "shackles now worn to the verge of breaking" were still unacceptable. Secondly it claimed that those who supported the Treaty did so under the influence of a hostile press and threats of war and thirdly it assured everyone that the Republic still lived. It also looked for omens of doom in recent events - Dublin Castle had been surrendered to Michael Collins not to the IRA, existing British officials were to be retained and law and order was still to be in the hands of enemy agents. The claim that the Republic still lived was repeated in its editorial on the Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis on 4 February. The Sligo Independent after a long period of self-imposed editorial silence again began to divulge its deepest thoughts in its issue of 21 January to hail the "Opening of a new era in Ireland." "The destiny of Ireland is now in the

96 S.C., 14 Jan. 1922.
97 S.C., 21 Jan. 1922.
98 S.C., 14 Jan. 1922.
99 CM., 14 Jan. 1922.
100 CM., 4 Feb. 1922.
Truce and Treaty.

hands of Irishmen themselves”, it said and hoped that its editorials would be useful "in helping to mould public opinion along the path of common sense and justice”. The same newspaper offered some thoughts on patriotism in its editorial of 18 February: "We need to learn that there is a patriotism of peace as well as a patriotism of war."

The anti-Treaty side in Sligo received a boost with the election of Michael Nevin as Mayor of Sligo on 30 January. His proposer expressed the hope that, like Nationalists and Unionists, Free Staters would soon be a thing of the past. John Lynch seconded Nevin. Former Sinn Féin Mayor of Sligo, Dudley Hanley, proposed Henry DePew. Nevin, in his acceptance speech, said "The only authority we recognise is the Republican government of Ireland". The meeting was attended by a large interested crowd, including "young men possessing republican views" who made their support for Nevin very clear by means which the Sligo Independent thought "bordering on intimidation". "Under a Free State or a Republic we have been promised greater freedom than ever before and why is it so difficult to permit this liberty at the election of a Mayor which should be lifted higher than mere politics?" the editorial asked concluding with the statement: "We must have true liberty". Though many of those who voted for Nevin made it clear that they differed from him in politics his election was an indication that there was a strong anti-Treaty voice in Sligo which would not be easily silenced. Nevin’s strong anti-Treaty acceptance speech suggests that no deal or arrangement of any kind had been put together to secure his election. His election however was also an indication that the Treaty split was not yet irreconcilable and that compromise was possible.

Arguments for and against the Treaty.

The arguments put forward in County Sligo by both sides of the Treaty divide seem to

101 SJ., 21 Jan. 1922.
102 SJ., 18 Feb. 1922.
103 Republican councillor, James Devins, who had been imprisoned during the War of Independence. Not to be confused with IRA leader Seamus Devins.
104 Henry DePew was a tradesman from Sligo town. He had been one of the pioneers of Sinn Féin in Sligo and had been a member of the Corporation since January 1913 when he had been elected as a Labour candidate.
105 SC., 4 Jan. 1922.
106 SJ., 4 Feb. 1922.
107 SJ., 4 Feb. 1922.
have been merely echoes of the arguments which were voiced at great length during the Treaty debate in the Dáil and in the columns of the national newspapers.\textsuperscript{108} There appear to have been no local issues which impinged upon the argument in Sligo. Despite the county's closeness, physically and economically, to Northern Ireland the issue of partition hardly surfaced and apart from an acknowledgement of the likelihood of the six counties exercising their right to remain outside the Free State it was not mentioned in Sligo newspapers for this period.\textsuperscript{109} On the anti-Treaty side the issue of the Republic was mentioned so often as to assume paramount importance. J.R. Treacy, one of the elders of Sinn Féin in Sligo, speaking at a welcome for released prisoners claimed that the welcoming cheer which greeted them was a "cry of allegiance . . . a profession of loyalty . . . to the still existent Irish Republic".\textsuperscript{110} The theme of the Republic already established was the main argument in editorials in the \textit{Connachtman} of 17 and 24 December. The former editorial, the first in that paper to declare against the Treaty, was entitled "the Republic" and declared that it was "strong in the determination to maintain to the end the principle which it (the Republic) symbolises".\textsuperscript{111} In its editorial on the ratification of the Treaty the same paper said "The Republic still lives and shall continue to live as long as the spirit of nationality endures in our people".\textsuperscript{112} "The only authority we recognise is the Republican government of Ireland", said Michael Nevin in his acceptance speech after having been elected Mayor of Sligo in January 1922.\textsuperscript{113}

When details were discussed by the anti-Treaty side the Oath of Allegiance and the Governor General were mentioned as tangible signs of the control Britain would still exercise. Frank Carty's speech at a Tubbercurry anti-Treaty meeting at the end of February dealt with both the Republic and the oath. He mentioned what he regarded as the "real issue": "When we were elected . . . we were elected as Republicans and not as Free Staters or Home Rulers". Mentioning the oath of allegiance to the Republic he said: "That oath I regard as sacred and binding and I will not swear another oath pledging fealty to the British king . . . The spirit of the Republic is unconquered and unconquerable". He concluded by

\textsuperscript{110}\textit{CM.}, 21 Jan. 1922.
\textsuperscript{111}\textit{CM.}, 17 Dec. 1921.
\textsuperscript{112}\textit{CM.}, 14 Jan. 1922.
\textsuperscript{113}\textit{CM.}, 4 Feb. 1922.
asserting that the people of Tubbercurry would stand by "the Republic proclaimed by the men of Easter Week, sanctified by their blood and ratified and legalised by two general elections".\(^{114}\) What the Treaty granted fell far short of a Republic and would result in less freedom for Ireland, he said, claiming that the "so-called Treaty would give Ireland merely a mutilated dominion status and make the Irish subjects of the British crown". He went on to claim that the Treaty, agreed to by the British in their hour of weakness would be taken back in their hour of strength. Instead of more freedom, less would be the result. For Carty acceptance of the Treaty meant becoming "West Britons" and "crawling slaves in the British Empire".\(^{115}\) The *Connachtman* claimed that the Free State was "simply the British Government masquerading in a new guise".\(^{116}\)

When the pro-Treaty side dealt with this issue of the Republic they did in either of two ways which reflected "two divergent and competing interpretations of the Treaty settlement".\(^{117}\) Alex McCabe appears to have been a lone voice emphasising the Treaty as a stepping stone to the Republic. Speaking at Jim Hunt's homecoming on his release from jail he dwelt at length on the reasons for his pro-Treaty vote: "His conscience told him he was right in voting for the Treaty because it gives Ireland the ways and means to win the Republic". He mentioned the Republic many times saying that getting control of the army and of the entire resources of the country would bring the obtaining of the Republic nearer. "At the first opportunity of getting a Republic he would vote for it and as in the past fight for it if necessary," he pledged.\(^{118}\) Many pro-Treaty commentators on the other hand attacked the idea of a popular commitment or electoral mandate for the Republic. "In the name of common sense does anyone seriously suggest that the Irish plenipotentiaries went to London to negotiate for the recognition of an Irish republic? . . On the other hand what could a Republic give that the Treaty does not give?" asked the *Sligo Champion*.\(^{119}\)

Ballinafad Sinn Féin club unanimously passed a resolution condemning those who had

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\(^{114}\)Carty's speech at the Tubbercurry meeting was reported in *CM.*, 25 Feb. 1922 and repeated in the following week's issue.

\(^{115}\)Ibid.

\(^{116}\)CM., 21 Jan. 1922.


\(^{118}\)R.H., 21 Jan. 1922. During the Treaty debates McCabe had said, "I vote for this Treaty but I will be a Republican and will continue to pursue the ideals of the Republic as long as I am in public life". (Dáil Éireann private sessions, p. 206 [16 Dec. 1921])

\(^{119}\)S.C., 24 Dec. 1921.
voted in Dáil Éireann against the Treaty asserting that they had "flouted the expressed wishes of their constituents". It went on to claim that the Dáil had received a mandate for self-determination, freedom, independence but not specifically for Republicanism. Many stressed that Ireland had in fact obtained what had been fought for and had been granted a measure of freedom greater than any enjoyed by the country since the Norman invasion. Tom O'Donnell, TD, called it "the dawn of a day they had not had for 750 years". The material benefits were often mentioned. Alderman D.M. Hanley said "Under this Treaty the Irish people will have full control of their own monies. You can have as much green white and gold over this Town Hall as you like."

The Sligo Champion editorial in reaction to the news of the signing of the agreement enthused that Ireland would be "absolute mistress of her own domain with full control over finances, trade and commerce and at liberty to work out her own salvation by the energy and capability of her sons".

On the anti-Treaty side allied with the concept of the Republic went the ritualistic invocation of dead heroes, called "the living dead" by the Connachtman. The same newspaper ingeniously printed the lists of those TDs for and against the Treaty added the names of the dead signatories of the 1916 proclamation to the anti side and declared the result a draw, 64 against 64! The only Sligo man to be included in the pantheon of dead heroes invoked by Sligo anti-Treaty orators or leader writers was Martin Savage, killed at the attempted ambush of Lord French at Ashtown, Dublin; "Is that what Martin Savage went out to fight for?" a republican councillor asked at a Sligo corporation meeting. The only Sligoman to be killed in action locally during the War of Independence, Thomas McDonagh, was not mentioned presumably because he was a native of the Gurteen area where the IRA leadership was pro-Treaty.

Together with the idea of the Republic being already established went the notion that a successful War of Independence against Britain had resulted in at worst stalemate and at best a glorious victory. Michael Nevin claimed at the Corporation meeting in December 1922.

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120 *R.H.*, 18 Feb. 1922.
122 *S.I.*, 31 Dec. 1921.
124 *CM.*, 14 Jan. 1922.
125 *CM.*, 28 Jan. 1922.
126 McDonagh was killed while ambushing a police cycling party just outside the county boundary at Ratra in North Roscommon. (Farry, *Sligo 1914-1921*, pp 241-2.)
Truce and Treaty.

that "we had war before and we were equal to it and we will be able to continue war with
equal success".\(^\text{127}\) Carty at Tubbercurry echoed this, "For three years the Republic
established by the people's will resisted all the might and savagery of their Godless empire
... British politicians won at the Council Chamber in London what their army and their
Black and Tans failed to accomplish on the field".\(^\text{128}\) On the other hand at the welcome for
the O/C Gurteen Battalion, Jim Hunt, in January 1922 the reported speeches contained no
eulogistic references to the War of Independence; rather they referred to the divisions over
the Treaty and the hope that these divisions might be healed.\(^\text{129}\) In the following month the
report of the speeches at a banquet in Gurteen in honour of released prisoners again
contained no exalted references to the struggle. It contained nothing more than a reference
to the fact that "in the latter stages of the war Gurteen had established a Republic of its
own because Crown forces had given the place a wide berth". Hunt merely thanked the
Gurteen Battalion "for the way they fought and worked in days gone by".\(^\text{130}\) This function
was attended by some of the 4th Brigade (Tubbercurry) anti-Treaty officers as well as
guest Seán MacEoin. It was not reported in the _Connachtman_. Amongst those who had not
been militarily active during the war there was no glorification of the previous three years.
There was instead relief that the war was over and a fear that it might resume. A speaker at
the Farmers' Association meeting on 31 December mentioned "the terrible conditions
existing in the country for the past few years" and said that "if it (the Treaty) wasn't
accepted it would mean chaos, blood and murder all over Ireland".\(^\text{131}\) Sir Malby Crofton,
unionist and former landlord, said at the same meeting that "their country would be
destroyed, their homes, their farms and their wives and families might be wiped out
altogether if the Treaty was not ratified".\(^\text{132}\) Tom O'Donnell, TD, never an orator, said in
explanation of his Dáil pro-Treaty vote that "he did not like to risk the lives and properties
of the people of Ireland".\(^\text{133}\) Presumably he meant to indicate that he considered that the


\(^{128}\) _CM._, 25 Feb. 1922 repeated in the following week's issue.

\(^{129}\) _R.H._, 21 Jan. 1922.

\(^{130}\) _R.H._, 25 Feb. 1922.

\(^{131}\) _S.I._, 7 Jan. 1922.

\(^{132}\) _S.I._, 7 Jan. 1922.

\(^{133}\) At Jim Hunt's homecoming. _R.H._, 21 Jan. 1922. O'Donnell, a friend of de Valera's since
their teaching days at Rockwell College and reputedly the first person to call him Dev,
voted in favour of de Valera in the contest for President immediately after the Treaty
vote.
lives and property of the people were more important than the pursuit of political goals. The *Sligo Champion* in successive editorials warned of the "dreadful consequences" and "dire consequences" which would follow the rejection of the Treaty.\(^{134}\) The anti-Treaty side derided this attitude as accepting peace at any price contrasting it with "Peace with Honour" which the *Connachtman* used as the title of an editorial critical of Sligo Corporation's declared support for ratification.\(^{135}\) A poem in the *Connachtman*, presumably by a local scribe, satirised this desire for an end to strife at any cost:

"Let them rest, the martyred dead,  
For the living want their bread  
And a cosy downy bed  
Free from all anxiety". \(^{136}\)

It appears that the anti-Treaty side accepted that the majority of the people were indeed in favour of the Treaty settlement. The *Connachtman* editorial of 14 January said as much: "Today the majority of the people of Ireland may believe that [the country will have a much greater measure of freedom than before] will be so, but we are convinced that as time goes on they will realise that their judgement has been badly at fault . . . But with time will come clearness of vision"\(^{137}\) This lack of clearness of vision the anti-Treaty side attributed to the influence of the press or of pro-Treaty politicians. Michael Nevin said that "the press was trying to stampede the country to get the people to accept the Treaty".\(^{138}\) The *Connachtman* editorial on the ratification claimed that those who supported the Treaty did so "blinded by a dust cloud of false issues, stampeded by a consistently hostile and bitter press, coerced and intimidated by threats of war"\(^{139}\) On the other hand the Sligo pro-Treaty press during the Treaty debates complained that the wishes of the vast majority of the people, 90% claimed the *Sligo Champion*, were being disregarded by the deputies in the Dáil.\(^{140}\) "The country finds its expressed wishes disregarded by its elected

\(^{134}\) *S.C.*, 24 & 31 Dec. 1921.  
\(^{135}\) *CM.*, 31 Dec. 1921.  
\(^{136}\) *CM.*, 28 Jan. 1922.  
\(^{137}\) *CM.*, 14 Jan. 1922.  
\(^{138}\) At the Corporation meeting reported in *S.C.*, 31 Jan. 1921.  
\(^{139}\) *CM.*, 14 Jan. 1922.  
Truce and Treaty.

representatives, the people who should be masters are utterly powerless to enforce their will," a January editorial said.141

John Lynch's speech at the Corporation meeting which elected Michael Nevin Mayor, long and rambling, elitist and vainglorious as it was, typified "the romantic and heroic order which the IRA represented in the minds of many young men".142 Lynch said that he supported Nevin for Mayor because "he [Nevin] was one of the few who had the courage to withstand the onslaught of the enemy" when that enemy "thought it well to invade this country with fire and sword". "I believe my friend [Nevin] and my other friends who withstood this onslaught are in the same position. We are never easy only when we are in the thick of the fight".143 There is no evidence that either Nevin or Lynch played any role in the single major ambush of policemen near Sligo town or in any other significant military action during the War of Independence.144 In Nevin's own account of his activities for the War of Independence period he does not mention taking part in any such operation. He was jailed from March to May 1921 but was released he believed as a result of the intercession of the Bishop of Raphoe "who had some influence with the British authorities".145 Lynch's role, if any, in the war is likewise doubtful. In the month of May 1921 he was in Liverpool trying to procure arms for Sligo Brigade, much to the annoyance of GHQ in Dublin.146

Conclusion.

It is clear that the Truce period gave the IRA in County Sligo an opportunity to re-organise and train its members and to establish itself on a firmer footing as a rudimentary but regular army. In the absence of any other effective power in the land it was also allowed to assert itself as the dominant force in the county with scant regard for any dissenting voice. It clashed bitterly with local authorities, public representatives and some clergymen, and made many enemies during this period. The signing of the Treaty came as a major blow to

141 S.C., 7 Jan. 1922.
142 Garvin, Unenthusiastic Democrats, p. 13.
143 S.I., 4 Feb. 1922.
145 A copy of Nevin's statement to the Bureau of Military History dated 29 Mar. 1956 is in Sligo Co. Library.
146 GHQ to and from "P" in Liverpool, May 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5.
the Sligo IRA at a time when they were being divisionalised and it took them some time to make a coherent stand against the settlement. Internal dissension and the lack of initial clear leadership at either county, divisional or national level on the anti-Treaty side increased the confusion. Meanwhile the popular verdict in favour of the Treaty was clear and the leading Sligo newspaper, the *Sligo Champion*, was to the fore in expressing this. The rhetoric in County Sligo on both sides of the emerging split mirrored the national arguments to a great extent. On the pro-Treaty side the arguments were based on the desire for peace and recognition that the settlement gave a substantial measure of self-government to the country. On the anti-Treaty side the emphasis was on the historic ideal of the Republic already established to which many considered themselves oath-bound and which they considered greater than any selfish desire for peace or lesser degree of independence. The vehemence of the views expressed in Sligo by the anti-Treaty side and the degree to which they focused on the immediately unobtainable goal of the Republic suggested that it would be extremely difficult to bridge this split between idealism and pragmatism during the following months. The degree of power and independence which the Sligo IRA had enjoyed during the Truce period also suggested that they would find it very difficult to give their allegiance to any centrally controlling body or function as a loyal branch of a national army whether that army was pro- or anti-Treaty. It would take a remarkable willingness to accept compromise if the division caused by the Treaty was not to result in an armed conflict. Little in the period of the Truce or Treaty debates suggested that the anti-Treaty Sligo IRA were amenable to compromise.
A rumour current in Ballymote to the effect that Frank Carty had been fired on while travelling through Charlestown on the Sligo-Mayo border was reported in early March 1922. "This rumour is so sensational that one can scarcely credit it. The wonder is how a man so deservedly popular as Brigadier Carty could be made a target by his own countrymen" the local paper said. The following week it reported that the rumour had been "entirely without foundation". Six months later Carty and his own countrymen were exchanging gunfire to deadly effect. What happened in the meantime to cause this? This chapter examines the events of the first half of 1922 and discusses how these contributed to the outbreak of war rather than to the advent of peace. It also looks at the election of June 1922, examining how the campaign was fought and the extent to which the electoral pact agreed by Collins and de Valera was adhered to.

The period was characterised by confusion. The rapid withdrawal by the British forces left a vacuum which no body seemed powerful enough to fill. There was confusion as to where power rested both politically and militarily and there was confusion as to where loyalty should or would be given. In Sligo most of the IRA took the anti-Treaty side and the army split; the separation of the 3rd Western Division from GHQ, together with the lack of any central anti-Treaty control, increased the power of local officers. At the same time (as will be described in a subsequent chapter) there was a general descent into lawlessness which the IRA seemed at best powerless to prevent, and at worst contributed to. The series of confrontations, compromises and pacts between the opposing sides increased the uncertainty. Public opinion in the county seemed to favour the pro-Treaty side but the absence of any way of indicating this added to the confusion. Originally it had been envisaged that a General Election would be held in mid-April 1922 and for some this election could not come soon enough. A Sligo Champion editorial said "The time which must elapse before a General Election can be held is fraught with the greatest danger because until stable government backed strongly by public opinion is established the country will continue to drift into a state that will compare unfavourably with Mexico at its worst or the least desirable of the Central American Republics".

2 R.H., 4 Mar. 1922.
3 S.C., 18 Feb. 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

relief when hostilities eventually began and the two sides were clearly defined.

January - May 1922.

After the Dáil vote of January 1922 the next indication of the depth and form of the split was to have been the Sinn Féin Árd Fheis in February. The *Connachtman* printed de Valera's Árd-Fheis anti-Treaty motion and speculated that "those who believe the Republic to be dead . . . are likely to receive a severe shock when the result of the ballot [at the Árd-Fheis] is made known".4 Press reports of selection meetings reinforce the impression that south Sligo was strongly pro-Treaty. At the South Sligo Comhairle Ceantair meeting six cumann voted anti-Treaty while twenty four voted pro-Treaty and Tom O'Donnell was delegated to vote pro-Treaty at the Árd-Fheis.5 A report in the *Irish Independent* claimed that the anti-Treaty decision of Tubbercurry cumann was influenced by intimidation which included the firing of Verey lights outside the meeting house windows but this was denied by Ms Lizzie McGetterick, Co.C. who had presided at the meeting.6 There is no record of a North Sligo Comhairle Cheantair meeting to discuss the issue but the Sligo Sinn Féin club appointed R.G. Bradshaw as one of its two anti-Treaty delegates to the Árd-Fheis.7

As it happened, the Sinn Féin Árd-Fheis of 22-23 February decided "to postpone awkward constitutional and political issues" avoiding a vote on the issue of the Treaty and delayed the election for three months.8 It seems certain that if a vote had been taken the anti-Treaty side would have been in the majority. The *Connachtman* proclaimed the Árd Fheis decision to be a "Sweeping Republican Victory" saying that it "dealt a severe blow to the supporters of the so-called 'Treaty' and has amply demonstrated that the claim put forward in Dáil Éireann and the general press that the Treatyites have behind them 90% of the Irish people is as false as it is absurd".9 The *Sligo Champion* leader writer put a brave face on it: "Those who desired a split open and unashamed have been sadly disappointed . .

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4 *CM.*, 4 Feb. 1922. A similar editorial was printed in its issue of 18 Feb. as a result of the postponement of the Árd-Fheis.
6 Newspaper cuttings, Sinn Féin Ard Comhairle Jan. 1922, NA, Dáil Éireann files. DE 2/486.
7 *CM.*, 4 Feb. 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

We hope the postponement of the General Election for three months will be allowed to prove a breathing space for the Irish electorate . . . that it should be availed by either or both parties to dig themselves in and prepare for a long and bitter campaign is too awful to contemplate."10

In the meantime the newly formed 3rd Western Division got a fillip when it took over barracks on the departure of British soldiers and RIC from Sligo.11 The speedy troop evacuation meant that evacuated barracks were taken over by local IRA units regardless of their Treaty attitude and in the case of Sligo town the attitude was strongly anti-Treaty.12 Ballymote Courthouse was also evacuated by British military and in mid-February its RIC Barracks was formally handed over the the IRA.13 The newspapers did not specify which faction of the IRA took possession but it seems that it was a pro-Treaty group.14 However within the 3rd Western Division area the extent of the challenge was soon apparent. Organisation and discipline were poor and in the absence of an effective police and court system law and order gradually broke down. In what appears to have been an unofficial action Charlestown RIC Barracks was raided by between 50 and 100 armed men in January 1922 and a considerable quantity of weapons and ammunition taken.15 There was also a bank raid in Charlestown in January 1922 with which seven local members of the IRA were charged in March.16

The 3rd Western Division saw action along the border from early 1922. In January a crisis arose when some of the Monaghan GAA team, including IRA members, were

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11 Most the 270 strong garrison of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment left Sligo by train on Wednesday 1 Feb. and the remainder left the following morning. That barracks was then occupied by the IRA under William Pilkington. (S.C. & S.I., 4 Feb. 1922.) On 9 Mar. both police stations in Sligo were evacuated and taken over by the IRA. (S.C. & CM., 11 Mar. 1922.)
12 Hopkinson, *Green against Green*, p. 58.
15 The report in W.P., 21 Jan. 1922 said that 24 rifles, 25 Webley and Colt revolvers, 50 grenades/Mills bombs, 5000 rounds of rifle and 1000 rounds of revolver ammunition were taken. The East Mayo Commandant told the local Liaison Officer that he thought that the raiders came from Sligo but the Liaison Officer was of the opinion that the operation was carried out by the East Mayo Brigade. (East Mayo Brigade HQRS to Liaison Officer, 18 Jan. 1922. M.A. Liaison Material, LE/9).
16 S.C., 18 Mar. 1922. Those charged claimed that they had heard that some of their officers were planning to raid the bank so they decided to get in first.
arrested in County Tyrone. Some had papers on them relating to plans for rescuing three prisoners then awaiting execution in Derry jail. This crisis caused the formation of a united IRA Northern policy by Dublin and an Ulster Council Command was established. With the approval of Mulcahy and Collins this Command early in February organised the kidnapping of forty two prominent loyalists in cross-border raids and the holding of them as hostages for the footballers and the three Derry prisoners. A Mayo IRA man, Tom Ketterick, was sent by Collins and O'Sullivan to Collooney to help organise these raids.

In what was presumably a part of this action a number of prominent Sligo Protestants were kidnapped by the IRA and held as hostages. The Sligo Protestants were released after being held for one day, the Derry prisoners having been reprieved on the day the kidnapping took place. Some of those who had been kidnapped from across the border were held for much longer. The extent of the 3rd Western Division's involvement in the larger operation is unclear but they were certainly involved in raiding north Fermanagh.

During March "a state of guerilla warfare" existed along the border. Tom Scanlon said that the Division became involved as a reaction to the activities of the B Specials: "The specials used to come across and throw their weight around so we sent down our ASU column." This column had "several engagements" with the B Specials and destroyed some outposts. It was operating on the border at the end of March when it was recalled urgently to deal with the situation in Boyle Barracks. The Craig-Collins pact of 30 March resulted in a lessening of activity during April. When it became clear that no worthwhile gains would accrue from this pact, Collins and Lynch among others planned a joint IRA offensive. There is no direct evidence that the 3rd Western Division was involved in this offensive but it seems probable that it was. Considerable activity among the IRA forces was reported in Sligo in late May, which according to the Roscommon Herald was connected with the dispatch of some forces to the "troubled border area".

17 Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 79 ff.; Tim Pat Coogan, Michael Collins (London 1990), pp 343 ff.
18 Not Coolaney as read by Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 80.
19 S.C., 11 Feb. 1922.
20 The Times, 21 March 1922, quoted in Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 81.
21 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
22 Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 82.
23 According to Hopkinson "Evidence for the joint IRA policy is sketchy and heavily dependent on oral evidence", Green against Green, p. 83.
24 R.H., 3 June 1922.
national plan for this offensive involved IRA units who were to take part exchanging their British supplied weapons for guns which were not supplied by the British.\textsuperscript{25} The 3rd Western Division was supplied with arms which were part of a consignment from Germany landed at Waterford in March 1922.\textsuperscript{26} Members of the Division went to Birr where they got the guns - Mausers. This is mentioned by at least two interviewees of Ernie O'Malley but neither mentions any swapping of arms. Tom Scanlon said "An arrangement had been made with GHQ that they could not give us rifles that had been given by the British but other areas were to give us 100 or 200 rifles. We went to Birr for the Mausers which had been landed in Waterford"\textsuperscript{27} and Matt Kilcawley said "The Mausers came in, we had about twenty of them. About 150 Mausers came into the Brigade".\textsuperscript{28} Whether this was connected with the northern offensive or not, it did increase the armament of the Division and meant that they were better prepared for the war when it did break out. The involvement along the border also gave members the opportunity to see action and to engage in guerilla warfare of the type which would be commonplace in County Sligo during the second half of 1922.

Another opportunity to operate on a national stage presented itself when a crisis developed in Limerick in early March caused by rival units contesting the right to take over evacuated barracks. For a time it appeared that violence was certain to break out and reinforcements were rushed to the city from many parts including a substantial number of 3rd Western Division troops from Sligo.\textsuperscript{29} Eventually the matter was settled without bloodshed and it was generally agreed that the anti-Treaty side came out best.\textsuperscript{30} This involvement with a national incident must have increased the confidence of the Division and given it a feeling of comradeship with other like-minded soldiers. Both the

\textsuperscript{27} Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
\textsuperscript{28} Matt Kilcawley, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
\textsuperscript{29} R.H., 11 Mar. 1922; S.C., 18 Mar. 1922. Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Charles Gildea List of Activities, Fr. O'Kane Papers, Archdiocese of Armagh Record Centre. The \textit{R.H.} report said that included in the Sligo contingent were four each from Ballymote and Collooney and eight from Tubbercurry. Scanlon said that 150 men were sent from the division, Gildea said 60.
\textsuperscript{30} Hopkinson, \textit{Green against Green}, pp 62-66.
involvement along the border and in the Limerick affair meant that the Division felt that it was now being taken seriously as part of the army and was calculated to increase the likelihood that the Division would perform strongly in a war against fellow Irishmen.

In the previous chapter I have noted the paucity of clerical pronouncements on the Treaty. This apparent reluctance of the clergy to become publicly involved in the political debate continued during early 1922. The Lenten Pastorals of late February contain the only references to the opinions of the bishops on the political situation and even here only two out of the three Bishops involved saw fit to comment. In his pastoral letter the Bishop of Killala recommended that the Provisional Government "should get the most generous assistance and cordial co-operation from all classes and sections of the people". While he acknowledged the possibility and indeed advantage of different political views he said that "any threats or intimidation on the part of one political party to enforce their ideas on their opponents would be against the moral law and gravely unjust." He said that there must be "perfect freedom of thought and liberty of action for the people in general to exercise their lawful rights." The Elphin pastoral said:

Political freedom will be of little advantage if Irishmen of all creeds and parties are not prepared to co-operate wholeheartedly with each other in the difficult task of reconstruction. A period of national unity and peaceful activity is now essential . . . During the past six years of the nation's crucification the young men of Ireland displayed a unity of purpose and a chivalrous valour and discipline for which there is scarcely a parallel in the annals of history. In the days of the nation's resurrection we should endeavour to maintain the same unity of purpose, the same stern discipline, the same high souled honour in our relations with other nations, loyalty and allegiance to the government constitutionally established and controlled by Irishmen and a readiness to obey its laws."

Surprisingly the Lenten Pastoral of the Bishop of Achonry contained no mention of political or national matters. Bishop Morrisroe was regarded by Sinn Féin as antagonistic

31 This diocese included the Barony of Tireragh between Ballina and Ballisodare north of the Ox Mountains.
32 W.P., 4 Mar. 1922.
33 S.C. & CM., 4 Mar. 1922.
34 R.H., 4 Mar. 1922.
to their cause during the War of Independence and there is little doubt but that he was strongly pro-Treaty. His silence may have been due to a belief that as his views were well known an intervention would have done little good and that matters were best left in the hands of the politicians.

As O/C of the 3rd Western Division, William Pilkington was involved in the many meetings and conferences which were held by the anti-Treaty faction, and between them and GHQ in the early months of 1922. Among the anti-Treaty group there were different shades of opinion and Pilkington seems to have been a strong voice against compromise. On 10 January divisional officers including Pilkington met under Rory O'Connor to formulate their anti-Treaty policy. Pilkington was clear on what he wanted: 'They have the money,' said Billy Pilkington, 'the press, the clergy and the arms. All our areas are being sapped in one way or another. I vote we here and now form an independent headquarters''. The officers sent a communication to Minister for Defence, Richard Mulcahy, demanding that an Army Convention meet and an Army Council be set up. Mulcahy met the anti-Treaty officers on 18 January. "During the discussion Liam Pilkington declared his desire for separation from GHQ". "We intend to cut away from this Headquarters," said Pilkington. "All you," pointing to the staff and to the officers on the left [pro-Treaty], "want to build up a Free State army so that you can march in step into the British Empire. Do it openly. We stand by the Republic." The holding of a Convention was banned by the Provisional Government but the anti-Treaty officers defied the ban. The Convention was held on 26 March and the 3rd Western Division was well represented with eighteen delegates. Pilkington was elected one of the temporary executive members whose task it was to frame a constitution for the anti-Treaty IRA. This constitution was presented at the next meeting and an executive of sixteen was elected,

35 See draft of letter to the Bishop by Count Plunkett attacking his statement after the Tubbercurry burnings during War of Independence. (NLI, Plunkett Papers, Ms 11408).
36 Described by O'Malley thus "fair-haired, thin faced, ruddy cheeks, straight, a pair of flashing blue eyes and an insistent directness of speech. He was very much loved by his men; very religious, a fighting saint". (Ernie O'Malley, The Singing Flame (Dublin 1978), p. 50).
40 O'Donoghue, No Other Law, p. 220. The figures from the other Western Divisions were: 1st - 13, 2nd - 17, 4th - 20.
From Treaty to Civil War.

Pilkington not being among them. The holding of the Convention represented a clear break by the anti-Treaty section of the army from GHQ but there was a signal lack of definite decisions. It was decided to reimpose the Belfast Boycott and to collect dog licence money. Financial problems increased for anti-Treaty IRA divisions since the cabinet had decided that only officers who remained loyal and obeyed orders from GHQ would receive financial assistance. This led to increase in bank raids and commandeering. In practice local IRA units and divisions still had local autonomy for "despite the establishment of the IRA executive, local initiative remained the dominant characteristic of anti-Treaty actions".

Elsewhere in Ireland "during February and March, in one district after another, minor clashes occurred between pro-Treaty and Republican units; arms, munitions and lorries were taken from one side by the other; arrests and counter-arrests were made". Very few such incidents occurred in Sligo because of the strength of the anti-Treaty IRA and because only one post was held by a pro-Treaty garrison. However one incident demonstrated how fragile was the allegiance pledged by some members of the IRA. Boyle, County Roscommon, was in the 3rd Western Division area and the Barracks there had been handed over by the British military to the North Roscommon Brigade O/C Martin Fallon. He declared for the anti-Treaty side and attended the army convention in Dublin on 25 March as such. The following Wednesday however he had a meeting in Carrick-on-Shannon with pro-Treaty officers which resulted in him and his staff going over to that side. Divisional officers who were visiting the barracks took over the position after an exchange of shots and all the pro-Treaty officers left the barracks: "The mutineers now withdrew and the Barrack is now held by forces of the Republic". Armed men arrived from all over the 3rd Western Division area to strengthen the barracks defences and ensure that it was not retaken by the pro-Treaty side. The ASU had to be recalled from the border area and the headquarters of the 3rd Western Division, IRA, was moved from Sligo to Boyle.

41 Twomey Papers, AD UCD, P69/144, 179; O'Donoghue, No Other Law, p. 224
42 Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 68.
43 Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 73.
44 Macardle, The Irish Republic, p. 612.
45 Tom Scanlon called him "a skunk named Fallon". (Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133).
46 Interview with anti-Treaty Divisional Adjutant Brian MacNeill in R.H., 8 April 1922.
47 Letter from Martin Fallon, R.H., 3 May 1922; Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
From Treaty to Civil War.

As the break with GHQ occurred individual army members had to declare their allegiance one way or the other. Some few incidents were reported of disciplinary action being taken against those who declared pro-Treaty. In the Tubbercurry Battalion area one 2nd Lieutenant was reduced to ranks and eight privates were court martialled and sent to Boyle IRA Barracks for fourteen days hard labour.48 Two IRA men who had been imprisoned in Tubbercurry having refused allegiance to the anti-Treaty side escaped and made their way towards Ballymote. They attended a GAA dance in a schoolhouse. A party of thirteen anti-Treaty IRA arrived at the dance having apparently been informed that the escapees were there. On being refused admission they sent for the Tubbercurry commandant who forced his way into the hall. The defenders claimed that fifty shots were fired but the commandant said that only half that were fired all being deliberately aimed wide. Those inside resisted, "delf were used against rifle and revolver." At least one person was wounded and the IRA arrested the two escapees and two more for aiding and abetting, and lodged them in Sligo jail.49 These incidents suggest that discipline was being strongly enforced in the Tubbercurry Brigade area under Brigadier Frank Carty.

The Convention decision as regards the Belfast Boycott resulted in a sudden upsurge in attacks and raids on railway property in March and April 1922. On the Collooney to Limerick GSWR system the company listed nine incidents which occurred in County Sligo between 26 March and 22 April 1922. These included raids for Belfast goods and attempts to stop Free State supporters travelling to rallies at Castlebar and Sligo.50 Thirty five incidents were reported by the MGW Company in County Sligo between 26 March and 22 April 1922. The majority of these incidents involved the halting and raiding of trains between Boyle and Ballymote especially near Kilfree Junction. There were approximately 150 raids on the whole of MGW property and the Kilfree Junction area was the single most raided place on the whole system according to the company's report.51 Following the decision of the Convention regarding dog licences a number of IRA men visited post offices in Sligo town and asked for and were given the dog licence money collected to date.52 The 3rd Western Division IRA issued a proclamation that all dog licences were to

48 W.P., 18 Mar. 1922.
49 Interviews with one of the organisers of the dance, and with Tubbercurry Commandant in R.H., 8 Apr. 1922.
50 Including the taking of sixteen cases of chocolate from Leyney station.
52 S.C., 1 Apr. 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

be paid for at the nearest IRA barracks on or before 15 April. That this was not fully obeyed is suggested by a later decision to extend the deadline to 30 April.53

The problem of finance was partly solved by the anti-Treaty IRA raiding branches of the National Bank, the Provisional Government's bank, on 1 May 1922 by order of the executive.54 The Quartermaster in the 3rd Western Division was Charles Gildea and he organised the raid on the Sligo branch in which close on £2,000 was taken.55 Tom Scanlon told Ernie O'Malley that not enough money was taken in Sligo and that "the QM had to go to Tubbercurry" and Gildea himself noted "Carried out QMG's order re collection of monies at National Bank, Sligo and Boyle" but no report of any such raid in either Tubbercurry or Boyle appears in local newspapers or elsewhere. 56 It may well be that these bank raids were carried out during the early part of the Civil War and were not reported in the general turmoil.

The Election Campaign.

The widening of the split as a result of the Convention and the break with GHQ was intensified by the fact that an election campaign had begun in the country. Early in March preparations began to be put in place in Sligo: "Both parties in the Free State, supporters of the Provisional Government and the Republicans, are feverishly preparing for the general election," a local newspaper reported.57 A conference of pro-Treaty supporters at which Alex McCabe TD presided was held in Collooney on 13 March and a Director of Elections for the Sligo-Mayo East constituency was appointed as was a sub-director for south Sligo. Significantly a similar position for north Sligo, where there was no outgoing pro-Treaty TD, was left vacant.58 Three organisers were appointed, one for each part of the constituency.59 At the same time the anti-treaty side held a meeting in Tubbercurry

53 S.C., 15 Apr. 1922
54 Hopkinson, *Green against Green*, p. 90
55 S.C., 6 May 1922.
56 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137; Charles Gildea List of Activities, Fr. O'Kane Papers, Archdiocese of Armagh Record Centre.
58 Martin Roddy was the Director of Elections and P.J. O'Brien, District Court Clerk of the Sinn Féin courts in South Sligo, was appointed sub-director.
59 Ben Ryan, a native of Bundoran Co. Donegal who had been interned after 1916, was appointed for North Sligo and J.S. O'Donnell, a journalist from Gurteen, for South Sligo.
attended by three outgoing TDs, Frank Carty, Seamus Devins and Francis Ferran and they set up an executive committee for the constituency.60

Campaigning began immediately. Pro-Treaty meetings were reported in south Sligo on Sundays 19 and 26 March addressed by Tom O'Donnell TD and James Gilligan.61 According to the Sligo Independent "excellent work in the way of canvassing" was done in Sligo [presumably meaning the town of Sligo] at the same time. A pro-Treaty election committee, chaired by a local merchant, was set up in Tubbercurry.62 The anti-Treaty campaign in the constituency opened with a St. Patrick's Day meeting at Swinford in east Mayo. Speakers included the Mayor of Sligo, Michael Nevin, who assured his listeners that "Sligo still stood staunchly by the Republic".63 By 1 April The Sligo Independent could report that "the election campaign may now be said to be in full swing in Sligo. Free Staters and Republicans have been particularly active as regards to propaganda, handbills been (sic) distributed by both sides".64 In this pre-pact period fourteen meetings are recorded for the pro-Treaty side and only one for the anti-Treaty side. The anti-Treaty leaders were in the main also IRA leaders and their commitment in this area may have precluded their organising an election campaign, especially at a time when the date of the election had not been definitely settled. Army matters, the campaign on the border, the Limerick affair and the various efforts at national and divisional organisation were obviously more urgent.

The question of whether labour candidates should stand in the election was both a national and a local one. The labour movement in Sligo was badly divided as a result of the Treaty and this affected its ability to come to an effective decision. Alderman John Lynch, strongly anti-Treaty, considered that labour should not contest the election.65 A delegation from Sligo Trades and Labour Council which was generally pro-Treaty attended the special Labour Congress in Dublin in February which decided to contest the election.66 At the next Council meeting it was agreed that all affiliated Trade Unions be invited to a

61 At Cloonloo, Monasteredan, Killaraght and Mullinabreena.
63 CM., 25 Mar. 1922; S.J., 1 Apr. 1922.
64 S.J., 1 Apr. 1922.
65 John Cunningham, Labour in the West of Ireland (Belfast, 1995), p.160.
special meeting to discuss contesting the election. At the subsequent meeting on 14 March a motion that a Labour party branch be formed was carried and the Sligo branch of the Labour party was founded on 25 March, delegates attending from seven unions affiliated to the Trades Council. William Reilly became president and a delegate from the T.U.C. and Labour party, Sligo native L.J. Duffy, attended. The Connachtman, as might be expected, did not approve of a labour presence in the election. It noted that of the nineteen societies affiliated to the Sligo Trades Council only seven were represented at the inaugural meeting. It pointed out especially the absence of any support from the powerful Sligo TGWU. According to it "there is ONE AND ONLY ONE [Capitals as in original] issue on which this election will be fought and it is the maintenance or disestablishment of the Republic. The question of proper labour representation must and shall have the support of of every democrat when the existence of the Republic is not as now in jeopardy". A conference subsequent to the formation of the Labour branch made a tentative decision to put forward a Labour candidate pending meetings to be held in Claremorris, Tubbercurry and Ballina with a final conference of three delegates from each centre to decide the issue. There is no evidence that such meetings ever took place nor was there any further mention of a Labour candidate for Sligo until late in May when it was reported at a Trades Council meeting that no progress had been made. The Voice of Labour made no further mention of the possibility of a Sligo candidate. There is no doubt but that the split in labour in Sligo prevented the selection of a candidate there.

During April and May there was a series of confrontations between rival forces throughout the country. Political meetings especially those addressed by Collins or Griffith, some deep in enemy territory, also caused an escalation of tension. The local Sligo newspapers reported these meetings and confrontations at length. Few clashes were reported in County Sligo during this time. The Ballymote RIC barracks had been held by pro-Treaty IRA but on the night of 2 April it was taken by anti-Treaty forces. No resistance was offered and it was believed that the take-over occurred when most of the garrison was

68 Cunningham, Labour in the West of Ireland, p. 105.
69 CM., 25 Mar. 1922 & 1 Apr. 1922.
70 S.C. & CM., 1 Apr. 1922; The Voice of Labour, 1 May 1922.
71 CM., 27 May 1922; The Voice of Labour, April-June 1922.
72 Hopkinson, Green against Green, pp 76-7.
attending that day’s pro-Treaty meeting at Castlebar. The pro-Treaty forces then took possession of the Courthouse in the town and remained there, with the anti-Treaty forces making no effort to remove them. "Matters some time ago looked somewhat threatening between these two armed forces causing a certain amount of uneasiness to many" reported the Sligo Champion at the end of April, but by then the "fears of a conflict had been reduced to a minimum". During the first week of April the office of the Free State election campaign in Sligo was raided, and literature and electoral registers taken. All local newspapers devoted much space to the tempestuous Free State election meeting at Castlebar, County Mayo, on 2 April when at one stage there was an attempt by republican supporters to rush the platform while Collins was speaking, McCabe, who was on the platform, drew a revolver. For a while it appeared that an outbreak of armed hostilities was imminent but the meeting broke up peacefully, having been proclaimed by officers of the anti-Treaty 4th Western Division.

The first notice of a Sligo pro-Treaty meeting to be held on Easter Sunday was a report in the Sligo Independent of 1 April, stating it had been officially informed that a "monster pro-Treaty meeting" would be held in Sligo on that day, to be addressed by Arthur Griffith. The Sligo local papers of the following week-end carried the announcement that William Pilkington, O/C 3rd Western Division, had issued a proclamation dated 7 April prohibiting "the holding of public meetings and demonstrations of a political nature" in the 3rd Western Division area. According to an editorial in the Connachtman this was done in view of the incidents at the Castlebar meeting. An anti-Treaty meeting which was to have been held at Sligo Town Hall on Sunday 9 April was cancelled in accordance with the proclamation. According to the Roscommon Herald the meeting was announced by poster only on Thursday evening suggesting that it had been hastily arranged and there is a suspicion that it was announced merely in order that it could be cancelled to demonstrate the republican side's willingness to adhere to their own proclamation. A pro-Treaty meeting which was to have been held at Calry, near Sligo, on

74 S.C., 29 Apr. 1922.
76 S.I., 1 Apr. 1922.
77 R.H. & CM., 8 Apr. 1922; S.I., 15 Apr. 1922.
78 S.C., 8 Apr. 1922; R.H. & S.I., 15 Apr. 1922.
the same date was not held "on the advice of a local priest".  

As the day of Griffith's meeting approached tension and anxiety rose. On Wednesday the Mayor of Sligo telegraphed Griffith: "All public meetings proclaimed in this area by military authority to preserve peace. Is announced that you are to address public meeting at Town Hall, Sligo on Sunday. Authorised by you? Reply requested latest Thursday noon". Griffith replied: "Dáil Éireann has not authorised and will not authorise interference with right of public meeting or free speech. I, as President of Dáil Éireann, will go to Sligo on Sunday next". Seán MacEoin wired: "As Competent Military Authority of mid-Western Command I know nothing of proclamation". During Thursday night a column of Provisional Government troops led by Alex McCabe entered Sligo under cover of darkness and took up position in the undefended jail. "I never thought of the jail for it was so far out of our way. I wanted to put them out several times but it was thought to be bad policy so I didn't," said Tom Scanlon. The Corporation held an extraordinary meeting on Friday at which the Mayor urged all citizens to avoid any political demonstration on the Sunday. Brigadier General Devins, anti-Treaty IRA, addressed the meeting, saying that the last thing his superior officers would do would be to order their men to fire on the soldiers of Ireland. "They would carry out the terms of the proclamation to the last man, while at the same time, protecting the civil population". When it became clear that the meeting would go ahead anti-Treaty troops were drafted into Sligo from all parts of the 3rd Western Division area and from some parts of the 4th Western Division, and by Friday the town was reported to be "almost in a state of siege". Over a hundred IRA men arrived by train from south Sligo on Saturday and the train from Enniskillen was commandeered and used to carry large numbers of IRA into Sligo. Many public buildings were occupied including the Town Hall where the meeting was to be held and a number of public buildings occupying strategic positions. Supplies were commandeered and windows were sandbagged. During Saturday, the Bishop of Elphin made unsuccessful efforts to arrange a

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80 S.I., 15 Apr. 1922.
82 S.I., 15 Apr. 1922.
83 Batt Keaney interviews 8 Oct. 1988 & 30 Aug. 1990. They had to climb over the jail wall using a rope ladder and find a known pro-Treaty warder who opened the gates and allowed the troops in.
84 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
85 S.I., 15 Apr. 1922.
86 Padraig Hegarty, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137; S.I., 15 Apr. 1922.
truce. When the evening train reached Sligo it was ascertained that Griffith, together with Darrell Figgis and Sean Milroy had travelled on it as far as Carrick on Shannon and had been met there by Seán MacEoin with an armed escort of Provisional Government troops. During the night the party arrived in Sligo.

Everything seemed ready for a major outbreak of violence. It was not to be. According to Tom Scanlon, who was Director of Operations on the day, anti-Treaty GHQ told the Sligo officers "at the last minute on Saturday" that if the banning of the meeting meant the shedding of one drop of blood the proclamation was not to be enforced: "The Free State got to know of this and that is why they were so courageous. Officers and men did not know what had happened. Morale as a result was very bad".87 Liam Mellows later wrote: "The cause was the issuing on his own responsibility of a proclamation by Commandant Pilkington declaring a meeting in favour of the Treaty to be illegal. The executive could not sustain this action as it would create a precedent it would not be able to follow up elsewhere."88 Tom Deignan said, "When they [pro-Treaty forces] knew there was not going to be a fight they careered around with armoured cars".89 Scanlon in another interview told O'Malley that Pilkington "had been forbidden to interfere by Liam Lynch, the Chief of Staff".90

On Sunday morning a patrol of three pro-Treaty lorries containing about 40 troops under the command of J.J. O'Connell arrived from Dublin, stopped outside one of the hotels unaware that it was occupied by the IRA and a ten minute exchange of fire took place in which some IRA were injured and three Free State soldiers were captured. Pilkington asked to meet MacEoin to parley, but the latter demanded that the IRA first vacate the Post Office. This they refused to do and there was no more contact. Commandant Pilkington remained shut up in his own office for most of the day and "would not see any of his officers", his Information Officer Bradshaw dealing with them instead. Eventually Pilkington met his officers and said that "he thought this [not opposing militarily the holding of the meeting] was best for the people of Sligo".91 Few of his officers were happy. Tom Deignan said that "Martin Bernard McGowan was raging that

87 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
88 Liam Mellows, Some events leading up to the Civil War, M.A. Collins Papers, A 0790.
89 Tom Deignan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
90 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
91 Padraig Hegarty, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
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day" and that "Jim Devins was out for a fight", but that "the discipline of our lads held that day and only under protest was it maintained". Scanlon also relates that during the day reports came to him that "the Free Staters were being aggressive, jostling the people" and he ordered two Crossley tenders to be prepared and asked permission to patrol the town. Pilkington refused. Jack Brennan also mentioned this incident, saying that "they were stopped as they were going out the gates . . . I walked out of the Division as a result".

In the afternoon the meeting went ahead at the end of the main street opposite the Post Office. One of the pro-Treaty Crossley tenders was used as a platform and a large crowd gathered. The chairman was D.M. Hanley and speakers included Arthur Griffith, Darrell Figgis, TDs O'Donnell and McCabe, James Gilligan, William Reilly and Harry DePew. DePew said that "he could not help but wonder how the natives of the town could be so backboneless as to allow an English bookie's clerk [Apparently a reference to Bradshaw] to walk into Sligo and set up a military dictatorship without making an effective protest". The day passed off without further incident, the Dublin party attending a banquet that night and leaving by the train the following day. The IRA evacuated the town on Monday night and Tuesday morning.

The failure of the anti-Treaty forces to prevent the holding of the meeting in spite of the huge number of their soldiers in Sligo had far reaching consequences. Several of the IRA officers resigned because of the fiasco, but Padraig Hegarty claimed to have gone to each individually and persuaded them to withdraw their resignation. Martin Brennan said that as a result of the meeting "Good lads of ours . . . joined up the Free State". According to Scanlon, Rory O'Connor and Sean Moylan came down the next day to heal the breach. "It ruined us. We were powerless. We could not do a thing to stop the Free

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92 Attached to No. 1 Brigade, 3rd Western Division, he became its O/C after death of Devins.
93 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
94 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
95 Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
96 S.I., 22 Apr. 1922.
98 Padraig Hegarty, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
99 Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
Staters from walking up and down". Frank Carty was in Sligo on the day of Griffith's meeting and was afterwards scathing in his comments on how the affair was handled, calling it a "tragedy". This added to the disagreement between himself and Pilkington and influenced his actions at the start of the Civil War when he justified his intention of going it alone without divisional sanction: "I had strongly before my mind the way the divisional staff had mishandled the situation... on the occasion of Arthur Griffith's meeting in Sligo and the disastrous effect which this had on the morale of our troops". Sligo, often criticised for its performance during the War of Independence, was once again made to appear foolish and amateurish. This reinforced the already strong distrust of central authority. Most significantly, for the first time since the split pro-Treaty forces had been able to establish a post in Sligo town itself from which they could and did expand. Around the same time Gurteen company IRA loyal to GHQ established two posts in their area.

In what was clearly an attempt to prevent the Sligo Champion gloating at the outcome, its offices and premises were raided and the following week's issue was destroyed. In its report of the raid the Champion said, "The raiders did their work with a completeness which showed that at least one among them had a keen knowledge of the workings of the mechanical side of a printing office", insinuating the involvement of someone from the Connachtman office. A full report of the meeting did appear in the other local newspapers, and the sales of the 22 April issue of the Sligo Independent was said to have gone up "many thousands". Following Griffith's meeting the pro-Treaty citizens of Sligo felt confident enough to convene a meeting at which they set up a Sligo Citizen's Association and passed a resolution asking that the Provisional Government take steps "to secure to the citizens of our town ample protection for life and property and we do hereby undertake to give any assistance which the Government may consider necessary".

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100 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
102 For comments on Sligo's poor performance during War of Independence see Valiulis, General Richard Mulcahy, p. 57; Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 10; Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 263.
103 One was in the former RIC Barracks near Gurteen, the other in the doctor's residence in the village. (R.H., 29 Apr. 1922)
104 S.C., 29 Apr. 1922. The issue of the Connachtman for 22 April 1922, is also missing from the file in Sligo Library.
for this purpose". Among the list of those attending were many of the leading businessmen of the town, a number of clergymen of different denominations and the chairman and secretary of the Trades Council. The secretary of this association wrote another reminder to the Provisional Government on 1 May stressing the importance of the resolution in view of the raids by the IRA on the bank in Sligo town on that very day. The acknowledgement merely stated that it was "fully alive to the necessities of the situation. Within the present very difficult period of transition it is using every endeavour to restore peace and order throughout the country." A minute on the file noted with apparent relief, "It is not suggested that the people of Sligo intend to raise a force of their own" suggesting what the Government's limited priority at the time was.

The proclamation on election meetings seems to have been quietly dropped in the wake of the Sligo meeting, and many pro-Treaty meetings were held at the end of April and early in May. On Sunday 30 April four such meetings were held in north Sligo and two in south Sligo. This is the first mention of pro-Treaty meetings in north Sligo and may have signalled a growth in confidence as a result of the Sligo meeting. A pro-Treaty election committee was said to have been hard at work in Ballymote town and area. None of the local newspapers carried any news of anti-Treaty election meetings or activities during this period and it appears that most of the electioneering was carried out by Treaty supporters. It would seem that in the wake of the Sligo meeting morale was very low in the anti-Treaty camp. It has already been noted that discipline appeared to have been more rigorously enforced in the Tubbercurry Brigade area and this continued in the post-Sligo meeting period. The local press reported that "it is quite evident that the holding of Republic or Free State meetings in or about Tubbercurry is out of the question" and the only two Sligo incidents where fire was opened between the rival factions were reported from this area. In late April Brigadier Jim Hunt of the pro-Treaty forces with a group of five men travelled to the Curry district to organise pro-Treaty IRA there. While there

108 At Calry, Clifenny, Coolera and Maugherow in north Sligo, Culfadda and Keash in south Sligo.
110 S.C., 29 May 1922.
111 CM., 29 May 1922.
112 An interview with Jim Hunt was reported in W.P., 13 May 1922 and a letter from Adj.
they were approached by a party of anti-Treaty IRA who opened fire on them. The fire was not returned. Hunt refused to surrender but agreed to go voluntarily to the anti-Treaty barracks in Tubbercurry. There he met the Commandant who had them detained overnight while awaiting instructions from the Divisional staff in Boyle. They were allowed go the following morning but their arms and car were confiscated. On 6 May shots were exchanged and some men were wounded when a group leaving a Free State election meeting at Curry were challenged by a republican patrol.

In spite of the deep split in Sligo labour ranks, a labour anti-militarism strike took place in the town as it did in most other towns and cities in Ireland. It was said to have been a "magnificent demonstration" with "the commercial and industrial life of the borough entirely stopped". William Reilly chaired the meeting and resolutions were passed opposing military interference in civil life and demanding that both parties honour the democratic programme. John Lynch was conspicuous by his absence. In Tubbercurry business was completely suspended even though it was market day and country people who came into town found closed shops. Likewise Ballymote was reported as having "joined in heartily". The only reported clerical intervention of this period was that of Revd P.A. Butler, Administrator, Sligo, who said at the AGM of Sligo Temperance Insurance Society in early May:

We are truly a strange people. Just when we had placed in our own hand the management of our own affairs . . . dissension in our ranks must threaten seriously to shatter the very foundations of the nation which cost so much of the blood of our race. A strange doctrine seems to have got loose in Ireland - a doctrine foreign to the social and Catholic interests of the Irish people and that doctrine is the rule of the gun . . . Men in their ambition to be leaders and dictators are prepared to subvert every honest material principle, to rob the country which it has now been given to develop and to spill the blood of their brothers in the pursuit of a phantom republic.

Nealon, the anti-Treaty officer involved was printed in R.H. 20 May, 1922. A short report was published in CM., 29 April 1922. This party numbered twenty claimed Hunt, seven said Nealon. The latter also claimed that no shots were fired.

S.C., 29 Apr. 1922.
W.P., 6 May 1922
R.H., 29 Apr. 1922
This intervention, coming as it did after the Sligo meeting when anti-Treaty morale was already low, was hardly calculated to make a significant impact on the mind of the electorate.

On 1 May pro-Treaty forces occupied three more posts in Sligo town.\(^{119}\) During May there appears to have been a considerable amount of sniping between the two forces in Sligo though no reports of injuries appear in the local press.\(^{120}\) On the morning of 9 May a Mills bomb exploded in the vicinity of the Bank of Ireland which was then under guard by the pro-Treaty forces but no injuries were reported.\(^{121}\) In mid-May the Sligo Champion reported "not a night has passed but rifle and revolver shots have been heard in Sligo much to the terror of the citizens."\(^{122}\) The pro-Treaty forces based in Sligo town made a concerted attempt to expand the number of posts they held on June 2. They assisted what appears to have been an attempt by local pro-Treaty sympathisers to occupy the Town Hall in Charlestown. Anti-Treaty forces rushed the building before the assistance could arrive and when the cars from Sligo did reach the town they were fired on and had to return.\(^{123}\) At the same time forty to fifty pro-Treaty forces occupied Dromore West workhouse. Anti-Treaty troops, numbering about 500, under the command of Brigadier Frank Carty took up positions around the workhouse and an ultimatum was sent to the pro-Treaty officer in charge. He said that he was acting under the authority of Brigadier Jim Hunt and was told that Hunt had no authority in the area. The pro-Treaty troops were allowed to return to Sligo with their arms and ammunition.\(^{124}\) On the same date Sligo Courthouse and Town Hall were occupied by pro-Treaty forces from Sligo Gaol. The Town Hall was vacated the following Monday and the troops moved on to Markree Castle near Collooney under the command of Brigadier Jim Hunt.\(^{125}\) All this activity demonstrated that the expansion of pro-Treaty forces throughout the county was not going to be easy and that strong and

\(^{119}\) These were the Custom House, the Bond stores and the Bank of Ireland. \((R.H., 6 May 1922)\)

\(^{120}\) \(R.H., 13 May 1922.\)

\(^{121}\) \(S.C., 13 May 1922.\)

\(^{122}\) \(S.C., 13 May 1922.\)

\(^{123}\) \(W.P., 10 June 1922.\)

\(^{124}\) What appears to have been an anti-Treaty press statement on the matter was printed verbatim in three newspapers, \(S.C., W.P.\) and \(R.H.\), without comment on 10 June 1922.

\(^{125}\) \(R.H., 10 June 1922.\) Markree Castle was the residence of Bryan Cooper but at the time he was residing in Dublin.
From Treaty to Civil War.

effective opposition from anti-Treaty forces could be expected especially in the west of the county.

The pro-Treaty candidates were announced in the Sligo Champion of 13 May. For south Sligo Alex McCabe and Jim Hunt were put forward, for north Sligo, John Hennigan and Seamus McGowan and for east Mayo Tom O'Donnell. Three of these candidates, McCabe, O'Donnell and Hunt, came from the Ballymote-Gurteen area of south Sligo. The first two were outgoing TDs but the selection of Jim Hunt is difficult to explain. He resigned as chairman of Coolavin D.C. in June 1922 saying that he was not a politician. He was however the only pre-Truce commandant to take the pro-Treaty side and this factor appears to have outweighed the disadvantage of his proximity to the other two candidates and his reluctance to enter the political arena. This coupled with the fact that apparently there was no candidate in the Free State interest from east Mayo suggests that it was difficult to find suitable persons willing to offer themselves as candidates.

The Collins - de Valera pact.

On 20 May, 1922, Collins and de Valera signed a pact designed to avoid an election contested on the issue of the Treaty. A national Sinn Féin coalition panel of candidates for the election was agreed and it was expected that outgoing TDs would be returned unopposed though non-Sinn Féin candidates could be nominated. Judging from editorial comment in the Sligo newspapers, the anti-Treaty side welcomed the pact much more enthusiastically than the pro-Treaty side. The Connachtman's comments were general, verbose and unusually restrained:

That our people will carry out the terms of the pact in the spirit in which it has been entered into we have no doubt nor will there be neglect of the opportunity afforded to show the world no matter what internal difference may and must exist in our midst, we as a people are at all times ready to suppress our personal viewpoints and stand together when the common cause of the nation so demands.

127 Hopkinson, Green against Green. pp 97 ff.
128 CM., 27 May 1922.
On the other hand the *Sligo Champion* did not disguise its disappointment at the news of the pact. Since January it had been looking forward to the verdict of the Irish people on the Treaty and saw the pact as another stratagem to avoid this. "It [the pact] means to an extent the muzzling of the Irish electorate . . . The coalition executive implies the complete wiping out of the Provisional Government and the abandonment of the election on the Treaty. Have Messrs Griffith and Collins signed their political death warrants?"129 Its editorial of 3 June entitled "The Treaty in Peril" warned that if the Treaty was broken "the social and economic ruin of the country is accomplished".130 A speaker at a Sligo Trades and Labour Council meeting said "the present settlement is only a way out for de Valera. I believe the people would generously support a labour candidate. They are sick, tired and sore of all this kind of humbug. I believe the farming class would support a labour man financially because they are pure sick of what is going on".131

In accordance with the general interpretation of clause 5 of the pact: "That constituencies where an election is not held shall continue to be represented by their present deputies" - it was expected that the outgoing TDs, three anti-Treaty and two pro-Treaty, would be nominated for Sligo-Mayo East constituency. This posed no problem for the anti-Treaty side as only the three outgoing TDs had been selected. However on the other side five candidates had been selected. The outgoing TDs, Alex McCabe and Thomas O'Donnell, were re-selected at a pro-Treaty convention in Sligo on 29 May. John Hennigan and Seamus McGowan who had to be dropped were obviously disappointed and at a meeting later the same day they announced that they were standing as independent candidates.132 There were few public expressions of support for the independents. Indeed they were attacked from all sides. The Sligo Free State election committee issued a short statement disassociating themselves from the candidature of the independents.133 A joint manifesto from the panel candidates was published in the local press on 10 June containing the following: "A contested election has been forced upon us by two candidates claiming to be independent . . . Any person or party who at this moment forces personal or party issues on electors is acting against the best interests of Ireland and contrary to the spirit of

129*S.C.*, 27 May 1922.
130*S.C.*, 3 June 1922
131*CM.*, 27 May 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

the Collins-de Valera agreement". A Believer in the Panel asked "where were J. McGowan and J. Hennigan when Alec McCabe with rifle in hand and hunted like a hare took a stand on the mountain side, true to Ireland to the last and when the watchdogs of the British government were to be shot or when their strongholds were to be stormed where were the independent candidates?" There is however no record of an attack on either of the independents by pro-Treaty speakers at any subsequent election meeting. It was from the anti-Treaty side that the bitter personal attacks came. The Connachtman speculated on the possible underhand influence of Darrell Figgis in the matter. The following week it surmised that "A desire on their part to gratify their personal vanity" was the reason for their candidature. A meeting of Sligo Corporation unanimously endorsed the national panel and there were personal attacks on the independents from anti-Treaty councillors. Michael Nevin said that while both candidates had disagreed with his proposal to add a shilling in the pound to the rates for the IRA they were causing unnecessary expenditure on the taxpayers by standing in the election. John Lynch said that one of the independents [He clearly meant Hennigan] "wouldn't give Almighty God a halfpenny in the way of wages if He came down to earth again." Lynch repeated this personal abuse of Hennigan at a later public meeting but claimed McGowan had been misled into going forward: "He would give McGowan the credit of having been one of the earliest Sinn Féiners in Sligo, with himself".

At first it had appeared that there were going to be contests in each of the five Connacht constituencies but in the event Sligo-Mayo East and Galway were the only ones contested. In each of the other constituencies pressure appears to have been exerted by pact candidates in order to prevent a contest. In most cases this pressure appears to have been moral rather than physical though as Gallagher points out the phrase "in the interests of national unity" was often a euphemism for a direct threat of violence. In Mayo South-

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134 S.C., S.I. & R.H., 10 June 1922.
135 R.H., 10 June 1922.
136 CM., 3 June 1922. Darrell Figgis had been attacked in the pages of The Irish Republic for, it was claimed, encouraging candidates to stand in opposition to the Sinn Féin panel. He had attended the Sligo Easter Sunday meeting.
137 CM., 10 June 1922.
138 CM., 10 June 1922.
139 CM., 14 June 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

Roscommon South the candidacy of the chairman of the County Council in the farmers interests was mentioned as early as April.\(^{141}\) He withdrew at the last moment "lest the introduction of independent candidates in the present crisis might cause any embarrassment or in any way imperil the National situation".\(^{142}\) In the Leitrim-Roscommon North constituency a farmers' meeting held on the Saturday before nomination day chose a candidate in the farmers interest.\(^{143}\) When he arrived at the courthouse on nomination day the four panel candidates held a meeting with him after which he withdrew his nomination paper "in the public interests of the nation".\(^{144}\) Bernard Egan intended to contest the constituency of Mayo North and West as a Farmers' candidate but his nomination papers were not presented on the day. A claim in the national press that the person carrying his nomination papers had been kidnapped was strongly denied by both sides of the pact and by the \textit{Connacht Telegraph}. The newspaper report also said that Egan had been visited by armed men the night previous to nomination day. Whatever the truth of the matter it appears that pressure of some sort prevented Egan's nomination.\(^{145}\) In Galway the Labour party put up a high profile candidate, who "successfully resisted pressure designed to force him out" and was elected.\(^{146}\)

The decision of the two independent to stand in Sligo-Mayo East effectively precluded the Labour party or farmers from putting forward their own official candidates. McGowan stood as an independent labour candidate proposed by William Reilly who was chairman of both the Sligo branch of the Labour party and the Trades and Labour council. Reilly was also election agent for both independents.\(^{147}\) Hennigan, chairman of Grange branch of the Farmers' Association, stood as an independent farmers candidate, and was proposed by Denis Leonard, the branch's secretary. The \textit{Connachtman} claimed that "organised labour and the majority of the farmers have already repudiated both of them" but subsequent events showed this not to be the case.\(^{148}\) A special meeting of the Sligo

\(^{141}\)R.H., 29 Apr. 1922.\(^{142}\)R.H., 10 June 1922.\(^{143}\)Described in those terms by the local press it may or may not have been a Farmers' Union meeting.\(^{144}\)R.H., 10 June 1922.\(^{145}\)W.P., 10 June 1922; \textit{Connacht Telegraph}, 10 June 1922.\(^{146}\)Gallagher, \textit{The Pact General Election of 1922}, p. 159. The candidate was T.J. O'Connell the General Secretary of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation,\(^{147}\)S.I., 2 June 1922; S.C., 10 June 1922.\(^{148}\)CM., 10 June 1922.
Branch of the Labour Party unanimously passed a resolution of support for both independents. Subsequent to this being reported in the national press Labour leader Tom Johnson was quoted as saying that there was no branch of the Labour party in Sligo but William Reilly contradicted this saying that Seamus McGowan was a member. John Lynch called a public labour meeting for the Wednesday prior to polling day to demonstrate labour support for the pact but none of the speakers except Lynch had been prominent in Sligo labour ranks. The only organised farmers' group in the county was the Sligo Farmer's Association and John Hennigan was one of its officers. A meeting of the executive chaired by Hennigan held on 11 June considered their stand with regard to the election and while no resolution of support was reported the secretary was ordered to immediately instruct each branch secretary to have collections taken up to defray the expenses of the two independents and to ensure that a reliable personating agent was present at each booth on election day.

The only statement from the independents appeared in a letter printed in the local newspapers in which they pointed out that they had been originally chosen to stand as pro-Treaty candidates: "Since then the political situation has completely altered. While in no way desiring to cause disunity, or to hamper the National Movement, we believe that the people have a right to determine who shall represent them. We also consider that the time of the Councils of the Nation has been wasted in political vapouring and petty jealousy". The independents were considered a serious threat to the pact candidates. The Gurteen & Ballymote correspondent of the Roscommon Herald, J.S. O'Donnell, also the Free State organiser, reported that the general opinion was that while McCabe would top the poll one of the independents would also be elected.

The election campaign seems to have lost whatever impetus it previously had on the announcement of the Pact. Ballymote Notes in the Sligo Champion in early June said that a "real wholehearted canvass has not as yet been widely made for the elections" and in the following issue it said "Hitherto the eve of parliamentary elections was a time of great

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149 S.C. & S.J., 10 June 1922.
150 CM., 14 June 1922; S.J., 17 June 1922.
151 CM., 14 June 1922; S.C., 17 June 1922. Speakers included Mayor Michael Nevin, Lynch, Devins, Bradshaw and Mulcahy.
152 R.H., 17 June 1922.
153 S.J., 10 June 1922.
154 R.H., 17 June 1922.
155 S.C., 10 June 1922.
activity. On this occasion scarcely a syllable has been spoken by the man in the street as to the pros and cons. No active canvassing has taken place on behalf of the panel or independent candidates". Very few public election meetings were reported in the period after the Pact though the anti-Treaty side were much more active than the pro-Treaty side. A panel meeting was held at the Town Hall, Sligo on Sunday 11 June which all panel candidates were to attend but "whether by accident or design or merely coincidental" only anti-Treaty speakers were there. The _Sligo Independent_ reported that telegrams of apology were received from Tom O'Donnell, TD and from D.M. Hanley. Reports of the meeting reflected the political bias of the newspaper, the _Sligo Champion_ reporting that "the meeting was one of the most apathetic ever seen in Sligo" and that "all efforts to raise even a mildly enthusiastic cheer were fruitless" while the _Connachtman_ said that it was "a most successful meeting". Seamus Devins speaking at the meeting said that "he had come to ask them to vote for the panel candidates. He did not ask a first preference or a second one for himself. They could give their first and second preference to any one of the panel candidates that they liked". Eamon de Valera made a tour of the constituency, which included meetings at Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Sligo, accompanied by Devins and O'Donnell. O'Donnell was a friend of de Valera's since their teaching days together in Rockwell College, Tipperary and this explains his presence on the platform with de Valera. This seems to have been the only instance where pro- and anti-Treaty candidates appeared on the same election platform in Sligo. The other pro-Treaty candidate, Alex McCabe, appears not to have addressed a meeting or otherwise engaged in electioneering in the period after the announcement of the pact.

On the Sunday previous to the election meetings on behalf of the panel candidates were held in six places in north Sligo. These appear to have been addressed mainly by anti-Treaty speakers including Bradshaw and Devins who made a circuit of the area. Prominent Treaty supporter Martin Roddy spoke at a pact meeting in the area which was not part of this "circus". According to the _Sligo Champion_ some meetings were also held on behalf of the independents but their supporters "mainly confined themselves to

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156 _S.C._, 17 June 1922.
157 _S.C._, 17 June 1922.
161 Cliffony, Ballintrillick, Maugherow, Grange, Calry & Ransboro.
From Treaty to Civil War.

distribution of literature and the canvassing of voters". The Connachtman gave two instances, both in north Sligo, where it claimed independents had to abandon meetings because of what it called "public hostility". On the eve of the poll James Gilligan, chairman of Sligo County Council, was brutally assaulted at his home by a party of men. Whether this assault had anything to do with the election is not clear, Gilligan was a strong pro-Treaty supporter who appears to have been loyal to the panel and there is no evidence to suggest that he supported the independents. There were two reported instances of postmen being held up and ninety election notices being taken by armed and masked men in north Sligo. Local newspapers reprinted the following typewritten letter which they claimed was received by a number of Protestants in the Drumcliff district of the constituency: "The bordermen expect that the unionists will kindly stay at home next Friday as they did in the 1918 election. If they do not it will mean some night duty for us next week. Please convey these instructions to your neighbours". The Sligo Independent reported that some of these Protestants had been impersonated early on election day.

The editorial in the Sligo Champion on the day of polling was very unenthusiastic and said little to encourage people to vote: "They [the people] know that to return the panel candidates will not result in a miraculous change in the character . . . of individuals . . . and if the national panel were returned in its entirety it is morally certain that the bear garden proceedings would be resumed exactly where they were left off and the country's drift towards disaster would be accelerated". The Sligo Independent published an editorial on "Elections" in the week previous to the polling day which while it did not explicitly advise its readers to vote for the independents certainly suggested as much: "On Friday next the Electors of Ireland will have an opportunity of recording their votes for men who represent Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, and who are better entitled to the control of the destinies of the Nation? . . . The Farmers, or Ratepayers, and Labour are here represented. And the workers are also justly entitled to representation. Therefore both candidates are certain to receive much support. We appeal for freedom for all, and good order".

162 CM., 14 June 1922; S.C., 17 June 1922.
164 Raids on Post Offices etc., NA, Dept. of Justice, H5/67B.
165 S.I. & S.C., 24 June 1922.
166 S.I., 24 June 1922.
167 S.C., 17 June 1922.
168 S.I., 10 June 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

week of the poll its editorial on the election was short and factual. It listed the candidates including "John Hennigan and James McGowan, Independent Sinn Féiners and representing Farmers or Ratepayers and Labour respectively". The *Connachtman* published a special edition on the Wednesday before the election containing an editorial entitled "The Way to Peace - Vote the Panel" strongly urging people to vote pro-panel: "Those who vote for the national panel candidates vote for unity. Unity means stable government and stable government means peace". It also contained the following verse:

Vote for Devins, Ferran and Carty,
But that's not all you've got to do.
To keep the panel alive
You must vote the panel five
Which includes McCabe and Tom O'Donnell too".

Comments on the election day itself confirm the picture of general apathy. The election passed off very quietly in the Tubbercurry area with "little or no excitement" and the poll was not a heavy one in any of the Tubbercurry stations. According to the Ballymote correspondent about 60% from that area cast their vote and there was no impersonation. However the *Roscommon Herald's* Ballymote and Gurteen correspondent reported that the "number of electors who exercised their franchise was not large" and he attributed this to the fact that "people were more or less in the dark as to whether they should go to the polls or not. The agreement between the political leaders left the man in the street somewhat confused". News reached Sligo early on polling day that election agents of the independent candidates had been kidnapped in the early hours of the morning. The *Sligo Champion* was able to print this news in its edition which was published on that day. It named one of these personating agents as John P. Jordan, grocer and publican, who was kidnapped and held in Sligo Military Barracks until late afternoon. The independent candidates wired their protests to Griffith on polling day and

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169 *S.I.*, 17 June 1922.
170 *CM.*, 14 June 1922.
171 *W.P.*, 24 June 1922.
174 *S.C.*, 17 June 1922.
175 *R.H.*, 24 June 1922; *S.C.*, 1 July 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

he telegraphed a reply to the effect that an enquiry would be held.\textsuperscript{176} When the counting of votes commenced the independent candidates withdrew "as a protest against the gross impersonation and intimidation which was practised on and before the day of the poll and the kidnapping of impersonating agents".\textsuperscript{177}

There were many rumours that personation had been rife in the east Mayo and north Sligo areas of the constituency.\textsuperscript{178} Two correspondents to the Irish Independent complained about such intimidation and impersonation.\textsuperscript{179} "Disgusted No 2" claimed that "parties summoned to the great beyond months ago were amongst the first to exercise the franchise" and "Anti-Humbug" stated that anyone who objected was intimidated into silence and claimed that "some young men voted five times in Sligo - East Mayo". A letter from a Sligo correspondent attributed such complaints to lack of sporting spirit: "Personation probably did go on, it went on in every election that I ever remember and will go on to the end of time but with the same rules governing the candidates of all parties - the same machinery at the disposal of each of them - it is simply moonshine to suggest on one side are all saints and on the other side all sinners".\textsuperscript{180} This was, of course, to ignore the fact that the same machinery was not at the disposal of each party in County Sligo. The anti-Treaty side had at their disposal the majority of the IRA, while the pro-Treaty side and the independents had no similar military force to either aid or defend them. In McCabe's victory speech after the announcement of the results he alluded to the problems and allegations saying: "Certain circumstances were not what they might have been. However he would not say anything further about them there that night".\textsuperscript{181}

Analysis of the Election Results.

The percentage turnout in Sligo-Mayo East was 55\% which was higher than the national figure of 45\%.\textsuperscript{182} The result of the election in the Sligo-Mayo East constituency was a clear

\textsuperscript{176}R.H., 24 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{177}Letter to the Irish Independent, 22 June, reprinted in S.C., 24 June 1922
\textsuperscript{178}R.H., 24 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{179}Letters reprinted in the R.H., 24 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{180}Irish Independent, 21 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{181}S.C. & R.H., 24 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{182}Election figures from Michael Gallagher (ed), Irish Elections 1922-44: Results and Analysis (Limerick 1993); Gallagher, 'The Pact General Election of 1922', pp 404-21 and from local Sligo newspapers, June 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

victory for the Sinn Féin panel with the five seats going to the five outgoing members. The Independents failed to make an impact, receiving only 0.84 of a quota between them. Even though the Treaty was not an issue in the election the result was claimed as a clear victory for the anti-Treaty side, this constituency being the only one in the country in which the anti-Treaty candidates got an overall majority of the vote. The percentage share achieved by each side in the constituency was as follows: Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin - 56%, Pro-Treaty Sinn Féin - 30%, Independents - 14%. The pro-Treaty side however did have the satisfaction of providing the poll-topper, Alex McCabe. Because of constituency changes it is impossible to compare election results for 1922, 1923 and 1927 with any degree of accuracy. However comparison suggests that the republican vote in 1922 was exceptionally high. The percentage figures for the Sligo-Leitrim constituency in the 1923 election were Republican- 36%, Cumann na nGaedheal- 48%, Others (Farmers, Labour and independents)- 16%. The figures for 1927 were Fianna Fail- 23%, Cumann na nGaedheal- 43%, Labour and Farmers- 18%, Others- 15%.

What were the reasons for the extraordinary high percentage of anti-Treaty vote in 1922? Because of the terms of the Collins-de Valera pact it was expected that outgoing deputies would be re-nominated. The three anti-Treaty TDs were strategically placed, Frank Carty in south Sligo, Seamus Devins in north Sligo while Frank Ferran came from the east Mayo part of the constituency which accounted for 40% of the electorate. This geographical spread was obviously to the advantage of the anti-Treaty side. The two Sligo based candidates were also high profile candidates as a result of their activity as IRA commandants. On the other hand the pro-Treaty side had only two deputies, both from the south of the county, within ten miles of each other. Alex McCabe was a high profile candidate having been first elected in 1918 but his running mate, Tom O'Donnell, was a lightweight and was to lose his seat at the 1923 election. Thus in two areas, north Sligo and east Mayo, the anti-Treaty candidates had no locally based opposition. We have also seen that the anti-Treaty side campaigned much more vigorously than the other side in the period after the announcement of the pact. Of the two independents one, the independent

183 The 1922 election was the only one fought using the Sligo-Mayo East constituency. For the other elections Sligo-Leitrim was the constituency. Leitrim-Roscommon North was uncontested in 1922.

184 The number of electors in the constituency was 62,763, made up as follows- Mayo East 24,596. Sligo 38,167. (East Mayo-Sligo election account, 1922, NA, Dept. of Finance, F 700/63.)
labour candidate, had not been a prominent labour activist and the split in the labour ranks over the Treaty made his election prospects remote. In the election of the following year John Lynch, the well known labour activist and republican supporter obtained almost twice the number of votes as McGowan did in 1922.

The election was fought using proportional representation and this means that by examining transfers we can gauge the extent to which the pact was observed by both sides. In the single instance, that of the transfer of Devins' surplus, of anti-Treaty transfers with pro- and anti-Treaty candidates available the figures were: to anti-Treaty 92%, to pro-Treaty 3.4%, to independents 4.6%. This shows a much higher proportion of anti-Treaty voters maintaining the party solidarity than was the case nationally. Of the remaining transfers there is no sign of pact solidarity with both independents and pro-Treaty candidates receiving a very similar small proportion. This may be a reflection of the fact that Devins, in North Sligo, was geographically far removed from the remaining pro-Treaty candidate and nearer the independents.

When we examine the distribution of the surpluses of the other anti-Treaty candidates we see a more marked adherence to the pact. In the case of Frank Carty's surplus there was no remaining anti-Treaty candidate and 13% of his surplus was non-transferable. Of the surplus the vast majority, 82%, went to the only remaining pro-Treaty candidate, Tom O'Donnell, and only 6% to the two independent candidates. The pattern of anti-Treaty adherence to the pact and refusal to give lower preferences to independents when no anti-Treaty candidate remained is also clear when we look at the transfers from the other republican candidate, Ferran, 90% of which went to pro-Treaty candidates as against 10% to the independents. Taking the two cases where anti-Treaty surpluses were being distributed without anti-Treaty candidates remaining the figures are: to pro-Treaty 85%, to independents 7% and non-transferable 7.5%. The non-transferable votes all came from Carty and reflect the fact that he was the last republican candidate. This represents a very small proportion of "plumpers" who voted anti-Treaty only. The figure for transfers to the opposing wing within the pact is significantly above the national figure.

The only pro-Treaty candidate whose surplus was distributed while there were pro- and anti-treaty candidates left in the field was Alex McCabe and his went thus: pro-Treaty 57%, to Tom O'Donnell, his only running mate, anti-Treaty 14%, to Frank Carty, the only remaining anti-Treaty candidate, Independents 29%, 12% to McGowan, 18% to Hennigan.
From Treaty to Civil War.

Table 3.1: 1922 General Election. Sligo-Mayo East Constituency.

Transfer of Votes.
(National percentages in brackets.)

(a) Destiny of Pro-Treaty transfers.

When pro-Treaty, anti-Treaty and independent candidates were available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 2,009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Treaty: 1,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 57% (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Treaty: 276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 14% (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents: 593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Transferable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Destiny of Anti-Treaty transfers.

When pro-Treaty and independents but not anti-Treaty were available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 1,620</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Treaty: 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 3% (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Treaty: 1,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 92% (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents: 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Transferable: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When pro-Treaty and independents but not anti-Treaty were available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total: 2,354</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Treaty: 2,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 85% (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents: 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Transferable: 176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C., 24 June 1922.
From Treaty to Civil War.

There were no non-transferable votes. Firstly this shows a large proportion of pro-Treaty voters giving their lower preferences to anti-Treaty candidates or independents rather than to their own party. This is in marked contrast to the pattern observed in the distribution of anti-Treaty surplus. Secondly the destination of those transfers which went outside the pro-Treaty side shows a significantly higher proportion going to independents than to anti-Treaty candidates. This demonstrates a failure on the part of pro-Treaty voters to observe the spirit of the electoral pact. The only other distribution of votes was that which followed the elimination of independent McGowan to decide the final seat between the other independent Hennigan and the second pro-Treaty candidate, Tom O'Donnell. The votes transferred thus: to Hennigan 52%, to O'Donnell 37%, non-transferable 12%. It would have needed almost 100% transfer rate to give Hennigan the seat and O'Donnell was elected. This pattern of transfers strengthens the indications apparent from the destination of pro-Treaty transfers that there was a fellow feeling between the independents and the pro-Treaty side in the Sligo-Mayo East constituency.

Conclusion.

In summary then it appears that in Sligo-Mayo East constituency anti-Treaty voters were more inclined to vote strictly for their own candidates and then adhere to the terms of the pact by voting pro-Treaty rather than independents. The pro-Treaty voters, on the other hand, were less likely to strictly vote pro-Treaty and were more likely to give lower preferences to independents than to the anti-Treaty candidates. The pact was more strictly observed by the anti-Treaty side and the figures show that while the pact patched things up for a time the basic split still remained and was not likely to be easily remedied. The slide towards confrontation during the post Treaty period had not been halted by the electoral pact and in Sligo the results gave a boost to the anti-Treaty side. The Connachtman in its editorial of 24 June said that the results from a republican point of view were satisfactory "in view of the fact that the pact entered into between Mr. de Valera and Mr. Collins was broken by the latter and his supporters". It coupled this criticism with criticism of the new Free State constitution which had been published on the eve of the election: "Such a constitution would be an unqualified surrender and abandonment of the nation's rights and would constitute a voluntary acceptance and acknowledgement of the status of slavery by
the Irish people. The pact has been broken and with it has disappeared any immediate prospect of a settlement. The verdict of the polls is clearly not one of peace.\textsuperscript{185} Seamus Devins speaking at the declaration of the results said that he did not wish to see any differences between either side. He also asked them to remember that the fight was not over yet but only starting.\textsuperscript{186} The truth of this statement became apparent very soon.

\textsuperscript{185} CM., 24 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{186} S.C., 24 June 1922.
4. THE COURSE OF THE CIVIL WAR IN COUNTY SLIGO.

The outbreak of the Civil War should have caught nobody in County Sligo by surprise. The leadership of the Sligo IRA had been deeply involved in the interminable conventions and conferences in Dublin during the previous six months.¹ Members of the new national army had marched the streets of Sligo and had exchanged fire with the IRA. The new force had established a strong presence in Sligo town and in a small number of other places nearby. It might be expected that a clear strategy would have been developed by the 3rd Western Division as a response to an expected outbreak of hostilities. That this was not the case was a reflection of the national confusion among anti-Treaty forces and of the local divisions in the ranks of the anti-Treaty IRA. This initial confusion ensured that the action of the anti-Treaty IRA would be fragmented and uncertain. The 3rd Western Division had increased its armament considerably since hostilities with the British had ceased and had seen action on the border but had failed to develop clear lines of command or become a cohesive military unit. It had learned nothing new as regards tactics and it was soon clear that its preferred modus operandi was a repeat of what it had convinced itself had been a successful guerilla campaign against the British. However this time the enemy was native not foreign, most of the war-weary populace were hostile, and the new government and its army could claim a democratic mandate following the June 1922 election and apostolic succession with the War of Independence struggle. A defensive guerilla campaign was thus not likely to achieve anything of significance.

July 1922.

When the news of the attack on the Four Courts reached Sligo a meeting of the 3rd Western Divisional staff was held in the town. In the absence of any communications from the Executive in Dublin there was confusion and conflicting opinions. Frank Carty advocated immediate offensive action against Provisional Government posts in the area. This was in line with what was the first concern of the republican side nationwide, to consolidate the control of areas in which they already had a strong presence.² Tom Carney

¹ Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914.
The Course of the Civil War in County Sligo.

on the other hand wanted the division to advance towards Athlone. William Pilkington and most of his divisional staff opposed both suggestions and advocated attacking British forces on the border instead. There was no agreement and Pilkington and his adjutant Brian MacNeill left the meeting to seek the advice of Michael Kilroy, O/C 4th Western Division in Castlebar. Carty and Carney returned to Tubbercurry, met Seamus Kilcullen O/C of the North Mayo Brigade and decided to take independent action. In his own words: "Immediately following the attack on the Four Courts we assumed the offensive in this area [4th Tubbercurry Brigade]. We formed an ASU of twenty four men and while awaiting further instructions we arrested prominent local Free State leaders and transferred them to Castlebar for detention." This joint force captured a strategically important position at Collooney on 2 July which had been occupied by a Provisional Government force of less than forty at the outbreak of the war. During the following week and a half republican forces operated freely in the immediate area, capturing a lorry of fourteen Provisional Government soldiers, destroying the bridge at Ballisodare and attacking the government post at Gurteen which had a garrison of thirteen. This attack failed and one republican soldier was killed. They also made numerous sniping attacks on Markree Castle and took the government outpost at Riverstown.

Carty's forces showed no inclination to move from Collooney and link up with comrades either in the Sligo town area to the north or the strategically important Boyle area to the south. Government reinforcements would be expected to arrive from the south but there was no attack on the government post at Ballymote or strengthening of the small republican post there. The 4th Brigade's activities for the week beginning 4 July consisted only of "destroying enemy lines of communication throughout the brigade area. In all there were eleven large bridges demolished, several culverts opened and trenches cut and trees

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3 Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133. Tom Carney was O/C 5th (East Mayo) Brigade, 3rd Western Division.
4 4th Brigade 3rd Western Division diary of activities from opening of hostilities to 30 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).
5 ibid.
6 S.C., S.I. & CM., 8 July 1922; Report by Commandant McCann on the attack and capture of Collooney Market House, July 1922, Institute of Celtic Studies and Historical Research, Killiney, Co. Dublin, MacEoin Papers, CSD/76; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914; 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P 69/33(17); Joe Baker, My Stand for Freedom (Westport, 1988), pp 42-3.
felled on all the main roads likely to be of use to the enemy". This was a repeat of the kinds of activities engaged in in the latter stages of the War of Independence. Joe Baker of the 4th Western Division recalled the lack of orders or direction in the Collooney area after the taking of the government post there. This concentration on their own brigade area was a fatal weakness and it meant that in spite of their initial gains the republicans there merely waited to be confronted by the government forces which were always likely to be superior in numbers and armament.

In line with Pilkington's initial instinct the 1st (North Sligo) Brigade attacked and captured Ballaghameehan Barracks on the Fermanagh border and attacked two government posts in County Leitrim one of which they captured. In Sligo town itself the republican forces did not take the initiative and it was the government troops in the courthouse who made the first move by taking over an adjoining garage which directly faced the republican occupied ex-RIC barracks. There was to be no armed conflict at this stage. "Our orders were to evacuate the town and burn the barracks", said Tom Scanlon and they did so early on the morning of 1 July. Later the same day the government forces again moved commandeering the Harp and Shamrock Hotel near the Military Barracks. The following morning the Military Barracks was evacuated and burned by the republicans who then established their headquarters at Rahelly House near Lissadell in north Sligo. Some republican police based in the Wine Street ex-RIC barracks remained on and patrolled the town. MacNeill reported to the O/C 4th Western Division at the time: "The tactics in this area will have to be altered to the guerilla form as attacks on enemy posts on a large scale are impossible for the following reasons (a) too expensive on ammunition, (b) strength of enemy posts, (c) more effect can be gained by ambushing them when passing between posts". Republicans throughout the northern part of the county also abandoned and

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7 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).
9 1st Brigade Diary, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27). The two posts were Glenfarne and Kinlough.
10 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
11 S.C., S.I. & CM., 8 July 1922; Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Western Command Report 6 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/106; Western Command Reports 6 July 1922, MA, Radio and Phone Reports, CW/R/1; Diary of activities 1st Brigade 3rd Western Division from 30 June, 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27).
12 MacNeill to O/C 4th Western Division, 2 July 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(50).
The Course of the Civil War in County Sligo.

burned their posts taking to the hills. In spite of these developments the government's hold on Sligo town was far from secure. Shooting incidents took place in the town during the following days and nights, one government soldier being killed in an ambush near the jail. Sligo Post Office was also entered and the telephone and telegraph equipment wrecked. The government forces made no attempt to engage the republicans outside of the town either to the north at Rahelly or to the south at Collooney. The latter town, less than ten miles away, was eventually retaken not by troops from Sligo but from Athlone.

Government reinforcements arrived in Sligo with the Ballinalee armoured car on Wednesday 5 July and on the following day the Wine Street republican police post was taken, a civilian being accidentally killed during this action. The Ballinalee was then used to maintain communications by a circuitous route between the threatened Markree Castle post and Sligo town. The extent of the lack of co-ordination among the republicans is evident from the fact that both the 1st and 4th Brigades laid ambushes on this route on the 13 July unknown to each other. The government army convoy, three or four lorries and the armoured car, first ran into Carty's ambush at Rockwood (actually in the 1st Brigade area) and had to surrender after a long exchange of fire, with five government troops killed. The Ballinalee's gun jammed but the car made its escape towards Sligo only to be captured when it ran into the second ambush. Carty does not record how he felt at having let such a prize slip through his fingers.

On the following day the north Sligo republicans used the Ballinalee in an attack on Sligo town and the government troops were confined to their positions in the courthouse and the jail. An ultimatum was delivered to the courthouse garrison asking them to surrender or be attacked. The garrison refused to surrender. The Bishop of Elphin then

13 S.C., S.I. & CM., 8 July 1922; Western Command Reports 4 & 5 July 1922, MA, Radio and Phone Reports, CW/R/1; 1st Brigade Diary, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27).
14 S.I., S.C. & CM., 8 July 1922. The Ballinalee was so named after the birthplace and scene of the greatest military success of General Séan MacEoin. The car was renamed the Lough Gill by some republicans after its capture in Sligo though most still apparently referred to it by its original name.
15 S.C., S.I. & CM., 15 July 1922; War News Western Command, 14 July 1922, MacEoin Papers C/60; Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Report by MacEoin, 15 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/106; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914; 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17); 1st Brigade Diary, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27).

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arrived and when his efforts at intercession failed he took up position inside the courthouse. Tom Scanlon explained what happened: "Not wishing to expose the Bishop to danger and realising the propaganda the enemy would make of it if the Bishop was either killed or wounded by our attack we left the town with all our men."

The ambush at Rockwood seems to have been the factor which led to the government side taking decisive action against Collooney. On the evening of 13 July Seán MacEoin took a troop train of 300 to 400 men from Athlone to Collooney. Ballymote was on the railway line to Collooney but had only a small republican post garrisoned by six men armed with shotguns which was unable to delay the troop train. The garrison defending Collooney was thus taken by surprise and after a battle which included artillery bombardment the town was taken and forty republican prisoners captured including Frank O'Beirne, O/C of the Collooney Battalion. There were surprisingly few casualties with only one anti-Treaty soldier reported as having been killed. Carty claimed that the post at Ballymote was taken by the troops on their way to Collooney and that the Information Officer was also captured and was unable to inform him of the impending attack. This he gave as the reason why he did not come to the aid of Collooney. The diary of the 4th Brigade however stated that Ballymote post was taken two days after Collooney and Martin Brennan claimed that Carty deliberately did not come to the aid of Collooney: "We heard the shooting but Frank Carty wouldn't let us go in so O'Beirne had to surrender. That was jealousy." After this Tubbercurry was soon abandoned by the republicans and was occupied by government troops on 28 July. Vice-Brigadier Harry Brehony was captured in this action. Republicans also abandoned and burned their remaining posts at Easkey and

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16 S.C., S.I. & CM., 22 July 1922; Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Poblacht na hÉireann War News, 25 July 1922, NLI Microfilm Reel 52.
17 1st Brigade Diary. AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27) The republicans privately dubbed the bishop "a sandbag". A similar incident occurred some days later when the 1st Brigade attacked Manorhamilton pro-Treaty post. The local curate took up position at the barrack door and the attackers decided to withdraw.
18 MacEoin was O/C Western Command based at Athlone.
19 S.C., S.I. & CM., 22 July 1922; Report by MacEoin, 15 July 1922. AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/106; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17); Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914.
20 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17); Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914. Martin Brennan was O/C 4th Brigade ASU and opposed Carty unsuccessfully as an independent candidate in Sligo in 1927 and 1937 before joining Fianna Fail in 1938 and becoming a TD in the same year.
The Course of the Civil War in County Sligo.

Dromore West and took to the mountains.\textsuperscript{21} The first phase in the Civil War in County Sligo was over with the government troops in control of the main towns and the republicans adopting guerilla tactics and controlling large parts of the countryside. The mountainous nature of much of the county meant that guerilla bands had large areas of suitable terrain from which to operate. The aim of the government army had been clear: "The general policy is to prevent enemy troops evacuating barracks in possession of rifles and ammunition and reverting to guerilla warfare."\textsuperscript{22} The failure of this policy in the county during this first phase ensured that a decisive victory over the republicans would be difficult.

\textbf{August - October 1922.} \\

While they now controlled the main towns the government forces were confined almost totally to those positions and adopted a defensive stance venturing out very rarely. Sniping of government posts was a common occurrence though such activity was said to have decreased in Sligo town when government reinforcements arrived at the end of July.\textsuperscript{23} Republicans from the town were said to be spending nights at home or in the Mercy Convent where they were often sheltered. On one occasion the convent bell was rung, presumably by members of the order, as a warning signal to republicans.\textsuperscript{24} The Ballinalee was a constant threat and was liable to turn up anywhere in the county as it was passed around among the Brigades. It caused terror in Sligo on 5 August when it entered the town and was used to attack and capture a small Provisional Government post.\textsuperscript{25}

Army intelligence officers reported in early August that the republicans were then based in three areas in the county. Most of the divisional staff including Pilkington and Devins were based at Rahelly House in north Sligo. Their strength was estimated at 100

\textsuperscript{21} S.C., S.I. \& CM., 29 July \& 5 Aug. 1922.

\textsuperscript{22} Western Command, Office of C/S, July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/73.

\textsuperscript{23} Reports Western Command I/O to D/I, 8 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); S.C., 5 Aug. 1922.

\textsuperscript{24} Reports Western Command I/O to D/I, 22 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.

\textsuperscript{25} 1st Brigade Diary. AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27); Report Western Command I/O to D/I, 5 Aug. 1922. MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); S.C., 5 Aug. 1922. The republicans held the post at the Ulster Bank for only a short time.
men with 90 rifles, 70 revolvers and 4 machine guns. This group controlled most of north
Sligo and its headquarters, in a lowlying area between the mountains and the sea, lay on
the northern edge on the army's Western Command which may explain its tardiness in
dealing with it. Isolated as it was it posed little threat. To the north Finner Camp and
Bundoran were held by the army's 1st Northern Division and there was little republican
activity in Donegal. To the east lay the Northern Ireland border and to the south the town
of Sligo was never seriously threatened. Carty's group was based along the Ox Mountains
between Coolaney and Curry and was estimated at 40-60 strong. "He is the most relentless
of all the irregular leaders", an August report stated. In the mountainous Geevagh and
Arigna area on the south Sligo/Roscommon border Harold MacBrien and Ned Bofin led a
party estimated in early August at 150 men which had a plentiful supply of rifles and
revolvers. A smaller group of thirteen armed with rifles and revolvers was reported as
operating near Ballymote. It was reported that excellent communications were maintained
between the different republican columns but that there was no evidence of any co-
ordinated actions or any unified command structure.26 There had been some
communications by boat between the republicans of north and west Sligo but Alex
McCabe commandeered the SS Tartar and used it to patrol Sligo Bay and attack the
republican held coast of north Sligo. 27

August and September was a time of military stalemate neither side attempting any
decisive action. Both sides seemed devoid of any strategic plans apart from maintaining
control in their respective areas. For the republican side this represented the losing of a
vital chance to inflict severe setbacks on the government army before it had a chance to
build up its forces. The republicans' greatest military objective appeared to be the capture
of an enemy post, disarming the occupants and retreat to their strongholds. They
sometimes laid ambushes but these were often unsuccessful because of the timidity of the
army and because of leakage of information. Lack of arms and ammunition appears not to
have been a problem on the republican side. Between the outbreak of the war and the

26 Reports Western Command I/O to D/I, 4 Aug. 1922. MA, Western Command Papers,
CW/Ops/7(c).
27 S.C. & S.I., 29 July 1922; Report by McCabe, 22 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers,
P7/B/73; SS Tartar, General file of correspondence, MA, Dept Defence Files, A7438; 1st
Brigade Diary, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27);
Poblacht na hÉireann (Scottish Edition), 2 Sept. 1922, NLI, Microfilm Reel 51. The
Tartar belonged to the Sligo Steam Navigation Company and plied regularly between
Sligo and Belmullet, Co. Mayo.
The Course of the Civil War in County Sligo.

beginning of August the 3rd Western Division had captured 160 rifles, one Lewis gun and an armoured car with a Vickers gun. They lost forty five rifles at Collooney. "From the point of view of armament we are much stronger than when we started", MacNeill reported at the beginning of August.\(^{28}\) The diary of activities of the 1st Brigade which controlled north Sligo for August 1922 details only four actions during the whole month. These included the successful attack on the Ulster Bank post in Sligo town and three attacks on army posts in Bundoran. They also sniped the Bundoran and Finner Camp posts for a week.\(^ {29}\) The impression created is of them waiting for an attack and being unable to undertake any offensive action on their own initiative in spite of the availability of the Ballinalee and the obvious inaction of the government forces. The diary of the 4th Brigade for the same period confirms this impression and shows that Carty, for all his early emphasis on action, was just as devoid of offensive ideas as were his north Sligo comrades. His reported actions for the month consisted of setting three unsuccessful ambushes, one successful ambush in which one government soldier was killed and sniping three enemy posts.\(^ {30}\) As Carty himself stated "There was a lull as far as large scale operations were concerned until near the end of August".\(^ {31}\)

Some few skirmishes did take place during this period. Near Enniscrone a party of government soldiers from Ballina surprised a republican ambushing party, reportedly killing two and capturing three. On 25 August Carty lured a party of forty five troops from Tubbercurry into an ambush in which one government soldier was killed, three wounded and arms and ammunition, including forty rifles and a Lewis gun, captured.\(^ {32}\) One of the reasons for the failure of some of the ambushes was that local people were giving information to the pro-Treaty troops: "On one occasion our efforts were foiled by the intervention of the civilian population who revealed our whereabouts to the enemy".\(^ {33}\)

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\(^{28}\) MacNeill to Liam Lynch, 2 Aug. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(49).

\(^{29}\) 1st Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27).

\(^{30}\) 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).

\(^{31}\) Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914.

\(^{32}\) S.C. & S.I., 12 Aug. 1922; Report Divisional Adj. to Command Adj., 26 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914; 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).

\(^{33}\) 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).
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There was some disruption of rail communications. The Collooney-Claremorris line which ran through Carty's territory was damaged in a number of places and no trains ran on the line during the remainder of the year. The Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties line was subject to constant attacks, stoppages and disruptions during July and August. The main Sligo-Dublin line operated normally for most of the period with only one attack reported during August.34

In early August there were rumours that some of the republicans in the Arigna and north Roscommon areas were anxious to surrender. A republican with a white flag came to the government outpost at Ballyfarnon and asked for a meeting with an officer from Boyle. Commandant Lavin came from Boyle and after a short meeting it was decided to hold a conference the following Sunday in Ballyfarnon which would be attended by two army officers from Boyle, the republican column leader Bofin and his adjutant MacBrien and Fr. Roddy, CC Gleann, County Sligo. This conference which appears not to have been authorised by higher authority was held on 6 August 1922 without any positive result. However hostilities in the 2nd Brigade area, 3rd Western Division were postponed from the Sunday until the following Wednesday apparently with the intention of facilitating further meetings. On Monday some of Deignan's Riverstown column members came to the barracks in Boyle under the impression that the terms of the truce also applied to them. They were disarmed and arrested. The arrival of Commandant General Farrelly at Boyle ended the truce.35 He released the republicans with a message to the effect that there would be no truce. According to the Western Command Intelligence Officer this episode "has had the effect of hardening up those irregulars who were wavering."36

The government troops still lacked the numbers, transport and confidence to undertake large scale attacks even on those republicans who were concentrated in accessible areas like north Sligo. Reports in August demonstrate the defensive attitude of the Free State troops containing as they do many warnings of possible republican attacks on towns. The Intelligence Officer of the 3rd Western Division in early August warned of a possible "coup", probably an attack on Sligo with the aid of the Ballinalee. In his 4 August

34 S.C. & S.I., 2 Sept. 1922; Telegrams from manager Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway to M/D 27 & 28 July 1922, and reply from Assistant QM Western Command to C/S 31 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/73; Protection and Compensation: Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway, MA, Dept Defence Files, A7160.
35 O/C 3rd Western Division, Provisional Government army.
36 Daily Reports 10 & 21 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); I/O W/C to D/I, 10 Aug. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/4.
report he warned that Carty "will probably attack the town [Ballymote] very soon." On the
11 August he warned that "the irregulars will certainly in the very near future attack these
two posts [Ballymote & Tubbercurry]" and again on 22 August "It is evident that the
irregulars are rapidly completing preparations for an attack on National forces in Sligo
town".37 He also listed ambushes which had been laid by republicans and added, "In all of
these operations our troops in Swinford and Tubbercurry knew of their preparations but
were powerless as the garrison in each place is too small to admit of raiding parties being
sent out."38 What the government side especially feared was co-operation among
republican forces. During the early days of conflict in Sligo town and just before the battle
for Collooney they reported without foundation: "A mobile column of Irregulars under
Maguire of Castlebar are [sic] moving towards Sligo."39 Similarly during the attack on
north Sligo they assumed, again mistakenly, that Carty would assist the north Sligo
republicans: "Supposed McCarthy [sic] of Irregulars advancing from his own quarter".40
Even in November the dreaded scenario was: "there is always a chance of Kilroy and Carty
uniting forces".41 In spite of some limited co-operation such as that in the early days of the
war and the sharing of the Ballinalee there was no significant collaboration between the
various republican groups within the county or between them and outside republicans.

The government troops did have some success by their use of "Flying Columns" of
mobile troops to harass the IRA. Alex McCabe in particular was active in the south Sligo
area from his base at Ballymote: "Colonel Commandant McCabe has frightened a few
Irregulars who were in this area by his surprise parties."42 Carty was reported to have
complained of the condition of his feet in August 1922 "on account of Alex McCabe's
Lancia cars being on all the roads".43

37 Reports Western Command I/O to D/I, 4, 11, 21 & 22 Aug. 1922, MA, Western
Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).
38 Reports Western Command I/O to D/I, 21 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers,
CW/Ops/7(c).
39 Report to C/S, 11 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P/7B/106. Tom Maguire was O
/C 2nd Western Division.
40 MacEoin to Army Comms, 15 Sept. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P/7B/73.
41 Report Thomas Henry, Reports Officer, 3rd Western Division to O/C 3rd Western
Division, 17 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
42 Report Henry to O/C 3rd Western Division, 17 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command
Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
43 Carty had descended on Templehouse, home of the landed Perceval family, and ordered
a dinner for 25 column members at a half hour's notice. (Report on Irregulars, 4 Aug.
1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).)
There were organisational and logistical problems on the government side. The Western Command was unwieldy, covering as it did an area from Longford to the west coast. An attempt was made in August to reorganise the Command which was to include the evacuation of some of the smaller positions and the sending of "surplus" men to the Curragh for training. About thirty posts in the area were closed including Gurteen in County Sligo. Four flying columns of 150 men each were to be organised on a regional basis. Column B was to work in the Sligo - Boyle - Foxford area. The total strength of the army in the command at the time was 2,234. This did not include the "more than 1,000 additional men in this area that he [MacEoin] cannot at present indicate the distribution of". MacEoin at once reported difficulties in implementing the scheme, especially opposition from traders in towns which were to lose their posts and he asked for a two weeks delay in its implementation. This was granted but with a stern rebuke from Mulcahy: "We are simply going to break up what we have of an army if we leave it any longer in small posts and do not give it proper military training."

On 4 September MacEoin reported that the scheme was ready to be put into operation as directed and he was waiting for supplies as promised. MacEoin complained of "serious trouble with some of the men - in fact mutiny in some places for want of pay ... Do something about pay for regulars at once". He reported that Dromahair (County Leitrim) barracks had been surrendered to the republicans because of the garrison's dissatisfaction with pay and supplies. The terse reply pointed out that 3,000 men were being paid regularly in the Western Command. A confidential report by MacEoin to the Commander in Chief in September reported that "grave dissatisfaction exists over the command area" for a considerable time. While many of the complaints related to matters of army appointments which were made without any reference to Command or officers, all the Divisional and Command officers had also reported to MacEoin their dissatisfaction on matters of pay and supply of uniform.

44 C/S to MacEoin, 7 Aug. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P/7B/74; General position of the army, Aug. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P/7B/29.
45 MacEoin to C/S, 10 Aug. 1922 and reply 14 Aug. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/73.
46 On 4 September Dromahair Army Barracks was captured by eight men. Forty six prisoners were taken. (1st Brigade Diary, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27); Report, 4 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); MacEoin to C/S, 4 Sept. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P/7B/73.)
47 C-in-C to MacEoin, 4 Sept. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P/7B/73.
48 MacEoin to C-in-C, 12 Sept. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/74; Lawlor to
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Early in September Frank Carty obtained the Ballinalee from north Sligo and used it to attack Tubbercurry. One government soldier was killed in a determined but unsuccessful attempt to take the two army positions but the republicans had to retreat having commandeered food, clothing and footwear. An attempt by Carty's column to take the government post at Ballymote failed, one of their number being killed. Meanwhile the Ballinalee had been sent to assist in the capture of Ballina by members of the 4th Western Division, IRA. The republicans held the town for one day, retreating on the news of the advance of a government convoy under Tony Lawlor. This convoy having retaken Ballina headed across the Ox Mountains towards Tubbercurry accompanied by the armoured car, The Big Fella. The Ballinalee had returned to Carty's column by this time. Carty's forces mounted several ambushes and inflicted two fatalities as Lawlor's men made their way to Tubbercurry. Seán MacEoin led another force from Athlone and joined forces with Lawlor at Tubbercurry on the night of 14 September before sweeping the Ox Mountains from there to Coolaney. According to Carty he demobilised his men in the face of this sweep and had only one man captured.

MacEoin and Lawlor next turned their attention to the north Sligo republicans. A carefully planned attack was launched on 19 September utilising 1st Northern Division troops from Finner Camp, 1st Midland Division troops operating from Manorhamilton and 3rd Western Division troops from Sligo and Boyle. The republicans had planned an orderly retreat towards the mountains on the Sligo Leitrim border in the event of an attack but what actually occurred was that their forces became disorganised and separated in the

49 Statement by Vol. James Carr, undated, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); Report from Tubbercurry Adj., 14 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); S.C., S.I. & CM., 16 Sept. 1922.
50 Report from Ballymote I/O, 13 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).
51 S.C., S.I. & CM., 16 Sept. 1922; Patrick Rutledge, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/90; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914. Ex British army member, Anthony Lawlor had been appointed Adjutant, Western Command.
52 S.C., S.I. & CM., 23 Sept. 1922; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133; Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914; 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).
53 Western Command Operation Order No. 1, undated, MacEoin Papers, C/57/1; S.C. & S.I., 23 Sept. 1922;
mountaineous area and many slipped through the cordon in small groups. 54 The Ballinalee which was in the area at the time was trapped and rather than let the enemy regain useful possession of this valuable asset its occupants put it out of action. How exactly this was done is unclear but the statement by Hopkinson that it was "wrecked by shells from an enemy armoured car" seems not to have been the case. 55 Even MacEoin did not claim that the aim of his artillerymen had been so precise. 56 The driver of the Ballinalee, Alfie McGlynn, is said to have stated that he "stuffed a mattress down the tower, followed by a gallon of petrol". 57 The local newspapers reported that the republicans used explosives to put the car out of action and the Sligo Champion said that its engine had been completely destroyed. However it was still mobile enough to be triumphantly towed by the victorious government troops through the streets of Sligo to the Town Hall where it was "inspected by the curious public". 58 A report from Army intelligence said that the armoured car had not been badly damaged but that the engine was "smashed". 59

In an event which caused much bitterness six republicans including Brigadier Seamus Devins and Adjutant Brian MacNeill were killed on Benbulben Mountains during this operation. 60 MacNeill was son of the Provisional Government minister Eoin MacNeill and his brother was a member of the national army. Two of the bodies were not found until almost a fortnight afterwards. 61 An official army press statement said that the republicans had been surprised by government troops in the preparation of an ambush and that as they retreated four of their number were killed. 62 Reports from the Intelligence Officer, 3rd Western Division government troops, mentioned only that the four were killed in action

54 Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
55 Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 215.
56 In his account to Younger he makes no mention of the Ballinalee having been put out of action. (Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 461.)
57 Told in later years to Bernard McDonagh, Sligo.
59 Report I/O 3rd Western Division., to D/I, 20 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c). This armoured car had first seen service in Egypt in 1918. It was apparently not used again during the Civil War but was reported as having been in service during the Emergency. Information supplied by Bernard McDonagh, Sligo.
60 The others were Vol. Joseph Banks, Vol. Tommy Langan, Lieut. Paddy Carroll and Capt. Harry Benson. Usually referred to as "Sligo's Noble Six" piligrimages to the place of their death were common in the years after the Civil War. Four versions of the event were recorded by primary school children as part of the national folklore collection in 1937-8. (Lug na nGall, Rossinver school, Co. Sligo, UCD Folklore Collection, S157.)
62 S.J., 23 Sept. 1922.
and that "Carroll and Banks were absolutely mangled by machine gun fire". The IRA investigated the killings and cited evidence from unnamed Provisional Government troops that the six had been shot by soldiers after they surrendered and had been disarmed. They blamed the atrocity on a detachment of troops from the Midland Division who left the area when the big round-up was over. While conclusive evidence is lacking it appears likely that this version of the killings is true. The funeral of the dead in Sligo, with the exception of MacNeill who was buried in Dublin, was a large affair "attended by all creeds and classes and political opinions". No attempts at revenge appear to have been made which is attributable to the to the weakness of the republicans in the area after the September round-up and to the fact that the supposed perpetrators were not Sligo based.

These Sligo round-ups failed to achieve their aim which was to surround and capture the republican concentrations. Intelligence reports had put the number of republicans in the north Sligo area at 120 and reports indicate that at most forty were arrested during the round-up. The remainder continued to pose a problem in the mountainous area in the north east of the county and in the area around Lough Gill. However the attack did break up the concentration based on Rahelly and opened up this area to the government troops. The deaths of Devins, MacNeill and Benson and the capture of the information officer and the Vice-Brigadier were serious setbacks for the republicans in the area from which they took some time to recover: "The loss of Brigadier Devins and his companions was a very severe blow to the Brigade which had practically to be reorganised again . . . A month was spent reorganising the Brigade". To make matters worse Pilkington had fallen and broken a limb and was also out of action: "In fact the only member of the staff working during that
During October it would appear that the republicans were on the defensive and government reports were full of optimism. In a round up in north Sligo on 6 October, thirty six republicans were captured and there were also arrests in Tubbercurry and Strandhill. Apart from sporadic sniping of posts in Sligo town the only major incident there was the escape of ten prisoners from the jail which was accompanied by a general attack with rifles, machine guns and rifle grenades on all the government posts in Sligo town. A Western Command report said: "Everywhere our troops have gone they have gained the sympathy of the people. The people are coming out, building bridges and repairing roads". This reopening of roads seems to have taken place especially in the Skreen-Collooney area. A report of 4 November said that Carty had lost men due to desertion caused by "harrying and chasing" by government troops and claimed that most of Sligo was clear apart from some groups operating as highwaymen more than as flying columns. A weekly appreciation of the situation of 6 November reported that "On the whole this Divisional area is fairly clear of irregulars. Carty's column is dwindling. It is reported most of his men have gone home". Some evidence from the other side seems to agree that this was a low point in the fortunes of the republicans. According to Martin Brennan people began to be hostile to them in autumn 1922: "It looked by their conduct that the people there thought we were beaten". "During this time [September 23 - November 4] we found it impossible to lie in ambush for any length of time especially on the Tubbercurry-Ballymote road owing to the activity of enemy spies" they reported and their activities were confined to destroying communications and sniping enemy posts. Attempts to repair the Sligo-Claremorris railway line during late November proved futile. Rails were torn up at Curry and Collooney, signal boxes were destroyed at Sligo and Collooney. Repaired

67 O/C 3rd Western Division to C/S IRA, 28 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(45).
68 Report from Conroy, 6 Oct. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).
70 Report from Boyle, 4 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
71 Report on The Enemy, 4 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
72 Weekly Appreciation of Situation, 6 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/ Ops/7(b).
73 S.I. & S.C., 14 Oct. 1922; Martin Brennan, O'MN, P17b/133; MP, P7/B/114.
74 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17).
bridges at Curry and Drumcliff were again demolished during October. Drumcliff bridge had been repaired in September, was damaged again 14 October, repaired by locals assembled by the parish priest on 23 October and demolished again on 28 October - "Our troops compelled the people who built it up to knock it down again".

The Provisional Government forces failed to take full advantage of this lull in enemy activity because of continuing problems with morale, organisation, supplies and equipment. Headquarters blamed administration in the Command, Command officers blamed lack of support from Headquarters and especially shortages of ammunition and transport. A Western Command meeting at the end of October reported that "area is well in hand" but also reiterated complaints about neglect in sending 200 rifles and two machine guns which had been requested, and said that transport in the area was also bad. McCabe reported on 7 November 1922 that "Carty is making a circuit of the Tubbercurry area leaving a trail of blood behind" and stated that it was impossible to follow him as the troops were short of ammunition, rifles and transport, instancing that at Ballymote there were only twenty six rifles for a garrison of fifty men. There were also shortages of ammunition at Ballymote, Tubbercurry, Markree, Collooney, Ballisodare and Sligo. A report for Commandant General Farrelly dated 17 November said "We cannot move from our barracks for the reason that we have neither transport or ammunition. We have plenty men of the best material possible but as we are we are helpless. During a recent raid after forces under Carty a column of ours went out with 15 rounds per man". The official view from headquarters was that much of the problem was caused by internal difficulties. In October Mulcahy wrote to MacEoin pointing out that only sixty men had been sent from his command to the Curragh for training whereas he had expected a number in the region of 1,000. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the progress being made by the command: "Personally I cannot sense that there is any solid administration or organisation over the area pressing back the forces of disorder there . . . The people of the area feel that no impression in being made on the situation . . . A re-organisation of the area is absolutely

75 Daily Operations Report, 20 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b); S.C., 18 Nov. 1922.
76 1st Brigade Diary, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(27).
77 Phone message from MacEoin, 24 Oct. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/74.
78 Reports Officer 3rd Western Division to Reports Officer Western Command, 7 Nov. 1922, MacEoin Papers, C57/9; Also in AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/114.
79 Report Capt. Henry to O/C 3rd Western Division, 17 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
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essential." A report of December 1922 mentioned "the comparative inactivity of the [government] troops" in the Western Command area and said "there is a need for . . . greater discipline and efficiency". The report went on: "In the 3rd Western Division there is much destructive activity on the part of the irregulars, telegraph poles being cut down in the Sligo area. No activity of any moment on the part of the troops is reported from this division".  

A local doctor reported to the President that government intelligence in the Sligo area was very poor and that there seemed to be no administration done in the Command: "Columns of 15 and 20 and even up to 50 go on raids but apparently without any direct objective and suggests that our intelligence there is altogether a farce".

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By early November the anti-Treaty forces appear to have reorganised. Eight republicans had been arrested on 1 November in a government round-up near Tubbercurry and Carty, obviously considering that members of his column had been informed on, took drastic action. On the night of 5 November he had two men shot dead as spies in the area. It was claimed by his adjutant that they had not received the General Order about spies by that time and that the Divisional Command had approved of the killings. In army activity as a result of these deaths a civilian was accidentally killed and a republican shot dead while trying to escape. Liam Lynch on reading the press reports of these killings wrote to Pilkington demanding an investigation claiming that "General Order No. 6 has not been complied with" and ordering that "the officer or officers responsible will be suspended pending further instruction after full facts are investigated". No action was however taken by Pilkington or any higher authority. General Order No. 6 which had been issued on 4

80 C-in-C to MacEoin, 19 Oct. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/74.
81 Appreciation of situation up to 31 Dec. 1922, MA, Radio and Phone Reports, CW/R/4.
82 Interview with MO Garrison, Sligo, 21 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/75.
83 List of successful activities, 21 Oct.-1 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/ Ops/7(b).
84 S.C., S.I. & CM., 11 Nov. 1922; 4th Brigade Diary of activities. AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17); Report by McCabe, 5 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b); Report by McCabe, 7 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/114; Report by Reports Officer, 3rd Western Division, 7 Nov. 1922, MacEoin Papers, C57/18A.
85 C/S IRA to O/C 3rd Western Division, 9 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(48).
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September 1922 related to spies and stated that all those charged with espionage must be tried by military courts set up by the Brigade Commandant and that death sentences should only be passed where the information given to the enemy resulted in the death of a Volunteer. All death sentences had to be confirmed by GHQ before being carried out.86

The killings by Carty had an immediate effect. Eight Tubbercurry inhabitants fled to Markree Castle post for refuge and McCabe reported that "there are crowds of refugees coming in from the terrorised areas to Ballymote and Tubbercurry barracks".87 For the remainder of the year Carty's column was very active. Sniping at Tubbercurry was a regular occurrence and a more serious attack on the post in the town took place on 22 December. A car carrying government troops was ambushed on 30 November at Powellsboro outside Tubbercurry and two soldiers killed.88 On 14 December the column held up a train near Kilfree, disarmed some government troops on the train and sent the engine out of control towards Sligo in an attempt to wreck the line.89 In the first fortnight of December Carty's men were reported as being very active in the area disrupting communications, raiding mail cars and commandeering transport.90 Attacks were made on Collooney Barracks and on Markree Castle at the end of December.91

By early December the north Sligo republicans also seemed to have moved back on the offensive. A small group captured and held the Town Hall government position for some hours, killing a soldier who resisted arrest. They then escaped with twenty one rifles, four revolvers and 1,300 rounds of ammunition.92 This event caused considerable

86 It was superseded by General Order No. 12 re spies on 24 November 1922. Instead of having to be ratified by GHQ the sentence had now to be ratified by the Divisional Commandant. (AD UCD, Twomey Papers, P69/1 (7) & (16).)
87 Daily Operations Report, 17 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b); Report by McCabe, 7 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/114.
88 4th Brigade Diary of activities, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17); Telephone message from Conroy, 30 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b); Report from I/O Sligo, 30 Nov. 1922, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6.
89 4th Brigade Diary of Activities for Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops /7(a); Report from I/O Boyle, 15 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/ 7(c); Frank Carty Statement, NLI, Collins Papers, p914;
90 Report from I/O Sligo, 15 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); Report from HQRS Western Command, 18 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).
91 Daily Operations Report, 27 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
92 S.C. & S.I., 16 Dec. 1922; Report O/C 1st Brigade to O/C 3rd Western Division, 10 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(3); Report by Divisional I/O, Sligo, 11 Dec. 1922, MacEoin Papers, C57/18A; Letter to prisoner J.
embarrassment to the authorities and an enquiry was held: it reported that a garrison of seventy five troops was not sufficient for a town of Sligo's size.\textsuperscript{93} The harrying of government forces in Sligo town reached its climax with the almost total destruction of Sligo Railway station on the night of 10 January 1923 in a well planned operation carried out by forty republicans. This event attracted unfavourable national coverage and it was alleged that the troops in the town had been very slow to respond. It was pointed out in their defence that their effective strength on the night was seventy.\textsuperscript{94}

In a survey of the north-west Sligo area by an unnamed army officer in December 1922 it was stated that the republicans controlled the entire area between Ballina and Ballisodare: "They move about as they please and they commandeer everything they require . . . Column work from Ballina is useless as all Irregulars get timely warning and clear out". Sentries posted on the hills could give warnings of any troop movements. "Every day the irregulars are strengthening their position and recruiting more men", he went on. If things remained as they were, the irregulars might be worn down in two years but his opinion was that they were actually strengthening their position: "You cannot hold the country as things are being done at present". He blamed the methods adopted in combating the enemy, the procedure for paying the troops, and the lack of supplies and uniforms. His suggestions for a quick solution of the problems in that Sligo area included utilising a force of 5,000 men with flawless transport and equipment and ensuring the utmost secrecy.\textsuperscript{95} The former was unlikely to be made available and the latter was impossible to guarantee.

By the end of the year republican columns continued to operate in the same areas as they had done since the outbreak of the war. A column of twenty to thirty operated in the Ballintrillick area of north Sligo, and the Calry area near Sligo town was frequented by about twenty led by Pilkington who had been previously at Rahelly. Bofin’s column of about twenty still ranged over south-east Sligo and Carty was operating in the Ox

\textsuperscript{93} Report on attack on Sligo Town Hall, 18 Dec. 1922, MacEoin Papers, C60/4.
\textsuperscript{94} S.C. & S.I., 13 & 20 Jan. 1923; 1st Brigade 3rd Western Division Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 15 Jan. 1923, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/91; Report Adj. 3rd Western Division to Western Command, 27 Feb. 1923, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7/7(a); Daily Operations Report, 12 Jan. 1923, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7/7(b); Burning of Sligo Railway Station, MA, Dept. Defence Files, A8125; Poblacht na hEireann War News, 26 Jan. 1923, NLI Microfilm Reel 52.
\textsuperscript{95} Report on north west Sligo area, 29 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/75.
Mountains area with a column of upwards of thirty men. The government forces had posts at the following places in the county in November 1922: Sligo, 211 men, Collooney 33, Markree Castle 110, Ballisodare 18, Tubbercurry 57 and Ballymote 43.

A Western Command comprising the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Western Divisions IRA had been established sometime in the early months of the war but never functioned satisfactorily. Tom Maguire, O/C 2nd Western Division later seems to have had no recollection of this: "There was no cohesion or military council formed between the provincial commanders here, Liam Pilkington of the 3rd Western, Mick Kilroy of the Fourth or myself." At a Western Command meeting on 22 November 1922 which was "principally concerned with bringing about unification of action and complete co-operation within the Command" it was reported that there was complete lack of communications between the Divisions. The meeting was adjourned until the following morning but an enemy round-up started and it was never concluded. In mid-January 1923 the Command Adjutant reported that his communications had not even been acknowledged by any of the divisions which comprised the Command. The Western Command had been without an O/C from the capture of Kilroy in November until January 1923.

As had happened during the War of Independence there was great dissatisfaction at higher levels with the frequency of reporting by the 3rd Western Division. Liam Lynch wrote to Pilkington in November 1922 complaining that very few communications from his division had been received and that no communications from headquarters had been acknowledged. He was however gracious enough to compliment the Division on its high

97 3rd Western Division strengths, Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
98 C/S IRA to O/C 3rd Western Division, 9 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(46). Liam Lynch appears to be introducing the idea to Pilkington in November 1922.
100 Report from Adj. Western Command to C/S IRA, 25 Jan.1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/31; Letter to D/E GHQ, 16 Dec. 1922, MA, Captured Documents, Lot No. 232. Four officers from the 3rd Western Division attended this meeting.
102 C/S IRA to Sean Hyde, 17 Jan. 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/31. Michael Kilroy was captured at Newport, Co. Mayo on 24 November 1922.
level of activity in the early stages of the war.\textsuperscript{103} Pilkington replied that communications had been sent to the Field General Headquarters at Mallow, Limerick and Clonmel but not to GHQ in Dublin "chiefly for the reason that I was unaware of its existence".\textsuperscript{104}

At the end of 1922 Pilkington, again reflecting what Mulcahy had called his "tendency to poor mouth and complain", reported on the situation in his division, stressing the handicaps under which he had laboured.\textsuperscript{105} He reported that the division had not at any time had a full complement of officers, there had been no munitions output because of difficulty in finding a safe place for a factory and because the munitions officer had been killed in the war, intelligence had been badly hit by defections before the war and by the arrest of the Divisional Information Officer in the north Sligo round-up, engineering was a particular problem because of the death of the Engineering Officer and the failure to find a suitable replacement, Company and Battalion organisation had been neglected, and communications were unsatisfactory in the area. However in spite of such a litany of misfortune he did manage to find some source of optimism: "I may mention that I find the civilian population generous and sympathetic in most of the area; there is no difficulty in finding billets and food for the Active Service Units. And it is my belief if our fight is maintained it won't be long until we have the people wholeheartedly with us in our struggle for the life of the REPUBLIC. (sic)"\textsuperscript{106} This optimism as regards food supplies was not shared by the O/C of two columns operating on the Ox Mountains on the Sligo/Mayo border who in January 1923 reported difficulty in obtaining food. The poor people among whom they were billeted had little food, the supplies in villages such as Enniscrone and Easkey were becoming exhausted, roads were blocked so that traders were having difficulty obtaining supplies, and large towns like Ballina which had been good sources of food and provisions were being heavily garrisoned. "The food item is the worst item we have to face" the report said.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{103} C/S to O/C 3rd Western Division, 9 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(46).
\textsuperscript{104} O/C 3rd Western Division to C/S, 28 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(45).
\textsuperscript{105} C/S to Sligo O/C, 6 June 1921, Mulcahy Papers, AD UCD P7/A/19.
\textsuperscript{106} O/C 3rd Western Division to C/S, 10 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(39).
\textsuperscript{107} Report on food supplies to O/C 4th Western Division, 20 Jan. 1923, MA, Captured Documents, Lot No. 11.
A reorganisation of the government army command structure in January 1923 saw County Sligo come under three Command areas. The area north of the Ox Mountains including Sligo town was transferred to Donegal Command, the rest of the county was under Claremorris Command except for a smaller area in the south east of the county under Athlone Command. Since Donegal was almost free of republican military activity and the Command was free to concentrate on the Sligo area these changes seem to have led to a more determined and effective policy of dealing with the republican columns. Their strongholds were repeatedly combed often in combined Claremorris and Donegal command operations resulting in arrests or the columns having to lie low. In February and March a number of leading republican activists were captured or killed. Sniping at towns was reported during February to April but the only incident of note was an attack on Tubbercurry in which one Free State soldier was killed. The 4th Brigade reported having to lie low during the period 2-15 February owing to activities of the Claremorris Command and six of their men were captured and one killed during this interval. A report from the 1st Brigade, 3rd Western Division at the end of January said "Since this area has been handed over to the Northern Command under General Sweeney the enemy has been very active. They are raiding the country constantly in large bodies". In March 1923 a meeting arranged between 4th Brigade officers and 2nd (Collooney) Battalion staff could not be held because of enemy activity.

Activities by IRA groups at this time tended to be those such as destruction of

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108 Army Orders, General Routine Orders No. 4, Reorganisation of Commands, MA. This reorganisation came into effect on 20 Jan. 1923.
109 Report, 26 Mar. 1923, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/130; Martin Brennan, O'MN, P17b/133; Report 25 Mar. 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(o); Operation Reports, 17 Feb. & 26 Mar. 1923, MA, Claremorris Command Papers, CW/Ops/4(d); S.C., 7 Apr. 1923. These included Coleman, Ballymote, Brennan and Ginty, Tubbercurry and Bofin, Arigna who were captured, and Brehony and Geoghegan, Collooney who were killed.
110 S.C., 3 Feb. 1923.
111 4th Brigade Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 15 Feb. 1923, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a).
112 1st Brigade Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 31 Jan. 1923, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a).
113 Letter Adj. 4th Brigade to O/C 3rd Battalion, 21 Mar. 1923, MA, Captured documents, Lot No. 30/2a.
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civilian property and communications which involved little risk to themselves.\textsuperscript{114} For instance the diary of activities of the 1st Brigade for the fortnight ending 15 February 1923 reports only eight minor activities including five telegraph wire cutting or road trenching operations, one raid on a mail train, one sniping at an enemy post and one raid on a post office.\textsuperscript{115} In the period to the end of April there were fourteen instances of private houses being bombed or burned in the county, all but one by anti-Treaty forces. One house was burned by Free State troops as a reprisal for a republican house burning and two were burned to prevent occupation by Free State forces.\textsuperscript{116} The others were houses of Free State supporters.\textsuperscript{117} "This action had the desired effect especially in that area", said a republican report on a house burning in February.\textsuperscript{118} Communications continued to be a target of the republicans and the main Dublin to Sligo railway line was attacked a number of times. Attempts were made to badly damage the line by runaway trains during and at the end of January and at the end of March.\textsuperscript{119} Signal cabins were burned at Kilfree, Carrignagat and at Coolaney.\textsuperscript{120} Free State troops began to repair bridges and clear roads as they penetrated more regularly into the republican areas and few reports of destruction occur after the end of March.\textsuperscript{121}

Reports indicate that the 3rd Western Division IRA had continued strength in numbers and armaments; in mid-March the division was said to have had 400 men on active service and 1,300 reliable men on roll, 300 Lee Enfield rifles with 15,000 rounds of ammunition, four Lewis guns, one Vickers and one Thompson machine gun.\textsuperscript{122} This high

\textsuperscript{114} Particulars of Residences destroyed in Area, 1st Jan. to 28 Feb. 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, 3rd Western Division Material, P69/33; Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 28 Feb. 1923, 4th Brigade 3rd Western Division, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a); S.C., 3 & 10 Mar. 1923.

\textsuperscript{115} Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 15 Feb. 1923, 1st Brigade, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30.

\textsuperscript{116} Êire, 7 July 1923; Interview with Willie Frizzelle, 14 Aug. 1987.

\textsuperscript{117} Burning of Gilmartin’s house in Grange. Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 15 March 1923, 1st Brigade, 3rd Western Division, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30.

\textsuperscript{118} Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 28 Feb. 1923, 4th Brigade 3rd Western Division, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a).

\textsuperscript{119} Report, 27 Mar. 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(o); S.C., 27 Jan., 3 Feb. & 31 Mar. 1923.

\textsuperscript{120} Report, 19 Mar. 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(o).

\textsuperscript{121} S.C., 17 Mar. 1923.

\textsuperscript{122} Report on Western Command, 17 Mar. 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30.
level of armament together with relative lack of action angered IRA Chief of Staff Liam Lynch who wrote: "What is the cause of the comparative inactivity throughout area? Are all rifles in 3rd Western manned? . . . I cannot make out what they are doing . . . You must press that all rifles are manned; rifles if necessary to be sent to the 2nd Western and used." Later in the same month he said "Our position in this area appears to be very strong though the enemy had a good number of posts in it. You should press for more activity. The enemy garrisons in many cases only 40, 60 to 80 men. If all our forces on active service are properly organised into columns and well led they should be able to make things very hot for the enemy". In a letter in May 1923 about the poor state of armaments in the 4th Western Division Lynch said "You should get the 3rd Western Command to give them a little help also, as they are very well off; in fact better off than we are". His faith in the ability of the western divisions to turn the tide in the war seems to have rested on these reports of their level of manpower and armament and the hope that they would shake off their apparent lethargy and seriously engage the enemy.

Government troops continued to mount large scale sweeps of areas frequented by the IRA. These resulted in a few arrests or deaths of the enemy rather than any large scale captures but the cumulative effect was to severely limit any offensive activity on the part of the republicans and to hold them in constant fear of attack with few areas now being regarded as safe havens. Operations in the Arigna area commenced on 15 February and resulted in few arrests. A March round-up in the area was more fruitful and resulted in the capture of the leader, E.J. Bofin. Donegal command reported that during the period 6-13 April 1923 in combination with Claremorris command they had repeatedly combed the Dromore West and Skreen areas of the Ox Mountains between Ballisodare and Ballina for the first time and that while they had captured very few republicans they had deprived the guerillas of a hitherto secure base. The anti-Treaty adjutant estimated that about 1,100

124 C/S IRA to O/C Western Command, 23 Mar. 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30.
125 C/S IRA to O/C Western Command, 3 May 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30.
126 For Lynch's hopes see Hopkinson, Green against Green, p. 236.
127 Report, 26 Mar. 1923, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/130; Report 25 Mar. 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(o).
128 Operation Order No. 2, Operation in Dromore West area, undated but refers to Easter Sunday, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6; Report on Operations in Dromore
Free State troops took part in this operation from all the garrison towns in the area as well as some from Dublin and Athlone. About eleven anti-Treaty activists were captured. There were still complaints on the Free State side of the calibre of the newer recruits: "Most of the men in this party . . . were hopeless marchers and useless for further operations." These gains were consolidated by the establishment of three new government posts in this area by the first week in May.

Columns were still in existence in three areas, along the Ox Mountains where Carty's column was said to number about twenty men, in the Riverstown area where the column was now no more than five or six strong and in the north Sligo area where numbers were estimated at ten to fifteen. Athlone Command reports for April on south east Sligo area claimed that the morale of the republicans there was very low and that "their organisation is completely broken". They were reported as moving about in very small groups and that their activities were confined to looting, post office raids, road blocking and cutting of telegraph wires. A report from Donegal Command confirmed the low morale among anti-Treaty forces. A Claremorris report said: "The people are becoming very friendly to the troops and are now feeling more secure as practically every town in the area is now garrisoned".

IRA Chief of Staff, Frank Aiken, issued his call for the dumping of arms by republican forces on 24 May. According to Tom Scanlon, the position of the anti-Treaty forces in Sligo at the cease-fire was stronger than it had been at the end of the Tan war. He had two columns under arms at the time consisting of about fifty men, he said, adding that Pilkington was also against the cease-fire. Pilkington himself reported:

West area, 14 Apr. 1923, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6; Operation Report, 14 Apr. 1923, MA, Claremorris Command Papers, CW/Ops/4(d); Report 21 Apr. 1923, MA, Dept Defence Files, A/8083.

Report Adj. 3rd Western Division to O/C Western Command, 16 Apr. 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30. The report includes the following statement: "With 4 exceptions not a single volunteer was captured."

Operation Report, 14 Apr. 1923, MA, Claremorris Command Papers, CW/Ops/4(d);

The new posts were Aclare with c. 80 government troops, Enniscrone 60 and Dromore West 73. (Inspection Reports, 9 & 25 May 1923, MA, LA/10; Éire, 7 July 1923).

Operation Report, 14 Apr. 1923, MA, Claremorris Command Papers, CW/Ops/4(d); Report, 27 Apr. 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(n).


Report, 1 May 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(n).

Fortnightly Report, 2 June 1923, MA, Dept Defence Files, A8079.

Thomas Scanlon, O'MN, P17B/133.
Although the feelings and opinions of all ranks in the Division were against the decision calling off the war and dumping the arms, still the orders enforcing this decision have been faithfully and effectively carried out . . . The prospect of getting money enough locally to meet our needs is not very encouraging as owing to all the demands of the past years on the sources at our disposal these have been bled white, dried up they are now. 137

By the end of May Donegal Command could report that conditions in its area were practically normal with no sign of their presence being shown by any of the republican columns.138 In a 26 May report mention is made of two large scale operations by government troops, one in the north Sligo and the other along the Ox Mountains. No arrests were made and there was no contact with the enemy. "All their energies are concentrated in keeping out of reach of the troops", the report stated. It also stated that the attitude of the people was improving and that more information was being supplied to the Free State forces.139 A Claremorris Command report for 2 June stated that "all irregular arms seem to be dumped".140 Reports for the rest of June emphasise the deterioration of the republican columns: "In the Sligo area especially conditions seem to be improving rapidly and in the area along the Ox Mountains which was the only important irregular stronghold in the area the irregular organisation is going to pieces completely . . . In no part of the area have irregulars given any indications of their presence".141 By July 1923 the Civic Guards could report that Sligo county as a whole was in a satisfactory condition and was rapidly recovering from lawlessness.142

Two of the main leaders of the IRA in the county still remained at large, William Pilkington was captured in August 1923 but Frank Carty was never arrested. In all about fifty-four persons lost their lives as a result of the Civil War in County Sligo. Of these, twenty were members of the government army, twenty three members of the anti-Treaty forces and eleven were civilians. A quarter of the army deaths were accidental and point to

137Pilkington to C/S IRA, 15 June 1923, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/30(7).
139General Weekly Survey, 26 May 1923, MA, Dept Defence Files, A8083.
140Fortnightly Report, 2 June 1923, MA, Dept Defence Files, A8079.
142Civic Guards Monthly Report July 1923, MA, Dept Defence Files, A8454;
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The fact that the soldiers were by and large inexperienced. Only two IRA deaths were accidental and almost half of the civilians who died did so as a result of accidents. By far the greater proportion of the deaths occurred during the first months of the war, twenty in July, six in August and twelve in September 1922. There were only eight war related deaths during the period January to May 1923.143

Conclusion.

Neither of the protagonists in the Civil War in county Sligo was at any time strong enough to inflict a decisive defeat on its opponent. Initially the republican side had the advantage of superior numbers and posts in the county but lack of co-ordinated action and clear strategy rendered them ineffective and after some initial gains they merely waited to be attacked or threatened by government troops. When thus confronted the IRA either abandoned or were driven out of their town posts and took up the more familiar and apparently more comfortable role of guerilla fighters. The government forces were not strong enough or secure enough in their occupation of the towns and surrounding areas to seriously threaten the IRA at this time and stalemate followed. It required large sweeps by the combined forces of MacEoin and Lawlor in September to break the concentration of the IRA in north Sligo. While this offensive by the government forces achieved much it failed to deliver a knock-out blow. Both sides continued to concentrate on defensive strategies with the government side hampered by poor organisation and morale, insufficient training and difficulties with supplies. Survival rather than offensive action was the priority of the IRA and the ineffectiveness of the army meant that survival was relatively easy. When one side inflicted a severe blow to the other as with the burning of Sligo Railway Station by the IRA or the north Sligo sweep by the Provisional Government forces that side seemed unable to follow up the victory with a series of decisive actions. The army re-organisation of January 1923 improved the situation to some degree and from then they had greater, if still limited, success. The republicans on the other hand failed to co-operate to any significant degree and did not develop any meaningful offensive

143 Casualty figures were compiled from reports in local newspaper, 3rd Western Division reports in Twomey Papers, Western Command correspondence in Mulcahy Papers, Operation and Intelligence files in the Military Archives as well as the incomplete but useful Roll of Deceased Personnel in the latter archive.
strategy. The government side were thus given as much time as they needed to build up their forces and they gradually wore down the IRA as they captured significant leaders, slowly encroached on previous republican strongholds and allowed normality to return to most of the county. The sweep of Tireragh in May 1923 penetrated the last secure fastness of the guerillas but did not result in any significant captures. It was clear at least from early 1923 that the IRA in Sligo had no hope of victory but it was also clear that the Free State army was not capable of finishing off the enemy within a short period of time. Most of the IRA leadership in the county were against the cease fire believing that they could survive indefinitely. The Civil War which had begun dramatically in County Sligo with armed confrontation in the streets of the towns and an artillery bombardment of Collooney ended with a whimper as the few bands of surviving republicans who sporadically carried out small scale nuisance operations dumped their arms and continued to evade as far as possible the government troops.
5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN COUNTY SLIGO 1920-1923.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the origins and course of the conflict which developed between rival groups within Sligo Local Government bodies during the period from the local elections in May 1920 to the end of the Civil War and to investigate the extent to which this division presaged the Civil War split. The degree to which this was a conflict between the centralising tendency of the Dáil Local Government Board and the parochialism of local politicians will also be explored as will the role of the IRA in Sligo local politics. Examination of the voting records of the councillors should show if a group consistently voted together on different issues, though it would be too much to expect complete solidarity. There would surely be those who refused to take sides or tried to play along with both sides for reasons of expediency. In many of the issues such as appointments of officials one would expect local considerations to outweigh other factors at times. It should also be possible to ascertain how organised and cohesive the separate groups were and to what extent they had developed strategies and agendas, rather than an instantaneous reaction to events and personalities in the conduct of the council’s business.

May 1920 - June 1921.

As a starting point in the discussion of the divisions in local government it makes sense to look at the selection of candidates and election of councillors for the May 1920 local elections. Sinn Féin was the dominant republican organisation at that time and the candidates were chosen by meetings of the Sinn Féin clubs in the electoral areas and then ratified by the Comhairle Ceantair.1 Twenty Sinn Féin candidates were selected for the twenty seats and there were twelve non-Sinn Féin candidates who variously styled themselves independent Sinn Féin, ratepayers candidates and independents. Two of these withdrew before polling day, at least one as a result of having been visited by armed and masked men and told that the seat was needed for the republic. In all cases the Sinn Féin candidates were elected.2 Those returned for Sinn Féin were not a homogeneous group.3

Local Government in Co. Sligo.

The growth of Sinn Féin and its political dominance meant that it encompassed many shades of nationalist opinion and this was reflected in the personnel successful, which included two who had previously been Nationalist Party councillors. The Sligo town political activists who had supported Sinn Féin from an early stage were represented by J.J. Clancy who was elected chairman and Dudley M. Hanley, a prosperous Sligo businessman who had been elected the first Sinn Féin Mayor of Sligo in 1917. Only two of those elected, Jack Brennan and Alex McCabe, became senior officers in the IRA or played a prominent part in that organisation.

Elections to the four Rural District Councils in County Sligo also took place in May 1920 and Sinn Féin won all those seats. The chairmen of these RDCs were entitled to become ex-officio members of the County Council and of these four chairmen three, Jim Hunt, Frank Carty and Frank O'Beirne, were to become very active IRA officers during the war. There were two others to be nominated by the relevant Comhairle Ceantair to the County Council, one from North and one from South Sligo. Sligo Brigade IRA asked the North Sligo Comhairle Ceantair to nominate the Commandant of the Grange Battalion IRA, Seamus Devins, and they did this. For South Sligo Michael Marren, Commandant of the Ballymote Battalion, was nominated and it is fair to assume that this was also done at the request of the Sligo Brigade. Even at this early stage the IRA assumed the right to be directly represented on elected bodies and was prepared to demand this. Thus while the election of councillors resulted in few high ranking IRA members being selected, the subsequent co-options and nominations resulted in many of the more active of the IRA commandants becoming councillors.

Some of those who were elected or co-opted were not primarily interested in council politics but saw the elections and membership of the council as an essential part of the

3 Biographical details from various sources including local newspapers 1914-1921 and John C. McTernan, Worthies of Sligo (Sligo, 1994).
5 McCabe, on being arrested, was replaced by Michael Marren as commandant of the Ballymote Battalion, never regained the position and did not play a major part in the military side of the movement during the remainder of the war. (List of Sligo Brigade officers, undated, MA, Collins Papers, A/0747(29)).
6 S.C., 12 June 1920.
7 O/C of Collooney Battalion.
8 Minutes of meeting 13 June 1920, North Sligo Comhairle Ceantair Sinn Féin Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library.
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take-over from the discredited Nationalist Party and of the fight against Britain. In June 1922 Jim Hunt resigned both the chairmanship of and his seat on Coolavin RDC, saying that he was not a politician: "We were put in as Volunteers to fight against the Local Government Board. Only for that I wouldn't have anything to do with it".10 During the Truce Carty and Devins made similar statements. Carty "reminded his hearers that he was not a man of words but as perhaps others knew, a man of action", while Devins was quoted as saying that "he did not happen to belong to the side of the organisation from which the speeches came".11 These statements may partly have been the rationalisation of a position which developed after 1920 but they do cast light on the attitude of some councillors towards the democratic process of local government. "Men of words" were implicitly less patriotic and less to be trusted than the "men of action".

The fact that the Sinn Féin members elected in 1920 were not a homogeneous group is not surprising in itself nor does it necessarily follow that a split was inevitable. However it does suggest that a division was possible and that one possible line of fraction was between those who were interested in politics per se, and those who were primarily interested in the struggle against England which was to be waged by whatever methods were available. If the genesis of a division in the ranks of the councillors is to be traced to the members elected and co-opted in 1920, then the development of that division must have been helped by the way the struggle for independence evolved in the period between 1920 and the Truce. Those members of the council who were active IRA members went on the run and/or were arrested and were thus unable to attend council meetings. It was impossible to function prominently as a politician and a gunman, and the politicians rather than the military men were generally the only attenders at council meetings in late 1920 and early 1921. This meant that IRA leaders like Carty, Hunt, Devins and Marren were unable to attend and influence council decisions.12 They had to either depend on and trust those who did attend or use other means to influence decisions.

The new County Council did little to deserve distrust. In common with most local bodies throughout the twenty-six counties, at its first meeting it unanimously declared its allegiance to Dáil Éireann and cut its links with the Local Government Board. In retaliation

10 S.C., 24 June 1922.
12 Not all of these took the Republican side in the Civil War. Marren had died during the truce and Hunt became an officer in the Provisional Government army.

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that Board refused to pay the usual grants leaving the council in severe financial difficulties; these were exacerbated by rate payers taking advantage of the disturbed conditions to refuse to pay rates. Those councillors who regularly attended tried their best to keep the county institutions functioning in very difficult circumstances, and in desperation the councillors asked the IRA to help in collecting the rates. "There seemed no other way out", the Dáil Local Government Department Inspector later reported. The IRA recovered £8,000 from rate collectors who had been refusing to pay this to the council. They then demanded the sum of £1,000 as poundage for their services, but this was refused on the basis that they had not actually collected the rates. The chairman of the County Council, J.J. Clancy, met the IRA in early 1921 and on his own responsibility offered them £500. This they refused and told him to have £1,000 ready "by a certain time or take the consequences". Clancy paid the money, apparently to R.G. Bradshaw who acted for the IRA in the matter. This affair was investigated by the Local Government Department in the post-Truce period and it appears that the IRA were ordered to refund the money. Meetings on the matter between the Ministers for Defence and Local Government, the Chief of Staff and some of the Sligo officers in late 1921 resulted in the Local Government Department reducing the amount to be repaid by the IRA first to £800 and later to £250. This reduced amount had not been repaid by March 1922 and it appears never to have been paid. The Local Government Department reimbursed the balance of £750 to the council.

J.J. Clancy resigned his seat on the County Council Committee of Agriculture in April 1921 "owing to circumstances over which he had no control" and the council accepted this with regret. A member said that "in all the circumstances he thought the council could only accept the resignation". Clancy was described by the Dáil inspector in late 1921 as being under a cloud "from which he is unable to clear himself". All this suggests that his handling of the IRA demand for payment for collection of rates landed

14 EC to Chief of Inspection, 23 Nov. 1921, NA, DELG 26/9.
15 Inspector to Chief of Inspection, 23 Oct. 1921, NA, DELG 26/9
16 C/S to Sligo Brigade Commandant, 16 June 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19.
17 Cosgrave to Carty and Devins, 1 Nov. 1921, NA, DELG 26/9; Dáil Éireann Loc. Gov. report for 1921, 28 Apr. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/63.
18 CM., 2 Apr. 1921.
19 Inspector to Chief of Inspection, 16 Nov. 1921, NA, DELG 26/9.
him in trouble, both with the IRA because of his initial refusal and with other councillors since it appears that they were unaware of the reason for the missing £1,000. Clancy, the sitting TD for North Sligo, was not reselected for the 1921 election and it seems that the main reason for this was the trouble concerning the £1000. According to the RIC County Inspector, Clancy's omission was due to the fact that he was "not extreme enough", which points to his not satisfying IRA criteria.\textsuperscript{20}

At the 1918 election the Sinn Féin candidates had been chosen by the Sinn Féin Comhairle Ceantair but by the general election of 1921 an active network of Sinn Féin clubs no longer existed in County Sligo and the selections were made by the IRA commandants.\textsuperscript{21} Those selected were high ranking county IRA officers including William Pilkington, O/C Sligo Brigade, Seamus Devins, O/C Grange Battalion, and Tom O'Donnell, adjutant Gurteen Battalion. Alex McCabe, outgoing, was re-nominated. Pilkington withdrew and Frank Carty, O/C Tubbercurry Battalion, was nominated in his place.\textsuperscript{22} The Sinn Féin nominees were elected without a contest. These selections show that the power on the republican side had passed from the Sinn Féin clubs to the IRA leadership and that that leadership considered that they themselves should be involved politically. Because there were no other local elections in the county after May 1920 the composition of the County Council reflected to a lesser degree the ascendancy of the IRA; and this was a source of tension and possible conflict.

Very little dissension was reported among those councillors who could attend meetings during this period. Whatever tension existed was between those who were able to attend and those who were not. When some vacancies on Sligo County Council had to be filled by co-option a meeting was held in the mountains near Coolaney in March 1921 for the purpose.\textsuperscript{23} Meetings were normally held in the council chamber in Sligo town and it seems that a remote location was chosen in this instance to allow councillors on the run to

\textsuperscript{20} SCI RIC May 1921 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/115.
\textsuperscript{21} S.C., 28 Sept. 1918. The new five seat constituency of Sligo and Mayo East was created for the 1921 election.
\textsuperscript{22} S.C., 14 May 1921.
\textsuperscript{23} Two county councillors, vice-chairman Sean MacMorrow and Dudley M. Hanley former republican Mayor of the town, resigned from the County Council in early 1921. No explanation for their resignations was given in any of the local newspapers. Hanley remained a member of Sligo Corporation and took the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War. (CM., 22 Jan. & 12 Feb. 1921.)
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attend and to ensure that the co-options would be to their satisfaction.24 The obvious inference was that they could not trust the regular attenders in this matter. Three men were co-opted, one of whom, Michael Nevin, was to become "the IRA spokesman" on the council.25 The situation on Sligo Corporation was different in that there were a number of non-Sinn Féin councillors on that body though it generally functioned with a Sinn Féin majority. Luke Gilligan, a Sinn Féin member, had been arrested in November 1920 and charged with possession of a revolver and ammunition. He recognised the court and pleaded not guilty. This plea was successful but on his release and return to Sligo he was forced to resign his seat because of his recognition of the court.26

Although no clearly defined split had developed in the County Council by the time of the truce it was already clear that tensions existed between the active non-attending IRA and those who had been able to attend council meetings. The IRA group had endeavoured to exert some control over the council and its workings during that difficult year. The question now was what effect these divisions would have on the operation of the council in peacetime when the IRA councillors would be free to attend and influence council business by their oratory and their votes. The emerging divisions needed to be healed; if not deeper divisions might ensue. During the early part of 1921 friction and bad feeling had arisen between IRA Headquarters and the local Brigade on the question of criticism of the Sligo IRA for inactivity, for infrequent and poor quality reporting, and for the corresponding unhappiness of the local officers with the level of support from Headquarters.27 This was likely to increase the Sligo IRA's distrust of central authority and its determination to exercise control over county affairs both political and military.

The major divisions which very soon became apparent were centred in the first instance on three issues; the relatively minor matter of whether a council employee should be dismissed or not, the more far-reaching question of whether the Dáil Local Government Board amalgamation scheme should be adopted as proposed, and thirdly the issue of IRA

25 This term was actually used by the Local Government Inspector. (Inspector to Chief of Inspection, 23 Oct. 1921, NA, DELG 26/9.) A solution of sorts to enforced absenteeism was attempted in July 1921 when instructions were received from councillors who were unable to attend naming persons to be their substitutes. (Minutes of meeting 9 July 1921, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library; S.I., 16 July 1921.)
26 Bradshaw to I/O HQRS, 23 Sept. 1921, MA, Collins Papers, A/0747.
27 See Chapter 1, pp. 30-32.
interference in and dictation to the County Council. All were issues of control, centralism and patronage. Eventually these divisions were to be reflected in the division on the question of the Treaty. These three strands of disagreement of course proceeded simultaneously in the County Council, but in the interests of clarity I will dealt separately with them.

Dismissal of Frank Jinks.

The apparent unanimity and agreement among those on the Sinn Féin side was publicly broken by editorials in the Connachtman of 16 and 23 July 1921, which bitterly attacked chairman James Gilligan's conduct of a special meeting of the County Council on 9 July.28 The matter under discussion at that meeting was something which would divide the councillors during the next nine months for it was to be discussed and voted upon again and again. Frank Jinks, the son of former Nationalist councillor John Jinks, had been appointed temporary clerk in the office of the county council in 1916. Three years later he was made permanent. This was later described by the local government inspector as "a piece of downright jobbery."29 In October 1920 a special meeting had been held to discuss the serious financial situation in which the council found itself as a result of the stoppage of grants from the Local Government Board. As part of the cost-cutting exercises some officials including Frank Jinks were made redundant. At the time the Connachtman opposed this suggesting that it would have been better to reduce the pay of the County Secretary than to dismiss a junior official.30 Jinks however remained on in the office in place of one of the other clerks who had been arrested.31 This clerk was released sometime in May 1921 and at a meeting in June a resolution proposed by James Gilligan was passed dispensing with Jinks' service. On 9 July 1921, Michael Nevin proposed that Jinks be reinstated. In an editorial on the same day the Connachtman suggested that the reason for

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28 Minutes of meeting 9 July 1921, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library; CM., 23 July 1921. James Gilligan had been elected chairman of the County Council in accordance with the understanding that the previous vice-chairman would be automatically chosen as chairman.


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Jinks' dismissal was his father's politics. "We dismiss as unthinkable any suggestion that the son should be saddled with responsibility for the actions or words of his father" it said, and went on to repeat the proposal that the salary of the secretary be reduced instead.\textsuperscript{32} The chairman, James Gilligan, refused to accept Nevin's proposal on the grounds that it was not in conformity with standing orders and the next issue of the \textit{Connachtman} ran the headline "Chairman adopts Subterfuge to defeat Colr. Nevin's Motion", and printed editorials in this and its following issue attacking Gilligan as "incapable of carrying out the duties of chairman with impartiality or efficiency".\textsuperscript{33}

The question of Jinks' position was then referred to the Local Government Department.\textsuperscript{34} The attitude of that Department was that Jinks was needed in the office and although not competent when first appointed had become so in the meantime. It suggested that he be appointed on three months probation.\textsuperscript{35} When this came before the council in August a proposal that the previous decision to dispense with his services be adhered to was carried. Gilligan defended himself against the attack in the \textit{Connachtman} and some other councillors including Martin Roddy strongly supported him.\textsuperscript{36} A subsequent \textit{Connachtman} editorial attacked Gilligan's conduct of the council meeting of 27 August, claiming that "Mr Gilligan is wholly unsuitable for the position he occupies".\textsuperscript{37} At a meeting of the County Council on 21 January 1922, a solicitor appearing for Jinks asked that the council re-instate him. A notice of motion to that effect was carried at a meeting in March on a vote of 7-6.\textsuperscript{38} Subsequently it was argued that this motion needed a two thirds majority to take effect, and while Jinks continued to work in the office he did not receive any pay. A council meeting on 25 March saw a long and bitter dispute between the chairman and the pro-Jinks faction. The chairman maintained that Jinks should not have taken up his duties in the absence of a two-thirds majority. "If you are the sort of people

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{CM.}, 9 July 1921.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{CM.}, 16 & 23 July 1921.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{S.I. & S.C.}, 16 July 1921.
\textsuperscript{35} Inspector to Chief of Inspection, 23 Oct. 1921, NA DELG 26/9.
\textsuperscript{36} Minutes of meeting 27 Aug. 1921, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library; Martin Roddy was born in Breeogue near Sligo town in 1887 and spent some years in the British Civil Service in London. He returned to Sligo and was elected a member of Sligo RDC in 1920. He became a Cumann na nGaedheal TD in 1925 and a Parliamentary Secretary in 1928. He became managing director and editor of the \textit{Sligo Champion} and died in 1948. (McTernan, \textit{Worthies of Sligo}, pp 401-5).
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{CM.}, 3 Sept. 1921.
\textsuperscript{38} Minutes of meeting 4 Mar. 1922, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library.
who are going to rule in the new Ireland all I have to say is Christ deliver us out of your hands," said John Lynch, "We will wipe you out."39 At a meeting at the end of May, another motion that Jinks be reinstated was put and carried on a vote of 12-6. This appears to have ended the controversy and Frank Jinks kept his job in the council.40

An examination of those who took sides in the Jinks affair shows that the majority of those who supported him later took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War while most of those who opposed him supported the Treaty. Of the nineteen councillors who voted at various times on the matter seven are known to have taken the anti-Treaty side. All of these supported Jinks. Eleven are known to have taken the pro-Treaty side and of these, eight opposed Jinks and three supported him. These three were from the Sligo area, as he was, and this partly explains their vote. Why the IRA group supported Jinks is not clear. The whole business appears to have started as support for a person from Sligo town against interference from those who were not from the town. At a March 1922 meeting at which a motion to remove him from the chair was defeated, Gilligan mentioned a plot against him which, he said, had originated in Sligo.41 Nevin in the council and the Connachtman outside would appear to have rallied the support of all the active IRA councillors to the cause, including some like Frank Carty and Jack Brennan who lived far from Sligo town and had no reason to support any member of the Jinks family. Gilligan, Hennigan and Roddy were most vocal on the anti-Jinks side. In the light of their many complains about the interference of the IRA in council matters it is ironic that in the Jinks case Gilligan and his supporters opposed the Dáil Local Government Board’s recommendation and complained about its interference in local matters.

Obviously one of the key figures in the Jinks controversy was the editor of the Connachtman, Robert George Bradshaw, who by this time appears to have achieved a position of power within the IRA. At the time of the truce he was the intelligence officer for Sligo Brigade and when the 3rd Western Division was formed he was appointed its intelligence officer.42 During the truce he was also appointed liaison officer for the Sligo area.43 In October 1921 he was selected as the County Council’s representative on the local administrative committee which was to oversee the administration of local government in

39 S.C., 1 Apr. 1922.
41 S.C., 1 Apr. 1922.
42 Reports from Bradshaw to Collins in A/0747, Collins Papers, Military Archives.
43 Sligo material in Liaison File, Military Archives, LE 4/16A.
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Sligo in the event of the truce breaking down.\textsuperscript{44} The Dáil inspector commented on Bradshaw's appointment: "His interest on the Local Government's behalf will I'm afraid be only a secondary one and will be made subservient to that which is now of more concern to him".\textsuperscript{45} Bradshaw's main interest appears to have been the furthering of the power of the IRA locally. In a report of December 1921 the inspector mentioned "the sinister influence of a man who has ever been causing trouble to the inspectors who were in this county. His influence in IRA circles is so great that he is able to swing the IRA members on the board into opposition."\textsuperscript{46} This man was obviously Bradshaw.

Amalgamation of Poor Law Unions.

The second long-running disagreement of the period concerned the question of union amalgamation and in particular the number of representatives Sligo Corporation would have on the new County Home Committee. The Irish local government system had been regularly denounced by Sinn Féin as wasteful, extravagant and inefficient. In County Sligo each of the four electoral areas, Sligo, Tubbercurry, Dromore West and Boyle No. 2, had a Board of Guardians, a Rural District Council, its own workhouse and its own local hospital. The Boards of Guardians were charged with among other things looking after the poor and sick. Recruitment to positions within the system including dispensary doctor positions and clerkships of Unions was controlled at local level and patronage appointments were common. There was a desire within Sinn Féin to rid the system of the corruption of local authorities and substitute a clean efficient system. The Dáil Department of Local Government saw that to achieve this, reform and centralisation were necessary. Thus was born the amalgamation scheme whereby most counties were to have only one central institution, the County Home, to replace the Workhouses and one central hospital to replace the small hospitals in each Union. Inmates of rural workhouses were to be transferred to the County Home in Sligo town or be given "home assistance". The individual Boards of Guardians would be replaced by a single Committee of Management which would oversee the reformed system. The two great aims of economy and


\textsuperscript{45}Inspector to Chief of Inspection, 23 Oct. 1921, NA DELG 26/9.

\textsuperscript{46}Report on Union Amalgamation, NA DELG 26/9.
appointment-on-merit would thus be achieved. There was however widespread opposition to the scheme.47

Everyone seemed to agree in principle but numerous objections were raised which were chiefly concerned with representation on the new Committees of Management. In County Sligo the Connachtman had printed a laudatory editorial on the amalgamation scheme in April 1921 saying that it "will save many thousands of pounds per annum to the ratepayers" and suggesting that it be put in place with as little delay as possible.48 By July of the same year it had changed its mind and now led the campaign of opposition and obstruction which continued from then until the outbreak of the Civil War. It now considered that substantial alterations would have to be made in the scheme, especially with regard to the constitution of the committee and superannuation for former officials.49

This change of mind appears to have coincided with the paper's attacks on Gilligan and the development of the split in the council. The Connachtman's stand against the proposed amalgamation scheme was supported by the the pro-IRA elements in the County Council and Corporation while most of the councillors who had opposed Jinks' reinstatement backed the scheme.

The focus of the opposition was to be the constitution of the Committee of Management, it being alleged that Sligo town was not being treated fairly either by the County Council or by the Local Government Department. Some changes were made to the proposed constitution of the Management Committee in August and September 1921 which added to the confusion. Originally to consists of fourteen members, eight members of the County Council and six guardians of unions this was amended to eight members appointed by Sligo County Council, one by Sligo Corporation and two by each RDC in the county with three women to be co-opted later.50 At the council meeting at the end of August Eamon Coogan of the Dáil Local Government Department strongly criticized the tardiness of the county in implementing amalgamation and stressed that the Boards of Guardians and their officials would cease to operate when the new scheme came into operation.51 The inspector emphasised the savings to the county's finances - £10,000 per

48 CM., 9 April 1921.
49 CM., 23 & 30 July 1921.
51 Eamon Coogan was described by Tom Garvin as the "roving Dáil Department of Local Government trouble-shooter in the west." (Garvin, 1922, p. 79.)
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annum he claimed - which would result from amalgamation. Gilligan said that "if it was going to be left to the Boards of Guardians of Sligo County the scheme would never be carried out". The scheme of amalgamation was adopted by the council at this meeting and was approved by the Department which instructed the council "to proceed with all speed" to put it into effect.

Sligo Board of Guardians quickly expressed their opposition to what they saw as control by the County Council of the Committee, though they did pass a resolution adopting amalgamation in principle. Tubbercurry Guardians also were in favour of the scheme but thought the hospital should be in Tubbercurry, not Sligo. The inspector told a County Council meeting that Tubbercurry had deferred discussion from 8 August to 22 August and from then to 12 September, and "he had no doubt that at the meeting of 12 September they would defer it to Christmas." In fact Tubbercurry District Council adopted the scheme in September recognising finally that it was a "waste of time discussing a hospital in Tubbercurry". Despite the opposition the transfer of inmates and patients from the outlying institutions to the County Home was not hindered and was completed by November 1921.

During September all the local bodies selected their representatives for the Committee of Management. The first meeting of the Committee of Management of Sligo County Home was held on 8 October 1921, the ubiquitous Frank Carty was elected chairman and Seamus Devins became vice-chairman. Three lady members were to be co-opted and the inspector explained that the idea was that the ladies should live near the County Home so that they could regularly inspect it. This was not accepted and the co-option was done on a regional basis with one from each area selected. The other criterion for selection was made clear by Carty when he proposed a number of ladies "who had made great sacrifices and done noble work for the republican movement.”

Applicants for positions as secretary and house steward in the County Home had to

52 S.C., 3 Sept. 1921.
56 S.C., 3 Sept. 1921.
57 S.I., 24 Sept. 1921.
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sit a qualifying examination set by An Dáil in Irish, English, Arithmetic and Accountancy, outgoing office holders being exempt from the Irish requirement. All candidates at the examinations in Sligo failed, and Philip Connolly, clerk of Dromore West Union, who had been one of the unsuccessful candidates was unanimously appointed by the Committee as temporary secretary. On the advice of the inspector the Local Government Department instructed the Committee that this proposed temporary appointment would not be sanctioned and that they should re-advertise at once. In the meantime the existing clerk of Sligo Union was to function as secretary. The exams were again held in mid-January 1922, three sitting the exam for secretary while seven sat the house steward exam. Connolly again failed the exam for secretary but the other two passed. One of these, a lady got the highest results in the exam but the third candidate T.J. Conlon, a local man who had spent some time in jail during the War of Independence, was proposed and unanimously selected.

Now that the workhouses had ceased to exist the only thing left before the new regime would be fully operational was the calling by each Board of Guardians of a special meeting to abolish on one month’s notice the offices of all their officials, and the Department circularised the Boards of Guardians to this effect in mid-November. This provided another method by which the local Guardians could obstruct the scheme and express their discontent before they were finally consigned to history.

Dromore West Guardians were particularly upset with the failure of their clerk to obtain the position of secretary of the County Home, and they adjourned a series of meetings in November and December 1921 called for the purpose of abolishing the offices. Not only was the clerk a local official but he was also a prominent member of the IRA, the local Commandant reporting that he had "rendered us invaluable aid in a variety of ways and has proved himself a worthy soldier of the Republic". They asked a Local Government inspector at short notice to attend a meeting to explain certain matters and used his absence to adjourn the meeting. When an inspector did attend the next meeting it

61 No list of candidates exists but Connolly had previously intimated his intention of being a candidate. S.C., 22 Oct. 1921; S.C. & S.J., 5 Nov. 1921.
63 S.C., 4 Feb. 1922.
was also adjourned on the grounds that it was "not representative" because of poor attendance. The inspector reported "the whole cause of the Guardians' attitude is the question of Mr. Connolly's, clerk, failure to receive sanction of the Department for Sligo Home job". Soon afterwards however the Guardians recognised the inevitable and the inspector reported that "I have heard from different sources that Dromore West have since caved in". Tubbercurry Board of Guardians also gave up the fight at this stage and abolished their offices in January.

It was Sligo Board of Guardians who put up the most sustained campaign against the abolition of offices. In spite of a number of meetings in November and December 1921 they repeatedly refused to conform until they got more than the one representative they had been allocated on the County Home committee. The inspector reported that one factor behind the opposition was an attempt to keep McGoldrick, clerk of Sligo Union, in office as Secretary to the Committee reporting that "the clerk I have found to be a double and an able dealer" but that there were other factors, "the vested interests of the Guardians are at stake. Indirectly the chairman [John Jinks] supplies coffins to the Union." The twin concerns of local patronage and local appointments were the basis of the opposition. Jinks proposed in early February that "we decline under any consideration to dismiss existing officials who have long and honourable service. This is our final word to the Local Government Department, Dáil Éireann".

Two bodies, the Board of Guardians and the Committee of Management now claimed to control the County Home: "The action of the Sligo Board and its officials now cause a stoppage and a very awkward situation in the progress of the amalgamation scheme. Everything is in perfect order for the economic and efficient running of the new home except this. The old officials are still in office and have been ordered by the Guardians not to recognise any other body in the county." The Guardians worked hand in

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69 Inspector McGrath to Chief of Inspection, 6 Feb. 1922, NA, DELG 26/9.  
70 S.I., 21 Jan. 1922.  
72 Inspector O'Ceallaigh to Chief of Inspection, 13 Dec. 1921, NA, DELG 26/9; Supplementary report on Union Amalgamation by inspector, 13 Feb. 1922, NA, DELG 26/9. A Mrs Jinks was also Relieving Officer for Sligo District. (Minutes meeting 24 Mar. 1923, Sligo Co. Home & Hospital Committee, Sligo Co. Library).  
74 Supplementary report on Union Amalgamation by inspector, 13 Feb. 1922, NA, DELG

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hand with Sligo Corporation which expressed its dissatisfaction with being allowed only one representative. It demanded two representatives for each of the three wards in the town. The inspector repeatedly pointed out that while the Corporation could only nominate one representative, in fact Sligo Union area had ten out of a total of twenty three members of the Committee. In reply to a resolution from Sligo Corporation asking for more representation for the Borough the Minister agreed to let them have two extra representatives. The County Council increased this to three but this did not satisfy the Guardians. At the next Committee of Management meeting James Gilligan regretted the granting of three extra representatives to the Borough of Sligo: "As far as he could gather the whole trouble about representation was that Sligo town wanted to have a monopoly of representation on that body in order that they would get their own officials appointed." The **Connachtman** gave publicity in a series of leading articles to the anti-amalgamation cause asserting that "The whole question of the amalgamation of the unions in County Sligo has been badly bungled with the result that while most people were and are in favour of amalgamation, only some half dozen can be found to back the present scheme which is undoubtedly basically unsound." The solution it proposed was to give to each Board voting power in proportion to the valuation of the union area. This started a public debate between the newspaper and inspector McGrath which ended badly for the inspector when he had to admit that figures he quoted in an argument about the relative size of the union areas in the county were incorrect. The inspector was pressing for a solution: "Some county councillors, Martin Roddy and others, believe that the time has come for drastic action and I am of a like opinion myself." Sligo was, he said, "the only Board of Guardians in the country which had not dissolved in obedience to the scheme of amalgamation." He inserted a notice in the local papers that no order for supplies would be

26/9; Minutes meeting 4 Feb. 1922, Sligo Board of Guardians, Sligo Co. Library.
75 "Remember they [Sligo Corporation] are now a republican and I fear an obstructing body". (Inspector S MacG to Chief of Inspection, 6 Feb. 1922, NA, DELG 26/9).
80 **CM.**, 11 Feb. 1922.
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recognised after 1 April except from the Committee of Management and as a sop to Sligo Guardians one additional representative from the Sligo rural area was to be appointed to the Committee. Notice of motion was handed in to abolish the offices in early April and when this motion was passed it ended the long drawn out opposition to the amalgamation scheme and the Sligo Board of Guardians ceased to exist. John Lynch did not however allow the momentous occasion to pass without putting his own unmistakable seal on it. After an objection of his was overruled on procedural grounds another member made what was obviously an unflattering remark. A local newspaper reported "Alderman Lynch replied 'I am as good a man as you are,' and invited Mr. McLoughlin outside, where he promised him a lesson he would never forget". The invitation was understandably declined.

IRA Interference in Local Government.

In addition to these two major sources of division there was a series of incidents which indicated that the IRA regarded itself as the supreme authority in the county and had no compunction about dictating to the County Council. This was the cause of continued conflict on Sligo County Council and of unease in the Local Government Department in Dublin. On the day after the truce came into effect the commandant of the Ballymote Battalion was drowned. At the next meeting of Sligo County Council J.J. Clancy proposed an adjournment as a mark of respect. All who spoke to the motion praised the dead IRA officer and agreed with the proposal. Councillor Connolly from Tubbercurry after concurring in this praise said that in his opinion an adjournment would add no respect to the dead person's memory and suggested that discussion was the best way to serve Ireland. "This man is mad for discussion", a fellow councillor remarked. The chairman Gilligan told Connolly that if he did not propose an amendment to the resolution he could not continue in that vein. Connolly sat down and the motion to adjourn was passed without further discussion. This was Connolly's first council meeting having been nominated as a substitute for Frank Carty at the council meeting of 9 July. His enthusiasm and naivety

83 S.C., 8 Apr. 1922.
84 S.C., 8 Apr. 1922.
86 S.C., 6 Aug. 1921.
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appear to have been the reason for his suggestion against adjournment but the IRA did not take such a kindly view of his zest for discussion. At the August meeting of Tubbercurry RDC a letter was received from the O/C, Tubbercurry Battalion IRA, which stated: "By order received from the commandant, Sligo Brigade, I am directed to order your council to have a resolution immediately passed rescinding the appointment of Mr. Patrick Connolly as substitute for Frank Carty TD on the County Council. You are directed to have a better qualified councillor appointed to the position." A resolution to that effect was proposed by Charles Gildea, a leading member of Tubbercurry IRA, and Connolly was replaced.87 This clear case of IRA dictation to an elected body caused the inspector to comment: "Sligo Brigade appears to have declared martial law for Sligo as otherwise such action is an unwarranted assumption of power".88 The Minister for Local Government asked William Pilkington to comment, and he replied saying that the action was demanded as a result of Connolly "refusing to agree to a meeting of Sligo County Council adjourning in respect to the memory of the late Commandant Marren".89 There was no evidence of a refusal on Connolly's part and the inspector in Sligo said: "There was nothing in the way of hostility to the resolution (to adjourn) and taking the case on its merits Connolly would appear to have been harshly dealt with. His action does not appear to have been sufficiently grievous to justify his removal". However the inspector went on to say that the council had not suffered a severe loss by Connolly's replacement and the Minister decided not to take any action.90

The next similar incident involved a letter from the IRA to the council in September 1921 asking that Miss Elizabeth McGetterick be co-opted to fill a vacancy on the council. The IRA letter was signed by the O/C, Tubbercurry Battalion, Jack Brennan, who was himself a councillor in attendance at the meeting. Brennan said "you have got your orders and it is for the council to obey", and the co-option was carried out unanimously. The press reports of the council meeting mention no dissenting voice, though the Sligo Independent used the sub-heading "Obedience to the IRA". John Hennigan was reported as saying "The people in the district are the best judges and they ask us to appoint Miss McGetterick". Gilligan, who afterwards complained to Cosgrave about the IRA's action in this instance,

87 Extracts from 8 Aug. Tubbercurry RDC meeting, NA DELG 26/7.
88 Inspector's report on 8 Aug. Tubbercurry RDC meeting, NA DELG 26/7.
89 O/C Sligo Brigade to A/G, 14 Sept. 1921, NA DELG 26/7.
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was recorded as commenting that Miss McGetterick had made considerable sacrifices for the movement and had at all times rendered good service to those who had been injured while serving their country. Gilligan and Hennigan either felt that no good would be served by voicing any opposition to the IRA demand at that stage or that the issue was not then very important. The action of the IRA in the co-option of Miss McGetterick was referred to by the Local Government inspector in Sligo in a report. "The letter struck me as being of a rather pre-emptory nature," he said, noting that the council had procedures for dealing with such a matter which were not followed in this case and adding "this incident appears to be subversive of all recognised procedure". On 14 October the Adjutant General wrote to the Minister for Local Government asking for further information. "The question of principle must be faced", he stated, "and the Tubbercurry IRA must confine their activities to selections and operations of a different nature." There is no record of the Minister's reply and again no action was taken.

The County Council meeting of 8 October was to see open dissent and public division between two groups in the council when a number of contentious issues came up for decision. The first such issue was the council's advertising contract. Tenders had been received from the three newspapers in Sligo as well as from those in Ballina and Boyle. Tenders had been asked for in the form of a price for the total advertising bulk sum and all tendered thus except the Connachtman and the Sligo Champion who tendered a price per line of advertising. On reading the tender from the Connachtman the chairman, according to the Sligo Independent, was heard to remark sarcastically: "This is signed by a man called R.G. Bradshaw." Seamus Devins and Jack Brennan questioned a previous decision to ask for bulk rate tenders. A deputation from the Sligo branch of the Typographical Association claimed that some of the papers which had tendered (the non-Sligo ones) did not comply with the Fair Wages resolution and Michael Nevin proposed a resolution that only the tenders of those which did comply be accepted. A counter proposal that the Western People, Roscommon Herald and the Connachtman be selected was carried. Bradshaw then made a comment about "scab labour" and there ensued according to the Sligo Independent, "a passage of arms" between him and the chairman. Gilligan accused

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92 Inspector to Chief of Inspection, 26 Sept. 1921, NA DELG 26/9.
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Bradshaw of having organised a "ring" with the other Sligo newspapers to control the price of advertising to the detriment of the ratepayers. Bradshaw admitted that the three Sligo newspaper proprietors had met "in their mutual business interests" and maintained that where their vital business interests were identical they were justified in taking steps to safeguard them.

The next business of the meeting was the appointment of a rate collector for the Ballintogher area. A letter was received from the O/C, 5th Battalion, IRA, "strongly recommending" a local man, O'Dowd, who it described as "a most respectable young man of sterling character, an earnest and enthusiastic worker for Ireland". He was proposed and seconded. Martin Roddy proposed an ex-RIC man who lived outside the area but the "respectable man" was selected on a vote of 13-7. Those who voted for O'Dowd included all but one of those who later took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War. Also voting for O'Dowd were some of those from south Sligo who later took the pro-Treaty side including Gilligan. Those from north Sligo including Hennigan, Rooney and Roddy voted against O'Dowd. It would appear from this that the pro-IRA group was becoming a more cohesive group but that the anti-IRA group was more easily swayed and divided by local considerations, Gilligan and Hennigan voting on different sides. A rate collector had also to be appointed for the Tubbercurry electoral division. Carty proposed the ex-master of Tubbercurry workhouse who was about to become unemployed because of the amalgamation scheme. He praised his work for the republican movement saying that he had the support of the officers and men of the 6th Battalion. In seconding this candidate, Brennan said that there had been many worthy candidates for the position but that it had been left to the Sligo Brigade O/C to make the choice and he had chosen him. The chairman began his reply by saying that he did not like to interfere with the affairs of the IRA. Brennan interrupting said "Nor you won't be allowed". This apparently angered Gilligan who replied (hotly, according to the Sligo Independent), "Neither do I like the IRA interfering with the civil affairs of the county". The temperature then rose considerably with the chairman claiming that a "hole and corner" meeting had been held in the office of R.G. Bradshaw in Sligo that morning to select a rate collector. Bradshaw, present in his role as reporter, spoke and denied that such a meeting had taken place but admitted that the selection of rate collector, referred to the Brigadier by the 6th Battalion, had been handed over to him and that he had selected McCarrick. "Are you the County
Local Government in Co. Sligo.

Council?" Gilligan asked Bradshaw, "do you think I would be so low as to take any
dictation from you?" Bradshaw replied: "You are only a County Councillor, sir." Devins
and Carty both referred to the fact that, as they saw it, the civil administration had fallen
into the hands of the IRA during the war when it was otherwise unable to function.
Gilligan took offence at this, saying that he had always been present at council meetings.
He was supported by other councillors who similarly said they had always attended. After
some stormy scenes the IRA nominee was confirmed as rate collector.

Less than a week after this meeting Gilligan wrote as chairman of Sligo County
Council to the Minister for Local Government, William Cosgrave, complaining about this
continued interference of the IRA in the council's affairs: "From what has taken place at
some recent meetings of this County Council in Sligo, it would seem that the civil powers
are not masters of their own actions and have to obey the orders of the IRA." He
instanced the co-option of Miss McGettrick and the election of the rate collector as
examples of IRA interference. This type of dictation, he said, "raises the important
question, whether the civil or military side of our Government is the supreme authority."

The Local Government inspector visited Sligo during 20-23 October, 1921 and reported to
the Minister. He mentioned the two rate collectors who had been appointed on the
recommendation of the IRA and remarked that neither had taken up his position by that
time. He said that the affairs of the County Council were "to put it mildly, somewhat
perturbed" and that the chairman, Gilligan, had often been embarrassed: "there is at all
times a strong undercurrent of friction between him and the Bradshaw following". He went
on to elaborate on what he saw was the position of the IRA: "From what I can learn, Mr.
Bradshaw and the IRA are out to run the business of the council according to their own
ideas and there is a good deal of underhand work going on in this connection." The
inspector drew the Minister's attention to other incidents as evidence to support his view
that "the IRA seem to think that they can interfere when and where they like in public
affairs." He also reported that he was being watched and had been advised by a friendly
source not to write from Sligo. In spite of Gilligan's letter and this report the Local
Government Department took no action. It was unable to influence to any great extent the

95 Gilligan to Cosgrave, 14 Oct. 1921, NA DELG 26/9.
96 The local newspapers and the minutes of the meeting did not mention any objection by
Gilligan at the time to the selection of Miss McGettrick. (S.C. & S.I., 1 Oct. 1921;
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business of the council and relied on local councillors to conduct affairs in accordance with its wishes. The various Local Government inspectors did what they could in the way of advice, threats, letters to the newspapers and reports but their power was limited. Sligo was not the only county causing such difficulties. At this time "the Local Government Department had its hands full dealing with difficult local authorities". 98

December 1921 - June 1922.

The continuing friction between the IRA and some council members, especially the chairman, came to a climax at a special meeting of the County Council held at the end of December 1921 to discuss ratification of the Treaty. 99 As luck would have it, a member of the IRA was accidentally shot dead in Sligo that morning and the meeting had before it a letter from the Battalion O/C asking them to adjourn as a mark of respect. Gilligan read the letter and began to explain why he thought the meeting should not be adjourned: "The County Council is independent, there is nobody only the ratepayers who can come and give them orders". Jack Brennan interrupted and pointed out that the letter contained a request, not an order. 100 The gallery was filled with IRA members and sympathisers and much interruption, heckling and applause came from that quarter. Brennan and Nevin took the lead in attacking the stand of the chairman who was supported only by Leonard. Finally a proposal that the meeting adjourn was put and carried with only three dissenting voices - Gilligan, Leonard and Hennigan. Many of those who voted for the adjournment were supporters of the Treaty. The lack of support indicates that there was little if any co-ordinated action among the pro-Treaty group. On the other hand the anti-Treaty side was obviously well organised, well prepared and well supported.

The split was now formalised and there was a major national issue of principle - the Treaty - on which to disagree. Between the Treaty and the Civil War (while the Jinks controversy and the amalgamation dispute rumbled on) there were many disagreements on issues relating to the split and in all these the divisions already apparent were

100 The request to adjourn was signed "by order, Battalion Commandant" and Gilligan appears to have interpreted this as an order from the IRA.
reinforced. In March 1921, Nevin moved a motion that the council strike a rate of 3d in the pound in aid of the IRA. Gilligan said he would not have military dictation on the council: "I will not recognise the unofficial body". "And d...n little you recognised the official IRA," replied Brennan. In the division on the adoption of the estimate without the IRA rate, the Hennigan/Gilligan group won 8-7. Comparison with the voting record on the Jinks case shows that apart from one member all who voted for the IRA rate voted in favour of Jinks and vice versa. At a County Council meeting in March a request was received asking for the use of the council chamber for the purpose of recruiting for the Civic Guard. Nevin proposed and Brennan seconded that this be referred to the proper military authority, meaning the local (anti-Treaty) IRA. Hennigan moved an amendment that the request be acceded to and this amendment was carried.

Table 5.1 illustrates the make-up of the two groups in the County Council. The voting patterns show a group of eight councillors who generally voted together against perceived IRA interference in the council. Gilligan was the most vociferous of these because of his position as chairman, but there seems to have been no recognised leader. Hennigan and Roddy obviously also commanded a lot of respect, Hennigan because of his long public service and Roddy because of his perceived ability and administrative experience. Both had long political careers after the Civil War. Where some of this group broke rank, local considerations were generally the reason. On the other side were those councillors who took the anti-Treaty side and who supported IRA interference in the council's affairs. These included Carty and Devins, two of the most active IRA leaders in the Anglo-Irish war. This group's leaders in the council were Nevin and Brennan, though as we have seen R.G. Bradshaw exerted powerful influence from outside (and sometimes from inside) the council. Carty, Lynch and Nevin had long political careers, the latter two at local level. In between these two groups were some councillors whose attendance was irregular and who obviously did not align themselves with any group.

Sligo TDs McCabe and O'Donnell belonged to this group as did Clancy. None of these three made any impact afterwards in national politics. For the election of 1922 the

101 S.C. & S.I., 11 Mar. 1922. The Dáil refused to sanction this IRA rate.
102 S.C., 1 Apr. 1922; Minutes of meeting 25 Mar. 1922, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library.
103 O'Donnell lost his seat at the 1923 election. There are pathetic job-seeking letters from him to Seán MacEoin in the MacEoin Papers, Killiney (Q.M.G. Papers, O/92). McCabe resigned his seat after the Army Mutiny of 1924.
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Table 5.1: Sligo County Council - Voting Patterns.

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<th>Councillor</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>O'D</th>
<th>Adj</th>
<th>CG</th>
<th>RATE</th>
<th>REP</th>
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Notes:
- \( J \) refers to support for or opposition to the reinstatement of Frank Jinks.
- \( O'D \) refers to support or otherwise for the appointment of the IRA nominee, O'Dowd, as rate collector.
- \( Adj \) refers to the request from the IRA to adjourn the meeting as a mark of respect to the dead IRA soldier.
- \( CG \) refers to the proposal to refuse the request from the Guards to use the council chamber for recruiting.
- \( Rate \) refers to the proposal to strike a rate for the support of the IRA.
- \( Rep \) refers to support for the anti-Treaty position during the Civil War.
- \( 1922/23 \) refers to the number of attendances (out of a possible 16) at Sligo Co. Council meetings for the year ending 31 March 1923.
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pro-Treaty candidates originally selected from County Sligo included John Hennigan, and an early published manifesto carried the name of James Gilligan as a treasurer of their election fund.\textsuperscript{104} When the electoral pact was announced Hennigan was dropped as a pro-Treaty candidate but he decided to stand as independent pro-treaty candidate with the support of the Farmer's Association. He failed to be elected.\textsuperscript{105}

At the statutory meeting of Sligo County Council on 17 June 1922 the brief spirit of unity engendered by the Collins - de Valera pact was still to the fore. In spite of their political differences Carty proposed Roddy for chairman describing him as an "honest, straight man" and he was seconded by McCabe. Roddy was unanimously selected, a unanimity which contrasted starkly with the dissension which had riven the council for the previous year and was to be reflected in the bitter fratricidal strife which was about to break out in the country.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{July 1922 - June 1923.}

The local government bodies of County Sligo provided much less excitement and interest during the period of the Civil War than in the preceding period. Amalgamation had been settled, the IRA were no longer in a position to interfere, and attendance was poor and confined almost entirely to pro-Treaty representatives.\textsuperscript{107} Those who had been prominent on the pro-IRA side during the Truce period were now either on the run or imprisoned.\textsuperscript{108} When anti-Treaty members did attend they showed no sign of any concerted programme of action or of disruption and merely responded to items on the agenda. John Lynch's attendance at a County Council meeting at the end of November 1922 caused John Hennigan to remark that "it was quite a cure for sore eyes to see him there at all." Apart from some typically bellicose comments - "He was in the minority there. He had been always in the minority and he supposed he always would be, and if they wanted to put him out it would be by force . . . What is the good of coming here. I am in the minority" -

\textsuperscript{104}S.C. \& S.J., 25 Mar. 1922.
\textsuperscript{105}S.C. \& CM., 24 June 1922.
\textsuperscript{106}Minutes of meeting 21 July 1922, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library.
\textsuperscript{107}For example Alex McCabe, TD and Army officer, attended only once during the year ended 31 March 1923. (S.J., 5 May 1923.)
\textsuperscript{108}Devins was dead, Nevin and Lynch were imprisoned and Carty, Brennan and Cavanagh were on the run.
Lynch could find no topic on the agenda with which to create a controversy. Attendance figures for the twelve months ending March 1923 show that County Council meetings were in general very badly attended. Of twenty six members, eighteen attended less that half the sixteen meetings. The regular attenders were those who had been to the fore in opposing IRA interference during the Truce period. Two poor attenders who were neither in jail nor on the run were asked to explain their absences and one replied by resigning his seat in terms such as to leave no doubt about his political allegiance to the anti-Treaty side: "I could not participate in the working of the council subject to the present L.G.B." Edward G. Boles was the only anti-Treaty Councillor to attend regularly and he put forward no coherent criticism of the Government or the army during all that time. He confined his attacks to infrequent remarks designed to rile the other members, particularly Gilligan, who as in the past proved easily provoked. For instance when the question of handing over the list of defaulting ratepayers to the military was raised, Boles asked to which military authority the list was to be handed: "There are two - the Republican and the Free State". Gilligan rose to the obvious bait and harangued Boles: "There is only one Government. We are functioning under that Government, and that is the Free State Government. There is only one military authority, and that is the one set up by the Government of this country". Again on the question of non-payment of rates Boles claimed: "You cannot expect satisfaction in any district that is disfranchised. We should impress on our TDs who are present that the elected representatives of the people who are locked up should be set at liberty." When the councillors expressed their sympathy on the death of Seamus Devins, Boles hoped that "his death would be an inspiration to the younger generation to support Irish Nationality and Irish Catholicity for which Seamus Devins lived and died".

Sligo Corporation was also poorly attended but the Sligo Independent was not overly

109 S.C., 2 Dec. 1922.
110 S.J., 5 May 1923. Gilligan, Roddy, Clancy, Hennigan and McHugh were the most regular attenders.
111 S.J., 5 May & 2 June 1922.
112 Boles, from Gaveagh, was an ex-officio council member as chairman of Coolavin (formerly Boyle No. 2) RDC.
113 S.J., 3 Mar. 1923.
115 S.C. 7 Oct. 1922. Gilligan associated himself with the motion of sympathy but asked that they also remember soldiers of the Provisional Government army who had died during the conflict: "killed trying to protect the people of the country".

150
Local Government in Co. Sligo.

concerned by the small attendances: "Sligo Corporation seems to have become a Model Civic Body judging by the businesslike consideration which it gave to important matters affecting the welfare of the citizens at its meeting on Wednesday last. Their numbers were small but the attendance represented the cream of the members of the council". The smaller Rural District Councils appear to have been even more badly attended during the period. The same factors which impinged on County Council attendance were responsible with the additional reason that these local councils had lost much of their power due to amalgamation. According to Garvin "most of the functions of the smaller local authorities had been centralised at the county level and there was literally nothing for the smaller local councils to do". Few meetings were reported in the local press. During the first five months of 1923 the Sligo Independent reported only two meetings each for Tubbercurry, Coolavin and Dromore West RDCs and four for Sligo RDC. "The meetings of Tobercurry District Council have been but few since June last, and even on those rare occasions the number of councillors necessary to form a quorum has not attended . . . It is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs . . . to find that half a dozen men cannot be got to meet every fortnight to transact the business of the Council", the Sligo Independent correspondent reported in March. Sligo Rural District Council was also concerned with non-attenders and wrote to four who were neither in jail nor on the run asking for reasons.

Because of the predominance of the pro-Treaty presence at council meetings little of a contentious political nature was aired there. The main topic of consideration all through the period was the state of the rate collection. At the end of October 1922 it was stated that there was almost £20,000 outstanding of the 1921/22 rates which should have been closed in the previous March, and collectors were given until the end of November to finalise their collections. The failure to pay rates resulted from many factors including direct opposition by "irregulars" though this appears to have been neither widespread nor co-ordinated. All north Sligo collectors had been raided and their books taken during October 1922 though no other collector in the county had reported this kind of interference.

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116 S.I., 20 Jan. 1923. Those present constituting "the cream" were Jinks, Kerr, Wood-Martin, Depew, Fitzpatrick and Costello.
117 Garvin, 1922, pp 87-8.
118 S.I., 24 Mar. 1923.
119 S.I., 31 Mar. 1923.
120 S.C. & S.I., 4 Nov. 1922.
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Dromore West area, an IRA stronghold, was the best paid up area with the collection practically closed there by autumn 1922.\textsuperscript{122} In June 1923 it was stated that "in the district in which men are on the run - that is Tireragh - there is only about £48 of the 21/22 rate outstanding" while "the people who owe the rates are among the greatest supporters of the government".\textsuperscript{123} Farmers groups, especially in south Sligo, were refusing to pay the rates though this was not the policy of the Sligo Farmers' Union.\textsuperscript{124}

By the end of November there was very little improvement in the rate collection, only about £500 having come in during the month. Gilligan proposed that the military be asked to help with collection but no decision was taken on this and it was held out as a threat over the next six months.\textsuperscript{125} In December it was decided that all collectors' books should be handed in and all rates paid directly into the council offices.\textsuperscript{126} A notice to this effect was inserted in the local newspapers which included a letter from Colonel Commandant McCabe saying that the army was willing and able to collect rates from defaulters: "The army is now strong and long-armed enough to reach every defaulter appearing in the Council's books".\textsuperscript{127} The direct collection of rates proved a success with £7,215 having been received between 20 December and 27 January including over £3,000 in a single week at the end of January. However £10,000 was still outstanding.\textsuperscript{128} Sligo County County printed a final notice for the payment of outstanding 1921/22 rates in February 1923 and decided to proceed to collect the 1922/23 rates by the same method.\textsuperscript{129} By the end of May it was reported that this rate collection was coming in well, £9,000 having been paid since the previous March.\textsuperscript{130}

Martin Roddy, the council chairman, showed himself perfectly in tune with the thinking of the new Local Government Department. He was the ideal chairman to steer the council in the new direction "to impose central controls and standard practices on local

\textsuperscript{122}S.C. \& S.I., 4 Nov. 1922.
\textsuperscript{123}S.C. \& S.I., 2 June 1923.
\textsuperscript{124}S.I., 3 Dec. 1921 \& 28 Feb. 1922.
\textsuperscript{125}S.C., 2 Dec. 1922.
\textsuperscript{126}Minutes of meetings 8 Dec. 1922 \& 6 Jan. 1923, Sligo Co. Council Minute Book, Sligo Co. Library.
\textsuperscript{127}S.I., 13 Jan. 1923.
\textsuperscript{129}S.I., 17 Feb. \& 24 Mar. 1923.
\textsuperscript{130}S.C. \& S.I., 2 June 1923.
government". He seldom took the limelight but consistently agreed with the Department's demands and orders. He avoided controversy and interfered as little as possible. When the matter of the outstanding claims of the ex-officials of Sligo Union came up at the Sligo County Home committee at the end of February and Jinks wanted the question to be referred to arbitration, Roddy proposed that what was on offer from the Department should be accepted and a majority agreed. He did however take centre stage on the question of canvassing for local appointments. When the Sligo County Home and Hospital Committee was electing a doctor for the Carney Dispensary District Roddy declared that he would not cast his vote as a protest against the widespread canvassing which had taken place. There was a rule in the minute book, he pointed out, disqualifying any candidate who canvassed. He got little support, many members saying that they saw nothing wrong with canvassing. DePew, one of the pioneers of Sinn Féin in Sligo town, said with disarming honesty that "in the early days of Sinn Féin they all started out with very high ideals. That was God's own word, for they could never reach the ideals that they aimed at." Roddy proposed a motion which would have seen all professional appointments awarded on seniority and non-professional appointments decided as the result of a public examination. When this motion was discussed and voted on at a later meeting it was lost, only Roddy, DePew, Leonard and Gilligan voting in favour. Roddy tried to have a similar motion passed at Sligo Rural District Council but it was also defeated there. Roddy's ideas were similar to those of central government, and within a few years were part of standard practice for most local authority appointments.

Gilligan, who as chairman had steered the council through most of the War of Independence, shared much of Roddy's concerns but was less comfortable with the new order in local government. During the cost-cutting exercises demanded by the Dáil Local Government Department in the War of Independence, Sligo County Council had reduced salaries of many of its officials. The Sligo coroners whose salaries had been reduced applied through their solicitor for the arrears of their salary in October 1922. After much

131 Garvin, 1922, p. 90.
132 S.I., 3 Mar. 1923.
133 S.J., 17 Feb. 1923.
135 S.J., 17 Feb. 1923.
136 Garvin, 1922, p. 86.
discussion the council adjourned the matter "until normal conditions were restored". The Local Government Department informed the council that they had exceeded their statutory powers in reducing coroners' salaries and ordered them to "pay the rightful claims of those gentlemen". During a long discussion on the matter Gilligan expressed his bitterness at the overturning of the council's action which he claimed had been done at the "expressed notice of Dáil Eireann." Gilligan also expressed bitterness at the abolition of the Dáil court system. "The men who served the District Court in the troubled times were not now wanted and legal men were appointed with a salary, legal men who would not take the risk during the troubled times" he said. Neither man, of course, could completely neglect his constituency - when Dublin suggested that Ballina should be the headquarters of the new District Court, Roddy thought it extraordinary "that they would not make Sligo the headquarters for District Justices", and Gilligan considered that "the best place they could have headquarters would be Tubbercurry".

Though the amalgamation scheme had gone through, Dromore West RDC managed a final grand gesture of self-assertion. A medical doctor had to be appointed for the Skreen dispensary district and the Dromore West District Council went ahead and appointed a local who had been working in England. Subsequently the Sligo County Home and Hospital Committee advertised for the position and the appointment was to be made at a meeting of that body towards the end of January 1923. A deputation from Dromore West attended and explained that they had been under the impression that they were entitled to make the appointment. After some discussion during which the whole question of the amalgamation scheme was gone over again, Gilligan proposed that the council should go ahead and make the appointment. An amendment proposed by Jinks to the effect that the Local Government Department be consulted was carried. The Department advised that as the appointment had been made by Dromore West in good faith it should be allowed to stand, but stressed that the Sligo County Home and Hospital Committee was the proper body for making such appointments and should do so in the future.

137 S.J., 4 Nov. 1922.
138 S.J., 3 Mar. 1923.
139 S.J., 24 Mar. 1923.
140 S.J., 13 Jan. 1923.
142 S.J., 17 Feb. 1923.
Local Government in Co. Sligo.

Conclusion.

This appears to have been the last twitch from the old boards, and the local government bodies of County Sligo settled down during the Civil War period from being tempestuous and rebellious to being more or less docile servants and compliant tools of the new order in local government. The struggle which had occurred on the County Council between the Gilligan and Jinks factions had elements of a local division between town and county but also was a struggle between a concept of local government which was forward looking and faction-free and one based on vested local interests, patronage and cronyism. The permanent antagonism between some local nationalists and the old Local Government Board was revealed as resentment of any attempt at central control. This was especially marked when the Dáil Local Government Department attempted radical changes which were in marked contrast to the weak indulgent control previously exercised by the Board. The local IRA whose suspicions of central authority had been increased because of their experience with GHQ allied themselves with the localists. The split over the Treaty when it came largely mirrored the split already evident in Sligo. The Gilligan bloc took the pro-Treaty side, emphasising centralism and the primacy of politics and negotiated settlement. The Jinks/IRA faction, though not Jinks himself, took the side which put abstract ideals first and emphasised the primacy of the army, "the men of action", over mere politicians. The ad hoc coalition between Jinks and the IRA did not survive the Civil War split. Jinks may have been against more central control, but he was after all an old Irish Parliamentary Party man and not a natural physical force supporter. He also of course achieved one of his main aims, the retention of his son on the staff of the County Council. This victory for the Jinks/IRA side was minor compared to its defeat in what was the most important struggle in local government, the implementation of the amalgamation scheme. This defeat spelled the end of the petty cronyism which had characterised Irish local government since 1898. That the battle was won was due to the selective persistence of the central authority and its inspectors but also to the resilient support of local councillors. \(^{143}\) The Local Government Department did not for instance fight the reinstatement of Jinks obviously deeming it of

\(^{143}\) Garvin, in his treatment of local government in Co. Sligo, makes no mention of the efforts of Gilligan and his group to oppose the interference of the Jinks/IRA side. Also his contention that "The Jinks family seem to controlled everything" appears an overstatement of the facts. Garvin, 1922, pp 76-7, 81-2.
minor importance in the bigger scheme of things. James Gilligan, quick to sense hostility and always willing to challenge it head on, was the robust figure needed at the time to demand and secure allegiance to the new order and opposition to perceived corruption and interference. Martin Roddy on the other hand was much less colourful but was an ideal successor, perfectly in tune with the changed times in local government who could guide the council through the less turbulent waters (as far as Sligo County Council was concerned) of the Civil War period. The active anti-Treaty IRA members could not attend the council during the Civil War and showed no great desire to interfere. For instance there was no large scale attempt to organise a non-payment of rates campaign. Thus the period which was most troublesome in the county in general proved most placid in the County Council. This gave the pro-Treaty side time to develop the new order of local administration under the amalgamation scheme and to ensure that by the time anti-Treaty members were again able to attend in numbers, the new order of local democracy had been firmly established and was seen to be working well.
6. THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN COUNTY SLIGO.

This chapter is an attempt to examine the Civil War in County Sligo in the light of the geography of the county it being almost self-evident that the geography of a region influences to a lesser or greater degree any conflict which takes place therein. At the simplest level the nature of the terrain in a particular area must have influenced the ability of a guerilla band to survive and the possibility of their opponents dislodging them. Did this mean that the war would be fought in the remote mountain areas of County Sligo as opposing forces clashed in the bogs while areas of better land remained unaffected? Roads and railway lines were vital if the government forces with their superior mobile armaments were to make that superiority tell. For this reason these communication systems, difficult to protect as they were, should have been prime targets for anti-government forces. I will in the first place examine the distribution of incidents during the war and assess its significance in relation to factors such as topography, land quality, poverty as evidenced by proportion of small holdings and lines of communications. What about comparisons between War of Independence activity and Civil War activity? Does an examination of the respective areas of greatest activity tell us anything useful about the nature of the latter conflict? And then there is the question of agrarian unrest. Did pre-War of Independence agrarian unrest take place in areas which were to see much conflict during the two subsequent wars? What about the geography of the participants? Did those who participated on either side come from clearly defined areas of the county and can it then be possible to infer a geographical basis to the conflict in the county. Did poorer areas provide more support for the anti-Treaty side? Did better off areas provide more personnel, soldiers and police, for the government side? To investigate this I will examine the distribution throughout the county of almost six hundred known participants in the Civil War.

Maps 6.1-3 provide a framework against which the incident and other distribution maps can be checked and interpreted. Map 6.1 is a map of County Sligo land use capability based on the map in the Royal Irish Academy Atlas of Ireland and gives a picture of land quality in the county. With the exception of one small area in the south of the county, all of County Sligo is in the "limited" and "very limited" range. North of the Ox Mountains the best land is found in a strip of varying width in the north-west coastal lowlands from

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Ballina to Sligo. North of Sligo town the land is less productive though there are some pockets of better land along the coast. The central lowlands area south of the Ox Mountains around Ballymote contains the best land in the county with the quality deteriorating towards the east, west and south. The slopes of the Ox Mountains as they widen towards the west into extensive boglands contain large areas of very poor land.

Map 6.2 shows the population density of each district electoral division in the county in four categories. The places of densest population coincide with the areas of better land in the coastal lowlands north of Sligo town which were classified as congested in 1891. The density lessens as the land quality declines towards the mountains on the east. The north-west coastal lowlands from Ballisodare to Ballina have a moderate density except at the western end where the population is densest. The poorer land on both northern and southern slopes of the Ox Mountains has the lowest population density in the county. The area of better land in the interior lowlands of south Sligo is only moderately dense though there is a very densely populated area around the town of Ballymote. The south east of the county with its poorer land is also moderately densely populated. There are only two areas, one in the extreme south around Gurteen and the other in the south west of the county around Curry which have a combination of poor land and dense population. These were areas which were also classified as congested in 1891.

An attempt to define the areas of high poverty in the county is illustrated by Map 6.3. I chose the percentage of holdings under £15 valuation as an index of poverty and calculated this from the statistics in the 1907 Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion. To a large extent, these areas of high percentage of holdings of low valuation occur in the regions containing the poorer land. The slopes of the Ox Mountains in the west of the county, the mountainous area on the eastern border of the county and the poor land in the south of the county all have high percentages of such holdings. On the other hand the areas having the lowest percentages of such holdings are areas of better land including the north-west coastal lowlands, the inland areas to the north of Sligo town and the central portion of the interior lowlands south of the Ox Mountains. An exception to this pattern is the extreme north west coastal area where there is a concentration of high

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3 Census of Ireland, 1911, Table VI.
4 Second appendix to the seventh report, Co. Sligo, tables I, Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland (Dublin, 1907).
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percentage of these holdings on better land. This is also an area of high population density. The two areas of dense population on poorer land have, as might be expected, a large percentage of small holdings as well. There appears to be no correlation between population density and poverty, the high population density area around Curry and the adjacent low population density area along the southern mountain slopes having similar poverty levels.

Distribution of Civil War Incidents.

The natural starting point in investigating the geography of the Civil War would appear to be consideration of the distribution of war incidents in the county. I have compiled a list of 185 such incidents based on reports in local newspapers, official pro-Treaty reports and some few anti-Treaty diaries of activities. This list should then reflect the general pattern of war activity in the county though it cannot claim to be exhaustive. The extent to which newspapers reported events may have been influenced by the bias of the paper and by reporting restrictions. While the bias of most Sligo newspapers was pro-Treaty, the presence of the anti-Treaty Connachtman newspaper in the early days of the war should have ensured a balance in the reporting of actions at that time. Incidents such as intimidation of civilians occurring in areas outside the control of the government forces were presumably less likely to come to the attention of the press. However this should be balanced by the fact that similar incidents involving the government side were likely not to be reported because of press censorship. On the other hand official records and pro-government newspapers may have sometimes exaggerated the number and gravity of IRA actions. No doubt local army officers also did this at times to explain their own lack of success or their need for more manpower or war materials and it suited the government side to have IRA actions reported as evidence of that side's commitment to extra-democratic means at the very time when the apparatus of democratic government was being built up. It does appears from comparison of newspaper reports, interviews with participants, IRA diaries and army reports that few incidents of any substance went unreported in the local press.

These 185 incidents (Map 6.5) generally involved attacks by the IRA on government posts, personnel or supporters or interference with communications and property. Incidents
such as searches by government troops which did not meet with opposition are not included. Therefore large scale operations involving great numbers of troops may not be included while the action of a single gunman, firing a few rounds at an army post in the dead of night from a safe distance, may be included as a sniping incident. This list does not differentiate as to the seriousness of the actions which obviously vary in their intensity and in the commitment demanded of their perpetrators. It was presumably easy to find some who would go out and cut telegraph wires under cover of darkness. It was surely more difficult to find men to attack the Free State post in Sligo Town Hall in the twilight of a December evening in 1922.\footnote{S.C. & S.I., 16 Dec. 1922; Report O/C 1st Brigade to O/C 3rd Western Division, 10 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33; Report by Divisional I/O, Sligo, 11 Dec. 1922, MacEoin Papers, C57/18A; Letter to prisoner J. Quinn, 17 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/75; Report Adj. Sligo to Adj. 3rd Western Division, 14 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).} Both incidents are ranked equal in my list.

I categorized these incidents by district electoral division and compared them with land quality, population density and poverty in order to assess if there was any correlation between the number of incidents and any of these three factors. The incidents were neither evenly distributed throughout the county nor concentrated on any one area. In south Sligo the poorer areas, both in terms of land quality and small holdings, to the east and west have very few incidents. In fact there was a large block of fourteen divisions in the south-east of the county without a recorded incident with the exception of the division containing the town of Riverstown. Similarly the poor land on the southern slopes of the Ox Mountains had very few recorded incidents. It is noticeable that all but one of the divisions in south Sligo with large proportions of incidents contain a town, Tubbercurry, Ballymote, Riverstown, Coolaney and Collooney being examples. The central portion of the interior lowlands in the southern part of the county, an area of better land and smaller percentage of holdings under £15, also had a large number of incident-free divisions. The south west corner of the county had a low level of incidents. In the north west of the county incidents occurred in the coastal lowlands which had better land and smaller percentages of small holdings rather than on the poorer slopes of the Ox Mountains where there were some divisions with no incidents. The eastern end of this area had a concentration of incidents. There seems therefore to be some evidence of a connection here between poorer areas and fewer incidents, better-off areas and more incidents. In the area north of Sligo town however there is little evidence of any such connection. The four maritime divisions here
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with the highest percentage of holdings under £15 valuation each had a different rate of incidents from the highest rate to none at all. This area has already been noted as being exceptional, it being an area of better land with high population density and high percentage of smaller holdings. While the evidence from this distribution does suggest that incidents were less likely to occur in areas of poorer land it also suggests that land quality or density of population were not the most important factors in determining occurrence of incidents.

There is much evidence from contemporary sources as to the areas in which the IRA were most active during the Civil War and an examination of this in the light of the incidents distribution may suggest a rationale for that distribution. According to Free State army material there were three concentrations of republican groups in the county. The areas involved remained the same for the duration of the war though the numbers of IRA and the size of the areas were reported as dwindling as the conflict progressed. Frank Carty commanded a group which operated in the west of the county on both sides of the Ox Mountains. In early August 1922 he was stated as ranging between Curry and Coolaney and in an end of December report was said to control the whole area between Ballina and Ballisodare. Indeed it was not until April 1923 that Free State troops claimed to have penetrated this north west area to any extent and Carty himself was never captured during the war. The only Free State post in this area was at Tubbercurry and this was obviously a prime target for the IRA accounting no doubt for the high rate of incidents there. Of the sixteen incidents recorded for the district electoral division containing Tubbercurry, ten involved an attack on or sniping at the army post in the town.

The second area where republicans were reported in numbers throughout the war was the south east of the county where a column operated on the mountainous poor quality land near and across the Roscommon and Leitrim borders. There was an absence of incidents in

6 Intelligence Reports for August to December 1922 give details of each group and estimate of numbers involved in each. [MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c)].
7 Report on Irregulars, 8 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); Report on north west Sligo area, 29 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/75.
9 The most serious attack on this post involved the use of the captured armoured car "Ballinalee" in a determined effort to take it. The attack on the post failed but one government soldier was killed. (Statement by Vol. James Carr, undated, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); Report from Tubbercurry Adj., 14 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c); S.C., S.J. & CM, 16 Sept. 1922.)
this area with the exception of the district around the town of Riverstown in the centre and at the northern end where there were some attacks on the Sligo-Leitrim and Northern Counties railway system. The anti-Treaty group here under Ned Bofin and Tom Deignan were either very inactive, unchallenged or careful to avoid conflict. In fact it appears that a combination of all three contributed to the lack of action here. A Provisional Government army report dated November 1922 states that while Bofin and his column was in the area it was "very difficult to get in touch with him". Tom Scanlon told Ernie O'Malley in the early nineteen fifties that "there were no results from Ned Bofin's area during the Civil War" and the lack of incidents in the area seems to bear this out. There was no government post in the district, Boyle being the closest, so there was no easy sniping target in the area. Of the seven incidents recorded for the Riverstown area three occurred in July 1922 and two of the others were raids by IRA on shops for supplies towards the end of the war. The expanses of the mountains on the Roscommon and Leitrim borders were readily available refuges into which they could escape when attacked.

The area between Sligo town and the Donegal border was a troubled and contested area for the whole of the war and the widespread distribution of incidents there confirms this. After the anti-Treaty forces evacuated their posts in Sligo town they exercised control over this area from headquarters within ten miles of the town. The large scale assault by the Provisional Government army in September 1922 managed to break the hold of the anti-Treaty forces on the area and open it up to the army. However the IRA remained strong here, operating from the mountains to the east and south east, and often attacked communications. The area about Grange appears to have come in for special attention and this group was also responsible for many of the incidents in Sligo town. The twenty five

10 General Manager Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway to M/D, 27 July 1922 and Asst. QM Western Command to C/S, 31 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/73; A Dept of Defence file, A7160, in the Military Archives deals with attacks on this railway line.
11 A Sept. 1922 report says that Bofin's column frequented the Geevagh and Highwood area nearly every Sunday evening "meeting lady friends". (Report I/O Boyle, 15 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).)
12 Report on military situation, 21 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/111.
13 This column did carry out some attacks on the Leitrim and Roscommon sides of the border. (Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.)
14 Intelligence reports, 4, 8, 22 Aug., 5 and 11 Sept. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).
16 The most spectacular of these was the destruction of Sligo Railway Station on the night
incidents recorded in this area are distributed evenly over the period July 1922 to March 1923 illustrating the fact that even after the penetration by the government forces of the area the IRA were able to operate to some effect there.

Comparison of this evidence with the distribution of incidents indicates an apparent contradiction in that Civil War anti-Treaty forces remained in strength in the more remote and inaccessible mountainous areas which generally had fewer incidents. However when it is considered that incidents are an index of conflict between the opposing sides not of strength of any one side this apparent contradiction can be explained. Absence of incidents in an area does not necessarily denote an area of little if any IRA activity. These mountainous areas were difficult to search and afforded plentiful opportunity of cover for the IRA, careful to avoid any direct confrontation, when the opposition did invest them. In February 1923, when the Free State troops made a determined search of the west Sligo area the IRA had no great difficulty in avoiding them reporting: "during this period our men had for the most part to lie low owing to intense enemy activity". The Free State army on the other hand were not over zealous in combing these areas because of the perceived strength of the IRA there, their own inadequacies as regards personnel and armament and the difficulty of the terrain. Absence of incidents therefore can indicate either unchallenged IRA control or the avoidance of a challenge by the IRA.

The significance of the absence of incidents in many of the district electoral divisions on both northern and southern slopes of the Ox Mountains is that these areas were controlled by the IRA who were generally unchallenged there. As has been stated in the chapter on the course of the war a state of equilibrium was attained in many such areas with very slow progress being made by the government troops in dealing with the IRA in their mountain hideaways. The main Sligo to Ballina road on the northern side through the strip of better land near the coast was often used by Free State troops and this resulted in more incidents in its vicinity. Incidents should then be expected in those areas at the periphery of IRA controlled regions where control was contested by the pro- and anti-

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of 10 Jan. 1923. (S.C. & S.I., 13 & 20 Jan. 1923; 1st Brigade 3rd Western Division Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 15 Jan. 1923, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/91; Report Adj. 3rd Western Division to Western Command, 27 Feb. 1923, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a); Burning of Sligo Railway Station, MA, Dept. Defence Files, A8125.)

17 4th Brigade Diary of Activities for fortnight ended 15 Feb. 1923, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a).
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Treaty forces and conflict, including sniping and ambushes, was more likely. One such region marked by a high incidence of conflict extended from the eastern end of the Ox mountains to the Mayo border. This marked the limits of Frank Carty's area of dominance. For instance Carty's men were responsible for the attacks at Gurteen and on the railway line between Collooney and Kilfree at the eastern edge of their area.\(^\text{18}\)

Another consideration which influenced the distribution of incidents was the situation of lines of communications. Impossible to protect completely, these roads and bridges, railways lines and buildings, together with telegraph installations and lines were often the target of the anti-Treaty forces. The main routes, road and railway, in Sligo in 1921 together with the principal towns and villages are shown on Map 6.4. A comparison of this map with that of the incidents, suggests that these were more frequent where there was a town or a main route. The reasons for this are almost self-evident. In the early days of the war republicans held positions in all the large towns and in some of the villages. In some of these, Sligo, Collooney and Ballymote for example, pro-Treaty posts also existed and this often resulted in clashes.\(^\text{19}\) After the anti-Treaty forces evacuated or were driven from their posts the government posts in the larger towns commonly became targets for the IRA.\(^\text{20}\) Efforts to penetrate republican strongholds used roads and ambushes of their very nature generally took place on roads. The IRA also targetted railway communications and a large number of the incidents are of this nature. Of the 185 incidents used in this study, fifty six were attacks on or sniping at pro-Treaty posts and thirty three were attacks on or damage to communications including attacks on railway track, station premises or rolling stock, telegraphs and mail cars.

The district electoral divisions containing the towns of Collooney and Ballisodare had the greatest number of incidents in proportion to their population in the whole county. This area, which contained the main route through the mountains between north and south Sligo, was the axle at the centre of the county communications. There all road and rail routes from north and south Sligo converged and three railway companies had stations and

\(^{18}\) 4th Brigade Diary of Activities for fortnight beginning 6 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(a). Carty was named as leader of the attack on the train at Culfadda by the Boyle I/O. [Report I/O Boyle, 15 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c)].

\(^{19}\) Reports in S.C., S.J. & CM., 8 & 15 July 1922.

\(^{20}\) There are lists of Sligo pro-Treaty garrisons with their strengths in AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/22, P7/B/74 & P7/B/75.
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lines there, the Midland Great Western, the Sligo-Leitrim and Northern Counties and the Great Southern & Western. Both towns had pro-Treaty garrisons during the Civil War. Collooney was a key town in the early days of the war in County Sligo having changing hands twice in July 1922.  

In the division which contains the town of Collooney, for instance, I have listed eighteen incidents. Half of these involved attacks on or sniping at the Free State posts either in Collooney itself or in nearby Markree Castle and five were attacks on the railway lines which ran through the district. In south Sligo the areas of greatest number of incidents follow closely the lines of rail and roads as well as concentrating on towns. The railway line between Ballisodare and the Roscommon border was a common target, fourteen incidents involving attacks on trains or railway buildings being reported from this area.

It does appear that the significance of the distribution of incidents lies in the fact that they occurred in general where targets were available. These targets commonly were government positions in towns together with communications lines and structures. The anti-Treaty forces did not have fixed positions susceptible to attack and so there are few incidents of this nature. The distribution of incidents then reflects the fact that most towns are in areas of better land quality and most important routes traverse similar regions. This accounts for the apparent correlation between poorer areas and lack of incidents already noted.

Civil War and War of Independence Incidents Compared.

Having considered the distribution of Civil War incidents, it is of interest to compare them with the distribution of 159 incidents reported in the county during the period from January 1920 to the truce in 1921 (Map 6.6) with a view to investigating similarities and differences. The smaller number of War of Independence incidents over a longer period of time confirms the view that activity during the later conflict was more intense than during the War of Independence. The number of active County Sligo combatants on the anti-government side in each war was different. During the War of Independence a small...

22 Markree Castle was the home of the Cooper family and was first occupied by the Provisional Government forces in the early days of the war. It became one of the largest garrisons of troops in Co. Sligo.
number of full time volunteers, probably no more than fifty, were in action while in late 1922 the number involved on the anti-Treaty side was estimated by pro-government intelligence sources at about three hundred. The nature of the conflict was also different in that during the early stages of the Civil War both sides occupied positions in towns.

The War of Independence incidents tended to be concentrated in the interior lowlands of the county with district electoral divisions containing towns and lines of communications to the fore. As in the Civil War large areas in the east and west of the county saw very little action. In the area to the north of Sligo town there were many more incidents during the Civil War and these incidents had a wider distribution. In south Sligo the opposite was the case. A large area in this region which had a very high number of incidents during the War of Independence saw very little action during the Civil War. This area included the main railway line and its branch at Kilfree Junction which was a frequent target during the earlier conflict. The difference in intensity here was mainly due to two factors. The terrain in the area was unsuitable for guerilla warfare of the type prevalent in the latter conflict and many activists in the area went strongly pro-Treaty. In the War of Independence this area had been strongly to the fore, politically from an early date and militarily later thanks to the leadership of men like Alex McCabe. These leaders took the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War. Tom O'Donnell TD, from the Gurteen area, told Seán MacEoin "All the men of our battalion are on the government side." Jim Hunt of Gurteen Battalion was the only Sligo Battalion O/C to take the pro-Treaty side and most of his men followed him. He and his column had been primarily responsible for the incidents in this area during the War of Independence. In the Ballymote area Alex McCabe also took the pro-Treaty side and, according to Martin Brennan, "more than half went with him". A small column of republicans stated to number only thirteen men was reported in the Ballymote area in August 1922 while at the same time Carty's column and the north Sligo column were stated to number 100 each and the east Sligo/Arigna column 150. Staff Captain Thomas Henry reported in November 1922 that there had been no irregular activity in the Ballymote area "for a long time" and most of the IRA actions in the Ballymote area were carried out by members of Carty's column.

23 O'Donnell to MacEoin, 30 Nov. 1923, MacEoin Papers, C11/3
24 Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
25 Intelligence reports, 4 & 8 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c).
26 Thomas Henry to O/C 3rd Western Division, 17 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
To what extent was there a connection between agrarian agitation and incidents in the War of Independence and the Civil War? Map 6.7 shows the distribution of the agrarian incidents reported in the local newspapers and in police files for February 1918. These were the incidents of the conacre campaign, instigated and led by Sinn Féin in County Sligo. According to the Sligo RIC County Inspector, there were forty eight indictable agrarian offences during that month.\(^{27}\) I have identified and mapped forty of these incidents of conacre having been taken without the owner’s consent.\(^{28}\) Their distribution shows a marked concentration in the centre and south of the county with some incidents towards the east. No such incident is reported as having occurred in the west of the county and only one was reported north of Sligo town. These incidents were part of a larger politically motivated campaign centrally organised and often led by outsiders and differed from the more usual agrarian troubles fuelled by local factors. Their distribution would be expected to reflect Sinn Féin strength rather than areas of historic agrarian agitation and so it is not surprising to find that these incidents show a similarity to the distribution of those of the War of Independence. Accounts in the local newspapers point to Alex McCabe as being the instigator of the Sligo conacre campaign of 1918 and this must also have had a major influence on the geographical distribution of these incidents. A map of Sinn Féin clubs mentioned in reports in late 1917 and early 1918 (Map 6.11) shows a proportionally greater number in central south Sligo indicating the organisation’s strength there.\(^{29}\)

A map of the smaller number of reported agrarian incidents during the War of Independence (Map 6.8) shows such incidents almost totally confined to the south and south east part of the county apart from a small pocket in the Skreen-Dromard area.\(^{30}\) This agrarian agitation of mid-1920 appears to have been in many cases the opportunistic resurfacing of local agitations at a time of reduced police presence and power. It was not

\(^{27}\) SCI RIC Feb. 1918 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/94.

\(^{28}\) These are taken from newspaper reports of the actions and of the subsequent trials which were widely reported in *S.C., S.J. & CM.* during Feb., Mar. and Apr. 1918.

\(^{29}\) This map is based on the reports of Sinn Féin clubs published in the *Sligo Champion* during this period, on the reports of North Sligo and South Sligo Comhairle Ceantair meetings, again from the local press, and the minute book of north Sligo Comhairle Ceantair in Sligo Co. Library.

\(^{30}\) These were compiled from local newspaper reports and from Agrarian Outrages, PRO, CO 904/121.
organised by Sinn Féin or the IRA hierarchy in the area and many of the landholders offended against took their complaints to the local Sinn Féin courts and were afforded protection by the IRA.\footnote{31} These were areas where small scale agrarian trouble had been common in the period before the War of Independence. The Easkey area, which included Skreen, had seen almost continuous low level agrarian trouble from early 1913 to mid 1915 and sporadic outbreaks in 1916 and 1917.\footnote{32} The RIC County Inspector reported similar sporadic agitation in the south Sligo area at intervals during 1915, 1916 and 1917.\footnote{33} These incidents occurred in areas where there was much War of Independence activity but few Civil War incidents. There was no geographic correlation between IRA activity during the Civil War on the one hand and previous agrarian trouble on the other in County Sligo. The statement made in 1923 that "Irregularism and land grabbing go together" finds no support in County Sligo.\footnote{34}

\section*{Distribution of Civil War Activists.}

The distribution map of Civil War incidents tells us little about the attitude of the people of the different areas in the county to the warring sides. By definition the map of incidents is a picture of conflict rather than of control or of the sympathies of the population. People in regions controlled by a particular side were not likely to loudly proclaim their allegiance to the opposition. Many, perhaps most, were more interested in their own survival than in which party would triumph in the struggle. MacEoin's remark about the people of Sligo: "They would be with you one day and against you the next" merely illustrated the concern for survival among the people and the resultant attitude of backing whichever side was in the ascendant at the time.\footnote{35} "Sligo county is simply inclined to look on", commented Dr. O'Donnell, Medical Officer, Sligo, in December 1922 and gave as the reason that the people felt let down by the government forces and consequently would not support them

\footnotetext{31}{SCI RIC June 1920 Monthly Report, PRO, CO 904/112; Irish Bulletin, 17 June 1920.} 
\footnotetext{32}{SCI RIC Mar. 1916 & Dec. 1917 Monthly Reports, PRO, CO 904/100 & 104.} 
\footnotetext{33}{These included Keash (Feb. 1915), Ballymote area (May - June 1915, Mar 1916 & Nov. 1917), Ballintogher (Dec. 1915 - Feb. 1916), Castlebaldwin (Mar. 1916) and Ballintogher (Mar - Dec 1916). (SCI RIC Feb. 1915 - Nov.1917 Monthly Reports, PRO, CO 904/96 - 104.)} 
\footnotetext{35}{Padraig O'Farrell, The Séan MacEoin Story (Cork, 1981), p. 89.}
though he added, in apparent contradiction, that "Carty's column has terrorised the people to such an extent that they will give no information whatever".  

As time went by and the Free State troops gained the upper hand, their reports commonly used such phrases as "the civilian population is getting friendlier every day," and "everywhere our troops have gone they have gained the sympathy of the people". Similarly the report of their penetration of the Dromore West and Skreen district stated that "with very few exceptions the people hailed the troops as deliverers and were inclined to give all the information they could". Martin Brennan's remarks on the killing of two "spies" by Carty's men near Tubbercurry are enlightening, illustrating the point that people were prepared to support the side they perceived as being in the ascendant: "People began to be hostile in the Gurteen and Moylough area and it looked by their conduct that the people thought we were beaten. Shortly after that we shot two spies." Such intimidation by the IRA also makes it difficult to decide what the opinions of the people really were. In a general report from Boyle at the beginning of May 1923 it was stated that "the people are all against them [the IRA] but at the same time are afraid to give information. They are threatened with the death penalty if they do so." This is obviously an overstatement of the facts but it does illustrate the difficulty of interpreting what the people thought by their actions or lack of action. The death penalty had been used by Carty and it is significant that it was used in the vicinity of the government post at Tubbercurry where there was an overlap of influence and where some people may have been tempted to defy the IRA because of the proximity of the army. Notices had been posted in Tubbercurry warning against speaking to pro-Treaty soldiers in November 1922. A similar notice warning the public against giving information through "sheer irresponsibility and love of gossip" and

36 Interview with Dr. O'Donnell MO Garrison, Sligo, 21 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/75.
37 O/C Athlone to C/S, 9 May 1923, McEoin Papers C 57/1.
38 Report Boyle, 4 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b).
40 S.C., S.I. & CM., 11 Nov. 1922; 4th Brigade Diary of activities. AD UCD, Twomey Papers, Western Command Material, P69/33(17); Report by McCabe, 5 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(b); Report by McCabe, 7 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/114; Report by Reports Officer, 3rd Western Division, 7 Nov. 1922, MacEoin Papers, C57/18A; Martin Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
41 General Report, Boyle, 1 May 1923, MacEoin Papers, C57/18c.
42 Newspaper cutting, 30 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/74.
threatening those responsible with public humiliation and execution was found in the dug out in which five IRA were captured in the Skreen area in May 1923.43

In order to assess the areas of support for each side in County Sligo it is necessary to examine the distribution of activists. This is based on the reasonable premise that an area in which there was widespread support for the pro-Treaty side would be more likely to produce recruits for the army or police than a predominately anti-Treaty area. Likewise more internees should come from areas where anti-Treaty sentiment was greatest. Map 6.9 shows the distribution of internees who gave their address as Sligo and Map 6.10 Free State army members with Sligo address in December 1922 both arranged according to district electoral division.44 It may be argued that joining the Free State army did not necessarily always indicate support for the Free State side. There are for instance examples of Free State soldiers deserting and joining the other side.45 Motives for joining the Free State army are impossible to certify but it seems probable that many, if not a majority, of those who joined did so for economic reasons rather than reasons of conviction. However it appears self-evident that persons opposed to the Treaty would not join the Free State army; so membership of the army can be taken at the very least as indicating a lack of support for the anti-Treaty side. On the other side it may also be argued that among the internees there is a bias towards persons who lived in areas which came directly under the control of the government at an early date on the basis that these persons were more likely to be apprehended. Even though a number of IRA activists were not arrested during the Civil War, no area was immune and in each of the strongholds important leaders were captured. In the Ox Mountains area, Martin Brennan, John Ginty and Charles Gildea, all important lieutenants of Frank Catty, were arrested.46 In the Arigna area, the three leaders, Tom Deignan, Ned Bofin and Harold McBrien were arrested and in north Sligo leaders including the brigadier were killed or captured.47 As with the army recruits it is of course

43 Notice headed Irish Republican Army, undated, MA, Captured Documents Lot No. 30.
44 Internment Prisoner Location Books, MA; Free State Army Census Dec. 1922, MA.
45 The re-arrest of deserters is mentioned in Claremorris Radio Reports, Military Archives, Report from Claremorris, 20 June & 31 July 1923, MA, Radio and Phone Reports, CW/R/2.
46 Brennan and Ginty were arrested on 27 Mar. 1923, Gildea on 2 May 1923. (Report, 2 May 1923 MA, Radio and Phone Reports, CW/R/4; Martin Brennan, O'MN, P17b/133; S.C., 7 Apr. 1923.)
47 Report, 26 Mar. 1923, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/130; Report 25 Mar. 1923, MA, Donegal Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(o); Operation Report, 26 Mar. 1923, MA, Claremorris Command Papers, CW/Ops/4(d); Report, 29 June 1923, MA, Donegal
impossible to gauge the strength of the support which caused the person to be interned. All may not have been dedicated anti-Treaty activists. One may have been arrested and interned for doing a favour, carrying a message or hiding a firearm for a friend or relative on the run, while another may have spent months with a guerilla band avoiding, and sometimes engaging, Free State troops. While it may be presumed that most had committed anti-Treaty views some may have taken part in the war because of friendships, boredom or hope of reward.

It has often been assumed that internees came from the poorer sections of the community. According to Jack Brennan, "when the Treaty came, the poor remained republican here but the people with a bit of property went Free State". This was related to Ernie O'Malley thirty years after the end of the war and may be coloured by simplistic romanticism. An officer of the Free State army painted a different picture in a report for the Director of Intelligence on the north-western region of County Sligo in December 1922. This is the area then controlled by Frank Carty's IRA group and therefore the same area as that mentioned by Brennan. The officer classified the people there into three groups. Large farmers and shopkeepers of the area would, he said, support strong action against the republicans. The moderate size farming class, however, had everything to gain from lack of order, no rents, no rates, and they supported the IRA. The very poor were suffering great hardship under the IRA and were secretly hostile to them. It should not therefore be taken for granted that the poorer people supported the rebels. Analysis of the distribution of internees in the county (Map 6.9) should provide sounder evidence.

High rates of internees are recorded for the northern part of the central lowland portion of the county from Sligo town through Ballisodare, Collooney, Ballymote to Buninnadden as well as some few divisions on the coastal lowlands of the north west. These are areas of better land with low percentages of holdings under £15 valuation. However the largest concentration of internees came from the areas around Ballisodare Bay from Sligo town to the eastern foothills of the Ox Mountains. The exceptional area north of Sligo town which had high population density as well as a high percentage of small holdings also had a high number of internees. This is the only area in which there appears to be any correlation between poverty and high incidence of internees. Few

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Command Papers, CW/Ops/6(n).
48 Jack Brennan, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/137.
49 Report on north west Sligo area, 29 Dec. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/75.
internees came from the poorer areas with high percentages of small holdings on the Ox Mountain slopes and in the extreme south and south east of the county. These included areas which had been IRA strongholds during the Civil War. Similar areas in the south west of the county around Tubbercurry had small numbers of internees.

The correlation co-efficient between internees per 100 population and percentage of holdings under £15 valuation is -0.122, an insignificant negative correlation. This confirms what is apparent from Map 6.9 i.e. that internees were not more likely to came from areas where the land was poorer or where there was a very high percentage of small holdings.

The distribution map of members of the Free State army has a similar overall structure as that of the internees. Again the central lowlands, the coastal lowlands of the north west and the north Sligo area are strongly represented. However within each region the area of densest distribution of army members differs from that of internees. In the central area it was the southern portion, from Ballymote to Gurteen, which produced the largest concentration of Free State soldiers. The western edge of the coastal lowlands has the greatest concentration in the north west coastal region and in north Sligo the eastern portion with lower population density is more strongly represented. These three areas have little in common, population density is different, percentage of holdings under £15 is not similar and land quality is not uniform. The area of high army membership in south Sligo coincides with the area of very high War of Independence activity already discussed. The leadership here supported the Free State and this must have been a factor in determining the number of recruits for the army in this area. The same was not true of the other two areas both of which were close to regions where the anti-Treaty party were in the ascendant for most of the war. It appears that this did not deter people there from joining the army.

The poorer areas on the slopes of the Ox Mountains produced few Free State soldiers or internees while areas on the southern fringe and northern edge produced more. The numbers of each group of activists from the Tubbercurry area are remarkably similar in spite of the fact that this area was regarded as being an IRA stronghold for most of the Civil War. In east Sligo the numbers and distribution of internees and Free State soldiers is also remarkably similar, some divisions registering an equal figure for each. There are eighteen divisions which produced no army member and twenty three which produced no internee, and of these thirteen are common to both. There are no clearly defined areas of
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the county which produced internees but no Free State army members or vice versa.

To provide further statistical evidence on the question of whether internees or army members came from poorer areas of the county I compared the district electoral divisions from which there were internees with those for which there were none and I investigated the same comparison for army members. The figures for percentage of holdings of £15 valuation or less is almost identical for each group (Table 1) confirming that the internees and army members came from district electoral divisions of similar standards.

Table 6.1: Comparison of DEDs with participants with those without participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEDs with</th>
<th>Valuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Army members.</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army Members</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDs with No Internees.</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internees</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both cases the percentage of smaller holdings was slightly higher in the district electoral divisions which did not produce participants. This is further evidence that poverty as evidenced by holdings of low value did not produce more anti-Treaty activists or government army recruits in County Sligo. I examined the set of thirty nine Sligo district electoral divisions where the percentage of holdings of valuation £15 or less was 80 or greater. This set, comprising the poorest areas in the county, accounted for 47% of the county population. Graph 1 shows the number of participants and the number of incidents from this set compared to the rest of the county. The pattern is remarkably similar for each category with the poorer area having fewer participants and fewer incidents than the other. The only exception to this is in the agrarian incidents during the War of Independence where the poorer area shows a marginally higher figure. The fact that the participation rate of internees and army members is noticeably lower in the poorer areas is further evidence for the position already outlined.
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Confirmation of the fact that even in poorer areas the Civil War division was evenly represented is provided in a strongly pro-republican memoir of the period. Speaking of his schooldays in the Curry area where over 90% of the holdings were under £15 valuation the author says:

As all these things were happening, we, little boys, were copying our elders. Our school had between seventy five and eighty boys who were fairly evenly divided between Free Staters and Republicans. We fought each other in the school yard and in the class room . . . We decided to challenge the Free Staters to battle . . . We recruited about twenty boys and there were about twenty Free Staters . . . I wanted to be de Valera but so did Louis Weaver, so I had to be satisfied with being Frank Carty . . . The battle ended with both sides claiming victory.50

It would be expected that the distribution of those who joined the new Civic Guard would correspond to a large extent with the distribution of those who joined the Free State army on the understanding that both would have attracted those who supported the legitimacy of the new state. There are similarities in the distributions but there are also

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major differences. Using the registers from the Garda Archives I have examined the distribution of all those with addresses in County Sligo who joined the Guards between their establishment and the end of the Civil War. Of a total of 172 recruits who gave County Sligo addresses I have identified to which district electoral division 133 of them belonged. The distribution is shown in Map 6.12.

There is a large concentration in the area from Ballymote to Gurteen with just over 30% (52) of the total recruitment came from this small area. As has already been mentioned this region where large numbers of the IRA took the pro-Treaty side was an area which also provided a large number of recruits for the army. Jim Hunt had been appointed recruiting officer for Sligo, Leitrim and East Mayo for the Civic Guard in March 1922 and his assistant was also from the Gurteen area. They naturally appear to have concentrated at least their initial efforts on their native area and it was reported that a large number of recruits presented themselves at Ballymote in early March with the first batch leaving for Dublin in mid-March. In contrast the large expanse in the western half of the county including the baronies of Tireragh and Leyney provided only 30% of the recruits. In particular it is noticeable that district electoral divisions in the north west coastal lowlands area of Tireragh provided very few recruits to the new force. The presence of Carty's anti-Treaty forces nearby did not hinder a large number of men from joining the army from this area but it apparently did from joining the Guards. The reason may have lain in specific intimidation against Guards. In mid-April 1922 Thomas Barrett of Skreen, the father of a Civic Guard from this area, was shot and seriously wounded by an armed gang who demanded to see his son then at home on leave. It may be that those who joined the Civic Guards had in the main not been involved in the previous violence of the War of Independence and so were more susceptible to intimidation real or imaginary. Recruits for the army were more likely to have been involved in the earlier struggle and to have been able to withstand such intimidation.

Elsewhere in the county there is an even spread of Garda recruits with only five district electoral divisions in the eastern half of the county without a Garda recruit. Apart from the Gurteen area there are no other pockets of substantial recruitment, typically a district electoral division has one or two recruits. It was not generally the case that the two

52 R.H., 18 Mar. 1922.
recruits from the same division joined together.\textsuperscript{54} Recruitment, after the initial enrolment, was not a case of groups of locals joining up together because of a ideological determination to assist the stability of the new state. Rather it appears to have been individuals deciding to embrace the opportunity of a new career.

Comparison of Five Areas of the County.

To provide further statistical analysis I divided the county into five distinct geographical areas. (Map 6.13) Using the figures for the percentage of the total holdings in the area which were under £15 valuation (Graphs 2.1 & 2.2) I arranged the five areas in descending order of poverty as follows:-

A - The poorer land on the southern slopes of the Ox Mountains and the western portion of the central lowlands comprising a triangle with its apex at Ballisodare gradually widening towards Tubbercurry and the south west of the county.

B - The mountainous area to the east and south of the county stretching from Ballintogher to Gurteen and including some of the poorest land in the county.

C - North Sligo comprising all of the county north of Ballisodare and including Sligo urban area. This contains a mixture of lowland and uplands with land of varying quality.

D - The barony of Tireragh, an almost self-contained area bounded by the Ox mountains to the south and the sea to the north and stretching from Ballisodare in the east to the outskirts of Ballina in the west. This includes the very poor mountain areas but also some better land along the coast.

E - The central area of the interior lowlands centred on the towns of Collooney and Ballymote. Some of the best land in the county is in this area.

Graphs 6.2 and 6.3 show the comparisons for these areas. Looking at the figures for participants it is noticeable that many areas have similar numbers of participants, both

\textsuperscript{54} This did happen in the first half of 1922 when groups of recruits were sent together to the capital.
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army members and IRA, relative to population. The two poorer areas, A and B, had least number of internees. However the variation is not great except in the case of area B where the number of internees is significantly lower. This area at the south east of the county included the area around Gurteen which was one of the strongest pro-Treaty areas in the county. The greatest number of internees relative to the population came from the area of least poverty, E. The most striking feature of graph 6.2 is the great number of army members who came from area E, almost twice as many as from each of the other areas. Area A has least number of army members. Areas C, D and A have similar numbers of participants from both sides. Areas E and B in the centre and east of the county which went more markedly pro-Treaty had significantly more army members than internees.

When the north Sligo area, C, is divided into the Sligo urban area and the rest, there is a significant difference in the numbers joining the army, with many more emanating from Sligo town than from the rural areas. No such difference is apparent as regards internees with similar rates from urban and rural areas. In each of the items measured except agrarian incidents in 1919-21 area E is to the fore. It has more internees, significantly more army members and significantly more War of Independence and Civil War incidents than the other areas. It is the area of least poverty but it also contains the main transport corridor through the centre of the county. In view of the information from the other areas which provides no evidence of a significant correlation between poverty and side taken in the conflict it can only be assumed that the position of area E and its importance in the transport infrastructure of Sligo were the reasons for its predominant position on these scales of measurement. It was a strongly politicised area with the northern part having a strong anti-Treaty following while the southern part was equally committed but to the pro-Treaty side. This accounts for the large numbers of internees and army recruits from the area.
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Graph 6.2: Comparison of five areas of County Sligo by area.

Graph 6.3: Comparison of five areas of County Sligo by category.
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Conclusion.

In summary, it appears that the position of towns and of road and rail routes were most influential in determining where conflict took place during the Civil War in County Sligo. Once the guerilla phase of the conflict was entered upon the more remote mountainous regions became the bases of the IRA. In these areas they were for a long time unchallenged and they struck at Free State posts on the edges of their territories. When attempts were made to penetrated their fastnesses, the IRA generally refused to engage the intruders who themselves were unable to round up large numbers of the guerillas. More incidents occurred therefore in the areas of better land where the towns with government posts were situated. Because of the altered nature of the conflict there was little correlation between areas of action in the War of Independence and the Civil War. An area of south Sligo in which political and agrarian activity had been high, had seen much activity during the earlier war but little during the latter. It did however provide a large number of recruits for the national army who presumably saw action elsewhere.

Members of the opposing sides came from all areas of the county though in both cases the poorer areas generally provided fewer recruits. Anti-Treaty activists and pro-government recruits came from the same areas with no differentiation on the grounds of poverty. Though I have shown that neither group of the participants came predominately from areas of poverty it may be claimed that they themselves came from the poorer sections of the population in the relatively better off regions. Only a detailed study of the individual participants will provide conclusive evidence on which to base answers to questions such as these and the next chapter will examine in detail the backgrounds of the participants in County Sligo.
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Map 6.1: Land Use Capability County Sligo.

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Percentages.

-60
60 - 69
70 - 79
80 - 89
90+

Map 6.3: Percentage of holdings under £15 valuation.

Map 6.4: County Sligo, towns and main routes.
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Map 6.5: Civil War incidents in County Sligo.

Map 6.6: War of Independence incidents in County Sligo.
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Each dot represents one reported incident.

Map 6.7: Sinn Féin conacre campaign February 1918.

Each dot represents one reported incident.

Map 6.8: Agrarian incidents 1919-21.
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Map 6.9: Distribution of internees from County Sligo.

Map 6.10: Distribution of army recruits from County Sligo.
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Each dot represents one Sinn Féin club.

Map 6.11: Sinn Féin clubs County Sligo 1917-18.

Number of recruits.

- 0
- 0 - 2
- 2 - 4
- 4+

Map 6.12: Distribution of Garda recruits from County Sligo during the Civil War.
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Map 6.13: Five geographical areas of County Sligo.
7. INDIVIDUAL COUNTY SLIGO PARTICIPANTS.

In the previous chapter I have analysed the geographical origin of over six hundred Sligo participants in the Civil War. That analysis showed no pattern of either group of participants coming predominately from particular areas of the county. Participants on both sides came from all areas of the county though the poorer regions generally provided fewer recruits. However pinpointing what areas participants came from does not tell the full story of their backgrounds. In particular it does not tell us whether those on either side came largely from a particular social class or strata and examination of individual details of the participants is necessary to investigate this. This chapter will analyse details of the background of the participants on both sides from County Sligo to examine the question of the existence of an identifiable pro-Treaty type and an anti-Treaty type.\(^1\) Consideration of fathers' occupations and the valuation of land holdings and houses should provide important evidence as to the social standing of the participants on either side. Were the oft quoted supposed archetypes true? Were anti-Treaty forces composed primarily of the "men of no property" while the pro-Treaty side consisted mainly of those "with a stake in the country"?

The Social Dimension of the Civil War.

The question of the existence and importance of a social dimension to the Civil War division has been touched upon by many commentators on the period. Most deal with supporters of the opposing sides rather than participants in the war. All stress the overriding importance of political, constitutional and military considerations in the split but many, for different reasons, consider that social factors played a part also. Michael Hopkinson in his book on the Civil War devotes just over a page to "Social Considerations and the Treaty Response". He considers that it is difficult to demonstrate any social basis

\(^1\) Army Census, Military Archives; Internment Location Books, Military Archives; Valuation Books for Co. Sligo, Irish Valuation Office; Census returns for Co. Sligo, 1911, NA. I located just over 60% of participants on each list in either the Census returns or Valuation Books or both and used the details to build up a picture of each side. The Internment Books in particular provided very little information beyond name and address, and this made searching difficult. The Army Census gave ages and (in most cases) a parent's Christian name which made them easier to trace.
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for the divisions on the Treaty but however goes on to state, without adducing anything by way of argument or example, that "enthusiasm for the Treaty was much greater among prosperous farmers and businessmen than it was among small tenant farmers and farm labourers". He also claims that "a remote situation and a backward economy corresponded often with an attitude that was at best lukewarm to the Treaty". C. Desmond Greaves regards it as logical that "the tendency was Republican" in Western areas "with their land-hungry small farmers or large agricultural proletariat based on dairying". Tom Garvin mentions that there was some correlation between social class and support for the Treaty "with employers, big farmers and many urban middle and working-class people supporting it, while other workers, small farmers and inhabitants of more remote areas opposed it". He goes on to say however that at the level of the elite there was little correlation between class origin and position on the Treaty. We have already seen that within County Sligo there is no evidence that inhabitants of the more remote areas actively supported the anti-Treaty side to a greater degree that those elsewhere. The republicans certainly controlled many of the more remote areas of the county for most of the Civil War period but this did not necessarily reflect the distribution of active participation. As has been pointed out in the chapter on geography the inaccessibility and suitability of these areas for guerilla bases, rather than the unforced hospitality of their inhabitants, was the reason for the anti-Treaty strength there.

Erhard Rumpf has made the most detailed study and argument about a possible social basis to the Treaty split. In his consideration of "The social structure of Irish Nationalism and Republicanism, 1922-23", he stresses that the causes of the Civil War must be sought in Ireland's historical heritage and social structure as well as political manoeuvrings. Dealing with the composition of the opposing forces he claims that it is "probably true to say that the sons of the larger farmers were to be found on the Free State side, while the sons of small farmers and the landless men were more likely to be Republicans". To support this theory he analyses public opinion in general. A desire for stability was, according to Rumpf, the reason why prosperous Catholics, the commercial middle class and those represented by the Farmers' Union supported the Treaty. He goes on to claim

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that "it is also true that the growing number of unemployed and the landless sons of small farmers provided an inexhaustible reservoir of recruits for the IRA".\textsuperscript{6} My survey of the course of the Civil War in County Sligo shows that this supply was indeed exhaustible and that numbers involved in active service on the republican side dwindled as hope of victory evaporated. Whether the sons of small farmers were more likely to be active on the anti-Treaty side will be investigated later in this chapter.

Rumpf argues that the division between the pragmatism of the Free Staters and the romantic idealism of the republicans coincided with certain lines of social division within the population. According to him the small farmers of the west were "sheltered from the worldly pressures which inclined other parts of the country to take a more practical view".\textsuperscript{7} The argument that the Sligo small farmer was in some way less practical than his counterpart elsewhere in the country seems very tenuous and the persistence of agrarian agitation among the same small farmers suggests the contrary. Paul Bew's view seems to be that the small farmers of Connacht were very practical indeed in their attitude to the struggle for independence: "Connaught's fairly restrained contribution to the War of Independence had its roots in agrarian disappointments".\textsuperscript{8} According to Rumpf their remoteness and the primitive subsistence farming they practised were among the reasons for the rigid adherence of these small farmers to the ideal of a republic. Rumpf bases his discussion of support for the republicans, not on any analysis of activists, but on maps of IRA divisional attitudes to the Treaty and voting patterns of constituencies in 1922 and 1923.\textsuperscript{9} These are very crude indices of support. He also claims on the strength of a map based on the 1936 census that there was a close correlation between areas where Republicans did well and and the portion of the country in which over 75% of the labour force worked on the land.\textsuperscript{10} Sligo is included on both maps but then so is all of Connacht. Much of Rumpf's analysis is based on the idea of the whole of County Sligo as a remote and backward place. A prosperous businessman from Sligo town or a well-off farmer with a large farm in the relatively rich centre of the county would hardly have seen things in that light.

\textsuperscript{6} Rumpf and Hepburn, \textit{Nationalism and Socialism}, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{7} ibid, pp 61-2.
\textsuperscript{9} Rumpf and Hepburn, \textit{Nationalism and Socialism}, maps 13, 14 & 15, pp 58-60.
\textsuperscript{10} ibid, map 16, p. 65.
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In his discussion of the social foundation of the Civil War, Charles Townshend claims that support for the anti-Treaty side among certain social groups was based on support for a different struggle than that of the middle classes for "nation" or "freedom" (his quotation marks). This struggle, he claims, was the struggle of the lower classes against the "bourgeois regime inheriting and operating the apparatus of the English state".11 Others, with even less justification, claim a strict social or class division in the Civil War split. A recent polemic work on the Civil War asserts: "Certainly there was an economic root to the struggle. Most of the republicans came from the rural and urban poorer class levels".12 The author lists categories of Treaty supporters as follows: Southern unionists, landed gentry, the vested interests of big business, Academics and intellectuals, the press, the clergy and the middle classes leaving very few groups to oppose the Treaty except the lower classes.13 In general it appears that all of the above commentators believe that to some extent there was a class basis to the Civil War divisions though none except Rumpf attempted to provide evidence for this.

Many commentators hold the view that while the proletariat did not actually join or even support the anti-Treaty side they were its natural ally. While admitting that the anti-Treaty side "were without the slightest concern for class politics"14 they deduce that since the vociferous propertied and commercial classes obviously supported the Provisional and Free State Governments the lower classes whose voice was less likely to be heard were supporters of the other side.15 The notes written by Liam Mellows while in Mountjoy Jail in 1922 indicate a recognition that the proletariat did not take the republican side and marks an effort at encouraging the development of policies which would have attracted their support: "In our efforts now to win back public support to the Republic we are forced to recognise . . . that the commercial interest, so called, money and goombien men are on the side of the Treaty . . . We are back to Tone - and it is just as well - relying on that great body 'the men of no property'. The 'stake in the country' people were never with the

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13 ibid, pp 16-17.
15 Kostick also mentions that while the republicans held Cork city "They were met with substantial political and economic opposition from Cork's merchant and professional classes". (Conor Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland*, p. 183)
Republic". Mellows and many like him considered that but for inadequate policy development the proletariat would have been the natural partner of the anti-Treaty side.

Only detailed examination of the profiles of participants can establish the validity of such assertions and little such research has been carried out on Civil War activists. There is however some evidence from the War of Independence period as to the profile of volunteers. David Fitzpatrick found that during the final period of the War of Independence in County Clare: "more of the new officers were ... sons of labourers rather than of shopkeepers, from medium-sized rather than large holdings." Joost Augusteijn has analysed the social background of individual members of the IRA in the War of Independence and while his analysis is confined to the pre-Civil War period his appendix on "Social Composition of the IRA" has some relevance. In the two areas which he examined in County Mayo he finds that farmers of holdings just below and just above average size were most likely to join the IRA. He found that "IRA membership appealed to all sections of society apart from the most well-to-do, and disproportionately little to the lowest social strata". Farmers were twice as likely as labourers to join the IRA.

Augusteijn, like Fitzpatrick, notes a clear if small change in social composition over time which shows that poorer farmers and labourers were more likely to join the IRA in the final more active period of the War of Independence: "Poorer farmers were less inclined to join when membership was considered a luxury, while they were less inhibited to join when life and possessions were at stake".

Peter Hart has analysed figures for IRA composition and membership for the periods 1920-1 and 1922-3 in County Cork. According to him "During 1922 and 1923, as membership and the prospect of victory rapidly receded, farmers and white-collar workers among the rank and file dropped out in large numbers, as did many city officers who worked in shops and offices. Some manual labourers also left the movement but a greater
Individual County Sligo Participants.

proportion stayed: as a result the army became more proletarian."²³ He found that the changes in percentages in occupations of IRA members for the periods 1920-21 and 1922-23 were: farmers or son from 31% to 18%; farm labourers from 12% to 21%; un/semi-skilled workers from 19% to 27%.²⁴ While these may not be dramatic changes they do represent the only clear evidence for a more proletarian IRA during the Civil War and it is clear that in the case of Cork it is caused by the dropping off of volunteers of higher social standing rather than an influx of the anti-Treaty proletariat. The numbers involved in Hart's samples for instance fell from 878 in 1920-1 to 460 in 1922-3.

Occupations of Fathers of Participants.

To investigate the background of the participants from County Sligo I examined the occupations of the fathers (and where no father was at home on census night in 1911, mothers) of those I have identified on both sides. These occupations have been taken from the 1911 census records. Parents' occupations give us an opportunity to see and compare the social and economic background of the two sets of participants. Because of the difference in time between the Army Census and Internment Books on the one hand and the 1911 census on the other hand it is likely that some occupations are under represented. Farmers' sons are likely to be over represented while sons of those whose occupations entailed frequent movement of domicile are likely to be under represented. Those with a firm stake in the community who owned their own home and property should be easier to trace while labourers and unskilled workmen living in rented accommodation or housing supplied by their employer are more likely to have moved in the period 1911 - 1922.

Those whose families moved into the county after 1911, are also under represented for obvious reasons. In many cases such outsiders had a disproportionately large impact on political and military activity in their adopted area. For instance the Geoghegan family, originally from Limerick, who came to Coolaney Station House sometime around 1916 had a large influence on the IRA in that area. The three active sons took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War and one was killed in a skirmish in County Sligo in 1923.²⁵ They

²⁴ ibid, table 18, p. 155. These figures refer to the occupations of Volunteer rank and file (not officers) in Co. Cork.
²⁵ Information from Séan Lee, Coolaney, Co. Sligo.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.1.: Occupations of fathers of Sligo Participants.\(^{26}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers &amp; Fishermen</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un/Semi-Skilled Workers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Workers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

appear in the Internment Books but I have been unable to trace them in the 1911 census. In all probability they were not in County Sligo then. Likewise the very influential figure of R.G. Bradshaw does not appear in the 1911 census in Sligo.

It is clear that in County Sligo both sets of participants in the Civil War were made up of a broad range of backgrounds but that farmers' sons provided the majority in both camps: the percentage of farmer's sons on each side is almost identical. Skilled and clerical workers were also almost equally represented on each side. The group comprising sons of labourers, unskilled and semi-skilled workers provided more army members than internees. On the other hand the sons of shopkeepers, merchants and professionals represented 6% of the internees but only 3% of the army members. In the 1911 census the figures for farmers and labourers in Sligo represent 41% and 15% respectively of the total males "of specified occupation in the county".\(^{27}\) This suggests that farmers' sons were greatly over represented both among internees and army members while labourers' sons were slightly under represented in each group.

The results of Peter Hart's investigations of the occupations of fathers of Cork rank and file IRA members during the Civil War contrast sharply with my figures for Sligo. His show a much lower percentage of farmers' sons involved, 40%, but a higher percentage of

\(^{26}\) A full list of occupations represented and their arrangement into classes is given in Appendix 1, p. 313.

\(^{27}\) Census of Ireland 1911, County of Sligo, Table XX, Occupations of the People, pp 50, 52.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

sons of skilled workers, 26%, and sons of merchants, 11%, active on the anti-Treaty side.28 In the case of Cork "artisans and tradesmen provided a solid core of support for the movement" but this was not the case in Sligo.29 This may reflect the fact that the economy of County Sligo was much more rural based and had fewer urban centres of population than did Cork where "most Volunteers had non-agricultural occupations, and lived and worked in urban rather than in rural settings".30 This was not true of the Sligo IRA where a larger proportion had a rural background.

As regards Cork, National Army recruits most came from Cork city and the East Riding and "almost none described themselves as farmers' sons".31 They were mostly urban and unskilled. This is again in stark contrast with the Sligo recruits where a majority came from the country areas and almost two thirds described themselves as farmers' sons.32

The large percentage of farmers' sons among the sample may hide real differences between occupations of those parents who were not farmers and this may be especially evident in the Sligo urban area. To investigate this I did a separate analysis of the parents' occupations of participants found in this area.

There is a clear difference in the two groups in Sligo town though the small numbers involved in the sample mean the results must be treated with caution. Of the army members in Sligo urban area whose parents' occupations are known, 64% were labourers or un/semi-skilled workers, while only 34% of internees belonged to the same classes. Skilled workers were the biggest single group of anti-Treaty activists in Sligo town at almost 40%. No army members were sons of merchants or professionals while 12% of internees came from these groupings. This is clear evidence that in the Sligo urban area more army members came from the poorer classes and internees were more likely to come from the better off sections of the community. In contrast, Hart's figures for activists' backgrounds in Cork city show significantly higher percentages of the sons of the skilled workers and merchants and fewer sons of labourers and un/semi-skilled workers among the Cork city anti-Treaty IRA: "Nearly half of the men who remained in the city I.R.A. for the

29 ibid, p. 155.
30 ibid, p. 159.
31 ibid, p. 163.
32 Hart's figures for National Army recruits refer to the occupations of the recruits themselves not those of their fathers'. Many of the farm labourers and un/semi-skilled workers who made up 70% of the recruits may have been sons of farmers.
Table 7.2: Occupations of fathers of participants from Sligo urban area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers &amp; Fishermen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un/Semi-Skilled Workers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Civil War had tradesmen for their fathers". 33

Land Valuation.

While over 60% of participants from each side were farmers' sons this may still hide a real social division in that one or other of the sides could predominately come from poorer or richer farmers. To investigate this further I examined the valuation figures for land occupied where the participant was the son of a farmer. Because of the varying quality of land held these valuation figures which come from the regularly updated Valuation Books should be a truer assessment of the farm quality and income than acreage. A percentage of those found did not occupy any land of course, and the greater number of these occurred in the urban area of Sligo where obviously extent and quality of land owned was not the principal indicator of wealth.

The evidence from these figures is clear. Of those who were sons of farmers more army members than internees came from very small holdings while more internees than army members came from substantial holdings. In all, the classes under £15 produced 10% more army members than internees, and while 21% of internees came from holdings of over £15 valuation only 12% of army members came from the same size of holdings. These findings confirm those from other figures. Certainly there is no evidence here to support statements that large farmers supported the Free State side rather than the republican side. If they did, their sons did not show this by flocking into the army.

Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.3: Valuation of land holdings of families of Sligo participants whose parents were farmers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4 &amp; under</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4-£10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10-£15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15-£20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20-£30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likewise the perception that poorer farmers overwhelmingly supported the republican side is not borne out. If they were supporters, they did not show this by rallying to the hills to join the flying columns. Rumpf’s assertion that the sons of small farmers were more likely to be active on the anti-Treaty side is not borne out by these figures. More probably these sons were serving in the Free State army.

Hart’s figures for the valuation of the family farms of Cork Volunteers contrast sharply with those for Sligo. In Cork farm sizes between £10 and £100 were over represented among the anti-Treaty IRA of 1922-3, those under £10 and over £100 were under represented; "I.R.A. family farms were well above the Cork average in valuation... so that they would have been seen as better off by most of their neighbours". In Sligo farms valued under £10 were over represented and anti-Treaty activists would not have been seen as better off.

In the previous chapter on the geography of the Civil War I divided County Sligo into five areas arranged in descending order of poverty as measured by the percentage of holdings under £15 valuation in the area in 1901. I looked at the percentage of each group of participants from each area whose parents lived on holdings of £15 or under. I omitted Sligo Urban area from area C as most participants from there had no land and all those who had holdings fell into the under £4 category. These percentages are compared with the percentage of holdings of £15 or under in the area to ascertain if those are under or over-represented.

Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.4: Participants whose parents lived on holdings of £15 or under compared to the total percentage of holdings of £15 or under in each of five areas of County Sligo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Interees</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In area A, the poorest area with the largest percentage of holdings of £15 or under, the percentages match almost perfectly. In area B under £15 holdings are under-represented among the internees but almost exactly matched by the army members. In area D all the army members came from the 76% of holdings of £15 or less and in area E a much larger percentage of army members came from the smaller holdings. In both these latter areas the percentage of internees was much smaller than the army members. Area C outside of Sligo Urban was the only area where a higher percentage of internees than army members came from holdings of £15 or less. I have already noted the difference in the numbers joining the army in this area with many more emanating from Sligo town than from the rural portion. This area included the north Sligo republican strongholds on the poorer land along the mountains on the Leitrim border and this is likely to account for the difference. In the early months of the Civil War this was a principal stronghold of republicans and was completely under IRA control until MacEoin's attack of September 1922. These figures show no indication of army members coming from the better off section of the community in poorer areas. In the areas of fewer small holdings, D and E, the percentage of army members which came from the poorer holdings was much larger than the percentage of internees. All the evidence from examination of land valuation shows that a slightly higher percentage of army members than internees came from the poorer sections of the rural community as measured by valuation of holding.
Another reliable indicator of poverty or wealth is house class and valuation. I first examined the house class of the individuals on both sides from the 1911 census. There were four possible house classes, 4 - one roomed cottages built of mud or other perishable material, 3 - A better house with one to four rooms, 2 - "A good farm house having from 5 to 7 rooms", and 1 which included houses of better quality. According to the 1911 census, of the 16,590 houses in County Sligo, 94% belonged to either class 2 or 3, 5% belonged to class 1 and just over 0.5% to class 4. Unfortunately separate figures for classes 2 and 3 are not given in the census figures for County Sligo.

In each set of participants the poorest and the best off classes are under represented but there are significant differences between them. More internees than army members came from the class 1 houses. Almost three quarters of the republicans came from houses of class 2 while 65% of army members came from similar class houses. Ten percent more army members than internees came from 3rd class houses. This adds strong evidence that army members were more likely to come from the poorer sections of the community than were the internees.

To investigate this question further I used the Valuation Books to examine the valuation of the buildings of both sets of individuals.35 These were their parents' houses in general though some of these individuals themselves would have come into possession of them after 1911. This confirms the evidence from the house class investigation. Significantly more army members came from buildings of ten shillings valuation or less than internees. Internees were more likely than army members to come from buildings of valuation between ten shillings and two pounds. Each category above £5 valuation had a higher percentage of internees than army members.

I also investigated the valuations of the buildings owned by the families of participants on both sides from Sligo urban area. The pattern here is similar to that for the county at large but much more pronounced. No internee from my sample for Sligo Urban area came from a house of less than £1 valuation, while 20% of army members came from

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35 The valuation books include the valuation of the buildings occupied by the person. These obviously include dwelling houses, out offices and business premises and are thus probably a better index of wealth than the house class from the census returns.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.5: Family house class (1911 Census) of Sligo participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6: Family house valuations of Sligo participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5/-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/- - 10/-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/- - 15/-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/- - £1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1 - £2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£2 - £3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3 - £4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4 - £5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5 - £10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10 - £20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20 - £40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.7: Family house valuations of Sligo Urban participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£1 &amp; under</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1 - £4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over £4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual County Sligo Participants.

this category. Almost the same percentage from both sides came from houses of valuation £1 to £4. The percentage of internees coming from the categories over £4 is twice that of army members. The picture then of participants from Sligo town is of republicans coming from homes of higher valuation than army members. The urban poor seem to have joined the Free State army rather than the IRA. In my sample there were ten army members and no internees from Holborn Street in Sligo's North Ward which was the epitome of working class Sligo. The perception would be that it was this same class and the same area in Sligo town which contributed most numbers to the British army. J.M. Wilson visiting Sligo in February 1916 was told by W. Russell Fenton, clerk of the Crown and Peace in Sligo that "Sligo town has done magnificently. Those of the lower classes who have joined (the British army) have done it as a matter of business . . . The labour classes all through the county have done well." Mr. Nelson, a Sligo jeweller told him, "All the corner-boy class has gone".36 Did these same people also join the Free State army "as a matter of business"?

The Army Census does not contain any information about previous service in the British army and it is impossible to gauge the number of Free State soldiers who were ex-British army members. However there are individual instances that we know of. The Free State soldier killed in the IRA attack on Sligo Town Hall in December 1922, James Skeffington, a native of Sligo, had served in the Connaught Rangers during the Great War.37 Likewise Free State army Volunteer Henry Conlon of Holborn Street, Sligo, accidentally killed in March 1923 had served in the Connaught Rangers during the war.38 Sergeant John Carter of the Free State army, a native of Strandhill, County Sligo, was killed in November 1922. He had also served in the British army during the war.39 On the republican side the only activist known to have served in the British army was Thomas Goff who was shot dead by Free State forces while trying to escape at Beltra in February 1923. He had served in the Royal Flying Corps in the Great War.40

Sons of policemen appear on both sides, two on the internees side, both from

37 S.C., 16 Dec. 1922.
38 S.I., 24 Mar. 1923.
39 S.C., 9 Dec. 1922.
40 S.C., 24 Feb. 1923. The Information Officer at the Volunteers HQR had asked the Sligo I.O. for information about Goff in Nov. 1921 claiming that he had been heard using "very unfriendly terms about the republican movement and its leaders" while in Dublin en route to an army hospital at Henley for treatment for war wounds. (Intelligence Dublin to I.O. Sligo, 30 Nov. 1921, MA, Collins Papers, A 0747).
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Sligo town, and one on the army side.\textsuperscript{41} Other sons of policemen not in the lists include Harold McBrien, IRA Commandant in the east Sligo area in both the War of Independence and Civil War, who was the son of an RIC constable. Two of his brothers were also members of the RIC.\textsuperscript{42} On the other side Jim Hunt, the War of Independence commandant of the Gurteen battalion, had been an RIC member before deserting in 1916. His brother, also an RIC member, remained in the force until its disbandment.\textsuperscript{43}

\textbf{Ages of Participants.}

Another interesting area of comparison is the ages of participants in 1922 given the common perception of those who fought on the anti-Treaty side as being younger men, "the young irresponsibles" in Collins' phrase.\textsuperscript{44} The most remarkable feature of these figures for County Sligo is surely the fact that one quarter of the army recruits were under twenty years of age on joining and 65\% were under twenty five. This confirms the impression that the Free State army was an army of youths, many of whom were inexperienced and poorly trained because of the lack of time between recruitment and active service. Figures compiled by Peter Hart for National Army recruits in Cork are very similar to the Sligo figures, showing the same large "percentage of the very youthful".\textsuperscript{45}

Secondly the comparative age patterns of the two groups of participants is interesting and informative. As might be expected the fifteen to twenty nine age range dominated both samples with the largest percentage of participants on both sides in the twenty to twenty four age group. The dominance of this age range is most marked among the army members with 40\% of their membership coming from this category as against 31\% of the internees. The distribution shows that in general the internees tend to be older than the army members. Forty five per cent of internees were twenty five years of age or over as against 34\% of army members. Figures from County Cork used by Hart show the same pattern of

\textsuperscript{41} On the republican side were J. Doocey and G. Glynn, while the army member was J. Barry from Cliffony.
\textsuperscript{42} Copy of statement by Harold McBrien to the Bureau of Military History and additional information from his daughter, Margaret McBrien, Ballygawley, Co. Sligo.
\textsuperscript{43} Statement by Jim Hunt in Sligo Co. Library; Additional information supplied by Jim Hunt's widow and sons, Gurteen, Co. Sligo & Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
\textsuperscript{44} Quoted in Hart, \textit{The I.R.A. and its Enemies}, p. 170.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.8: Ages of Sligo participants. 46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

older anti-Treaty activists. The percentage of IRA rank and file under twenty in Cork dropped from 25% in 1920-21 to 20% in 1922-23 with a corresponding rise in the 20-29 age group from 58% to 64%.47

National figures for IRA Civil War rank and file members contrast with the figures for Sligo. The national figures show a greater concentration of ages between twenty and thirty, 75%, than in Sligo, 61%. The Sligo figures show a greater spread of ages with 22% under twenty as against a national figure of 17% and 16% over thirty as against 8.1%.48

None of the Sligo internees whose age I have found was under fifteen years of age. There is however the case of Jack Fowley, whose name does not appear in the Internment Books, which was raised in the Dáil by Darrell Figgis in February 1923. Fowley had been

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46 The Army Census provides the ages of almost all the army members while the internment books provide no such information. Therefore the sample size for the Army Census is much larger. For those I found in the 1911 census, both army members and internees, I added eleven to their stated age in the census. The 1911 census was taken in April while the Army Census was taken in December so obviously adding eleven may sometimes underestimate the December age by one. This age did not always coincide with the age given in the Army Census but I have used the 1911 census age where both are available on the basis that the age given there was more likely to be correct. The person was in general a young child then, and there was no incentive to add to the age as there might have been when joining the army.


48 ibid, table 30, p. 172.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

arrested and interned the previous October when, according to Figgis, he was only fourteen and a half years old. After investigation Mulcahy replied that Fowley had given his age as sixteen when arrested and had also given a false surname, first calling himself Foley.\footnote{Request for information from Sligo, Feb. 1923, Dept Defence Files, MA, A8332; Dail question by Darghal Figes and written answer by General Mulcahy, 27 Feb. 1923, \textit{Dail Eireann Parliamentary Debates}, Vol. 2, 6 Jan. 1922 - 27 Mar. 1923, p. 1728.} I have found two army members who, on the basis of the 1911 census, were under fifteen. However they had given their ages as nineteen and twenty according to the Army Census.

The figures show that younger men joined the army rather than the anti-Treaty forces. As we have seen many of these were farmers' sons and members of the labouring and semi-skilled classes who are likely to have joined for economic reasons. These may have been people who would have used the avenue of emigration had it been available at the time. On the other hand the membership of the republican side in the Civil War was older and therefore more likely to consist of those who had been pre-truce IRA fighters. The figures also suggests that few younger people joined the anti-Treaty side after the split and demonstrates the fallacy of the statement: "Those too young to have fought against Britain follower their elders into the Republican ranks".\footnote{Frances M. Blake, \textit{The Irish Civil War and what it still means to the Irish people}, p. 18.} These figures, as has been stressed, refer only to activists and so do not necessarily contradict Tom Garvin's finding with reference to TDs that there was "a slight tendency for older leaders to favour the settlement".\footnote{Garvin, \textit{Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland}, p. 147.} The only IRA pre-Truce commandant in County Sligo to take the pro-Treaty side, Jim Hunt, was also the oldest at thirty and prominent Sligo politicians who took the pro-Treaty side such as Alex McCabe, Martin Roddy and John Hennigan were significantly older than the anti-Treaty military leaders including William Pilkington and Frank Carty.\footnote{McCabe was 35, Roddy 34, Hennigan 45, Carty 24 and Pilkington 27 in 1921.}

Were eldest sons less likely to be active part on the anti-Treaty side because doing so might jeopardise their inheritances? Were their younger brothers, Rumpf's "landless sons of small farmers", more likely to be involved on that side?\footnote{Rumpf and Hepburn, \textit{Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth-Century Ireland}, p. 37.} Were they on the other hand more likely to be army recruits having seizing an opportunity for regular employment? Joost Augusteijn found no evidence of reluctance to participate on the part of first born sons in the pre-Truce IRA in his research on participants in four Irish counties.\footnote{Augusteijn, \textit{From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare}, table A.8, p. 338.}
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.9: Position of Sligo participants in family.\(^55\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Internees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eldest son</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Eldest</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hart's research suggests that there was a small drop in the percentage of those who were eldest sons in the IRA in Cork in the Civil War period, from 41% to 39%: "Over one third of the rank and file, and around half of the officers were the eldest resident sons in their families".\(^56\) The Civil War situation, with the enemy no longer easily classified as foreign, may have made a difference.

The eldest sons among the participants amounted to almost the same percentage of each group suggesting that there was no factor which operated to a greater extent on one side rather than on the other. Farmers' eldest sons with their succession rights may have been more liable not to jeopardise these rights, so I carried out a separate analysis of farmer's sons.

This gave similar results with similar participation rates for both sides. It also pointed to the fact that the rate of participation of the eldest sons of farmers was similar to that of eldest sons of all classes. These figures result in much smaller percentages of eldest sons being active in the IRA than was found by Augusteijn. The percentage of unknowns is much less in his study than in mine but his figures show the percentage of first born sons being active members of the IRA to have been much closer to and in some cases more than, the percentage of non first born. In the case of Mayo for instance only 5% fewer first born than non-first born were active participants. Augusteijn suggests that as in Mayo where the IRA stood more in the centre of communal life first born sons were not

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\(^{55}\) I used information from the 1911 census returns though it was not always possible to tell if a son was the eldest in cases where the total number of surviving children was more than those returned on the census form. I recorded those who were obviously the eldest sons and those who clearly were not from both groups of participants.

Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.10: Position of Sligo participants in farming families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Army (%)</th>
<th>Internees (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eldest son</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Eldest</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

prevented from joining, but where the IRA was more peripheral first born sons were more restricted.\(^57\) If this thesis is true then the lower percentage I found may reflect the greater peripherality of the IRA during the Civil War in County Sligo.

The most successful IRA leader in south Sligo, both during the War of Independence and the subsequent conflict, Frank Carty, was an only son. He was said to have sided with his mother in a history of trouble between her and his father, Carty senior having spent at least one term of imprisonment in Sligo jail as a result of a complaint of assault by his wife. This was in April 1920 at the same time as his son was imprisoned for his part in the raid for arms on the house of Alexander Perceval.\(^58\) This is interesting in light of the father/son generational conflict pattern mentioned by Tom Garvin.\(^59\)

Officers and Rank and File.

Another area of interest is the profile of the officers as against the rank and file among the Free State army. I compared those who were described as Volunteer or Private with those who had other ranks, commissioned or otherwise and investigated this with reference to age, land valuation and fathers' occupations.

\(^{57}\) Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare*, p. 338.
\(^{58}\) Jim Hunt, O'Malley Notebooks AD UCD, P17b/133; Letter from governor Sligo prison, 26 Apr. 1920, NA, General Prisons Board Correspondence 1912-1920, 3694. Carty senior was not at home on the night of the 1911 census. There was a belief current in south Sligo that Frank Carty was the son of Alexander Perceval, his father's landlord.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.11: Ages of rank and file and officers of the Free State Army from Sligo.

(%)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Rank &amp; File</th>
<th>Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.12: Occupations of rank and file and officers of the Free State Army from Sligo.

(%)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Rank &amp; File</th>
<th>Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers &amp; Fishermen</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un/Semi-Skilled Workers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Workers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the ages one finds as expected that the officers were generally older than the rank and file with most coming from the 25-29 age group. Few officers were under twenty though over a quarter of rank and file were. Nearly 20% of officers were thirty or over as against 14% of the rank and file.

Almost three quarters of the officers were sons of farmers compared to only 59% of the rank and file. The only other occupation class which had a larger percentage of officers than rank and file was that of merchants. The percentage of labourers' sons and the sons of
Individual County Sligo Participants.

Table 7.13: Valuation of land holdings of rank and file and officers of the Free State Army from Sligo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Rank &amp; File</th>
<th>Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4 &amp; under</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£4-£10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10-£15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15-£20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20-£30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30 +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

un- and semi-skilled workers among the rank and file was twice as high as among officers.

More officers came from larger holdings than did rank and file. This is as would be expected and shows that the officers in general came from higher strata of society than the rank and file. Free State army officers from County Sligo then tended to be older than rank and file, less likely to be sons of labourers or un-skilled workers and if sons of land holders, to come from landholdings of higher valuation than the rank and file.

Conclusion.

The figures which I have analysed demonstrate that simplistic statements on the social basis for the Civil War split have no basis in fact with regard to County Sligo. It is clear that the three criteria I have used to determine relative wealth and social standing - occupation, house class and valuation and land holding valuation - all point to the same conclusions. As far as activists were concerned the Civil War division in County Sligo was not based on social standing or relative wealth. Not only is there is no evidence that those who served in the Free State army came from better off backgrounds there is clear evidence that they tended to come in greater proportions from lower strata of society than the anti-Treaty internees. While this pattern is evident in the county at large it is more marked in the Sligo urban area. At the same time it is clear that the poorer sections of the community were over represented on both sides.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

The small village of Coolaney on the southern slopes of the Ox Mountains close to the centre of the county may have little claim to be regarded as a microcosm of Sligo at large but it is interesting to consider the five participants from there whose names appear in the two sources used by me. Coolaney had three internees and two members of the Free State army. The three internees were sons of substantial shopkeepers or publicans while the two army members included the son of a farmer of six acres living in a third class house and the son of a man who described himself as having "no trade or calling". Other republican activists in Coolaney included the Geoghegan brothers already mentioned, sons of the local station master.60

It is important to stress again that my conclusions refer to activists only and cannot easily be used to extrapolate information about support for either side. As far as the better-off groups, including as they did merchants, professional people and clerical workers, are concerned they may have supported the Free State to a great extent without necessarily enlisting themselves or their offspring in the new army. And these groups with a "stake in the country", who according to many were strong Free State supporters, had no economic imperative to have their sons join the army. This was not the case with the sons of labourers and semi-skilled workers who may have been tempted to enlist because of the lack of other employment opportunities and many of these who joined the Free State army may have done so for economic reasons rather than reasons of conviction.61 The extent of motivation in either case is impossible to ascertain. However as mentioned earlier it can be presumed that at the very least most who joined the army were not anti-Treaty supporters. On the other hand most of those who took the republican side hardly did so for monetary gain and so it can be taken that the internees are representative to a large degree of those who opposed the Treaty.62 Those from the poorer sections of society would have had less to lose in terms of status or employment and so would be expected to join the republicans in greater numbers if they had supported that side. In this regard the figures for Sligo town are most suggestive that the urban poor did not fight on the anti-Treaty side, and so it may be assumed that they did not support that cause in any significant numbers. My analysis

60 The army members were H. Monaghan and P. Kane; the internees R. Heffernan, W. Conlon and M. Coleman.
62 Though I have been told by a person who for obvious reasons wishes to remain anonymous that at least one person who fought on the republican side in Co. Sligo used money collected during the war to establish a business afterwards.
Individual County Sligo Participants.

shows no simplistic class basis for the division manifested in the Irish Civil War. Having examined individual participants the next chapter will look at the broader picture and consider the impact of the Civil War on daily life.
8. DAILY LIFE IN COUNTY SLIGO DURING THE CIVIL WAR.

In this chapter the effect of the Civil War on the everyday life of County Sligo will be discussed under a number of headings and an attempt will be made to judge to what degree daily life was disrupted by the war. I will also investigate if such disruption changed through time as the character of the war changed. An effort will also be made to ascertain if interruption of the patterns of ordinary life was more marked in areas which saw more conflict. It would be expected that the lawlessness of the times and the efforts of the republicans to hamper the mobility of the national army would have had an effect on the communication systems, roads and railways, the number of social functions held, the general economic life including farming and even on school attendance. All these aspects will be looked at.

Communications.

In the latter stages of the War of Independence when the mobility of the Auxiliaries was putting pressure on the Volunteers, they in response began blocking roads and damaging bridges. This meant that by July 1921 there was widespread inconvenience as regards communications in County Sligo. In March 1922 the County Surveyor listed seven major bridges which had been damaged during the War of Independence and needed repair or reconstruction which he estimated would cost £1,540. A number of smaller bridges would, he considered, cost £400 to repair.¹ During the Truce period the policy of the IRA was that bridges should remain un repaired because of the possibility of a resumption of hostilities; the County Surveyor for instance had been prevented from repairing Curry bridge in September 1921 by the local IRA.² Maintenance work on main roads had resumed in December 1921 but the County Surveyor reported in June 1922 that "fair progress" only had been made. Contractors were in many cases trying to evade the terms of their contracts, he reported and there were particular problems in north Sligo where anti-Treaty forces were obstructing the work on the Sligo to Bundoran road.³ Thus by the time the Civil War started the road infrastructure of the county had not been repaired.

² S.C., 21 Sept. 1921.
Daily life during the Civil War.

During the very early days of the conflict in County Sligo "the attempts to interrupt communication with Sligo by road and rail were persistent and successful". Rails were torn up on the Sligo to Dublin railway line and a railway bridge near Sligo was damaged by explosives. The strategically important road bridges at Ballisodare and Drumcliff, the former on the main road south from Sligo, the latter on the main road north, were blown up. As the first phase of the war ended and the republicans withdrew from, or were driven out of, the towns they continued their policy of destroying lines of communications. The pro-Treaty forces on the other hand as far as possible effected immediate temporary repairs in order to facilitate their own mobility and lessen disruption to the populace. By the end of July 1922 the railway line to Dublin was clear, trains were running regularly and the bridges at Drumcliff and Ballisodare had been temporarily repaired, the latter being guarded by Government forces. The County Surveyor reported at the end of August that damage to the amount of about £6,000 had been done to bridges in the county since the outbreak of the Civil War. This in contrast to the cost, mentioned above, of about £2,000 for similar War of Independence damage suggests the more disruptive nature of the Civil War as far as communications were concerned.

Communications continued to be badly disrupted for the rest of the Civil War. In the coastal area north of the Ox Mountains all the roads except one were stated to have been held by the anti-Treaty forces in August 1922 and were "more or less impassable", communication between Sligo and Ballina being possible only through circuitous routes and bye roads. In January 1923 the IRA operating in the same area reported that food supplies in the local country villages had become exhausted. All the principal roads in the area were kept continually blockaded making it more difficult to get "anything like a decent supply." Tubbercurry, lying as it did close to the stronghold of the most active republican guerrilla group, came in for much attention. In early September all public roads

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4 S.C., 8 July 1922.  
5 S.C., 22 July 1922.  
7 Reports on Irregulars, 8 & 22 Aug. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW/Ops/7(c). The pro-Treaty side believed that an assistant County Surveyor from the area was responsible for destroying the bridges.  
8 S.C., 2 Sept. 1922.  
9 Report on Food Supplies, O/C 2nd Brigade to O/C 4th Western Division, 20 Jan. 1923, MA, Captured Documents, Lot No. 11.
Daily life during the Civil War.

leading to the town were made impassable by broken bridges, felled trees and stone barricades. These barricades were quickly cleared but later in the same month bridges were again cut and though soon repaired this caused anxiety: "Something in the nature of a wild panic prevails there [in Tubbercurry] at the moment. Merchants cannot know how provisions etc. will be procured or from where." Goods were however being taken to Tubbercurry by motor lorry from Sligo and by cart from Ballymote and "so long as these lines of communications remain open there is no danger of a shortage." It was said that the horses pulling the Ballymote to Tubbercurry mail car became so accustomed to hold ups that whenever they saw two or more men on the roadside they stopped of their own accord. After the Provisional Government troops had dispersed the republican concentration in north Sligo in September 1922, bridges in that area were temporarily repaired. However the County Surveyor reported in October that two of these bridges had again been damaged and he had ordered all work on the Sligo to Bundoran road suspended. He had, he said, good reason to believe that some of the men employed on this road had taken part in the destruction. The men denied any involvement.

No area was free from disruption. The Ballymote area had no concentration of anti-Treaty forces and "there are probably few towns in the west that are less inconvenienced as a result of the troubles than Ballymote" a local newspaper reported. An army report from Ballymote in December 1922 however stated that "blocking of roads, cutting of wires and raiding of mails appear to be the prevalent form of destructive actions employed by Irregulars . . . Blocked roads cleared by our troops with little delay . . . The population has no difficulty in obtaining food supplies at little inconvenience." In what appeared to be one of the few concerted operations by the republicans in the area, bridges and roads near Ballymote were damaged or blocked by felled trees or stone barricades at the end of September 1922. Oldrock bridge on the direct route from Ballymote to Tubbercurry was

10 W.P., 2 Sept. 1922.
11 W.P., 30 Sept. 1922.
12 W.P., 4 Nov. 1922.
13 W.P., 19 Aug. 1922.
15 S.C., 2 Dec. 1922.
16 W.P., 12 Aug. 1922.
17 Intelligence Report from Ballymote, 18 Dec. 1922, MA, Western Command Papers, CW /Ops/7(c).
Daily life during the Civil War.

blown up at least twice. 18

Sometimes road and bridge repairs were carried out by local civilians in the usually vain hope that this would impress the republicans and dissuade them from further disruption. During October 1922 temporary repairs to Drumcliff bridge were destroyed and violence was threatened against anyone who again repaired it. On the following Sunday the local Parish Priest led a group of parishioners who again made the bridge passable but these repairs were again undone on the Monday night.19 In November 1922 at the request of the parish priest of Collooney civilians helped clear roads in the Skreen and Beltra areas under the protection of Government troops. At Templeboy roads which had been blocked were cleared in early November but were immediately blocked again. 20

Railway lines were also a target for the anti-Treaty forces. Of the three lines which ran through the county two were particularly vulnerable. The Collooney to Claremorris section of the GSWR line ran through countryside along the Ox Mountains which was controlled by Carty’s guerillas and was closed at the outbreak of the conflict. In November 1922 a party of fifty Government troops cleared the line as far as Coolaney but the anti-Treaty forces retaliated by inflicting further damage and this line was not reopened until the cessation of armed opposition.21

The Sligo Leitrim and Northern Railway line from Collooney to Manorhamilton also ran through remote territory and was frequently the target of republican sabotage. In early July 1922 the trains on the line were prevented from running and after normal service had been resumed later in the month trains were frequently stopped and passengers and goods searched.22 The Chief of Staff reported to the Minister for Defence in November that arrangements had been made for added protection of this line which was to consist of “sudden swoops” by National forces on villages in the area.23

18 S.C., 30 Sept. 1922.
19 S.C. & S.F., 4 Nov. 1922.
20 Western Command Daily Operations Reports, 3 & 7 Nov. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/114.
21 S.C., 11 Nov. 1922; Daily Operations Reports, 13 Nov. & 20 Nov. 1922, MA, Western Command Files, CW/Ops/7(b). Communications Report, 22 May 1923, MA, Donegal Command Files, CW/Ops/6(j).
22 Manager SL&NC line to M/D, 28 July 1922 & Ass Q/M Western Command to C/S, 31 July 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/73.
Daily life during the Civil War.

The third line, the Midland Great Western from Sligo to Dublin, was a vital artery and ran through territory which, after the fall of Collooney in July, was not under anti-Treaty control. Attacks were infrequent and consisted of attempts to disrupt the line or to destroy railway buildings. None of these attacks caused any significant interference with services. An attempt to burn Ballymote signal cabin in October was foiled by Government troops.24 Signal cabins were burned in November and March.25 Three unsuccessful attempts were made to cause destruction by sending a driverless train careering down the track, in September, December, January and March.26 The Field Inspecting Engineer, Western Command, anti-Treaty forces, ordered the issuing of instructions to each company O/C through whose area a railway line ran to carry out specified destruction work on the line.27 In a major operation which may have been a response to this order Sligo railway station was practically destroyed by anti-Treaty forces on 29 January 1923.28

Captured republican diaries of activities in January/February 1923 give an idea of the disruptive activities then being engaged in: "Our principal activity during this period consisted of demolishing bridges, cutting trenches and felling trees on all roads used by the enemy."29 By April the Free State army was reporting that "Irregular activity is confined to attacking railways, Post Office raids, looting, road blocking, cutting telegraph wires and sniping but it is very little."30

Republican activity was not the only reason for the deterioration of the Sligo roads. Maintenance of the roads depended on direct labour and on contractors who undertook to maintain a fixed stretch of road. At the end of January 1923 it was announced that the County Council had suspended all direct labour on roads because of non-payment of rates and that the main roads, all under direct labour, were in a bad way.31 As in the Truce

24 Intelligence Report, 12 Oct. 1922, MA, Western Command Files, CW/Ops/7(c).
25 R.H., 18 Nov. 1922; Radio Report, 19 March 1923, MA, Donegal Command Files, CW/Ops/6(o).
27 Letter to O/C 5th Brigade, 3rd Western Division from Field Inspecting Engineer Western Command, 24 Jan. 1923, MA, Captured Documents, Lot No. 11.
28 Correspondence on reply to Dáil Question by Darrell Figgis on the burning of Sligo station, Jan. 1923, MA, Dept. Defence, A8125.
Daily life during the Civil War.

period the contracting scheme had not been successful with contractors unable, unwilling or afraid to carry out maintenance. Because of the absence of a functioning police force or court system in the county there were no means of enforcing the contracts and in a report on the state of the roads for the period ended 30 September, 1922, the Sligo County Surveyor said that few contractors had got their work done during that time. Tom O'Donnell, TD, said that South Sligo was particularly bad, "some parties do nothing but sit down and earn their money."32

In April the County Surveyor reported that over forty bridges had been broken since the commencement of hostilities and no work on permanently repairing these or revitalising the road maintenance system in the county began before the end of the Civil War.33 This emphasised the fact that while increasingly the government forces took control of the county it was still possible for small bands of republicans to cause disruption to the road system. Road maintenance was impossible while this disruption could be repeated and while the absence of a police or legal system allowed those charged with maintenance to escape accountability. Because of this the road infrastructure of County Sligo deteriorated greatly during the war.

Social and Sporting Events.

The disruption of the transport network coupled with the general lawlessness of the times would be expected to affect social and sporting events most of all. Non-essential journeys, it might be thought, would be the first casualties. The farmer would still travel to the fair to sell his cattle but might decide not to venture to the parish hall to view the dramatic society's latest offering. Evidence from local newspapers confirms that there was a huge drop in the number of social and sporting functions in the county during the war period. The outbreak of the Civil War had an immediate effect on events in the county with numerous cancellations announced. The Sligo branch of the Catholic Institute cancelled its annual excursion across the Leitrim border to Dromahair on Sunday 9 July.34 The annual retreat for ladies due to be held in Banada Abbey near Tubbercurry on 31 July was

32 S.C., 2 Dec. 1922.
34 S.C., 1 & 8 July 1922.
Daily life during the Civil War.

postponed.\textsuperscript{35} Drumcliff races did go ahead on 5 July but according to local press reports the attendance and competitors were confined to locals.\textsuperscript{36} Beltra Industries Show fixed for September was not held because "the abnormal times are altogether against progressive fixtures of this sort".\textsuperscript{37} Sligo Cattle and Horse Show was also abandoned in 1922 as was the Achonry Vegetable and Home Industries Show.\textsuperscript{38} Several flapper race meetings due to be held early in August were also cancelled.\textsuperscript{39} For the first time in nearly a quarter of a century the annual Sligo Feis Ceoil was not held in 1923, it being decided early in the year to abandon it "owing chiefly to the impossibility of getting suitable premises under existing circumstances".\textsuperscript{40}

Graph 8.1: Social and sporting events in County Sligo, August 1921 - June 1923.

In order to systematically examine the effect of the Civil War on social and sporting events in the county I recorded the number of such events mentioned in the three newspapers published in Sligo and the two published in neighbouring counties which

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{R.H.}, 1 July 1922.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{S.C.}, 22 July 1922.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{S.I.}, 19 Aug. 1922.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{S.I.}, 26 Aug. 1922.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{S.I.}, 16 Sept. 1922.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{S.I.} & \textit{R.H.}, 7 Apr. 1923.

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circulated in Sligo for the period August 1921 to July 1923.\textsuperscript{41} I classified the events in five groups as follows: A. Dances and céilithe; \textsuperscript{42} B. Concerts and dramas; C. Aeráiochtaf; D. Sports events apart from regular fixtures as part of a league and E. Miscellaneous. The graph of total number of events per month for the period August 1921 to June 1923 shows a very high level of activity from August 1921 to January 1922 followed by a steep decline from then to July 1922 reflecting the growing unrest between the signing of the Treaty and the attack on the Four Courts. The period from July to November 1922 shows a very low level of reported social activity coinciding with the period of the greatest Civil War activity. From then to the end of the war there is a small increase in activity but the level remains far below that of the Truce period.

There was of course a seasonal pattern to these social and sporting events, race meetings and athletic meetings being usually held in late summer and early autumn, while dramas and concerts were especially popular during spring particularly during the period of Lent. To allow for this and to compare like period with like I divided the period into four sections: 1- July to December 1921, 1a- January to June 1922, 2- July to December 1922 and 2a- January to June 1923.

A comparison of the July to December period in 1921 with the same period in 1922 shows a drop of 80% in the number of recorded events. This represents a major decrease in activity in all spheres of social activity. We are of course comparing two periods of vastly

Table 8.1: Comparison of the number of social & sporting events held in County Sligo during four periods 1921-23.\textsuperscript{43}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>A</th>
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<th>E</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{41} S.C., S.I. and CM., R.H. and W.P. The W.P. for 1923 was not available.
\textsuperscript{42} This also included most events advertised as "socials".
\textsuperscript{43} July is not included in 1921 but is in 1922.
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differing moods, the euphoric Truce period and the miserable opening months of the Civil War. During the former period the IRA were able to openly flaunt themselves and arranged or had arranged many opportunities for parading, for speech-making and for fund raising. During August and September 1921 there were thirty reported or advertised aéraíochtaí in County Sligo, many of them including Gaelic Football matches which featured teams representing IRA companies.\(^{44}\) There were also two waves of functions to mark the homecoming of some of those who had been imprisoned or interned, one in autumn 1921 when TDs were released and another early in 1922 when the rest of the prisoners were released. Added to these events were fund raising dances held in various parts of the county usually in aid of the local company IRA or Cumann na mBan. Indeed the reason given in the local press for the "disappointing attendance" at a Céilí Mór in Sligo in September 1921 was that "many such functions have taken place recently."\(^{45}\) Twelve dances or concerts in the period September to December 1921 were specifically advertised as being in aid of the IRA, Cumann na mBan or Republican Prisoners and some of the other dances and concerts may also have been IRA functions. However even if we subtract such events from the period 1 total the drop as against the number of period 2 events is still 74%.

Comparing the period January to June 1922, Period 1a, with the same Period in 1923, Period 2a, we find a similarly substantial though smaller drop in volume of activity. The number of recorded events in the first half of 1923 represented a drop of 61% on the number for the corresponding period in 1922. The largest drop was in the number of dances held, ninety four dances were recorded for Period 1a but only seventeen for period 2a, a drop of 82%. In the period January to June 1922 there were twenty eight dances, concerts or dramatic presentations in aid of the IRA, Sinn Féin or in honour of released prisoners but even when these events are omitted the drop is still remarkable at 53%. A minor influence which might account for a small part of the drop in the number of events was the attitude of the Bishop of Elphin who, in December 1921, expressed his disapproval of fundraising for ecclesiastical purposes by means of "whist drives, dances and entertainments of a like nature". This was particularly with reference to fund raising for the new Strandhill church and for which some functions "of a like nature" had been

\(^{44}\) As at Ballymote sports on 28 Aug. (S.C., 20 Aug. 1921)
\(^{45}\) S.C., 17 Sept. 1921.
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During the winter and spring of 1921-22 there seems to have been a flowering of dramatic talent in the county, judging from the number of plays produced and advertised. This represents quite an investment of time given that each production demanded a commitment from a number of amateur actors over a period of time and differs from the amount of time and organisation needed for instance to hold a dance. Thirteen different dramatic societies in the county produced plays which were given one or two performances. Many titles suggested patriotic and political themes; "On the Run" was produced by two different societies, "The Smashing of the Van" concerning the Manchester Martyrs, "Lord Edward Fitzgerald", "The Dawn of Freedom" and "For Ireland's Sake" were among others produced. A bilingual play "An t-Athru Mór" by Sligo-born William Partridge was produced by two Sligo societies. In contrast during the following winter/spring, 1922/23, only four dramatic societies are recorded as having performed plays.

Christmas and the New Year were of course times of year traditionally characterised by a multitude of festive events. The curfew which had been imposed on Sligo town from 13 December 1922 following the anti-Treaty raid on the Town Hall post, threatened to dampen the holiday spirit and limit holiday spending. The local army authorities were approached by Sligo business people and asked to relax the curfew in order that business might not be adversely affected. The curfew was accordingly only enforced between midnight and 7am. In spite of this Christmas 1922 was, according to newspaper accounts, a very quiet time in County Sligo. "Quietest Festival in History Perhaps" and "Season Barren of Social Functions" were two of the sub-headings used by the Sligo Independent over an account which stressed the lack of public events. Apart from a football match in

46 S.C., 3 Dec. 1921. The money which had been collected in this way, £111-5-6, was not put towards the church but was divided between the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Sligo Volunteers. (S.C., 10 Dec. 1921). The Bishop was also responsible for the cancellation of Irish classes in a premises under his control, the Gilhooly Hall, Sligo, because the classes were mixed. (S.C., 12 Nov. 1921).

47 Partridge had been a member of the Citizen Army, Dublin labour organiser and city councillor, took part in the 1916 Rising, was imprisoned and died after release in 1917.

48 Easkey, Kilmacoen, Knocknarea and Rosses Point Dramatic Clubs. The latter was the most active, producing two plays in September and two more the following January. (S.I., 23 Sept. 1922 & S.C., 20 Jan. 1923).


50 S.C., 23 Dec. 1922.
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the Showgrounds and a dance at Rosses Point "the entire Christmas season was practically barren of any social functions, which, up to recently, were popular events at Christmastide, especially on St. Stephen's Night." The cinemas in Sligo, however, were stated to be full each night during the season. The Roscommon Herald reported that the "Christmas holidays were very dull in Sligo" and that the cinemas were the only attraction "to lighten the monotony". It noted that there was nothing in Sligo to show "that the great festival had come except the extra bustle of the shops and the gaily dressed windows". The same paper noted that the "festive season was very tame and dull in Ballymote" and that social functions were conspicuous by their absence. A sodality dance in Gurteen was the only event of note held in south Sligo during the Christmas week. Similarly "there was no demonstration of any kind in Ballymote to mark the arrival of the new year". According to the Sligo Champion "1923 was ushered in in complete quietness in Sligo, no bells, no steamers' sirens. The cathedral's chimes did not play on this occasion." It was reported that the Bishop of Achonry had asked that no dances "or similar gatherings" be held in his diocese, which included much of south Sligo, during the Christmas holidays owing to the disturbed conditions prevailing. During the period from Christmas Eve to 6 January inclusive there were twenty nine social functions at Christmas 1921 while there were only nine such functions at Christmas 1922. St. Patrick's Day 1923 was also reported very quiet in Sligo, "compared to old days." Easter 1923 in Ballymote was likewise quiet, "social functions, which were a feature of the Eastertides of the past were conspicuous by their absence."

Of interest is a comparison between the number of events in Sligo town as against the rest of the county. The ratios of events in Sligo town as against Sligo county for each of the four periods are 1:3, 1:2.2, 1:3 and 1:0.8. Only in the last period, January to June 1923, is there a significant difference in the ratio suggesting that Sligo town had begun to recover from the darkness of the troubles quicker than the rural areas of the county. A graph of Sligo town events as against those from the rest of the county confirms this.

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51 S.I., 30 Dec. 1922.
52 R.H., 30 Dec. 1922.
53 R.H., 6 Jan. 1923.
54 S.C., 6 Jan. 1923.
55 S.I., 30 Dec. 1922.
57 R.H., 7 Apr. 1923.
The damage to routes of communications was more significant and disruptive in the countryside than in Sligo town and the hold of the Free State was stronger in the town with its garrison, ineffective though it was at times, than in the countryside where IRA bands had greater freedom and constituted a greater threat for a longer period of time.

Visiting dramatic and variety groups performed in Sligo town on a regular basis during the winter months of 1921/22 entertaining either in the Town Hall or in one of the picture theatres. This type of show did not visit Sligo again for almost a year missing all the first half of the 1922/23 season. A vocal and comedy speciality act, "The Assassins of Sorrow" played for six nights at the end of February 1923 and in March the Harry O'Dempsey Popular Operatic and Variety Company performed extracts from "Il Trovatore" and "Barney McGee Matchmaker". The return of such shows to Sligo in early 1923 were a signal that the town was returning to normal after the worst of the Civil War disturbances.

All this evidence points to a remarkable decrease in social activity in the county at large during the period of the Civil War. The decrease in activity was most marked during 1922 with a slight recovery during 1923. Sligo town however began to recover earlier than

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Graph 8.2: The number of events in Sligo town as against the rest of the county, 1921-3

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the rest of the county and the recovery there was more marked. The evidence from organised sporting activity corroborates this, with GAA activity, traditionally stronger in the country areas, ceasing completely during the Civil War while soccer, which was Sligo town based, flourished throughout the period.

Sporting Activity.

The GAA had been strong in County Sligo in the years leading up to the War of Independence with flourishing regional leagues and county football championships which attracted an average of ten senior teams and ten junior teams each year between 1917 and 1920. However the War of Independence had caused a severe drop in these activities with the 1920 championship having to be abandoned at the semi-final stages and no activity took place on the playing fields during the first half of 1921. As conditions returned to normal in the latter half of the year a number of local competitions resumed. Six teams contested a Sligo and District league competition which was completed in September 1921.60 Competitions involving six senior teams and seven junior teams were started in November 1921 but by the following February only eight matches had been played and it appears that these leagues had not been finished by the time the Civil War broke out and were then abandoned.61 A Ballymote District GAA league comprising eight teams and a North Sligo league comprising seven teams started in late 1921 both being completed by May 1922.62 Football matches and tournaments were common in the second half of 1921 in the Tireragh area of the county and a league competition involving six teams was begun in March 1922 and was completed sometime in May.63

In April 1922 a seven-a-side tournament was being played among the clubs of the Sligo and District League but there is no record of this having been finished.64 A notice in the local press in mid-October 1922 announced that all matches under the auspices of the

60 John McTernan (ed), Sligo GAA - A Centenary History 1884-1984 (Sligo, 1984), pp 52-5; S.C., 1 Oct. 1921. The winners received a cup presented by Seamus Devins TD, then in Dartmoor prison.
64 S.C., 8 Apr. 1922.
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Sligo and District GAA League were suspended. This presumably was merely the recognition of the current position rather than a notice of cancellation of a league in progress. A Tireragh league championship had started on the first Sunday in June but there is no other mention of this league until September 1922 when a meeting was called of representatives from the clubs. No report of this meeting or of any subsequent fixtures appeared in the local press and it appears that this league as the others came to a complete standstill during the Civil War.

In spite of all the local league activity Sligo County Board did not organise a county championship until the county convention of March 1922 which decided to abandon the 1920 and 1921 championships and to make fixtures for the 1922 championships. Eight teams were entered in the senior championship and nine in the junior championship. Some championship matches were fixed for June but there is no report of these matches having been played, and the 1922 championship was eventually abandoned at the outbreak of the Civil War. At the inter-county level there were high hopes that Sligo would do well in the 1922 Connacht championship as a result of good performances in the 1920 Connacht championship and the 1921 Railway Cup Final. A series of preparatory inter-league challenge matches culminating in a test match between North Sligo and South Sligo selections was arranged for June 1922, but no reports of these matches appeared in the local press and it seems likely that in the light of increasing tension and unrest they were never played. Sligo were drawn to play Roscommon in the first round of the 1922 Connacht championship on 2 July but again the match was not played owing to the disturbed conditions. GAA activity came to a halt in July 1922 with the outbreak of the Civil War and nothing happened on the Gaelic playing fields of Sligo until early 1923, when tentative steps towards a revival were undertaken.

These first reawakening of GAA activity in 1923 came from south Sligo, the area

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65 S.C., 14 Sept. 1922.
66 S.C., 10 June 1922.
67 S.C., 2 Sept. 1922.
68 S.C., 18 Mar. 1922.
69 S.C., 13 May 1922; W.P., 1 Apr. 1922. Teams from all the local leagues were involved with the exception of Tireragh whose committee had decided that "to take part in the County Championship this year would be detrimental to the interests of football in Tireragh". (W.P., 22 Apr. 1922.)
70 S.I., 17 June 1922; McTernan, Sligo GAA - A Centenary History, p. 55.
71 S.C., 27 May & 24 June 1922.
72 R.H., 22 July 1922.
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least involved in the Civil War. A GAA tournament was held in Knockalassa near Ballymote in March and a Knockalassa/Keash selection played Collooney in two matches at the end of April and in mid-May. A match was played between south Sligo teams Curry and Killaville at Tubbercurry in April 1923 and the *Sligo Champion* hoped "that Gaels will show by their presence there that football is not yet dead in the county." A South Sligo league was organised during May with five teams from the area taking part. It was decided that the 1922 Connacht championship should be finished and the game originally fixed for July 1922 was now played in early May 1923 with Sligo defeating Roscommon. Sligo went on to win the Connacht final and qualify for the All Ireland Final by defeating Tipperary but an objection by defeated Connacht finalists, Galway, resulted in the Connacht final being replayed with Sligo losing the second time.

In May 1923 the Sligo County Board made plans to finish the 1922 championship and the semi-finals of the 1922 County Championship were fixed for July 1923. The attendances at these matches were very small. Twelve teams signified their intention of contesting the 1923 county championship which was started during the summer of 1923 but had to be eventually abandoned because of numerous objections and disputes.

With GAA clubs spread all over the county the pattern of their activity reflects well the general situation in County Sligo over the period of the Civil War. As the tension heightened and erupted into war in mid-1922 Gaelic football activity waned and expired. There was no reawakening until clubs in south Sligo, the area least affected by the conflict, began to reorganise in early 1923 during the final months of the war. Once the war was over matters very soon began to return to normal.

The pattern of activity on the soccer scene in Sligo during this period was different. Soccer was at this time exclusively a Sligo town preserve and those who participated were working class rather than the middle class or farmers who were identified with the GAA. Soccer was not identified with any political persuasion though the presence of a British garrison certainly had been an influence in its development and popularity in Sligo. When

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74 S.C., 21 Apr. 1923.
75 R.H., 26 May & 9 June 1923.
76 S.C., 5 & 12 May 1923.
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A soccer league was eventually organised in Sligo in 1922 the chairman of the meeting and frequent referee of subsequent matches was Michael Conlon who was also a member of the committee of the Sligo Branch of The Legion of Irish Ex-Servicemen.\textsuperscript{80} He was one of eight Conlon brothers who fought in World War One, four of whom were killed in action.\textsuperscript{81}

By the end of the War of Independence soccer seems to have been in a similarly disorganised state as Gaelic football in the county. In September 1921 a \textit{Sligo Independent} correspondent, "Spectator", lamented the state of the game in Sligo. He appealed for the organisation of a local league mentioning the "partly dismantled clubs" and the "talent that is lying dormant among the manhood of Sligo".\textsuperscript{82} In a subsequent article the same correspondent asked "What is wrong with Sligo?", lamenting that no move towards organising a league had yet taken place in the town.\textsuperscript{83} This appeal seems to have fallen on deaf ears and it was not until the end of May 1922 that a meeting of the Sligo Association Football League was held in the Town Hall, Michael Conlon presiding. A competition involving nine teams from the town was organised and continued until October with good attendances being reported.\textsuperscript{84} In spite of the state of war then raging soccer matches were played in Sligo on the weekends of 1 and 8 July.\textsuperscript{85} This competition was succeeded by the \textit{Sligo Independent} challenge cup, seven teams again participating, which continued during the winter and was finished in April 1923.\textsuperscript{86} Thus, unlike the situation in the GAA, there was continuous activity among the soccer fraternity of Sligo during the course of the Civil War and that conflict seems not to have had any detrimental effect on the sport in the town.

There are very few reports of minority sporting activities during this period and those which do appear offer little evidence as to how they were affected by the war. Hunting was revived in the Sligo district with the reorganisation of the Sligo Harriers in October 1921.\textsuperscript{87} This club had regular meetings during the winter 1921/22 and 1922/23.\textsuperscript{88} The other group of harriers in the county was that run by Major O'Hara which hunted the lands to the south

\textsuperscript{80} S.C., 6 Jan. 1923.
\textsuperscript{82} S.I., 3 Sept. 1921.
\textsuperscript{83} S.I., 1 Oct. 1921.
\textsuperscript{84} S.I., 3 June, 12,19 & 26 July & 12 Aug. 1922.
\textsuperscript{85} S.I., 1 & 8 July 1922.
\textsuperscript{86} S.I., 4 Nov. 1922, 3 Mar. & 21 Apr. 1923.
\textsuperscript{87} S.C., 1 Oct. 1921.
\textsuperscript{88} S.I., 4 Nov. 1922: S.C., 28 Oct. 1922.
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of Collooney on Tuesday and Friday of each week during the season. These harriers also hunted for all of the 1921/22 and 1922/23 seasons.\textsuperscript{89} There were no attempts to interfere with either of these groups during the Civil War - though a meeting of North Mayo Hunt Club was stopped by armed men near Enniscrone on St. Patrick's Day 1923 and ordered to clear out of the district at once.\textsuperscript{90} A tennis club was opened in Ballymote on Easter Monday 1922 and a new tennis court was under construction there in June 1923.\textsuperscript{91} Sligo Coursing Club held meetings in November 1921 and in January 1922 but there are no reports of any subsequent meetings during the winter 1922/23.\textsuperscript{92} Bunninadden coursing club did not hold any meetings during the same period and at the end of 1922 the committee was said to have "expressed the hope that conditions will be such in the new year as to admit of a fixture being brought off".\textsuperscript{93}

School Attendance.

It seems likely that the extent to which everyday life was disrupted during the Civil War should be reflected in the attendance levels at schools. This should be especially apparent in schools in areas where conflict was common. Evidence from three national schools in County Sligo shows that while there was a drop in attendance figures close to areas of activity this drop was small, suggesting that disruption of ordinary day to day life was not of large proportions. However it should also be considered that sending a child to school may not have been seen as putting the child at risk even in time of war. Most children would have had a very short walk to and from their nearest school. The parents would have been sure that the children were being supervised which might not have been the case if they were kept at home and allowed out with their peers. There are no figures for the initial intense period of action of the war since this coincided with school holidays, which in 1922 were extended to allow primary teachers attend courses in Irish.

The sparse national figures for school attendance for these years provide little evidence of any adverse effect of the war on attendance at school. The national figures for

\textsuperscript{89} S.C., 30 Dec. 1922, 6 & 13 Jan. & 3 Mar. 1923.
\textsuperscript{90} S.C., 24 Mar.1923.
\textsuperscript{91} S.J., 29 Apr. 1922; R.H., 16 July 1923.
\textsuperscript{92} S.C., 12 Nov. 1921 & 7 Jan. 1922.
\textsuperscript{93} W.P., 18 Nov. 1922.
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calendar years (not school years) were 1920 - 69.7%, 1921 - 73.3%, 1922 - 71.8%, 1923 - 74.3% and 1924 - 73.5%. No figures are available for 1922 attendance at Sligo schools but the average attendance in County Sligo primary schools was 69.9% for the year ending 31 December 1923 and 70% for the following year.\textsuperscript{94} The usefulness of these figures is limited since they do not fit neatly into Civil War chronology but they do suggest that no large decrease in attendance occurred during the conflict.

Table 8.2: Percentage attendance at three County Sligo schools
for the period Sept 1921 to July 1923.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Term</th>
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<th>Mullaghmore</th>
<th>Moylough</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Apr-July</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>1923</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To investigate school attendance for the period I examined the attendance records for three schools from areas of the county which saw different degrees and patterns of activity during the war, Culleens Boys N.S. (Roll No. 12140), Mullaghmore N.S. (Roll No. 14723) and Moylough Boys N.S. (Roll No. 13831.)\textsuperscript{95} I looked at the weekly and termly attendance for each school for the period September 1921 to July 1923.

Culleens, on the northern slopes of the Ox Mountains, was in an area where the writ of the Free State did not run until towards the end of the Civil War. Relative calm reigned here with few incidents reported while the anti-Treaty forces were in control. It was the week ending 21 April 1923 before a large scale sweep was made by Free State troops in the area. Culleens Boys National School was closed for Easter holidays during that week, and during the following term the attendance increased only marginally. The average attendance for September to December 1922, the first period of the war, was exactly the

\textsuperscript{94} Statistics relating to National Education in Ireland for the years 1920-21, 1921-22, 1922-23, Saorstat Éireann Government Publications.

\textsuperscript{95} These Daily Report Books containing the attendance figures are still in the schools named with the exception of those for Mullaghmore School which has been amalgamated its records are now being kept in Cliffony Boys NS.
Daily life during the Civil War.

same as it had been for the Truce period, and attendance remained higher during the rest of the war period than for the corresponding pre-war periods. This is strong evidence that the events of the Civil War had no obvious effect on school attendance in this area. The average attendance at Culleens was significantly and uniformly lower than at the other two schools for the whole period from September 1921 to July 1923, but this apparently had nothing to do with the Civil War and may have been the result of local factors.

Mullaghmore, a seaside village in north Sligo, saw little action during the war though it was under the control of the republican forces until the major attack on north Sligo in September 1922. This school was closed for four weeks in March 1922, apparently due to an influenza epidemic which was reported as having closed schools in Sligo town at this time.\(^6\) The attendance was low during the weeks before and after this, contributing to a very low average attendance for that term. Attendance during the first period of the war, September to December 1922, was almost 4% lower than during the corresponding period in 1921, but the attendance like that of Culleens progressively increased over the following two terms of wartime. This reflects the lessening in intensity of the war during this period resulting in a lack of incidents in the area.

Moylough is just off the main Tubbercurry - Ballymote road, close to the former, and was in an area which saw much action during the war. Attendance here was lower in each term during the war than in the previous year's corresponding term. The early period of the war, September to December 1922, saw the greater difference, 5%, over the same months in 1921. As with the other two schools the average attendance increased each term of the Civil War. Two local men were shot as "spies" at Moylough early on the morning of Sunday 5 November. Later that day a civilian car driver and a local republican were shot dead by Provisional Government soldiers in the area. Moylough Boys' School opened as usual on the following day when fifty-two out of 113 pupils attended, a 46% attendance rate, well below the term average of 65%. The following day the school remained closed "by order of manager".\(^7\) This was presumably because of fear and apprehension after the events of the weekend.\(^8\) On Wednesday the school was again open and it operated

\(^6\) Hamilton, teacher, to inspector, 6 Mar. 1922, NA, ED 11, 75/6.
\(^7\) Daily Report Book, Moylough Boys' National School, Roll No. 13831.
\(^8\) The attendance had been poorer than average since the previous month and it is also possible that some other reason, perhaps sickness, was responsible for the poor attendance and the closing on the Tuesday. The probability is however that it was as a result of the killings.
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normally from then on. Attendance on Wednesday was 50% and on Thursday 63%, close to the term average. The attendance for the remaining weeks of the term was high at 75%. If the low attendance was due to the troubles then fear quickly evaporated and children were sent to school without apprehension. A major ambush occurred at Powellsboro near Moylough on 30 November 1922 in which republicans killed two Free State soldiers. This had no effect on attendance at Moylough school which operated normally the following week recording an attendance of 80%, well above the term average.

The evidence from the three schools suggests that to a large degree they operated normally during the Civil War but that the disturbed times caused a marginal lowering of average attendance. This lowering was more marked during the first term of the 1922/23 school year when the Civil War in Sligo was being waged most actively. Moylough school was the only one where the attendance for each of the three relevant terms was lower than for the corresponding terms of the previous year. This was undoubtedly due to the greater number of incidents in the area, an area where neither side was comfortably in control.

Food Prices.

To what extent were food prices in County Sligo affected by the disruption and unrest of the period July 1922 to June 1923? Since communications by road and rail were subject to constant interruptions it seems reasonable to suppose that prices would be higher in those parts most affected by the disruption. Consideration must also be given to contemporary national patterns in prices. Food price trends in the UK show a fall from autumn 1921 until June 1922. A sharp rise took place in July followed by an immediate fall during autumn leading to another lower peak in December. From then until mid-1923 prices continued to fall.\(^9\)

There are small collections of price statistics from the Irish Free State area and an price index using July 1914 prices as a base of 100.\(^10\) These are only available from

\(^9\) Average Percentage Increase as Compared with July 1914, in Retail Prices etc. in the United Kingdom, 1915-1925, Eighteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics of the United Kingdom, pp 139-140, [Cmd 2740], HC 1926, v xxix (29). As from January 1923, the figures relate to Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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March 1922 at four monthly intervals. These figures, while sparse, do suggest that as in the UK as a whole food prices rose after June 1922. However in Ireland's case the rise continued until January 1923 and subsequently dropped to summer 1923. The difference in pattern is presumably due to the effect of the Civil War.

Graph 8.3: UK Retail Price Index, July 1921 - July 1923.

Graph 8.4: Index of Prices in the Irish Free State, March 1922 - July 1923.
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I have found records of actual prices charged in the village of Coolaney, County Sligo, for this period. Coolaney was served by the Midland Great Western railway line which was closed for most of the Civil War and goods had to be transported either from the nearest Great Southern & Western railway station which was about six miles distant at Collooney or from the town of Sligo. It might be expected that this extra cartage would mean that prices of foodstuffs would be increased. I have looked at a series of prices for this period for four items, oatmeal, sugar, Indian meal and tea.

The price of oatmeal at Coolaney over the period saw a rise from 30 pence per stone in the pre-Civil War period to 39 pence during August 1922, a rise of 30%, but a drop during December to pre-Civil War levels. The pattern of average Irish oatmeal prices seems to be different with no similar large rise in prices at the same time. The price of sugar at Coolaney shows a similar pattern to that of oatmeal. There was a rise of 8% in the price in early August 1922 which was maintained until November when the price returned to its previous level and remained so until February 1923 when it rose sharply and maintained a high level until the end of the period in question. The price of Indian meal at Coolaney, for which there are no comparable national figures, shows the same pattern as the other two commodities. Prices began to rise at the end of July, reached a high at the end of October and by January had fallen to pre-Civil War values.

The price of tea at Coolaney however did not follow the same pattern. Tea remained steady at 5 shillings per lb from May 1922 to the end of July 1922, began to come down then and reached its lowest price of 4/2 in December 1922. It fluctuated between that and 4/6 for the rest of the period. The price rises which occurred in three of these commodities are strong evidence of a price rise in food at Coolaney starting in July/August 1922 and lasting for three to four months. If so it would seem sensible to attribute this to the effects of the Civil War disruption. However the fact that tea prices do not correspond to this trend suggests the need for caution and the possibility that other factors were at work to a larger degree. The disruption of course continued and the later downward adjustment of prices may reflect a coming to terms with economic conditions and the making of alternative arrangements.

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Ledger of Michael Coleman, General Merchant, Coolaney, 1904 - 1930. In private possession.
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Graph 8.5: The prices of four commodities in Coolaney, 1922-23.
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I have also found some prices for the Civil War period from Tubbercurry. Like Coolaney, Tubbercurry was on the Midland Great Western railway system and so was without a rail link for most of the period. The nearest operational railway station was ten miles away at Ballymote and in the earlier part of the period this road was subject to blocking and bridge damaging operations. A series of Indian meal prices for the period in Tubbercurry show a 27% increase in price between 3 July and 7 August 1922, from 16.5 pence to 21 pence. The price had dropped to 18 pence by December 1922 and remained at this level for the rest of the period. This pattern is similar to that for Indian meal prices at Coolaney. A comparison of the price of flour in Coolaney and Tubbercurry shows that while the price in both places was the same in May 1922, by December 1922/January 1923 there was a 12% differential, flour being more expensive at Tubbercurry than at Coolaney. Tubbercurry’s distance from a rail link was presumably the cause of this.

All this suggests that the disruption caused by the Civil War had an effect, though not a major one, on prices of foodstuffs in shops and it appears, though the information is not abundant, that distance from railway connections meant higher prices. This effect was most marked during the early period of the war but by early 1923 the effect was wearing off.

Table 8.3: Business figures for Meehan Bros., Drapers, Sligo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Half-year</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>% credit</th>
<th>Profits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>£8272</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>£3784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>£7093</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>£6780</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>£1339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>£6319</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>£6274</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>£3189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>£6660</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>£5702</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>£2405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>£4795</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The business accounts of a large drapery store in Sligo town, Meehan Brothers, demonstrate no great detrimental effect of the war, their half yearly sales figures showing no marked decrease during the period of the Civil War. In fact the figures for the second

103 Meehan Bros. Sligo, Business Records, NA, Sligo 9/3. They advertised extensively in the local newspapers during the period including offering in April 1922 Gents’ trench coats at 32/6 and 63 shillings. (S.C., 15 Apr. 1922).
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half of 1922, when it might be expected that their business would be most adversely affected, were better than those for the second halves of 1921 and of 1923. Sales for the first half of 1922, which included July, though lower than the corresponding period in 1921 were higher than the same period in 1923.\(^{104}\) It may be however significant that the percentage of sales accounted for by credit as against cash is higher in 1922 than either 1921 or 1923. Normally this percentage lay within the range 25 - 28% but the 1922 figures were 33% for the first half and 38% for the second half. This is presumably a reflection of the poor prices being paid for farm produce and the fall in employment at the time. A comment by the Tubbercurry correspondent of the \textit{Western People} in November 1922 may be relevant: "Merchants are complaining of the scarcity of cash but country people while anxious to discharge their liabilities are unable to do so owing to bad fairs and low prices for agricultural matters."\(^{105}\)

**Industrial Unrest.**

Moves to reduce wages were common in Britain and Ireland as a result of the general depression which followed the first world war. Bakers in Tighes Bakery, Sligo, refused to accept a reduction of 5 shillings per week in their wages in November 1921 and gave a week’s strike notice. There is no subsequent mention of this in any of the local papers which suggests that a compromise settlement was arrived at.\(^{106}\) According to the Dublin-based \textit{Voice of Labour}, "a short sharp fight" by builders' labourers in Sligo resulted in the dropping of a planned reduction of 2 pence per hour in their wages.\(^{107}\) A tailors' strike in Sligo in early January 1922 against a similar 2 pence per hour wage reduction eventually resulted in an amicable settlement.\(^{108}\) In the same month a proposal to reduce the wages of cabinetmakers in Sligo by 2 pence per hour had to be postponed until the following May.\(^{109}\) No report of such an attempt at wage reduction appeared in local newspapers later in the year so it is reasonable to assume that it did not take place. At the AGM of the

\(^{104}\) For accounting purposes Feb. to July was regarded as the first half year and Aug. to Jan. the second half year.

\(^{105}\) \textit{W.P.}, 4 Nov. 1922.

\(^{106}\) \textit{S.I.}, 19 Nov. 1921.

\(^{107}\) \textit{The Voice of Labour}, 14 & 21 Jan. 1922. The local press did not report this.


Trades Council in March 1923 the newly elected president, Henry DePew, warned that he expected a big move in Sligo in the near future to reduce wages, suggesting that such a move had not yet taken place on a large scale. At a Labour Day demonstration "somewhat smaller than expected" in Sligo on Sunday 6 May, 1923 four resolutions were put, none concerning wage reductions which provides evidence, admittedly circumstantial, that such reductions had not been widely proposed in Sligo.

There are few other indications of industrial unrest in the period. The general depression, the threat of wage reductions and the division in the forces of labour in Sligo were responsible for this. In mid-March 1922 what the Sligo Independent called a "brief strike" took place in the mills in Ballisodare. According to The Voice of Labour this was caused when two labourers were dismissed when they refused to perform a "muck and watery" job. The strike resulted in their reinstatement. In May 1922 labourers who were employed at Rosses Point in direct labour went on strike. "They are too lazy to work and they don't want anyone else to work either", the County Surveyor told the County Council meeting. Mahon's sawmills and the Sligo Garage both closed during the last week in October 1922, sufficient work not being available.

In September 1922 two business premises in Sligo town, McCarrick's Coach Factory and Messrs Cooke and McNeilly's Bacon Factory were burned to the ground. There was no suggestion in the local press that either fire was malicious, "more or less a mystery and points to being accidental", the Sligo Independent commented on the second fire. It was estimated that fifty to sixty workers were thrown out of employment as a result.

Pollexfen's flour mills, Ballisodare, announced in November 1922 that because of the "poor demand for flour at the present time" the mills were to be put on half time. The workers brought their case to the Trades Council and asked that the "dumping" of foreign flour be condemned. The Council called on Dáil Éireann to impose a duty on foreign manufacture and called on organised workers to refuse to handle foreign flour. A letter from Jossyln Gore-Booth the following week pointed out that Pollexfen's Avena flour was...
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in fact made from foreign grain. "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones", he quoted, pointing out that the mill run by Drumcliff Co-operative Society was again in operation and suggesting that "if any consumers want meal which is really Irish let them support the products of this mill." The Voice of Labour had earlier called Gore Booth "Jossie the Lissadell Lollipop", claiming that his labourers who received only 23 shillings per week were ready to strike for an increase. In March 1923 Sligo Trades and Labour Council congratulated Sligo workers for refusing to handle a consignment of meal imported from Derry by a Sligo merchant, "they being of the opinion that a superior article is being manufactured in the mills in Sligo."

Signs of confidence in the commercial future of Sligo in early 1923 included the founding of a Chamber of Commerce, the purchasing of a new dredger "Elsinore" by Sligo Harbour Board, and the installation by the Sligo Independent of a new linotype type setting machine at a cost of nearly £2,000.

Agricultural Prices.

The years 1921-1923 saw a general depression in agricultural prices in Ireland. The ending of the war and the gradual return to normal trading conditions resulted in a fall in agricultural prices. "Between 1920 and 1921 the Sauerbeck-Statist index registered falls of 37% for arable products and 17% for animal products. Thereafter the decline continued. By 1923 the price of arable products was 57% below the level of 1920; that of animal produce - of more concern to Irish farmers - had fallen by 38%. Store cattle prices declined by over 40%, approximately 10% more than the cost of living." An editorial in The Irish Farmer, the organ of the The Irish Farmers' Union, in October 1921 stated that "the outlook for agriculture as a whole this winter can only be described as one of the blackest and look in what direction one will there is hardly a prospect which can be considered as encouraging." The column "Recent Irish Fairs" in the same publication continually reported the downward tendency in livestock prices during the winter of 1921 and spring

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117 S.I., 25 Nov. 1922.
118 The Voice of Labour, 11 Mar. 1922.
120 S.C., 6 & 20 Jan. 1923; S.I., 7 & 14 Apr. 1923; S.I., 6 Feb. 1923.
122 The Irish Farmer, 22 Oct. 1921.
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and early summer of the following year. The organiser of the Sligo Farmers' Association was quoted as saying in October 1922 that "the price of everything which the farmer has to sell is at its lowest." Presumably in response to a collapse in demand because of poor agricultural income the merchants, Woods of Sligo announced sweeping reductions in the prices of manures in spring 1922.

![Graph 8.6: Livestock prices per quarter in Ireland and in Connacht, June 1921 - June 1923.](image)

A study of a series of average prices for six items (young calves, Store cattle 1-2 years old, Lambs under 12 months, Young pigs 8 - 10 months, Springers, and Store sheep 1-2 years) for Connacht and for Ireland shows that the Connacht prices were similar to the national pattern. Livestock prices were at their lowest in the period December 1921 to June 1922, when they were in the region of 70% of the June 1921 prices. From then there was a very gradual recovery until March 1923 to be followed by a drop by June 1923.

With livestock prices in Connacht rising, albeit very gradually, from June 1922 it appears that the Civil War disturbances had little effect on prices generally. However all the evidence from County Sligo for the period suggests that contemporary commentators considered that the war was a major factor in what they regarded as the continuing collapse.

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123 No issues of The Irish Farmer are available for the period after Aug. 1922.
124 S.C., 7 Oct. 1922.
125 S.C., 11 Mar. 1922.
126 Quarterly Average Prices for Each Province and for Ireland of Crops, Livestock, Meat, Provisions etc., Statistical tables, Journal of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Dublin), vols XXI and XXII.
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in prices in the county. The Sligo Independent in its editorial of 6 January 1923 looked forward to the prospects for commerce and agriculture in Ireland. It listed the reasons why both had suffered and put the Civil War as the last of three reasons, citing "a falling market, a reduced demand, and the disturbed conditions of the country" as the causes. It contrasted the condition of England which it claimed was well on the way to prosperity with that of Ireland which was "committing national suicide." An article by Michael Nerney, County Secretary Sligo Farmers' Association, which appeared in the local press in early October 1922 considered that the crisis in agricultural prices had its causes both in internal and external influences laying stress on the the former. Among these he named the fact that even in County Sligo, some fairs could not be held and where they were held buyers were unwilling to travel because of dislocation of roads and railways.

This pessimism as regards agricultural prices was reflected in reports of prices at fairs in County Sligo during this period, though there is a disappointingly meagre amount of actual figures. Fairs in the second half of 1921 in Gurteen and Ballymote were said to be very poor and each month prices were stated to be worse than those of the previous month. The Gurteen fair of October 1921 was said to be "the worst held there in the experience of local people." At the December fair in the same place the quantity and quality was good but demand was slow and prices lower than the previous fair and very little business was done. Pig prices at Ballymote October fair 1921 were said to be on average 50% those of the previous year while cattle were said to be down £5 per head since the previous September. In early 1922 the same comments are common: "Bad prices showing a huge decrease compared to a few months ago", "Cattle supply over average . . . demand slowest for a considerable time . . . very few sales", "Prices were not satisfactory and showed a big drop on recent weeks", "Nice well fed stores found a fairly brisk market at prices slightly below those prevailing at the last fair but inferior

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127 S.I., 6 Jan. 1923.
128 S.C., 7 Oct. 1922.
129 Generally reported in the Roscommon Herald.
132 S.I., 8 Oct. 1921.
beasts were difficult to dispose of."\textsuperscript{136} What reports there are for early 1923 show that the small transient rise already noticed nationally was reflected in the county. Ballymote January and February fairs reported an "upward tendency" in prices but the March prices "compared very unfavourably with those of two months ago."\textsuperscript{137} Gurteen February fair was "one of the briskest held for some time" but the March fair was" one of the dullest for some considerable time."\textsuperscript{138}

There is some evidence that in the early stages of the war the republicans deliberately targeted fairs with the intention of disrupting them. According to a Free State report in November 1922 "a threat was made by Irregulars to stop two fairs in Collooney and Ballymote but this was frustrated by a column under Commandant Mitchell from Markree Castle."\textsuperscript{139} Three bridges in the area had been damaged but the troops had repaired them thus allowing people to take cattle to Ballymote November fair.\textsuperscript{140} Irregulars broke up the Sligo Leitrim and Northern Line track and prevented 80 wagons of stock on their way from the September 1922 Collooney fair from reaching their destination. Such actions "seriously injured future prospects" according the the \textit{Sligo Independent} correspondent.\textsuperscript{141} Transport difficulties added to costs. Gurteen fair committee fixed a charge for cartage to either Ballymote or Tubbercurry at 15 shillings per cart. The Ballymote rate was to be reduced to 12 shillings when the bridge was fixed.\textsuperscript{142} Tubbercurry appears to have been especially badly affected since it was the largest town in the county whose previously functioning railway link was not operational. During the Tubbercurry fair at the beginning of August an outbreak of firing cleared the streets very quickly.\textsuperscript{143} The pig market in Tubbercurry in August 1922 was reported as being "fairly good", thanks to a number of enterprising Sligo dealers, "who attended in spite of the stoppage of the railway to Tubbercurry and had the bonhams brought to be railed at Ballymote."\textsuperscript{144} However a report in October painted a different picture, "The absence of railway facilities is playing havoc with the fairs here

\textsuperscript{139}Weekly Appreciation of Situation, 6 Nov. 1922. MA, Western Command files, CW/Ops /7(b).
\textsuperscript{140}\textit{R.H.}, 4 Nov. 1922.
\textsuperscript{141}\textit{S.J.}, 23 Sept. 1922.
\textsuperscript{142}\textit{R.H.}, 18 Nov. 1922.
\textsuperscript{143}\textit{R.H.}, 12 Aug. 1922.
\textsuperscript{144}\textit{S.J.}, 12 Aug. 1922.
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(Tubbercurry) more especially as regards the pigs but people can only live on in hope that better times will soon prevail."145 By December the Tubbercurry correspondent of the Western People was even more despairing: "The monthly fairs held here have been diminishing to a great extent, much preferring to do business in other towns served by railway. Prices have gone down for all classes of stock and the cost of having them taken to other towns has increased."146 It does appear if this mainly anecdotal evidence is to be believed that livestock prices in County Sligo did not follow the upward trend apparent in national and provincial figures for this period and if this is the case then the intensity of the war in the county must be to blame.

Graph 8.7: Number of animals exported from Sligo (top) and from Ireland (bottom) during each three months from March 1921 to March 1923.

146 W.P., 2 Dec. 1922.
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In spite of the problems with holding fairs and the poor prices there seems to have been no reduction in the numbers of stock raised and sold. Comments on fairs quoted above suggest large numbers of cattle being offered for sale. This is corroborated by figures for the number of animals exported from the port of Sligo during the period. In comparison with numbers exported earlier the numbers exported for the three months ended 30 September 1922 when the troubles would be expected to have had the greatest effect were not significantly lower, either in absolute numbers or as a percentage of the total national exports. The figures for the following two quarters show increases in the livestock numbers exported from Sligo as compared with corresponding periods in the preceding years.\(^{147}\) The Civil War disturbance did not then effect the volume of animals which were available for export nor did it disrupt the export business.

Co-operative Creamery Societies.

There were ten co-operative creamery societies in existence in County Sligo in this period operating a total of twenty one creameries. A comparison between turnover figures where available for these societies for 1921 to 1923 should provide evidence on the effect of the war on this business.

Total turnover figures available for seven co-operative creamery societies in the county show a 13% increase in 1922 over the 1921 figures and a 8% decrease in total turnover in 1923. All societies except one showed a drop in total turnover from 1922 to 1923. Figures for gallons of milk received are available for a smaller number of societies but the pattern is similar. The average increase for 1922 over 1921 was 18% while the figure for 1923 as against 1922 was a decrease of 5%. The average price per gallon paid for milk by the Sligo societies was 7.11 pence in 1921, 7.17 pence in 1922 and 6.4 pence in 1923 while the average price received for butter per pound for the three years was 21.42 pence, 20.38 pence and 17.49 pence.\(^{148}\) Relating these figures to the Civil War and establishing cause and effect is not easy. The Civil War was at its most intense during the latter half of 1922, while the second half of 1923 was a period of peace. It is clear from the

\(^{147}\) Statistical Tables, Tables showing the exports and imports of animals (Quarterly), *Journal of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction* (Dublin), vols XXI, XXII & XXIII.

\(^{148}\) Appendix E, Creamery Statistics, IAOS Annual Reports, 1921, 1922 & 1923.
figures that while 1921 and 1922 were broadly similar years as regards turnover, milk production and prices, 1923 was a much less successful year. This was due as much to the general depression in farming as to any specific effect the Civil War had on the operation of the co-operative creameries in the county. An examination of the files for various societies in the county for this period reveals that most societies had troubles of some kind none of which stemmed directly from Civil War disruption or splits.

Many of these disputes were concerned with the performances of creamery managers. The Irish Agriculture Organisation Society (IAOS) secretary R.A. Anderson had a poor opinion of managers in the area: "There does not seem to be a single creamery in Connacht at present that is not at the beck and call of the manager . . . The manager seems to be able to entrench himself behind relatives and various forms of intrigue and to defy the better judgment of the people whom they are supposed to serve."149

Ballymote creamery had been destroyed by crown forces in September 1920 and it was mid-1923 before the creamery was again operational. There were difficulties about the reappointment of some staff and the secretary of the IAOS had a very low opinion of the manager's abilities, commenting that "it would be better for Ballymote to rest in its ashes than to be raised again for the gratification of Mr. Cooke [the manager] for I am afraid he

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will only spoil it."¹⁵⁰ A special meeting summoned by a group of dissident shareholders in June 1923, though declared illegal by the manager, went ahead and decided that the committee should be replaced. "It is believed that the failure of the committee to reinstate some of the old staff is at the root of the trouble" a local newspaper commented.¹⁵¹

A dispute in Kilmactranny society between the manager and a section of the shareholders resulted in his resignation in April 1921.¹⁵² Very soon afterwards the creamery was burned down, apparently accidentally.¹⁵³ Rebuilding did not start until February 1922 and the creamery did not reopen until April 1923.¹⁵⁴ Ballintrimllick creamery had been completely destroyed by crown forces after the Moneygold ambush in October 1920. Unlike the others in the county similarly destroyed Ballintrimllick was rebuilt at once and was operational again by June 1921. A dispute concerning an employee who had been laid off had started in January 1920 and dragged on until the end of August 1921 when it "fizzled out".¹⁵⁵ By various stratagems he had himself re-employed twice before being finally dismissed. Some incidents of sabotage took place at the creamery culminating in a "hand to hand fight between partisans of the principal aggrieved person and a number of young men on the other side who took up the cudgels against him."¹⁵⁶ A long running dispute at Sooey caused by dissatisfaction among a large number of shareholders and suppliers with the manager resulted in him being suspended for mismanagement in November 1921 but reinstated in April 1922.¹⁵⁷ "By reinstating the manager after his record of the last eighteen months I firmly believe the Society has signed its own death warrant", reported the senior IAOS Connacht organiser.¹⁵⁸ Various subsequent attempts to settle the internal difficulties were unsuccessful and by 1925 the creamery was practically in ruins.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵¹ R.H., 9, 16 & 23 June 1923.
¹⁵³ Ibid.
¹⁵⁴ Series of letters and reports, Jan. 1922 to Apr. 1923, NA, IAOS files, Kilmactranny. 1088/567/7.
¹⁵⁵ Letter from secretary IAOS, 29 Aug. 1921, NA, IAOS files, Ballintrimllick, 1088/42/5.
¹⁵⁶ Ibid.
¹⁵⁷ Sec. IAOS to Moore, 11 Aug. 1922, NA, IAOS files, Sooey, 1088/844/5.
¹⁵⁸ Report on special meeting at Sooey by Moore, 19 Apr. 1922, NA, IAOS files., Sooey 1088/844/5.
¹⁵⁹ Report by Moore on visit to Sooey, 8 Aug. 1922, NA, IAOS files, Sooey, 1088/844/5; Correspondence 1923-25, NA, IAOS files, Sooey, 1088/844/6.
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Only five Sligo societies had paid their 1921 affiliation fees by the end of that year.\textsuperscript{160} Some societies refused to affiliate with the IAOS, including Riverstown which was prospering because of the closure of Ballymote and Sooey creameries. Drumcliff Society also refused to amalgamate because of opposition by the chairman and some shareholders.\textsuperscript{161} Unsuccessful attempts were being made in early 1922 to organise a co-operative society at Dromore West by members of Skreen society.\textsuperscript{162} The Skreen society itself was "very flourishing in a small way" in 1921, but as a result of the purchase of seed potatoes of an inferior quality and "the strange conditions in the manure trade" funds were much lower the following year.\textsuperscript{163} Collooney society was also in a bad financial situation at this time because of mismanagement as a result of the arrest and internment of its manager in 1920. A.J. Crichton estimated that this society had lost over £2,000 because of the arrest.\textsuperscript{164}

In all this sorry catalogue of petty internal disputes and financial mismanagement there is little evidence of any detrimental effect of Civil War disturbances, nor any evidence that any of the disputes paralleled the Civil War divisions. Achonry creamery had suffered some damage by crown forces in November 1920 but it was able to continue operations. The manager wrote to the IAOS in September 1922 with regards to difficulties experienced as a result of the Civil War, reporting "no great difficulty in getting our work done." He reported some difficulties with blocked roads, especially at the commencement of the trouble, and said that many by-roads used to transport milk were in "awful conditions". The nearest railway station, being on the Sligo-Claremorris line, was closed and they used Collooney station on the MGWR instead. They purchased a Ford lorry and used it for transport to and from this station. Anti-Treaty forces had inquired at the creamery on one occasion for the lorry but it was not there. The creamery store had been raided four times and about £110 worth taken. Bicycles belonging to workers had also been taken and these workers had now to walk to work. The manager commented that they had probably lost more by interrupted telephone services than the value of goods stolen.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{160} Appendix E - Statistics, Annual Report Irish Agriculture Organisation Society, 1921.
\textsuperscript{161} Drumcliff manager to James Fant, 3 July 1923, NA, IAOS files, Drumcliff Co-Op Dairy Society Ltd., 1088/361/11.
\textsuperscript{162} Crichton to Norman, 21 Mar. 1922, NA, IAOS files, Skreen, 1088/835/1.
\textsuperscript{163} Crichton to Norman Ass. Sec. IAOS. 31 May 1921 & 1 Apr. 1922, NA, IAOS files, Skreen, 1088/835/1.
\textsuperscript{164} Manager to IAOS, 6 Sept. 1922, NA, IAOS files, Achonry, 108 8/5/10.

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Achonry also had its local dispute. This featured James Gilligan, the local politician who had been chairman of the County Council and was a member of the Achonry committee. Since his joining the committee he had "blossomed out into a shopkeeper" and in October 1921 the committee used an IAOS rule to have Gilligan removed. This dispute seems to have been purely an economic one with Gilligan "a trade competitor" of the Society. There is no mention of any similar trouble in the society until the 1923 AGM, when "a clique including an ex-shopkeeper and his following", presumably Gilligan, was stated to have caused some trouble.

Tubbercurry creamery had been destroyed by Auxiliaries in November 1920. The manager, Thomas Murricane, who had been elected a Sinn Féin County Councillor in 1920 went to Scotland after the burning and did not return. There were, according to an IAOS official, "rumours to his discredit in circulation concerning his management of the society." No attempt at rebuilding had been undertaken by July 1921. At that time some members of the Tubbercurry IRA, including officers Charles Gildea and Jack Brennan, began to take an interest in the affairs of the society: "The young people of the district who have taken matters into their own hands have called to their aid the forces of the Republic and the Republican police are going to see the society through." The main interest seems to have been the financial standing of the society and it appears that the republican police got money from the bank in May 1921 to pay some suppliers who had been waiting for their payments. The old committee did not take kindly to being replaced and accused the IAOS of engaging in "a certain amount of wire pulling". The disagreements continued through 1922 and 1923 with very little work being done to rebuild the creamery beyond drawing up plans and clearing the site: "There is very little real enthusiasm about the revival of the creamery and I am afraid that so called politics are still allowed to play too great a part in influencing the actions of those connected with the creamery."

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168 Confidential report by Moore to Assistant Secretary IAOS, 25 Aug. 1921, NA, IAOS files, Tubbercurry, 1088/906/4.
169 ibid.
170 Confidential addendum to report by Moore, 24 Nov. 1921, NA, IAOS files, Tubbercurry, 1088/906/4.
171 Cooke to sec. IAOS, 7 Dec. 1921, NA, IAOS files, Tubbercurry, 1088/906/4.
172 Moore to IAOS, 11 July 1923, NA, IAOS files, Tubbercurry, 1088/906/6.
The evidence from this consideration of daily life during the Civil War is clear in many respects. The road infrastructure of the county deteriorated considerably during the period with many roads and bridges becoming impassable. One railway line did not function at all during the war and the other two were subject to occasional interruption. Destruction by the anti-Treaty forces and lack of maintenance due to war conditions were responsible for this state of affairs. This caused major inconvenience in the everyday life of the people which lasted for the duration of the war. The disruption in communications together with the general lawlessness led to a major decline in the social and sporting life of the county with a dramatic drop in the number of functions during most of the Civil War period with a slow recovery only apparent from early 1923. Gaelic games came to a halt in the county for almost all of the war period. Rural areas dependent on road and rail transport were affected to a greater degree than the town of Sligo and the recovery was quicker to manifest itself in the urban area. In many respects however, as for instance attendance at school, life went on much as before with only a small drop in attendance in areas close to trouble spots.

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which the war impacted on livestock prices and on food prices because of the paucity of evidence and of the difficulty of deciding to what extent price changes were merely reflections of general trends in the British Isles at the time. What is clear is that the Civil War increased to some degree the problems which were already being caused farmers by the general depression in livestock prices, though it appears to have had little effect on output. The drop in the total turnover of most co-operative creamery societies in 1923 and the rise in the prices of some foodstuffs in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of war suggest the direct influence of the disruption. For most ordinary people the Civil War impacted in many and varied ways, making what was already an economically difficult period worse and adding many inconveniences to daily life. What must have caused added hardship was the absence of a fully functioning system of law and order. The next chapter will consider the extent if any to which court and police systems operated in Sligo during the period in question.
9. LAW AND ORDER.

One of the main aims of the independence movement in the pre-Truce period was the disabling of the existing forces of law and order and the replacing of these by structures loyal to Dáil Éireann. This was achieved to a large extent in much of the country and by mid-1921 the British police and courts had ceased to function normally in most of County Sligo. However the attempts at replacing these by police and courts, answerable to the Dáil or the IRA had only been partially successful with the result that there had been "a long background of non-application of the law in many areas". With the confusion of the pre- and post-Treaty period and the state of war which followed there was a danger that law and order in particular would suffer and that the county might slide into a state of lawlessness. This chapter examines the relative strength and effectiveness of the competing systems of police and courts during each of the periods in question. It also seeks to determine the extent to which the county did slide into a state of lawlessness and the effectiveness of the attempts by the Free State government to re-establish the rule of law and order by the end of the Civil War.

The Truce Period.

When the Truce came into effect the RIC found themselves with no more than a token presence outside Sligo town. They did occupy six other barracks in the county, Ballymote, Tubbercurry, Collooney, Cliffony, Dromore West and Easkey, but they appear not to have exercised any power here in the period after the Truce. A Sligo Champion editorial said: "For a couple of years past the Royal Irish Constabulary discharged little or no police duties and since the Truce they have confined themselves more or less to the onerous task of drawing their pay." The widespread operation of IRA training camps and the public sittings of Dáil courts during the Truce period were continually complained of by the RIC County Inspector, but no serious effort was made by the British authorities to curtail these activities. A scheme of republican police had been initiated at the time of the Truce which

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3 Alleged Truce Breaches by the IRA, PRO, CO 904/155.
envisaged a police officer being appointed for each brigade area, each battalion area and each company area. Each company area was also to have four policemen. To what extent this was implemented in County Sligo is uncertain but there are few references to such in the period between the Truce and Treaty, and reports of the application of republican policing in County Sligo do not often specifically refer to republican police. More often the reference is to the IRA or Volunteers having carried out police duties. For instance IRA members in Skreen and Dromard were said to have captured a person who had robbed a public house in early September. In October 1921 "Volunteer police" were said to have arrested a man in Sligo for disorderly conduct and for breaking a window. He was made pay the cost of the window. It is clear that while a rudimentary republican police system may have operated in Sligo it was hardly distinguishable from the IRA proper. Alex McCabe's dissatisfaction with the scheme as it operated in the county centered on this point:

Organisation of police force in this and all areas I have come in contact with leaves a lot to be desired. At a time like this when our administration is on trial it is very important I think ... that we should give some indication of what our administration will be in peace time ... I feel that if something is not done the results if we have ever to appeal to the country again will be disastrous. The common expression I hear is that if the Republican law is to be anything like this give us back the old system again as soon as possible.

He blamed this on the "the mix up of volunteers and police". The police were under the control of the IRA, he said, the Chief of Police in County Sligo being described as the Brigade Police Officer.

Newspaper reports indicate no great increase in crime in County Sligo in the second half of 1921. The Sligo Champion in December 1921 did complain about the scenes of disorderly conduct and drunkenness which, it claimed, regularly occurred at week-ends in Sligo: "The RIC do not appear to be able to act. It is high time the Republican police took

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5 S.C., 17 Sept. 1921.
the matter in hand.\textsuperscript{8} The following week the paper could report a great improvement: "Republican police exercised a salutary control over the rowdy element in Sligo on Christmas Eve and that night there was a marked absence of the disgraceful scenes of drunkenness and disorderly conduct which occurred in the town during recent weekends".\textsuperscript{9} The same newspaper devoted an editorial in early January 1922 to "IR police in Sligo" reporting that this body was doing "excellent work" in the town and it had "the sympathy of the public", though its problem was punishment for minor offences. However neither of the two examples of good work done by the body quoted was conclusive evidence of a well organised efficient force, one being the finding of a British officer's lost terrier and the other the finding of a lady's stolen bicycle.\textsuperscript{10}

In the rural parts of County Sligo Petty Sessions courts had not functioned since mid-1920, the majority of courthouses having been burned or damaged by the IRA. This situation continued during the Truce period. Only one report of a Petty Sessions court functioning outside of Sligo town appeared in the local press for the period after June 1921 and that was Collooney Petty Sessions which in September 1921 heard over one hundred cases. A large part of this business consisted of signing publicans' certificates for the whole south Sligo area and it appears likely that this court was held specifically for this purpose.\textsuperscript{11} When the resignation of the clerk of Collooney Petty Sessions was reported in December of the same year it was stated that very little business had been transacted recently, with the exception of poteen cases, unlicensed dogs and unlighted vehicles.\textsuperscript{12}

Sligo Borough Court which had remained in operation during the latter stages of the War of Independence sat regularly during the truce period with the Mayor, John Jinks, usually taking the chair. Cases dealt with were the usual fare of such courts, drunk and disorderly, petty larceny, riotous behaviour and no lights on vehicles.\textsuperscript{13} Transfer of publicans' licences were also common and because such matters were not within the jurisdiction of the Dáil Courts, Michael Nevin, soon to be anti-Treaty Mayor of Sligo, applied for such at the Sligo Borough Court at the end of October 1921. The only reference to the volume of business transacted occurred is a report of the sitting of 19 December

\textsuperscript{8} S.C., 24 Dec. 1921.
\textsuperscript{9} S.C., 31 Dec. 1921.
\textsuperscript{10} S.C., 7 Jan. 1922.
\textsuperscript{11} S.I., 8 Oct. 1921.
\textsuperscript{12} S.C., 3 Dec. 1921.
\textsuperscript{13} S.I., 29 Oct. 1921.
1921 where it was stated that "the business of the court was of an exceptionally light character comprising a couple of cases".14

The vacuum due to the non-operation of the Petty Session courts should have been filled by the Dáil Courts, but in County Sligo as elsewhere these had to a large extent been driven out of existence during the latter stages of the War of Independence.15 The Dáil ministry under Austin Stack decided that the republican court system should be developed and that there should be no return to the British system, but it took some months before the alternative system was operational in Sligo.16 The south Sligo area in particular caused great trouble due to the inefficiency of the officials and justices but also because of Stack's attitude. He was, according to Mary Kotsonouris, "self-important, bullying and pedantic" and his Department dealt very unsympathetically with the District Registrars who were charged with responsibility for the operation of the courts.17 "The reports and the financial returns - either the lack or infrequency of them - were the subject of an endless stream of corrective correspondence from headquarters, which insisted that its own rigid and unreal demands be met".18

In early August Stack circularised all registrars with details of the new scheme of organisation and the following month sought the assistance of each TD in summoning a meeting of all court officials to ensure that justices and officials fully understood their business.19 Such a meeting appears not to have taken place in south Sligo until 14 November. In the meantime Stack had complained repeatedly that he had received no reports on courts from the district and had had no reply to correspondence.20 He again asked Tom O'Donnell TD, to have a convention summoned to appoint district and parish justices for the south Sligo area and had sent an organiser to the district by November.21 Eventually in early October 1921 the registrar of the South Sligo District Court, P.J.

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18 Ibid. p. 39.
19 See Kotsonouris, Retreat from Revolution, chpt 4; Stack to TDs, 13 Sept, 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24.
21 Stack to Registrar, 10 Oct. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
O’Brien, wrote lamely that he had been unable to report during the War of Independence because he had not received a covering address for the Ministry. There appears not to have been very much to report. He said that South Sligo District Court had been formed in September 1920 but that there had been only one sitting before 26 September 1921. The position was now much improved, he said, as a result of his efforts, together with those of O’Donnell and M.J. Marren: "There is not a constituency in Ireland with fewer cases in the British courts" he claimed. "The Parish and District Courts are now in full working order in South Sligo and are functioning in accordance with your instructions", he said, adding that sub-district courts had been established at Riverstown, Gurteen and Tubbercurry. A court styled Tubbercurry Sinn Féin District Court appears to have been held monthly from September 1921. Only five sittings of the South Sligo District Court were recorded in the court register, though O’Donnell later claimed to have attended fifty sittings of this court in the immediate post-Truce period. It appears that either he was confusing Parish, sub-District and District Courts or that the whole system of courts in South Sligo was in a state of disorganisation. The latter appears to have been the interpretation taken by Stack, and the organiser for the area seems to have agreed, reporting in November 1921, "I can’t say that I am satisfied that things were done properly in the past... Things seem to have been conducted in a very slipshod fashion".

The situation as regards district justices in south Sligo was, to say the least, complicated. Two were local TDs, one was a Catholic curate and one a medical doctor. Of the five originally elected, one had died, one had been imprisoned for much of the period, and the priest, though given permission by his Bishop, had been forbidden by some Parish Priests from officiating in their parishes. Two substitutes justices had been selected at a Sinn Féin Comhairle Ceantair meeting but after the Truce one of the substituted justices wanted to become active again.

P.J. O’Brien reported to the Minister that the first public sitting of the South Sligo District Court after the Truce had been held in Ballymote on 26 September, though in a

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23 S.I., 1 Oct. 1921; McAllister v McCoy, NA, Courts Commission, DE 6/4136.
24 Claims in respect of services etc, Dáil courts, NA, Dept. Justice, H 189/77.
Law and Order.

later report he gave the date as 1 October.\textsuperscript{28} TDs McCabe and O'Donnell, Fr. Thomas Henry and Edward J. Boles were the justices at this sitting which lasted two days.\textsuperscript{29}

Stack placed O'Brien on a month's probation in November 1921 as a result of his continued dissatisfaction. O'Brien's postponement of a meeting of justices and court officials early in that month without the permission of the local court organiser seems to have been the last straw as far as Stack was concerned.\textsuperscript{30} This meeting of parish justices, clerks and district justices, at which the organiser attended was eventually held on 14 November and it was decided that the District Court should sit on the first Friday of each month. Every parish in South Sligo was represented at this meeting and all but two were said to be properly organised. It also decided to grant O'Brien a salary of £3 per week retrospective to the date of the Truce.\textsuperscript{31} Stack was pleased with the work of the reorganisation meeting and looked forward to the proper functioning of the courts in the area. However he refused to sanction the award of salary to O'Brien, saying that "I am quite in the dark as to what work has been done in your district since the truce came into operation". He complained again of lack of reports from south Sligo: "I have not received a single monthly report sheet from him", and wondered where the October report was.\textsuperscript{32} This action of Stack's, it must be said, was carried out with the agreement of the court organiser who had reported: "There seems to have been a great looseness about the conduct of the courts in the past and though the registrar must be blamed for much of it, still I think the justices must bear equal blame. The registrar will, I think, if handled firmly, make good and the probationary period given him may have the desired effect. He is not a bad type of individual and appears willing enough to make good."\textsuperscript{33}

Things got worse however. O'Brien's first attempt at a report in early December was pathetic. He reported that the first of the post-reorganisation District Courts, that of 2

\textsuperscript{28} Registrar to Stack, 29 Sept. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
\textsuperscript{29} Reports Registrar to Stack and McCabe to Stack, 15 Nov. 1921 & Report Registrar to Stack, 30 Dec. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58. The next sitting on 25 Nov. was interrupted by the arrival of enemy forces who however left when the court refused to disperse.
\textsuperscript{30} Correspondence of court organiser for Roscommon, Mayo and Sligo, NA, Courts Commission, DE 11/219a; Stack to Registrar, 16 Nov. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
\textsuperscript{31} Reports Registrar to Stack & McCabe to Stack, 15 Nov. 1921, Report Registrar to Stack, 30 Dec. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
\textsuperscript{32} Stack to Registrar and to McCabe, 18 Nov. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
\textsuperscript{33} D.A. O'Donnell to Stack, 23 Nov. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 11/219a.
December, fell through because only one justice was present and all the cases were adjourned to the January sitting. The justices' excuses included being unable to get a car, being absent on Volunteer duties, the clergyman unable to get permission from the parish priest to officiate in his parish, and the doctor engaged on medical work. O'Brien said that he had no reports from Parish Courts to send in because although he had received "a good many" they were not suitable to send on and he had asked those responsible to rewrite them. Stack wrote to each of the justices asking for an explanation of the "fiasco" of 2 December, saying "The courts in your district are in a most unsatisfactory condition". To O'Brien himself Stack wrote a blistering attack on his inefficiency and on the whole court system in south Sligo. He pointed out that in spite of the fact that a scheme of organisation had been issued by the Department shortly before the Truce, no District Court had been held in the area until 1 October. No details of any Parish Court in the area had ever been sent to the Ministry and no monthly report sheets had been returned. Stack also queried a number of items of payment totalling £18/10/0 in the October report. He pointed out that some cases should not have been heard by the District Court but should have been referred to the Circuit Court. He also pointed out that the debacle of December need not have occurred since one district justice could have disposed of the business of the court with the help of at least two parish justices. O'Brien seems to have decided that silence was the only possible defence, and in early January Stack wrote to O'Brien asking why there had been no reply to his December broadside, threatening that unless he received a reply by 14 January he would suspend him and appoint a more efficient registrar. Two justices, McCabe and Boles, wrote on O'Brien's behalf to Stack with regard to the salary question. "Taking into consideration all the useful work carried out by Mr O'Brien during the war he was entitled to a fair consideration", Boles said. By this time the Treaty had been signed and its approval by the Dáil had resulted in Stack's resignation from the ministry.

In contrast with its counterpart in the south, North Sligo Republican District Court generated much less correspondence and much less anger on the part of Stack. It had been established in 1920 and sat for the first time after the Truce on 15 August 1921 and

34 Report Registrar to Stack, 3 Dec. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
36 Stack to Registrar, 8 Dec. 1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
37 Stack to Registrar, 6 Jan. 1922, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/58.
fortnightly after that. Minister Stack expressed his approval of the operation of the north Sligo courts and only asked that they be regularly constituted at a convention which would elect five justices. This was held on 5 November. The court functioned regularly between then and the outbreak of the Civil War and appears to have attracted business from all sides of the political divide, including some of the Protestant-owned businesses of Sligo town. For instance it adjudicated in favour of the Western Wholesale Ltd., Sligo, presumably for debts, in November 1921. Monthly reports of the type so desired by Stack appear not to have been sent in by this District Court either, but this did not lead to the bitter correspondence the South Sligo court engendered. One reason appears to be that while both Sligo District Courts were in the same inspection area which also included Mayo and Roscommon, north Sligo was very much on the periphery and appeared to receive little attention from the inspector.

There are few reports of the operation of republican Parish Courts in Sligo during the Truce period, suggesting that like the District Courts they were slow to reorganise. It does appear that such courts were almost unknown in north Sligo while sittings are reported sporadically in south Sligo. There is for instance no mention of a Parish Court in Sligo town for the Truce period. Ballymote Parish Court sat on 4 August 1921 and according to the Sligo Independent the Dáil Courts were functioning in the Ballymote area and doing good work in mid-October 1921: "these courts seem to be winning the confidence of the people", it commented. The Connachtman held up Tourlestrane Parish Court in south Sligo as an example to neighbouring districts. It was sitting regularly during August and September 1921 and a "considerable number of cases [were] dealt with to the satisfaction of all". This may be the same court as Kilmacteige Parish Court which sat during the last three months of 1921. Parish Courts were also held at Skreen and Dromard, mid-October 1921 and Keash, 30 December 1921. However the absence of references may also reflect

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39 Bradshaw to Stack, 17 Oct.1921, NA, Courts Commission, DE 10/57; North Sligo District Court, 10 Jan. 1922, NA, Courts Commission, DE 6/4118. This court's registrar was Bertie Glynn and justices included chairman Denis A. Mulcahy, John Hennigan, R.G. Bradshaw, Michael Nevin and William Hande.
41 Western Wholesale Co. Ltd. v Tolan, NA, Courts Commission, DE 6/4161.
42 Correspondence of D.A. O'Donnell, NA, DE 11/219a & b.
44 CM., 17 Sept. 1921.
46 S.C., 29 Oct. 1921. Skreen and Dromard were in the North Sligo District Court area;
the official policy of giving these courts no publicity since they were often the subject of complaints from the British side during the Treaty negotiations, Stack's advice being that "the work should go on quietly and unostentatiously". The absence of references to court proceedings in accounts of the apprehending of criminals by IRA, Volunteers or republican police during this period however also points to the absence of such court infrastructure at the time.

The overall impression gained from this consideration of the Dáil courts in County Sligo during the Truce period is of slow and uneven progress rather than a great immediate resurgence. James Casey says that "it was in the period between the Truce and the Treaty that the courts reached the highest point of their effectiveness". If this is true then that high point for Sligo was not a signal achievement.

The post-Treaty period.

Towards the end of 1921 there had been a nationwide increase in lawlessness which took advantage of and exposed the lack of an efficient police system. This was made worse by the evacuation by the RIC of the remaining occupied barracks in the county in early 1922. In February 1922 Chief of Republican Police Simon Donnelly mentioned the "wave of crime which began about three months ago and which has been caused by numerous armed bands operating all over Ireland". Sligo also suffered. The figures for malicious injury claims in the Sligo Crown and Peace Records show a rise from no claim based on an October incident to five for November and twelve for December.

An incident involving a group of four men, at least two of whom were IRA members, apparently from Ballina illustrates the attitudes and conditions of the time. One stated at
his subsequent trial that "I met Farrell on Friday evening 23 December 1921 and he asked me was I game to go on a stunt with him. I said I did not care." They collected two others, one of whom had a car and visited three pubs before starting the "stunt". Two were armed with revolvers. They decided against raiding in the town, believing this to be too dangerous, and instead visited three premises in the neighbouring countryside, one in County Mayo and two in County Sligo. In the first they stole fourteen shillings and some watches at gunpoint. In the second they announced they were raiding for poteen, took the poteen they found on the premises and drank it. They also imposed a fine of £10 but accepted £5-10-0. On being refused entry to a third house they broke windows and fired a shot.\(^{54}\) In the financial appeal in February 1922 by the 3rd Western Division IRA the disturbed state of the area was adverted to: "evilly disposed persons are taking advantage of the unsettled conditions and it is our duty to trace and bring to justice such individuals".\(^{55}\)

In recognition of its failure to cope with this outbreak of lawlessness the republican police system was changed towards the end of 1921. Company police officers were instructed to rejoin their military units, and battalion and brigade officers "where competent" were to act in co-operation with the army in policing the country. The split in the army over the Treaty made the situation worse. The anti-Treaty side established their own republican police force and it appears this operated in those areas of the country including most of County Sligo which were under their control. In February 1922 it was reported that anti-Treaty IRA police were restoring law and order in the Ballymote district.\(^{56}\) According to the *Roscommon Herald* the Ballymote IRA were discharging their duty of preserving law and order in the town "right well", mounting patrols on the streets, meeting all the trains and guarding all the local banks.\(^{57}\) Pro-Treaty Thomas Casey of Gurteen was still functioning as Battalion Police Officer in his area in May 1922 and in a letter to Duggan, Minister for Home Affairs, said that he was "more or less cut off from HQ since the split in the IRA". He asked for directives in carrying out his duties, saying that he did "not like to serve under anyone whose loyalty to GHQ might be doubtful".\(^{58}\)

\(^{54}\) The State v Several, NA, Courts Commission, DE 8/68.
\(^{55}\) *CM.*, 25 Feb. 1922.
\(^{56}\) *S.I.*, 11 Feb. 1922.
\(^{57}\) *R.H.*, 4 Mar. 1922. They were under the command of Patrick Coleman, who later fought with the anti-treaty side.
\(^{58}\) Casey to Duggan, 9 May 1922, Civic Guard - Relations with local IRA, NA, Dept.
Law and Order.

Reports in the local newspapers reflect the increase in crime in the county in the early months of 1922. Armed robberies became common. In January 1922 a man named Davey from north Sligo was robbed by armed men of a sum of money, the proceeds of a sale of cattle.\(^{59}\) Robbers entered a house at Rosses Point in late January/early February 1922 and demanded money from the housewife threatening to shoot her and her baby, £25 was taken.\(^{60}\) In February 1922 two masked men impersonating members of the IRA raided the house of a person who happened to be a member of the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade IRA. Money was handed over but the IRA investigated and the guilty parties were arrested and returned for trial to Tubbercurry District Court.\(^{61}\) One hundred pounds was stolen from the offices of Messrs Pollexfen in Wine St., Sligo in February 1922.\(^{62}\)

The high point of this lawlessness occurred on the afternoon of 13 February when the offices of the Bank of Ireland and of the Provincial Bank in Sligo town, both in Stephen St., were raided and a large amount, over £10,000, taken. There were eight to ten raiders, described as young men with country accents, only the leader being disguised. The Sligo IRA were notified and chased the raiders reportedly in the direction of Northern Ireland. Sligo IRA had to deny that they were involved and no-one was ever brought to justice for the raids.\(^{63}\) As a result of these bank raids Sligo Corporation held a special meeting to discuss the lawless state of the area and it was agreed that the matter should be put in the hands of the local IRA. The "competent military authority" was asked to afford all the protection possible to citizens and a request was sent to the Minister for Defence to have a police force set up for Sligo Borough. It was stated that the IRA police had been disbanded only a few day previous to the raids and that in any case there had been only six members of the force in Sligo.\(^{64}\)

The local newspapers continued to report criminal activities during March to June 1922. These included raids on houses, business premises and mail cars. Such incidents

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\(^{59}\) Justice, H103/14.
\(^{60}\) R.H., 13 Jan. 1922.
\(^{61}\) R.H., 11 Feb. 1922.
\(^{62}\) CM., 18 Feb. 1922.
\(^{63}\) CM., 25 Feb. 1922.
\(^{64}\) S.I., 18 Feb. 1922.
Law and Order.

were reported from all parts of the county including Sligo town. It is impossible to distinguish between the incidents which were the work of the anti-Treaty IRA securing funds and transport, and those which were the work of common criminals taking advantage of the unsettled state of the county. Among the malicious injuries claims recorded in the Crown and Peace Records there were seven claims each for January and February, five for March, twelve for April and thirteen for May. These claims were for injuries suffered for a variety of reasons. The twelve April claims included four incidents related to Griffith’s meeting in Sligo, four agrarian attacks, three cases of stealing or damaging motor cars and one house burning. The thirteen May claims included nine agrarian incidents, three incidents of stolen cars and one of a stolen bicycle.

There were other series of incidents which increased the amount of crime. Immediately after disbandment there was a campaign of intimidation against ex-members of the RIC in County Sligo as elsewhere in the country. Most of the disbanded RIC appear not to have returned to or settled in the county. Those who did were usually given twenty four hours to leave and most appear to have complied. Most left the county though one or two fled to Sligo town and remained there. These incidents were reported from all parts of the county. In mid-May 1922 the Roscommon Herald reported that houses owned or occupied by ex-RIC had been fired into in the Castlebaldwin district in south Sligo and reported rumours to the effect that ex-RIC in the area had since left. Shots were fired into the houses of ex-RIC at Gurteen and a notice was posted on the gate of the chapel warning all such personnel to leave the area. Some were reported to have complied with the order at once. In two cases intimidation escalated to killing. On 17 June 1922 the brother of an ex-RIC man was shot dead by masked raiders near Ballymote. The disguised raiders apparently wanted to question the ex-RIC man about his involvement with IRA cases where he had been stationed and panicked when recognised by the ex-RIC man’s brother.

66 Crown & Peace Records, Co. Sligo, Criminal Injuries Papers 1922, NA. Belfast Boycott related claims have not been included in these figures.
67 Simon Grumbleton, Irish Grants Committee (IGC), PRO, CO 762/23; Michael Mullaney, /41; Martin Gilroy, /44; Jeremiah O’Sullivan, /82; Charles Graham, /90; Peter Healy, /118; Charles O'Donnell, /157; Delia McKeon, /172.
68 *R.H.*, 20 May 1922.
70 W.P., 24 June 1922. The victim, John Brehony, was shot by a member of the IRA garrison at Ballymote. (Confidential information.)
In August 1922 an ex-RIC man was shot dead near Bunninadden.\(^{71}\)

Incidents of intimidation of Protestants had occurred in County Sligo from late 1921 but increased dramatically in April and May 1922 just after the departure of the RIC.\(^{72}\) Already feeling isolated, abandoned and threatened by political developments, small wonder that they considered that there was a deliberate campaign "of loyalist extermination".\(^{73}\) There is however little evidence that this widespread intimidation was a co-ordinated campaign. Instead it appears to have consisted of numerous settlings of real or imagined old scores in the absence of law and order.

A notice from the IRA, 1st Brigade, 3rd Western Division signed by Brigadier General Seamus Devins stated that the boycott of Belfast and the Six County area had been reimposed as and from 10 April.\(^{74}\) This was the main reason for a sudden upsurge in attacks and raids on railway property in March and April 1922. Of the twenty three malicious injuries claims in the Criminal Injuries Papers 1922 arising from the Belfast Boycott nineteen of them related to events during those two months.\(^{75}\) On the Collooney to Limerick GSWR system the company listed nine incidents which occurred in County Sligo between 26 March and 22 April. These included raids for Belfast goods and attempts to stop Free State supporters travelling to rallies at Castlebar and Sligo. The list submitted by the MGWR Company is much longer with 35 incidents reported in County Sligo for the same period. The majority of these incidents involved the halting and raiding of trains between Boyle and Ballymote especially near Kilfree Junction in South Sligo. There were approximately 150 raids on the whole of the MGWR system and according to the company’s report the Kilfree Junction area of south Sligo was the single most raided place.\(^{76}\)

The Provisional Government had established the Civic Guard on 21 February 1922. Jim Hunt of Gurteen was appointed recruiting officer for Sligo, Leitrim and East Mayo and a large number of recruits presented themselves at Ballymote in early March with the first batch leaving for Dublin in mid-March.\(^{77}\) Hunt was in Sligo town on 27 March to attest

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\(^{71}\) The man was James Cullen. (W.P. & R.H., 2 Sept. 1922.)

\(^{72}\) S.C., 22 Apr., 6 & 20 May, 17 June 1922; R.H., 29 Apr., 6 May, 3 June 1922.

\(^{73}\) Statement of John Russell ex-RIC, H.R. Wood-Martin, IGC, PRO, CO 762/78.

\(^{74}\) CM., 1 Apr. 1922.

\(^{75}\) Crown & Peace Records, Co. Sligo, Criminal Injuries Papers 1922, NA.

\(^{76}\) Reports on raids on railways, 25 Apr. 1922, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/63.

\(^{77}\) R.H., 11 & 18 Mar. 1922.
suitable men and it was reported that sixteen out of forty candidates examined at Sligo courthouse were successful. This initial scheme of establishment of the Civic Guard was not successful because of internal divisions over the number of ex-RIC recruited, mutinies and indiscipline. It was disbanded by the Provisional Government on 18 August 1922 and was reconstituted in September.

Courts.

With the approval of the Treaty the position as regards the courts became more confused that ever. Garvin says that "in early 1922 the Dáil and Provisional Government found themselves in charge of two mutually exclusive court systems, the British and the Dáil courts." The courts previously called "British courts" had been taken over by the Provisional Government and were operating side by side with the former Dáil Courts. Some still considered these latter courts under Dáil control, others considered that they now operated under the Provisional Government. On 16 January 1922 a proclamation was issued by the Provisional Government which among other things directed that all law courts which had acted under authority of the British Government were to continue to operate until the establishment of the Free State. On 20 January the Provisional Government decided that the Dáil Courts were also to remain in operation. The dual system of courts was therefore to continue.

The post Treaty period was an "era of uninterrupted expansion" for the Dáil courts according to Kotsonouris. Conor Brady, on the other hand, says that "once the unifying influence of the common struggle against the British had passed, the Sinn Féin courts would lose much of their acceptability throughout the community" and says that the courts in the post Treaty period became "disorganised and ineffective as a result of the split over

78 S.C., 25 Mar. & 1 Apr. 1922; R.H., 8 Apr. 1922.
80 Garvin, 1922, p. 171.
81 Casey, "Republican Courts in Ireland 1919-1922", p. 337.
82 Kotsonouris, Retreat from Revolution. pp 61-8.
the "Treaty". The evidence suggests that as far as Sligo was concerned the former view is correct. Both North and South Sligo District Courts continued to function until just before the outbreak of Civil War and there are many reports of Parish Court sittings, especially in south Sligo. The North Sligo District Court sat monthly until May 1922. At the sitting of 2 March twenty four new cases and two appeals were to be heard and some cases had to be adjourned. All except one of the justices of this court were anti-Treaty activists but they appear not to have let this disrupt the business. The pro-Treaty member, John Hennigan, who was to stand as an independent candidate in the June election, continued to sit as a justice at least until April.

P.J. O'Brien was still the registrar of South Sligo District Court at the sitting of the court which was held at Riverstown in early February 1922. Cases included land disputes, shop goods claims and some cases referred by Parish Courts. Organiser D.H. O'Donnell was still working in the area and he reported in March that the several Parish Courts in south Sligo which he visited were working satisfactorily and held up the Ballymote Parish Court sitting of 9 March as "a model one from every standpoint". However a District Court sitting fixed for Tubbercurry later the same month fell through. A convention of all the district and parish justices plus registrars was fixed for 10 April 1922 in Tubbercurry "to put the whole thing on a business-like basis" reflecting continued dissatisfaction with the system. Some time later O'Brien resigned or was dismissed and an advertisement appeared on 1 July under the heading of Saorstát na hÉireann advertising the position of District Registrar for South Sligo District Court. The meeting for the election of the new registrar was not held and the office was still vacant in September.

As in the pre-Treaty period reports and references to sittings of Parish Courts in County Sligo in the January to July 1922 period are confined almost exclusively to the south Sligo area and there are no references to any Parish Court being held in the area north of Sligo town. It may be the case that a Parish Court system was not developed in this area with only the District Court and Sligo town Parish Court functioning. It may also

83 Brady, Guardians of the Peace, p. 49.
84 CM., S.I. & S.C., 4 Mar 1922.
85 CM., 15 Apr. 1922.
88 R.H., 1 Apr. 1922.
89 S.I., 1 July 1922.
90 Quinn to Minister, 5 Sept. 1922, NA, Courts Commission, DE 14/22.
Law and Order.

reflect the fact that most of the IRA in this area took the anti-Treaty side and had little time
to spend on non-military matters. However at Collooney Parish Court held on 31 May
1922 the three judges were prominent anti-Treaty leaders from the local area. It may also
suggest that south Sligo had become well organised as a result of Stack's "encouragement"
and that north Sligo, neglected by the organiser, never developed a viable system of Parish
Courts. Sittings of Sligo Parish Court were however regularly mentioned in the local
newspapers during January, February and March 1922.

An examination of the files of cases dealt with by the Winding Up Commission
shows that thirty-one of the thirty-six Sligo cases referred to were held in the period from
October 1921 to May 1922. This confirms that that the court system took some time after
the Truce to be properly re-organised and suggests that it ceased to function with the
outbreak of the war. The sittings categorised by area show that eleven of the thirty-six were
sittings of the North Sligo District Court but only three were sittings of north Sligo Parish
Courts. There were on the other hand only three sittings of the South Sligo District Court
but eight were sittings of south Sligo Parish Courts, the majority only once though
Kilmacteige had nine sittings mentioned. Of forty-one cases where the subject matter is
identified sixteen were cases of non-payment for goods purchased, five were for
possession of property and three each were for assault, illegal fishing and trespass.

There is little evidence of differences arising because of the split over the Treaty. As
we have seen pro- and anti-Treaty personnel sat together on the North Sligo District Court
in the post Treaty period. A long letter from Enniscrone to Michael Collins in March 1922
by a self-proclaimed Free State supporter complained of her being persecuted by the local
Dáil Parish Court in Kilglass because of her allegiance. She said that her son had been
imprisoned during the War of Independence and she described the clerk of the court as "a
young truce bird". However this case appears to have resulted from a local dispute rather
than from conflicting political allegiance.

The main problem which the courts faced was the inability to enforce decrees as a
result of the absence of an effective police force. This problem was exacerbated after the

91 CM., 10 June 1922. The three were Michael Coleman, Henry Brehyony and Michael
O'Beirne.
93 O'Neill to Collins, 6 Mar. 1922 & to Mins H/A, 5 Mar. 1922, NA, Courts Commission,
DE 12/174.
Treaty split when many of the police, also members of the IRA, took the anti-Treaty side and were not likely to assist courts they regarded as under the Provisional Government. A report on Kilmacteige Parish Court in September 1922 said that it had been in existence for about a year and that it had continued to sit fortnightly during the first half of the year. The work of the court was "fairly satisfactory", it said, were it not for the failure of certain sections of the republican police. Obstruction and prejudice were blamed especially on the part of the chief of police in the area who later took the anti-Treaty side in the civil war. There was a long list of writs waiting to be enforced with no means available for so doing. For instance in January 1922 four men were fined for poaching in a local river, writs for collection were issued to the chief of police but the fines were not collected. In August 1922 there were only three prisoners in Sligo jail committed there by Dáil Courts, one by North Sligo District Court and the other two by Sligo Parish Court.

There was some concern that Parish Courts were overstepping their jurisdiction. Rev M.J. Connellan, C.C. Sooey, Riverstown, wrote to the Minister for Home Affairs in late June 1922 asking if these courts had the power to grant new public house licences. This was because a local court had just granted a new licence on 22 June 1922 in spite of the fact that there was a public house about 200 yards away. "This new licence will dump down a public house on each side of our church here" he claimed, adding that it was a "big set back to public good order especially when here as elsewhere, theft, plunder, land hunger, threatening letters are the order of the day". The reply on 13 July from the Minister was that the Parish Courts had not been granted jurisdiction in licensing matters. The Roscommon Herald's report on what was probably the same case praised the applicant's "pluck in taking advantage of Irish law which allows any man to get a living as he pleases". It also said that the requirements that the application should be previously published in the local papers and signed by a certain number of residents and that the consent of the police authorities should be obtained were not insisted on "owing to the disturbed nature of the country". A Keash correspondent wrote to the Minister in August 1922 asking if Parish and District Courts were to continue to grant new publicans' licences. He said that he had seen several granted in places and he knew of people building houses

97 R.H., 12 Aug. 1922.
beside existing public houses in the expectation of getting licences.\textsuperscript{98}

The former British courts continued to operate as they had during the Truce period though the reports in the local newspapers suggest a falling off in the volume of business of Sligo Borough Court. At the sitting of 6 February 1922 only one case was heard and a sitting on 6 March 1922 had no business before it.\textsuperscript{99} With the disbandment of the RIC in April there was no police force to summon petty criminals to the court. The \textit{Roscommon Herald} commented in March 1922 that the Sligo Borough Court had lost its biggest patrons with the departure of the RIC. The IRA police were having all cases dealt with at the Parish Court, it said.\textsuperscript{100} However the Borough Court continued to function in parallel with the Dáil Parish Court. A report for the month of May 1922 by Sligo Resident Magistrate William Murphy says there were no cases for hearing at the Petty Sessions courts outside the town of Sligo during May.\textsuperscript{101} None of the county Petty Sessions courts reopened and there is no reference to Collooney Court having sat during this time.

The Quarter Sessions Courts continued to sit in Sligo during 1922 and 1923, those for Sligo, Ballymote, Easkey and Tubbercurry all being held in Sligo. Business transacted was usually confined to applications for transfer of publicans' licences and claims for compensation for malicious injuries.\textsuperscript{102} There appears to have been no attempt to interfere with the workings of this court after the September/October 1921 Sessions when many jurors had been kidnapped to prevent them from serving.\textsuperscript{103} However during the May 1922 Sligo Quarter Sessions three anti-Treaty IRA officers walked in and ordered the judge to cease operating crown proceedings. The judge went to the IRA barracks where he reported the matter to Adjutant Brian MacNeill. MacNeill said that the order to cease was given without any authorisation and that the court had been functioning with the approval of the republican authorities.\textsuperscript{104} The numbers of cases taken before these courts appears to have varied enormously. Few cases were reported as having been heard at the January 1922 Sessions.\textsuperscript{105} On the other hand 150 civil bills, almost all undefended, were dealt with and

\textsuperscript{98} Egan to Minister, 17 Aug. 1922, NA, Courts Commission, DE 14/22.
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{R.H.}, 18 Mar. 1922.
\textsuperscript{101} Resident Magistrates' Leave 1922, NA, Dept. Justice, H137/5.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{S.I.}, 21 Jan. 1922.
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{R.H.}, \textit{W.P.} & \textit{S.C.}, 27 May 1922.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{W.P.}, 21 Jan. 1922.
Law and Order.

decrees given in March 1922.\textsuperscript{106}

The Civil War Period.

The outbreak of the Civil War and the intensity of the conflict in the Sligo area during July 1922 overshadowed all else and during the initial stages of the war there were few reports of ordinary crime in the county. It would be expected that conditions were much too unsettled to allow those so inclined to operate. However one significant incident occurred in the Riverstown area. A Provisional Government post had been taken by republicans here on the outbreak of the war but had been retaken when Collooney was attacked and captured by Seán MacEoin on 13 July. Eleven days later on the night of 24 July 1922 Mrs Nellie McDonagh, Kilcullew, Riverstown, was shot dead by one of a gang of armed and masked youths who broke into her house.\textsuperscript{107} Her husband had reported persistent larceny of goods and turf and had accosted one of the youths the previous day about the incidents. After a roadside dance the group drank a bottle of whiskey and decided to break into the McDonagh house, beat up the husband and "raid for a gun". When they entered the house they found that McDonagh was not at home and instead were confronted by his wife. A shotgun was discharged and she was shot dead. The youth who discharged the shot claimed at the inquest "I got a stagger and fell up against the jamb of the door. When I was trying to balance myself the gun went off and Mrs McDonagh was shot."\textsuperscript{108} Six local youths, four of whom were aged fifteen, sixteen, eighteen and nineteen, were arrested and charged with the killing.\textsuperscript{109}

As the conflict settled down some people began to find the situation conducive to lawbreaking. This was especially so in those areas where no significant anti-treaty forces operated. Areas such as the country part of south Sligo were nominally under pro-Treaty control but in fact were without any law enforcing element of any kind. Crimes occurring in these places included robberies by criminals and vandalism by youths unfettered by authority. The Gurteen area seems to have been particularly prone to crime of this nature towards the end of 1922: "From many parts of the Ballymote and Gurteen districts reports

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{106}CM., 25 Mar. 1922.
\item \textsuperscript{107}W.P., 29 July 1922.
\item \textsuperscript{108}R.H., 5 Aug. 1922.
\item \textsuperscript{109}S.C., 29 July & 5 Aug. 1922.
\end{itemize}
reached us . . . of a lot of wanton destruction of property which included the scattering of oats, hay, turf etc." This state of affairs was attributed to the fact that "boys want to do damage". "Mysterious occurrences" were reported there including the burning of a dozen cocks of hay belonging to a widow and the breaking of windows in a house belonging to the Gurteen postmaster at the end of September. In October 1922 there were reports that gangs of youths were still causing wanton damage to property in the area at night. A Protestant farmer had his apple trees cut down and his house stoned. An old man had been pulled from his house one night, had his hands tied and was thrown into an outhouse while a rick of his hay was burned.

Public houses and business premises were targeted. All public houses in the Mullaghroe district were raided in early November and tobacco, drink and cigarettes taken. One licensed premises near Gurteen was raided in mid-November and money and spirits taken while another was visited twice by raiders towards the end of 1922 but on both occasions the raiders were beaten off. The co-operative store at Seefin was robbed of £20 worth of goods and tobacco and cigarettes in November. Gurteen post office was raided at the end of December and the old age pension money was demanded but when the postmaster said this money had not been received the raiders went away empty handed. The same day Kilfree post office was also raided and a small quantity of stamps taken. Other parts of the county were also affected with reports of similar though less numerous occurrences from Sligo town, Bunninadden, Easkey and Collooney from the same period.

It was difficult to differentiate between crimes committed by the IRA and those committed by ordinary criminals especially as the latter often masqueraded as the former. Three men were charged with robbery near Strandhill in October 1922. "We are Bolsheviks from the Ox Mountains and are starving," they were reported as having told their victims. One was a showman and the others natives of Strandhill. They sampled the justice systems of both Civil War protagonists having been originally apprehended by anti-

111 R.H., 30 Sept. 1922.
113 R.H., 18 Nov. 1922.
114 S.C., 25 Nov. 1922; R.H., 18 Nov. 1922.
115 R.H., 18 Nov. 1922.
Law and Order.

Treaty forces and tied to church railings at Strandhill. They were then arrested by pro-Treaty army police and taken to Sligo jail.118

In the meantime the country was still without a properly organised police force. As the Provisional Government forces regained control of the towns in the county they appear to have set up an army police force. By the end of July such a police force had been organised in Ballymote under the command of Boles, "a gentleman to his fingertips . . . bound to command respect".119 In August 1922 the *Roscommon Herald* reported that the army authorities had set up a police force who wore armbands inscribed Irish Army Police (IAP). This was said to have been a great relief to the inhabitants generally who according to the paper "had to endure things which with the presence of police forces would not be permissible".120 In October 1922 it was mentioned that the troops were efficiently carrying out police duties.121 Some of those who had been acting as Irish Army Police had gone to join the Civic Guards.122

Members of the new Civic Guard force began to take up duties in September 1922 and a Superintendent was sent to Sligo-Leitrim division in October with a complement of men to arrange for accommodation of barracks at Sligo, Ballymote and Manorhamilton.123 Eighteen members took up duty at Wine St. ex-RIC Barracks in Sligo town on 19 October 1922 and seven members of the Civic Guard took up duty in Ballymote at the same time.124 The following week's issue of the *Sligo Independent* contained the following description of the new police: "They are a splendid type of Irish manhood indeed, and Sligo is very fortunate in securing such a fine band of young men as protectors of the general public".125 The original proposed strength of the Sligo-Leitrim division of the Civic Guards was one Chief Superintendent stationed at Sligo, three Superintendents at Sligo, Carrick on Shannon and Ballymote, four Inspectors at Sligo, Mohill, Manorhamilton and Collooney, thirty sergeants and 209 constables.126 The Sligo-Leitrim division was to have forty three stations, in two sub-divisions with headquarters at Sligo and Carrick on

119*S.C.*, 29 July 1922.
120*R.H.*, 12 Aug. 1922.
125*S.I.*, 4 Nov. 1922.
Shannon. The Sligo sub-division was to have four districts, Sligo, Easkey, Ballymote and Manorhamilton, each with an inspector in charge. There were to be twenty four stations in County Sligo.127

The Civic Guard report for January 1923 stated that the Guards then still occupied only two stations in Sligo - Sligo and Ballymote. "The Guard is not effective here and are merely in occupation of posts", it commented.128 At this time Sligo, with two stations, had the lowest number of occupied garda stations of all the counties of the Irish Free State. Leitrim had three stations, Mayo four, Roscommon six and Galway fourteen.129 There was no increase in Civic Guard numbers in the county until the following April when Civic Guards took up duty in Tubbercurry.130 Sligo then had one sergeant and fifteen guards, Ballymote one sergeant and six guards and Tubbercurry one sergeant and five guards.131

Thus the Civic Guards played no significant role in the Civil War in County Sligo. They were of course intended to be an unarmed body with a purely policing role and in Sligo they were deployed only in those areas where the Free State was more or less in complete control. This resulted in very few incidents involving Guards being reported in the county during the early part of 1923. In an attack on a patrol in Sligo 6 January 1923 two Guards were held up and deprived of their waterproof coats, batons and handcuffs and three days later a Sergeant and a Guard were held for over three hours by republicans. 132

Superintendent Neary who had been stationed in Sligo since the new force arrived was dismissed from the force in March 1923. No explanation or reason was given nor was his dismissal mentioned in the local newspapers. No incident which might cast light on the dismissal appears to have occurred at the time.133

Lawlessness continued and again the south Sligo area seems to have been badly affected. Numerous arrests of robbers who had been posing as irregulars were made in the Ballymote area in January 1923.134 "It goes without saying that there are men and boys

127 Iris an Ghráda, 7 May 1923.
129 Civic Guard, NA, Dept Justice, H99/125.
130 S.I. & S.C., 14 Apr. 1923.
131 Iris an Ghráda, 7 May 1923.
133 Iris an Ghráda, 26 Mar. 1923; S.I., 14 Apr. 1923. To replace Neary Inspector R. Muldoon, a native of Westmeath, was transferred from Longford to Sligo and promoted to Superintendent.
who are taking advantage of the disturbed times to prey on the people and take whatever comes their way in the matter of ready cash, goods and valuables", the *Roscommon Herald* said. The newspaper reported two such raids in the Ballymote district in the last week of January.\textsuperscript{135} The Bunninadden area of south Sligo was particularly subject to lawlessness during early 1923. This area was a centre of agrarian trouble during the whole 1921-23 period with two landowners in the area, Charles Phibbs and J. Ormsby Cooke, subject to particular attention.\textsuperscript{136} Woods there were totally destroyed during January with the timber being "cut down and carried away openly by anyone and everyone. It certainly illustrates the strange times that we are passing through when a man can scarcely call his soul his own" said the report in the *Roscommon Herald*.\textsuperscript{137} In early February the same newspaper reported that armed and disguised men had raided several houses in the area between Bunninadden and Gurteen stealing guns, cash and goods. "That the raiding spirit is abroad there can be no doubt and it is certainly not confined to any particular district", the newspaper commented adding that for each incident reported there were probably at least two others not spoken about many people preferring to suffer in silence rather than let the public know of their victimisation."\textsuperscript{138} The *Sligo Champion* reported that "armed raiders have been operating in the Bunninadden district for some time past giving the people of that district a lively and by no means a pleasant time".\textsuperscript{139}

It appears to have been mid-1923 before this area was taken in hand. In June 1923 Alex McCabe suggested the sending down to the Bunninadden area of some Oriel House men to try to curb the "gang of armed marauders." This was done and Doddy, a native of the Ballymote area, was sent with a group who arrested three or four men thought to have been involved.\textsuperscript{140} A request from McCabe to allow the Oriel House men further time in the Bunninadden area was turned down.\textsuperscript{141}

Statistics on raids on post offices, mail cars and postmen for the period February

\textsuperscript{135} *R.H.*, 3 Feb. 1923.
\textsuperscript{136} Protection of lands of Charles Phibbs, MA, Dept. Defence, A3642; Damage to property, C. Phibbs, NA, Dept. Justice, H5/215; Charles Phibbs, IGC, PRO, CO 762/70; Robbery and ill treatment of J Ormsby Cooke at Kilturra, Bunninadden, Co. Sligo, NA, Dept Justice, H5/269.
\textsuperscript{137} *R.H.*, 10 Feb. 1923.
\textsuperscript{138} *R.H.*, 10 Feb. 1923.
\textsuperscript{139} *S.C.*, 24 Feb. 1923.
\textsuperscript{140} *S.C.*, 23 June 1923.
Law and Order.

1922 to June 1923 show that the big increase in numbers of raids coincided with the Civil War period, July 1922 to March 1923. There were an average of 21 such raids per month during this period with December 1922 recording the greatest number of raids per month with 47 raids in the county. Raids per month for the immediate pre-Civil War period averaged little over three per month and March 1923 was the last month with a significant number of such raids. These figures show very little overspill of post office raids after the end of the Civil War. How many of these raids were carried out by IRA members acting officially collecting money or searching mails for incriminating correspondence is not known. Many must have been the work of IRA members acting independently in their own interest and others were the actions of criminals taking advantage of the unsettled times.

Another death was recorded as a result of lawlessness towards the end of the war. On 2 April 1923, 77 year old Catherine McGuinness of Cairns, Culleens was shot dead by armed men. It appears that a group of armed anti-Treaty IRA visited the house late at night and were entertained by two sons of Mrs McGuinness, a quantity of poteen being consumed. After some time a row developed about an earlier incident and about spies. One IRA man and a son started to fight and the IRA man was thrown out. Stones were thrown at him and he was called names. In reply he fired shots at the house from the road and Mrs McGuinness was fatally injured and a son dangerously injured. The IRA man remained at large until February 1924 when he was arrested and charged with the murder. When the case was brought to trial both McGuinness sons refused to implicate the suspect and he was set free.

The outbreak of the Civil War affected the operation of the courts in different ways in different areas. In most cases courts did not function in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak. Sligo Borough Court and Sligo Parish Court resumed operations in mid-August after having been out of action in July and early August. Both Sligo Borough and Parish Courts were held on 14 August 1922 and Joseph Graham who attended at the Borough Court as a magistrate went on to attend the Parish Court as a witness in a case where two men were charged with having assaulted him. At the end of September Sligo Parish

143S.J. & S.C., 7 Apr. 1923.
146S.C., 26 Aug. 1922. Joseph Graham was a prominent unionist. See chapter on
Court heard a Holborn Hill row case where a Free State soldier home on leave was told: "You shouldn't come up here, we are all republicans". His retort: "I was never with a British soldier anyway" led to a fracas which led to the court case. These two courts appears to have functioned side by side as in the pre-War days.

The North Sligo District Court on the other hand appears to have ceased operation with the outbreak of war, almost all its justices being anti-Treaty activists. A letter referring to this court said: "Unfortunately every official attached to the court . . . is in opposition to the established government . . . The former officials are either in jail or on the run." In July 1922 the registrar of the court had been arrested by the Provisional Government forces. D.A. Mulcahy, presiding chairman of the court, wrote a letter to Pilkington and sent a copy to the local newspapers in which he said that courts were very necessary at that time "when evil minded persons are almost bound to take advantage of the situation and the property of others is likely to be regarded as fair spoil by the criminally inclined".

In south Sligo whatever advance in the court organisation had been achieved before the outbreak of war was set aside as many courts ceased to function. This seems to have been the case in particular in those areas where the anti-Treaty forces were stronger. Kilmacteige parish court which had been regularly held before the war "owing to local political disturbance . . . ceased to function". Likewise the Tubbercurry area saw the cessation of the Dáil Courts: "The work in South Sligo but particularly in the sub-district of Tubbercurry has ceased to be carried out". No sitting of the District Court is recorded for the period after the outbreak of war though a court organiser was still operating in south Sligo. A meeting to elect a replacement for Registrar P.J. O'Brien had not been held. Some Parish Courts did continue to function during the war especially those in the Ballymote and Gurteen areas. Sittings of Ballymote Parish Court which had been suspended during the summer of 1922 resumed in mid-August 1922 and Mullaghroe

Protestants.

147 S.I., 30 Sept. 1922.
149 S.C., 15 July 1922.
150 Walsh v Noone, NA, Courts Commission, DE 6/4160. Its final sitting may have been the one mentioned as taking place in early September. (W.P., 9 Sept. 1922.)
151 Quinn to Minister, 7 Sept. 1922, NA, Courts Commission, DE 14/22.
152 Paul Vignoles was now the organiser.
Parish Court was regularly held each month from June until December 1922.\textsuperscript{154} Gurteen Parish Court was held at the end of September 1922, one defamation of character case involved one person calling another "A Black and Tan".\textsuperscript{155} Quarter Sessions continued to be held in Sligo, Superintendent Neary of the Civic Guard attended the January 1923 Sessions and in May 1923 Judge Wakely presided under an Irish tricolour.\textsuperscript{156}

In mid-1922 the Provisional Government moved to regularise the court system. The Supreme Court and the Dublin area Dáil Courts were closed down in early July and the remainder of the Dáil Courts, including Parish Courts were closed down by decree in October.\textsuperscript{157} A new simplified District Court system, presided over by twenty seven District Justices with powers of summary jurisdiction was announced on 31 August 1922.\textsuperscript{158} No court was held in Sligo from October 1922 pending official notification regarding the new courts.\textsuperscript{159} A District Justice appointed for Leitrim and North Roscommon held his first sitting in Boyle in early November\textsuperscript{160} and at the end of December 1922 the Roscommon Herald reported an expectation that courts would be functioning in Sligo at an early date in the new year commenting that "it is now some months since a court of any kind has been held in Sligo".\textsuperscript{161} Finally a notice signed by District Justice Charles A. Flattery appeared in the Sligo Champion of 3 February 1923 announcing the first sitting of District Court No. 3 area at the Courthouse, Sligo on 8 February.\textsuperscript{162} A short report of this court mentioned that five men had been charged and convicted of breaches of the licensing laws.\textsuperscript{163} Ballymote District Court under District Justice Flattery was held on 13 February 1923 in the Hibernian Hall, Ballymote and a small amount of business transacted.\textsuperscript{164} Sligo District Court under Justice Flattery was held during the last week in February and Sligo and Ballymote District Courts continued to be held monthly for the remainder of the Civil War.

\textsuperscript{154} Nerney to Minister, 21 Feb. 1922, NA, Courts Commission, DE 21/15.
\textsuperscript{155} \textit{R.H.}, 30 Sept. 1922.
\textsuperscript{157} Kotsonouris, \textit{Retreat from Revolution}, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{158} Kotsonouris, \textit{Retreat from Revolution}, pp 93-4; Garvin, \textit{1922}, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{S.I.}, 4 \& 11 Nov., 30 Dec. 1922.
\textsuperscript{160} \textit{R.H.}, 11 Nov. 1922.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{R.H.}, 30 Dec. 1922.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{S.C.}, 3 \& 10 Feb. 1923.
\textsuperscript{163} \textit{Irish an Ghráda}, 26 Feb. 1923.
Law and Order.

period. The coming of the new court system signalled the replacement of a chaotic and inefficient system which seems not to have been unduly lamented by the people of County Sligo. It also signalled the effective end of the Civil War and the beginning of the return to normal conditions with the gradually re-establishment of the rule of law.

Conclusion.

There had been no generally accepted or effective police force or court system in operation in County Sligo since early 1920. This situation continued for most of the succeeding period with competing parallel systems adding to the confusion. The Truce and Treaty periods had seen a slow re-organisation of the Dáil Courts without a concomitant development of an effective police force. Lacking such an enforcement agency the courts were powerless to prevent a rise in lawlessness in early 1922. Agrarian unrest, intimidation of Protestants, robbery, petty crime and hooliganism became widespread. With the outbreak of the war things became worse as official and unofficial actions by anti-Treaty forces added to the chaos. Large areas of the county were without any semblance of police force and here lawless element had free rein. This seems to have been particularly the case in those country areas where anti-Treaty forces were not strong. As the Free State forces slowly gained control courts began to function again and the new Civic Guards were introduced. As the Civil War ended the county was still in a state of disturbance and unrest. Less that forty Civic Guards occupied four stations in the county. Arms were easy to come by and numerous anti-Treaty personnel who had been used to living off the land still remained at large. In spite of this by July 1923 the Civic Guards could report that "this county is on the whole in a satisfactory condition and is rapidly recovering from the lawlessness which some ago prevailed. The county is in a peaceful condition as regards ordinary crime." It reported no political crime and only six reported cases of ordinary crime of the usual kind. Sligo county appeared to be well on its way back to normality most citizens having survived the year or so of lawlessness. However there was one group, the non-Catholics, which might have been particularly vulnerable during such a period and the degree to which they suffered is the subject of the next chapter.

10. SLIGO PROTESTANTS AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

During the revolutionary period republican definitions of Irishness were often expressed in narrow terms which excluded non-Catholics. The Connachtman listed those it claimed would not vote republican in the 1922 election as follows: shoneen, Unionist, British subject, recruiting sergeant, Loyalist, Castle hack, place hunter. "Who is there left?" it asked, answering "The Irish People and the Irish People will stand by the Republic." At the Mayoral election in 1922 Councillor Seamus Devins said that "he was glad to see that nationalist and unionist were things of the past and he thought it was a good job too that both of them had been wiped out". In response to a query from headquarters, Sligo IRA reported that three prominent Sligo Protestant loyalists were "all Unionist of the bitter type and men of considerable means." They were also Freemasons, they reported, saying that they would have their correspondence watched and reported on. Sligo town was treated as a special case in a report to IRA Headquarters probably dating from the Truce period:

The town of Sligo presents a special problem . . . If the enemy were once demoralised in and around Sligo he would suffer a really severe blow as far as Connacht was concerned . . . The Belfast Boycott should be vigorously enforced because Sligo is an important trading centre. Telegraph and telephone wires should be cut regularly. As regards the outlying Unionists who are fairly numerous they should be subject to comprehensive requisitions of every kind - food, implements, clothing, billets if thought suitable, fuel, bedding, animals and vehicles. It must be brought home to them unmistakably that the English are helpless to protect them . . . In all respects Sligo can be treated as mainly a hostile town and an enemy area of influence.

This group, variously called non-Catholic, Protestant, Unionist or Loyalist, which made up 8.8% of Sligo's population in 1911 might have been expected to suffer more than a little during the period of national unrest and lawlessness. As one commentator said, "The Anglo-Irish, by reason of their past, their politics, their religion, and their larger stake in the country, had most to fear from the growth of lawlessness, and they suffered their fair

1 CM., 25 Mar. 1922.
2 S.I., 4 Feb. 1922.
3 HQRS I/O to Sligo Brigade I/O, 15 Oct. 1921, & reply 24 Oct. 1921, Sligo Brigade IRA material, MA, Collins Papers, A/747. D. Perceval, landowner, Thomas Brian, auctioneer and land agent and Arthur Jackson, later a Senator, were the three in question.
4 Report on Sligo area, undated, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/32.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

share of outrage." This chapter will investigate the extent to which Sligo non-Catholics suffered during the period of the Truce and Civil War.

The Protestants of County Sligo.

Of the five Connacht counties Sligo had the highest percentage of non-Catholics, 8.8%, in 1911. This non-Catholic population was not evenly distributed, the highest percentages being found in the areas in the north and centre of the county, from Calry and Drumcliff in the north to Collooney and Ballymote in the centre, as far east as Riverstown and as far west as Skreen and Dromard. The areas on the periphery of the county especially in the south west had few non-Catholics. Of the main Protestant denominations the smallest in 1911 were the Methodists, 0.6% of the total population, who were concentrated in the Sligo town area and Drumcliff parish north of Sligo with a concentration in the Riverstown, Ballymote and Collooney area. Methodists were almost completely absent from the western half of the county. Presbyterians who were more numerous at 0.9% were more dispersed, though the majority again was in the Sligo town and its environs. Protestant Episcopalians were the most numerous, 7%, and most dispersed of the non-Catholics communities with members in every parish of the county.

Although they amounted to less than 10% of the population the Protestants of Sligo were making a significant contribution to the life of the county. Mary O'Dowd mentioned "the rather claustrophobic and inward-looking atmosphere of the Protestant merchant families in the town [Sligo]. Looked down on, socially, by local Protestant landed families, such as the Gore-Booths in Lissadell or the Coopers in Markree, the Sligo merchant families felt increasingly under threat from the Catholics of the town". There is little hint

6 Summary showing by provinces and counties the Religious Professions of the people, General Report, Census of Ireland, 1911, pp 6-7. Leitrim was closest with 8.5% non-Catholics. The other Connacht counties had non-Catholic populations of between 2.1 and 2.4%.
7 Religious Professions, Table XXIX, County of Sligo, Census of Ireland 1911, p. 69.
8 Of the 281 "All other denominations" recorded in the 1911 census for Sligo all but forty six were Protestant. The terms non-Catholic and Protestant are therefore almost interchangeable in this regard.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

Map 10.1: Percentage of non-Catholic population of County Sligo by parish. (1911 Census).

of this from the newspapers of the time; rather the feeling is of the strength of the Sligo business families having being augmented by the arrival of fresh blood from the north of Ireland during the previous decades and by renewed interest in and impact on the political life of the town through the Ratepayers Association and the use of proportional representation in elections. There is also a sense of a community with close contacts, business and social, through a variety of clubs and societies. The following description of a typical Sligo loyalist gives an idea of the profile of such in this period:

Prior to the Truce applicant was a leading figure in the commercial, official and social life of Sligo . . . J.P., Grand Juror, Member of Sligo Harbour Commissioners, Member Sligo Chamber of Commerce, hon sec of the Select Vestry of St. John’s Church, Sligo, Vice-President Sligo Tennis Club, member of Sligo Constitutional Club, the members of which were all loyalists, and acted as agent for conservative party at local elections, owner of considerable house property in Sligo . . . Ancestors always staunch supporters of the crown. He himself was brought up in a strong atmosphere of loyalty where the supremacy of the Empire was ever in the forefront of his education.10

The Protestant community in Sligo produced powerful figures in the commercial and political life of the county and beyond. One of the more prominent of these was Arthur Jackson, a native of Belfast who married into the Pollexfen family and was brought to

10 George R. Williams, Irish Grants Committee (IGC), PRO, CO 762/195.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

Sligo to rescue the ailing businesses of that family. He managed the Sligo Steam Navigation company and joined Sligo Harbour Commissioners of which he served as chairman for fourteen years. He was elected a Ratepayers Association member of Sligo Corporation in 1919 and was nominated by the President to the Senate of the Irish Free State in 1922. Another leading businessman was Harper Campbell Perry who came to Sligo in the 1880s to join his grandfather's company, the large provision and curing business of Harper Campbell of which he later became chairman. He too was elected to Sligo Corporation in 1919. He was also a director of the Sligo Steam Navigation Company and a Harbour Commissioner. Both were prominent Freemasons, Jackson becoming Deputy Provincial Grand Master and Perry Provincial Grand Secretary. 11 A measure of the confidence of the Sligo Protestant business community was the fact that in spite of the troubles they were to the fore in the setting up of the Sligo Chamber of Commerce in early 1923, the idea having been originally floated at a meeting of the Harbour Commissioners in late 1922 - hardly a time when one would expect Protestant businessmen in the Free State to be sanguine about the future. Its first president was Harper Campbell Perry, one of the seven Freemasons on the original committee of eleven, only two being Catholic. 12

Politically the Protestant businessmen had also been to the fore. Many of the business concerns in Sligo had been complaining for years of mismanagement in the affairs of Sligo Corporation, claiming that one of the reasons for this was their lack of representation on that body. They formed a Ratepayers Association; a government enquiry agreeing with their assessment, proposed that the Proportional Representation system of voting be introduced at Sligo Corporation elections to ensure a more equitable representation. This was accepted and this system was used for the first time in Britain or Ireland at the Sligo Corporation election of January 1919. The Ratepayers Association secured 37% of the vote and eight seats.13 Sinn Féin got seven seats and Labour got five. The Ratepayers Association members became the effective and vocal opposition over the next four years

11 Steven Reid, *Get to the Point at County Sligo Golf Club* (Naas, 1991), pp 82-5.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

voting against the non-recognition of the British Local Government Board by the Corporation. At a meeting in December 1920 in the absence of many Sinn Féin-Labour councillors they passed a motion that the Corporation should contest malicious injury claims and answer a letter from the British Board which was tantamount to recognising it. This was rescinded at the next meeting when there was a large muster of Sinn Féin and Labour members. The Ratepayers councillors inflicted a severe blow to the morale of the Sinn Féin/Labour group on the Corporation when in January 1921 they assisted in the defeat of the republican nominee and the election of an independent as Mayor of Sligo. This appears to be the end of the activities of this group and there are no references to the Ratepayers Association as an active political group during the years 1922-23.

In the county non-Catholic farmers in general had bigger farms than their Catholic counterparts. According to the 1926 Census 37.5% of Protestant farmers and 6.5% of Catholic farmers had farms of 50 acres or more, 49% of Protestant farmers and 54% of Catholic farmers had farms of between 15 and 50 acres and 12% of Protestant farmers and 39% of Catholic farmers had farms of less than 15 acres. There were only 91 non-Catholic owned farms in the whole county of less than 15 acres, an average of just over one per district electoral division.

Graph 10.1: Farm Size of Catholic and non-Catholic farmers in County Sligo in 1926.

15 Farry, Sligo 1914-1921, p. 278. John Jinks became the independent Mayor of Sligo.
16 Table 21, Saorstát Éireann, Census of Population 1926.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

The Protestants of County Sligo were almost entirely Loyalist and made no effort to hide this even in the troubled times of 1921-1923. During October 1921 memorials to the dead of the Great War were dedicated in Calry Church and in Sligo Grammar School. A Memorial service was held in Calry church on Armistice Day 1921, attended by the band of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire regiment. There was no reticence in commemorating the departure of the British military from Sligo which was marked by Protestant church services and functions under the auspices of the two Sligo Protestant parishes. "A big loss to Sligo" was the heading of a short editorial in the Sligo Independent in which it stated that the military's departure was a loss to Sligo from the social, musical and business point of view. The same paper's editorial comments during these times reinforce the impression of a people who if fearful for their future were still proud, sure of their stance and self-confident. However this loyalty was not translated in action during the War of Independence and only three Protestant claimants to the Irish Grants Committee claimed to have helped the RIC by passing on information. John Russell, District Inspector, who had also been the County Sligo RIC Intelligence Officer provided references for two and was cited as a referee by the other. The loyalty of the other Protestants claimants did not apparently extend to rendering any special assistance to the crown forces in their struggle against the IRA, though in the context of the Grants Committee it would have been in their interest to so claim. This was the common experience elsewhere in the country.

Few non-Catholic Sinn Féiners were active in County Sligo during the period. Countess Markievicz, formerly Constance Gore-Booth of Lissadell, was the best known but her activities in County Sligo were confined to receiving the Freedom of Sligo in 1917 and some appearances at public meetings during the War of Independence. The political development of R.G. Bradshaw from anti-Sinn Féin letter writer in 1916 to anti-Treaty

17 S.I., 8 Oct. 1921.
18 S.I., 12 Nov. 1921.
20 S.I., 28 Jan. 1922.
21 See editorials such as "Opening of a new era in Ireland", S.I., 21 Jan. 1922 and "We must have True Liberty", S.I., 4 Feb. 1922.
22 George R. Williams, IGC, CO 762/195; J. Walpole-Boyers, IGC, CO 762/202; Joseph Graham, IGC, CO 762/205.
23 See Peter Hart "The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland" in Richard English & Graham Walker (ed), Unionism in Modern Ireland (Belfast, 1996), pp 84-87.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

publicist in 1922 has already been dealt with. Another non-Catholic republican was Robert Basil Anderson of Calry who on returning home from the continent at the outbreak of war joined the Volunteers instead of the British army as had been his original intention. He became a prominent speaker at Volunteer and Sinn Féin meetings in the county and was arrested in early 1919. He took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War and was imprisoned in Sligo jail.24 The only other non-Catholic mentioned as having played any part was Presbyterian Jim Heuston of Ballymote. He was originally from Belfast and took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War.25 None of these four republican non-Catholics could be regarded as typical of Sligo Protestants and it is interesting that all took the anti-Treaty side. Tom Garvin in his analysis of the vote on the Treaty mentions that "Protestants and the foreign-born were more inclined to fundamentalism", suggesting that those marginal to an ethnic group who join it take collective values more seriously.26

Protestant Social Organisations.

The Protestants of Sligo had a vibrant network of social outlets where they could meet like-minded people and which reinforced their sense of community. The County Club was described in 1907 as "the rendezvous of the aristocracy of the county".27 Its committee however at that time contained none of the members of the old landed families of Sligo but did include relative newcomers to Sligo like Jackson and Campbell Perry. The Constitutional Club formed some years after the County Club was described as "the headquarters of conservatism in Sligo". Its committee in 1907 showed a leaning towards the large businessmen of the town, men such as Lyons, Nelson and Pollexfen.28 By the time of the Civil War it appears that the Constitutional Club was more politically active and it called the meeting of Sligo Protestants in 1922 to express their abhorrence at the attacks on Catholics in Northern Ireland. There was considerable overlap in membership of the various clubs. In 1907 nine of the twelve Constitutional Club committee members were Masons.29 Of 125 persons who applied for membership between 1907 and 1917, forty nine

25 See article by Catherine Finn in The Corran Herald, no. 16, (Ballymote, 1988).
27 Kilgannon, Almanac and Directory of County Sligo 1907, Sligo Co. Library.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
were members of a Masonic Lodge in Sligo. Of the fifty nine who proposed or seconded these applicants thirty two were Masons.  

In July 1921 Sligo Brigade IRA listed "Enemy Social Institutions" as follows: "County Club, Sligo - Aristocratic enemy club; Constitutional Club - Businessmen, shopkeepers etc.; Town and County Club - Dangerous mixed club frequented by sub sheriff, DI, so called republicans and enemy agents. Rosses Point Golf Club." Other clubs in Sligo town frequented and run by loyalists were Sligo United YMCA, Sligo Boating and Rowing Club, County Sligo Cricket Club and the County Sligo Hockey Club. The County Sligo lawn tennis tournament held in July 1921 was described as "almost a typical pre-war local Society gathering" with the list of those attending included many names from the former landed families, O'Haras, Percevals and Wynnes together with businessmen such as Jackson and Campbell Perry.

There were two Freemason lodges in operation in Sligo town at this time, Lodge 20, The Light of the West Lodge, which had been in existence since the early part of the previous century and Lodge 165, which had been founded in 1895 and had grown in popularity so that by the middle of the twentieth century it had become the largest lodge in the province of Connacht. Lodge 20 appears to have attracted the upper echelons of Sligo Protestants. The seventeen merchants who were members included Pollexfens, Jackson, Campbell, Nelson and Lyons. Only seven merchants were members of Lodge 165. On the other hand twenty clerks were members of Lodge 20 but only three members of 165. All shop assistants who joined the Freemasons joined Lodge 165. Notable by their absence from the Lodges' membership lists were members of Sligo's older landlord families. There were no Coopers, O'Haras or Croftons among the members. H.R. Wood-Martin was a member of Lodge 20 but he was prominent in Sligo business circles as well as being a member of a landed family.

Freemasons did not dominate public positions in the town and county. Of nineteen Borough of Sligo magistrates in 1907 only five were Freemasons and in 1916 none of the

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30 Sligo Constitutional Club, Register of Candidates, 1907-1917, Sligo Co. Library.
31 Report from Sligo Brigade July 1921, AD UCD, Mulcahy Papers, P7/a/15. The Town and County Club had been founded in 1891 as the Catholic and Nationalist equivalent of the Constitutional Club.
32 S.I., 6 Aug. 1921.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

sixteen Deputy Lieutenants in the County were Masons. Only ten of the 107 magistrates in the County were Masons.\textsuperscript{34} No member of the RIC joined the Masons in Sligo between 1902 and 1920. Only eleven clergymen are recorded as members for the period surveyed.\textsuperscript{35}

An analysis of the numbers of new entrants to the lodges each year from 1910 to 1923 shows a steady decline in new enrolments from 1910 until 1916 when there was a levelling off. The war years, 1914 to 1918 were the years with the lowest new membership. The three troubled years from 1919 to 1921 saw very large enrolments while 1922 and 1923 saw a return to more normal levels. This growth in membership during the years after the 1918 election may be explained by a gathering together of a group which felt threatened by the rising tide of Sinn Féin and sought safety in the comradeship and the companionship of fellow loyalists.

Graph 10.2: New members of Masonic Lodges in Sligo each year 1910-1923.

There is little information on the operation and numbers of Orange lodges in County Sligo during this time and no references to Orange lodges or Orange functions in the county appear in the local newspapers of the period. In 1901 six Orange warrants had been cancelled in the county, indicating the closure of that number of lodges. The official

\textsuperscript{34} These figures are based on an analysis of membership registers of Lodge 165 from 1895 to 1923 and of Lodge 20 from 1872 to 1923, Freemasonry Archives, Dublin. The occupations of 159 members of Lodge 165 and 130 of Lodge 20 are known.

\textsuperscript{35} The parish of Calry seems to have had a closer relationship with the Freemasons that the other Sligo Church of Ireland parish, St. John’s. In 1907 the incumbent, both Churchwardens and the organist were all members of Lodge 20.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

reports of the Grand Lodge suggest that at least three Orange lodges were operating in 1921, in Sligo town, Ballymote and Riverstown. There was also one chapter of the Royal Arch Purple connected with the Orange lodge at Riverstown in 1911. After 1921 there are no further references to County Sligo in the reports of the Grand Lodge and the last meeting involving the county in the proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland was held on 14 December 1921. It appears that the importance of the Orange Order had declined considerably in the county during the early years of the century. Robert Beattie of Keash, told the Irish Grants Committee that he was "still an Orangeman of the old school" and Rev. Algernon Harris of Ballymote wrote that the Murrays, coachbuilders, of that town "were out and out Orangemen and were hated for being so." However it may be that "Orangeman" was being used here as a synonym for "Protestant loyalist" and may not necessarily indicate membership of an Orange lodge.


While their public tone was self confident and proud it is clear that by the time of the Civil War loyalists in Sligo as elsewhere in the south had been subject to a succession of disappointments. They felt they had been let down by the British government, by their co-religionists in the north, by the British administration in Ireland and even by the Dáil government. In early 1916 there were signs of dissatisfaction with the reaction of the British government to the growth of Sinn Féin. Sligo Unionist landowner Sir Malby Crofton wrote "I suppose there is no use in trying to wake up the authorities to the state of things in parts of the country . . . I do not know how the government can go on urging us to use every means to get recruits, while they do nothing to put down a movement which is

36 Nos 464, 795 and 1733 respectively.
37 Information on Orange Lodges in Co. Sligo supplied by Cecil Kilpatrick, Archivist, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast.
40 Joseph Murray, IGC, CO 762/173.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

directed against recruiting".41 J.M. Wilson's interviews with Sligo Unionists in 1916 revealed their poor opinion of government policy and of Chief Secretary Birrell: "He does not represent loyalists of Ireland".42 Wilson's general comment on Sligo loyalists was that "People seem to drift from day to day not knowing either what to expect, or what to hope for".43 With the growth of Sinn Féin the worst fears of the loyalists seemed to be realised. Charles O'Hara wrote in 1918 that "Home Rule in any form would be absolutely unthinkable under the existing state of affairs, it would mean handing over this country to Sinn Féiners."44 In 1920 he wrote to District Inspector Russell asking him to withdraw a poteen prosecution which was to come up at the local Petty Sessions in case the courthouse, his property, would be burned: "I know it is useless to look to the Government to protect it, even if it were given, the place would suffer as the Barracks and Market House did as soon as the police were withdrawn".45 After the truce he frequently wrote to local IRA leaders recognising their de facto positions of authority.46 In the absence of an effective response by the government the attempts by Sinn Féin to impose order through courts and policing was a straw to grasp at:

Slowly realisation is coming, and side by side with the realisation that the government is either unable or unwilling to protect them is coming the yet more startling discovery that on the whole Sinn Féin is trying to prevent anarchy and maintain order . . . This had made a considerable impression on the Unionist mind . . . There is a growing tendency among those whose main desire is a quiet life to say, The government can't protect us or govern the country. Sinn Féin is doing the latter and seems disposed to do the former. Won't it suit my book to make friends with Sinn Féin?47

When the Treaty was signed Sligo unionists, recognising the inevitability of some form of self-government and weary of the disruption caused by the War of Independence, were strongly on the side of ratification. Sir Malby Crofton said that he supported the Treaty because it promised peace: "They, as farmers, depended entirely on peace and law

41 Sir Malby Crofton to Beresford, Hon Sec IUL, 11 Mar. 1916, PRONI, D989A/8/6.
43 Ibid, 28 June 1917, PRONI, D989A/9/7.
44 O'Hara to Lord Midleton, 8 July 1918, Letter Book of C.K. O'Hara, NLI, Ms 16826.
and order and they hadn't those things for a long time past." At the December 1921 corporation meeting Ratepayers councillors supported ratification of the Treaty: "It was a decision either for peace or war and they had suffered enough from war," said Wood-Martin. Perry said "While a lifelong unionist I am convinced that the march of time brings certain changes. We are, I believe, on the threshold of a happy destiny for this country. I welcome this opportunity, while not approving of the necessity which led up to it, of joining with the majority for the ratification which I hope will bring lasting peace. Let us all work together to make this country what it can be - one of the best in the world." 

With the ratification of the Treaty and the immediate departure of the British military loyalist nervousness grew. The Sligo Independent decided to start printing leading articles from 21 January 1922 saying that with the establishment of the Free State "there will be an entire new order of things" and "its readers may have no opportunity of voicing their opinions through any other source except the medium of this newspaper". The foreboding here expressed is that the new state would not be generous to members of the minority churches and minority political outlook. The publicity given to the sectarian outrages in Northern Ireland by local newspapers was calculated to add to the feeling of unease on the part of loyalists and a meeting of Sligo Protestants of all denomination at the end of March passed a resolution condemning the northern violence. The chairman, Arthur Jackson, spoke at length mentioning the fact that they represented a small minority among a people who differed from them in religion and politics:

it was agreed that during perhaps the greatest political upheaval that had ever occurred in Ireland no Protestant member of the community had been injured and certainly no-one had lost his life. He did not know if that could be said of any other town of over 10,000 inhabitants in the south and west. (hear, hear and applause) It was not often they got a public opportunity of expressing what he felt sure they all felt that they could not be living in a community which had shown itself to be more liberal to the many and various opinions which they held.

Dr. MacDowell said that he had been a surgeon in Sligo for over forty-five years and though he had strong opinions of the Unionist type he had received extraordinary kindness.

49 S.C., 31 Dec. 1921.
50 CM., 31 Dec. 1921.
51 S.I., 21 Jan. 1922.
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and sympathy from his fellow countrymen of all classes and creeds in Sligo.\textsuperscript{52} These fulsome expressions of fellow feeling with Catholics betray a nervous desire for acceptance. No Protestant had indeed been murdered in Sligo town but not far north of the town a Protestant process server had been killed by the IRA. His death was not mentioned now when it was more politic to forget it.\textsuperscript{53} While the reaction of the non-Catholic communities was to support the Treaty they did not take any part in public pro-Treaty meetings nor did they take any part in the election campaign of 1922. This aloofness from politics was to be a hallmark of ex-unionists in the Free State.

There were other events which increased the foreboding of the Protestants. In February 1922 a number of prominent Protestants in the north-west were kidnapped and held as hostages until death sentences on three Derry republican prisoners had been commuted. The \textit{Sligo Independent} denounced this "outrage" in a strongly worded editorial:

It is the grossest insult ever committed perhaps against the rights and liberties of the subject and common citizenship, and a very bad omen for the future of Ireland for such things can only add to the flames of bitterness and turmoil in the country to the detriment of everybody no matter to what creed or class or political party they may belong . . . This is certainly a poor response to the willingness with which the minority in the South and West of Ireland agree to work with their fellow-countrymen in the interests of peace and progress and prosperity for the whole of Ireland . . . and at the very first opportunity of the slightest pretext the very men who shouted most about freedom from England denied the simplest exercise of freedom to their own citizens.\textsuperscript{54}

Tom Scanlon said that Freemasons were especially targetted, "We had heard of all the Masons in Sligo town and county for we had raided them in the Tan war and we had all their names . . . We arrested 50-60 and we brought them into different barracks in our area."\textsuperscript{55} Those arrested in County Sligo included representatives from many of the major business houses of Sligo but only one representative of the landed gentry.\textsuperscript{56} A rumour in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{52} \textit{S.C.}, 1 Apr. 1922.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Seventy two year old Thomas Walker had been killed 14 Apr. 1921 by four members of the local IRA acting on orders. (Farry, \textit{Sligo 1914-1921}, pp 288-9).
\item \textsuperscript{54} \textit{S.I.}, 11 Feb. 1922.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133.
\item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{S.I., S.C. & R.H.}, 11 Feb. 1922; Tom Scanlon, AD UCD, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/133. Those arrested included Robert Dodd of Lyons & Co., Alderman Percy Campbell Kerr, manager of the Laird Line Shipping Co., Chris Bellew, of Bellew Bros., Tom Brien, Frazier's & Brown auctioneers, George Lewis, of Thornhill, who was reported as holding an important position in Pollexfen's, Josslyn Gore Booth and Major Eccles.
\end{itemize}
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

circulation to the effect that Freemasons had passed a resolution or signed a memorial petitioning for the execution of the Derry prisoners was denied by both the Sligo Independent and the Connachtman.\(^{57}\)

With the departure of the RIC in April 1922 and the realisation that no new efficient force was to replace them for some time the pressure on the Protestants of County Sligo, especially those who lived in the countryside, was increased. Neighbouring counties were badly affected. A letter from Ballina to Arthur Griffith in May 1922 asked for immediate steps to prevent the expulsion of "prominent Protestant merchants and businessmen", saying that notices to that effect were being printed in the town by the IRA.\(^{58}\) Protestant refugees from North Leitrim were reported arriving in Enniskillen on 19 June 1922.\(^{59}\) In County Sligo there were numerous incidents of intimidation and petty crime directed against Protestants including the commandeering and burning of vehicles.\(^{60}\) In May 1922 Gurteen Sinn Féin Cumann condemned raids on private houses of "well to do Protestants" for "mere loot".\(^{61}\) The Roscommon Herald reported in June 1922 that several Protestants in the Riverstown area had been warned to clear out but it considered the threat as "something in the nature of a stupid joke", suggesting that it had no effect since "notices and warnings are of such common occurrences nowadays".\(^{62}\) Some Protestant jurors were kidnapped to prevent their attendance at Sligo Assizes in July 1922.\(^{63}\)

Having compromised by expressing their acceptance of the Treaty the Protestants now found that it did not result in the much desired peace. A Sligo Independent editorial in July 1922 lamented that "Civilisation is practically gone. Life is not worth living, and all are asking when will it all end, and praying for Peace, Perfect Peace, so that Ireland might be glorious and free".\(^{64}\) In spite of public pronouncements of support for the Treaty many loyalists must have been bitterly disappointed at the settlement and the outbreak of the Civil War only served to confirm this opinion. H.R. Wood-Martin confided to a

\(^{57}\) *S.I. & CM.*, 25 Feb. 1922.

\(^{58}\) Expulsion of Protestants in Mayo, NA, Department of the Taoiseach, S565.

\(^{59}\) Army Truce 1922, Breaches, NA, Department of the Taoiseach, S572.

\(^{60}\) For Riverstown area see *R.H.*, 3 June 1922; For Ballisodare and Beltra areas see *S.I.*, 22 Apr. 1922 & 17 June 1922. Other incidents are reported in *S.I.*, 6 & 20 May 1922 & *R.H.*, 29 Apr. & 3 June 1922.

\(^{61}\) *R.H.*, 6 & 27 May 1922.

\(^{62}\) *R.H.*, 17 June 1922.

\(^{63}\) *S.I. & S.C.*, 16 July 1921.

\(^{64}\) *S.I.*, 22 July 1922.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

correspondent: "I only wish that some of the late politicians who handed over this country were in this town last Wednesday night. A band of irregulars came in, burned the station to the ground and sent six engines down the line... The rest of the night was made hideous by gunfire." It was difficult enough to accept self-government but now they found that it had not prevented further violence and disorder and that in many areas they were at the mercy of the anti-Treaty extremists.

Protestants as Victims.

How badly were the Protestants of County Sligo treated during the period 1921-23? Peter Hart has shown how in particular between the Treaty and the outbreak of the Civil War non-Catholics in County Cork were subject to murder and persecution. During the revolution the IRA shot at least 202 civilians in Cork the vast majority of whom were alleged to be spies or informers. Of these, 36% were Protestant. This contrasts with Sligo where the IRA shot one civilian "spy", a Protestant, during the War of Independence and two, both Catholics, during the Civil War. Few incidents of Protestant victimisation were reported from Sligo during the War of Independence. Peter Hart's statement that "At least two [Protestant churches] in Sligo were burned before the truce" lacks evidence. The two reports he cites refer to the same incident, an unsuccessful attempt to burn Tubbercurry Protestant Church and school. Three men were apprehended for this crime by Volunteers, convicted at a Sinn Féin court and were ordered to pay fines to the local Protestant clergyman.

A "campaign of loyalist extermination" was mentioned at least three times in claims put forward by Sligo non-Catholics to the Irish Grants Committee, but there is little evidence that a campaign to drive out Protestants was waged in the county during the Truce and Civil War period. Of a total number of sixty-nine Sligo persons who claimed

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69 Jessie Hunter, IGC, PRO, CO 762/51; Richard T. Kerr-Taylor, IGC, CO 762/48; H.R. Wood-Martin, IGC, CO 762/78. The Irish Grants Committee was set up by the British Government to hear claims from loyalists for losses and injuries sustained between the
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

compensation from the Irish Grants Committee at least thirty-six were Protestant.\textsuperscript{70} Of these six were refused awards.\textsuperscript{71} To a large extent the distribution of the thirty successful claimants mirrors closely the distribution of the non-Catholic population in the county with concentrations to the north of the town of Sligo and south through Collooney, Riverstown, Ballymote and Bunninadden. Applicants came from areas where the non-Catholic population was significant not from areas where there were few isolated non-Catholics. Apart from the town of Tubbercurry the whole western half of the county where Protestants were thinly scattered was free of applicants. The Barony of Tireragh which contained a large non-Catholic population and had been under the control of the anti-Treaty forces until May 1923 had no applicant. The Bunninadden area, already mentioned as having been particularly disturbed, had a group of four claimants of which three obtained grants. There was also a concentration of claimants in the Riverstown area though only three of the six claimants here obtained awards.

Consideration of the occupations of the claimants shows that the majority, fourteen, were farmers or landowners, eleven were shopkeepers, traders or in one case a hotelier and three others described themselves as farmers and shopkeepers. Many of these claims were for goods looted and for boycotting. When goods were to be commandeered it made sense for the IRA to take those goods from one who was perceived as "the enemy", and so a Protestant shopkeeper was often targeted rather than a Catholic one. Of the Protestant claimants from County Sligo there were nine which I have classified as very serious cases i.e. they involved serious and prolonged loss of earnings and physical hardship and/or serious destruction of property. Five of these were farmers or landowners where the damage and agitation was of an agrarian nature and three were cases of shopkeepers being boycotted and/or being raided and looted more than once.\textsuperscript{72} One was both a farmer and a

\textsuperscript{70} The religion of the claimant is sometimes given in the IGC files. The religion of others was found by searching the 1911 Census records for Sligo in NA, Dublin. Thirteen were Catholics and the religion of the other twenty I have been unable to ascertain.

\textsuperscript{71} Four of these were refused because the trouble had occurred in the pre-Truce period, one was outside the scope of the committee and one was an ex-RIC member who it was considered had already been adequately compensated.

\textsuperscript{72} Farmers were: Jessie Hunter, IGC, CO 762/51; Richard G. Bell, IGC, CO 762/205; John Lougheed, IGC, CO 762/137; Palmer J. McCloughrey, IGC, CO 762/63 and Charles
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

shopkeeper and suffered on both accounts. Their distribution reflect the general distribution of the claimants, two came from Sligo town, two from Kilturra, two from Riverstown and the other two from elsewhere in south Sligo.

Of the thirty-six Protestant claimants from County Sligo ten included a claim for loss as a result of agrarian trouble. This usually took the form of the forcible taking over of lands for grazing by locals often under the banner of the local Sinn Féin club. Some agrarian disturbances had been reported in County Sligo in early 1921 but it was not until early 1922 that more widespread and serious cases occurred. On the one hand the absence of an efficient police force meant that these acts could be engaged in with little danger of the perpetrators being brought to justice. On the other hand there appears to have been a widespread belief that the new Irish government would make it a priority to distribute the ranches among the smaller farmers. Keash Sinn Féin Club echoed this feeling when it passed a resolution that "all ranch lands in the parish should be left for the accommodation of the small landholders for grazing until the new government takes it over to divide it among them". In all of these agrarian cases there had been a history of trouble in the years previous to the Civil War. The following statement made on behalf of Richard Bell to the Irish Grants Committee describes the situation well:

In 1920 the Sinn Féin organisation demanded these lands from the applicant. He was able to hold out until the Imperial forces were withdrawn in 1922. Bereft of all protection he was then completely at the mercy of the lawless element and his attitude as a British supporter coupled with his steadfast refusal to recognise or submit to the revolutionary faction was not long without a sequel... He had no-one to appeal to for protection and living in the midst of a rebel community who hated and would not hesitate to shoot any loyalist who showed courage enough to oppose them he had to yield to outrage threats and intimidation.

Bell, who lived near Ballymote, was a loyalist whose lands had been confiscated and ploughed during the Sinn Féin conacre campaign of 1918. In December 1922 he had been physically attacked, dragged out of his house and assaulted, his hay burned and his cattle driven. His attempt to sell the farm at public auction in 1922 failed because of boycott and

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Phibbs, IGC, CO 762/70. Shopkeepers were: George Williams, IGC, CO 762/195; Joseph Graham, IGC, CO 762/205; Richard Kerr-Taylor, IGC, CO 762/48.

73 Charles Graham, IGC, CO 762/90.
74 R.H., 18 Feb. 1922.
75 Richard G. Bell, IGC, CO 762/205.
he eventually had to dispose of his lands on the terms set by the IRA.

Palmer J. McCloughrey, a farmer, veterinary surgeon and a self-styled "strong supporter of British rule in Ireland", claimed that he had been consistently victimised and eventually driven from his farm of 133 acres in the Riverstown area. This agitation dated at least from 1920. When in 1921 his tenants conspired not to pay the rents he obtained civil bills for non-payment of rents, but in April 1922 he was dragged from his house, beaten and kicked and had to promise at gunpoint not to execute the decrees. From that time until April 1923 he slept either outside or in the house of a neighbouring loyalist and he left the area in April 1923 going to live in Sligo town.76 John Lougheed farmed about 350 acres in the Riverstown area. He had been the subject of agrarian trouble since at least 1920. Some of his lands had been forcibly entered and grazed, hay and outoffices burned and meadows cut.77 This action got worse after July 1921 and the lands were especially subject to overstocking and overgrazing. Lougheed's enquiries about a British soldier who had been shot as a spy in the vicinity in 1920 also raised suspicions among the local IRA. A group of armed men visited his house and not finding Lougheed told his wife that he would be shot because "he was an Orangeman and a spy". For a long time afterwards he did not dare sleep at home.78

There had been almost continuous agitation against Charles Phibbs of Doobeg, Bunninadden since the family acquired a large farm there in 1877. In the early months of 1922 this agitation reached a new level when hay and a barn were destroyed by fire. There was some speculation in the local newspapers as to the cause of the fire; the Western People was convinced that it was accidental, insisting against all the evidence that "Mr. Phibbs is exceedingly popular in the district".79 The agitation continued, gates and fences were stolen or damaged, cattle driven, shots fired, and his workers had received threatening notices signed "The Irish Tenants Organisation" and "The Red Hand Murder Gang".80 By May 1922 his house had been vandalised, his farm was derelict and stock belonging to neighbours grazed the lands.81 Eventually Phibbs sold his land at Bunninadden and settled

76 Palmer J. McCloughrey, IGC, CO 762/63.
77 Farry, Sligo 1914-1921, pp 223-4.
78 John Lougheed, IGC, CO 762/137; Illegal seizure of lands of John Lougheed, Rockbrook, Riverstown, NA, Department of Justice, H5/1091.
79 W.P., 14 Jan. 1922.
80 R.H., 13 & 20 May 1922
81 One of the threatening notices was in the form of a verse: "Here lies the remains of
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

on his other property in Wales.82

Miss Jessie Hunter, a Protestant of Ardagh House, Riverstown owned a farm of 175 acres. There had been a history of agrarian unrest on the farm since the conacre campaign of 1918 and it was taken over by local smallholders in May 1921. She eventually sold the farm which she claimed was worth around £2,000 to the occupiers in March 1923 for just over £1,000 because a free sale was impossible. This holding was only part of Hunter's total holdings of 300 acres in the area and she retained possession of the rest continuing to live and farm in the area after the Civil War.83

Charles Graham, Knockalassa, was a Protestant farmer and shopkeeper, owner of over 200 acres. He had been the victim of continual persecution from 1920 and his business was boycotted from October 1921. His shop was looted by masked and armed men on at least four occasions in 1922 and twice in early 1923. He closed down his shop in December 1922. In October 1921 he was arrested by the IRA and taken to a camp where he was "courtmartialed" and charged with refusing to resign his commission of the peace, of having spoken against Home Rule ten years previously and of having brought civil proceedings in a British court for debts due. He was held in the camp for three days and was only released when a fine of £200 was paid. He remained in the area and reopened his shop after the Civil War.84 The remaining cases of agrarian trouble were less serious consisting of cattle driving and taking over of parts of farms usually some distance from the residence of the owner and without personal attack or serious destruction of property.85

In spite of all this agitation only one loyalist was shot dead during the period. Edwin Williams, aged 23, son of Essex Williams of Skreen was shot dead on the night of 15 April

Charles Phibbs, Who died with a ball of lead in his ribs. His tenants are all grieved of him as quick as he went, For he went of a sudden without lifting the rent". Charles Phibbs, IGC, CO 762/70.

82 Protection of lands at Bunninadden, NA, Dept Defence, A3642; Damage to property of C. Phibbs, Doobeg, Bunninadden, NA, Dept. Justice, H5/215; Charles Phibbs, IGC, CO 762/70.

83 Jessica Hunter, IGC, CO 762/51; Valuation Book no. 26, Riverstown DED, Valuation Office, Dublin. The Valuation Book records the transfer of ownership of Hunter's Ardvarney farm (179 acres) in 1925.

84 Charles Graham, IGC, CO 762/90. During his imprisonment one of his captors produced a newspaper cutting from 1912 which contained a speech of his in support of the Union.

85 See the case of Basil Phibbs, (Damage to lands at Ardcumber, Riverstown, Co. Sligo, NA, Dept. Justice, H5/214).
1923 as a result, it was believed, of a long-running agrarian dispute. In December 1920 and March 1921 there had been incidents involving Williams' land including the burning of a farmhouse, stable and contents. Four others reported having been shot at but these all appear to have been cases of intimidation rather than serious attempts on their lives.

This was not an exclusively anti-Protestant agrarian campaign. A Catholic neighbour of Charles Phibbs, J. Ormsby Cooke, Kilturra, Bunninadden, suffered similarly. He tried to let his land for grazing at auction in May 1922 but was seized by armed men and held blindfolded for more than twelve hours, during which time he was thrown into an open grave, threatened with shooting, and robbed of money and personal belongings. Cooke appears to have been an atypical Catholic who was chosen for attention partly because he was a large landowner but also because he was seen as aping the Protestant gentry:

He was a small fussy little man . . . He had a leaning for the aristocracy who shunned him; and he would not fraternize with the tenantry . . . He sold his lands to what was known as the Parish Committee of Bunninadden, who had set up for to acquire lands from the landlords of the neighbourhood. These were the 1918-1922 days when persuasion was not always done by the tongue. Cooke vacated Kilterra in the year '21 . . . Cooke came back again to Kilterra in 1922 but his stay this time was very short . . . Let me tell you that the reception he got then left him in such a way that he never wanted to revisit Kilterra again. Nor did he.

Protestant shopkeepers and businessmen also suffered during this period and fourteen of them made claims for losses to the Irish Grants Commission. Of these one said that he had had to give up his business in Tubbercurry and leave the area in September 1922. Another two claimed that the trouble resulted in their businesses being ruined. Seven of those who claimed did so because they had been fined for stocking Belfast goods. Six shopkeepers reported damage to premises consisting of two cases of a store being burned,

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86 *R.H.*, 14 Apr. 1923; *S.I.*, 21 Apr. 1923.
88 Robbery and ill treatment of J Ormsby Cooke at Kilturra, Bunninadden, Co. Sligo, NA, Department of Justice, H5/269.
90 Including three who described themselves as Farmer and Shopkeeper/Dealer. Only one of the fourteen was awarded nothing.
91 Thomas E. Guthrie, IGC, CO762/40.
92 Joseph Graham, IGC, CO762/205; R.S. Allen, IGC, CO 762/134.
two cases of windows being broken by shots and one case of a bomb being thrown at a shop wall - the extent of the damage seems to have been slight. There was no case where the complete shop premises was destroyed. Those shopkeepers who suffered most appear to have been those most prominent in supporting the police during the War of Independence. These include Jonathan Walpole-Boyers of Rosses Point who was, according to ex-RIC District Inspector John Russell, "of the greatest possible assistance to the RIC in rounding up parties wanted for serious crime including the murder of crown forces". After the RIC station at Rosses Point was closed he was subject to intimidation and threats. His storehouse was burned down, he was fined for dealing in Belfast goods and his shop was looted.93

Joseph Graham carried on a business as ironmonger and gunsmith in Sligo town. He was "a remarkable loyalist", a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Unionist Alliance, indefatigable in getting recruits for the army and very outspoken in 1916; "during the years 1919, 1920 and up to the Truce in 1921 when murder and anarchy were rampant applicant did not content himself with denunciation but took a very active part in bringing to justice the perpetrators of crime and assisting the police". "When the Truce left the republicans a free hand" his business was severely boycotted and he was forced into debt. In 1924 he had to go out of business.94 Though he blamed his treatment by republicans for this he was unable to produce any accounts for the Grants Committee. George R. Williams was a prosperous Sligo flour merchant who was "a leading figure in the commercial, official and social life of Sligo". He claimed to have given considerable amount of information to the police during the War of Independence period, including information leading to the arrest of Frank Carty in 1920 and the arrest of members of the IRA in November 1920 when conveying the arms captured at Cliffony ambush to south Sligo.95 He claimed that because of this activity he was boycotted and his business was badly damaged. However the figures he produced for the Irish Grants Committee show that his income from the flour agency was actually greater in 1922 and 1923 than in previous or subsequent years. He claimed £15,000 and was awarded £7,000.

Catholic shopkeepers also suffered, in some case as badly as did Protestants. Five

94 Joseph Graham, IGC, CO 762/205.
95 He also claimed to have recognised Michael Collins disguised as a priest on the Boyle to Sligo train in July 1921. According to Williams Collins escaped with the help of scouts. (George R. Williams, IGC, CO 762/195).
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Sligo Catholic shopkeepers submitted claims to the Irish Grants Commission because of serious disruption of business. All were targeted because they had been friendly with Crown forces during the War of Independence and/or were active in recruiting during the Great War. At least three, John P. Jordan, John O'Dowd, former Nationalist MP for South Sligo, and P.J. McDermott, suffered because of their anti-Sinn Féin political activities. One of those worst affected was John R. Keating, a Catholic hardware merchant from Sligo town, who was awarded £2,050. He had been friendly with the RIC and been suspected of having given information which led to the arrest of Alex McCabe in 1915. He also claimed to have rendered other assistance to the RIC evidence of which he refused to commit to paper. His business which had been boycotted since 1920 declined and he had to sell it in early 1923. John P. Jordan had supplied the RIC with goods and had been suspected of giving information to them. He had been election agent for Tom Scanlan MP in 1918 and for the independent candidates in the June 1922 election. He had to close his premises after they had been looted and boycotted. Annie Brennan of Tubbercurry had been friendly with the Auxiliaries and had supplied them with goods. After their departure her undertaking, grocery and public house business were boycotted and shots were fired into her premises.

Another campaign which affected Protestants disproportionately was the Belfast Boycott. This boycott appears to have been strictly enforced by the IRA in the Ballymote area particularly in October 1921. Those who had their accounts in the Ulster Bank were especially targeted. Robert Beattie told the Irish Grants Committee "I always kept my account at the Ulster Bank with my brother Orangemen which being the Orangeman's bank was definitely marked out for reprisals through the troubled times." On the day of the October fair in Ballymote the IRA visited a number of traders and presented them with a printed order demanding that they paid a fine for trading with the Ulster Bank. Amounts demanded ranged from £25 to £100. On their refusal to pay the IRA put an armed guard on each premises refusing entry to customers. After some negotiation a reduced fine was paid in each case and the premises was allowed to reopen. According to M.C. Kevins, one of

96 John R. Keating, IGC, CO 762/201.  
98 Annie Brennan, IGC, CO 762/108. Some of the Auxiliaries had left without settling their accounts.  
100 Belfast boycott, Ballymote claims, NA, Dept Finance, F 311/8-12; S.I., 15 Oct. 1921.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

the affected traders, "the very moment that the notices were received every single trader immediately withdrew their accounts from this bank but that had no effect as was evident afterwards it was the cash that was wanted."¹⁰¹ Those who enforced the fines were members of the IRA and some at least later took the pro-Treaty side.¹⁰² Of the sixty nine Irish Grants Committee claimants, eleven included a claim for losses due to or fines paid for the Belfast Boycott.¹⁰³ Of these eleven, seven were Protestant, one was Catholic and the religion of the other three has not been determined. All except one were shopkeepers or dealers. The names of twenty-two business persons from the Ballymote area are included in claims made to the Department of Finance arising from Belfast Boycott fines.¹⁰⁴ There is some overlap between this and the Irish Grants Committee list. In total there were twenty-eight claimants. Of these eight were Protestant, nine were Catholic and the religion of the other eleven is not known.¹⁰⁵ Richard Gorman, Templevanney, with reference to a £50 fine which he paid for having his account in the Ulster Bank said "that fine was inflicted as the simplest way to get at supporters of the Government and at the same time to fill the Irregulars' depleted coffers."¹⁰⁶ There is no evidence of the Belfast Boycott campaign having the same effect in other parts of the county or being activated in the Ballymote area at a later date during the Truce or Civil War periods.

Many statements by loyalists to the Irish Grants Committee stress the isolation and terror felt by individual Protestants during this period: "There is no getting away from the fact that from 1920 to the end of 1923 isolated loyalists were made a shuttlecock for the worst and most desperate of the revolutionary element and that our client (Miss Jessie Hunter) received a liberal share of their attention;"¹⁰⁷ "her treatment was due entirely to her

¹⁰² Joseph Flanagan, IGC, CO 762/168.
¹⁰⁵ Religion where not given was found in the 1911 Census records or from conversation with Tom McGettrick, formerly of Ballymote.
¹⁰⁶ Letter from Rev Algernon Harris Ballymote, 7 Jan. 1929, Richard Gorman, IGC, CO 762/172. The IRA involved were not "Irregulars" since this happened pre-Treaty.
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support of and unswerving loyalty to British rule in Ireland previous to 11 July 1921." Jessie Hunter herself said "I was a well known Protestant loyalist living in a very disaffected locality. Because I was alone and unprotected and a supporter of British rule in Ireland these persistent outrages were committed on me and my property with impunity and as part of a campaign of loyalist extermination".

While this terror and feeling of isolation was real there is no evidence of a campaign of loyalist extermination in County Sligo. If we allow that each of the thirty-six Protestant claimants represents a family of five persons this still represents less than 3% of the Protestant population of the county. Many Catholics also suffered. Isolated Protestants were not targetted to a greater extent, most claims came from areas where Protestants were relatively numerous. Shopkeeper H.T. Evans described himself as "the only loyalist, the only Protestant" in the remote village of Aclare, and said that his shop had been raided four times during 1920 and 1921, the last raid taking place on 14 June 1921 when he was fined £10 for not resigning his Commission of the Peace. No award was recommended in his case since he could claim no damages during the Civil War period, even though his area was under the control of the anti-Treaty forces for most of the period. Thomas J. Ewing, hotel keeper at Rosses Point, claimed to have received many threatening letters warning him to "give up my business and to clear out of Rosses Point but still held on." However the only claim he could make was for his Ford car and garage which were destroyed by fire in June 1922. He appears not to have been interfered with in any other way during the subsequent period.

H.R. Wood-Martin was involved in collecting rents for many of the absentee landlords of unpurchased lands in the county. According to John Russell, "Mr. Wood-Martin being a well known loyalist in this county was selected for exceptionally bad treatment" as part of "the campaign of loyalist extermination which was being intensely carried out by the revolutionary element at the time". In fact all Wood-Martin was able to claim for was deprivation of use of a grazing farm near Keash, seized in 1920 by Sinn Féiners and held during the War of Independence and Civil War. In other cases referees did not agree with the claimants assessment of the damages. A Bunninadden Protestant

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109 Jessie Hunter, IGC, CO 762/51.
110 H.T. Evans, IGC, CO 762/68.
111 Thomas J. Ewing, IGC, PRO, CO 762/172.
112 H.R. Wood-Martin, IGC, CO 762/78

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Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

claimed that his house had been raided on three occasions during the period and that one raid, not the last, resulted in the "total destruction of the dwelling house." The local Protestant clergyman however said that material damage done during the raids was slight.\textsuperscript{113} There was no attempt to target the numerous Protestant former landlords such as the Coopers, the O'Haras and the Gore-Booths.\textsuperscript{114} The absence of claims from any of the larger Protestant businesses in Sligo town indicates that there were no attempts to target these. The statement in the claim of Joseph Graham of Sligo town to the effect that "every loyalist who had rendered active assistance to the crown was being victimised and arrangements were being made to clear them out of the country" suggests that those Protestants (and Catholics) who were seriously victimised were attacked not because of their religion but because in the eyes of their attackers had done something to deserve attack. Graham's case, indeed was said to have been "a very rare one".\textsuperscript{115} All Protestants may have been regarded as enemies but relatively few suffered seriously. Only three Protestants claimants said that they had to permanently leave the county and one had to move residence within the county.\textsuperscript{116}

I have found no references to Protestant refugees fleeing from Sligo during this period. If refugees were to leave the county it would be logical to suggest that they fled to the nearest part of Northern Ireland, County Fermanagh, with which there was a rail link. A census dated 1925 of 2,117 Protestants who had left what became the Free State during the preceding five years and who were then living in Fermanagh contains only 51 Protestants from County Sligo. The figures for the other Connacht counties are Leitrim - 292, Galway - 55, Mayo - 34 and Roscommon - 6.\textsuperscript{117} The figures for Sligo suggest that there was no exodus of refugees from the county to the nearest place of refuge, unlike for

\textsuperscript{113}Charles J. Allen, IGC, CO 762/54.
\textsuperscript{114}In March 1923 Bryan Cooper did call for help in dealing with theft of timber from Union Wood on his Sligo estate and with some cattle being illegally grazed on his lands. (Robbery of property near Collooney, Bryan Cooper, NA, Dept. Justice, H5/639). The Cooper residence, Markree Castle, which had emerged unscathed from the War of Independence was occupied by Free State troops and suffered £10,000 worth of "wanton, mischievous and filthy" damage from the raw and often undisciplined Government troops. (Robinson, \textit{Bryan Cooper}, pp 138-9).
\textsuperscript{115}Joseph Graham, IGC, CO 762/205.
\textsuperscript{116}Edith Anderson, IGC, CO 762/62; T.E. Guthrie /40; Joseph Graham /205; P.J. McClooughery /63.
\textsuperscript{117}Census enclosed with a letter from James Cooper, Solicitor, Enniskillen to the Irish Boundary Commission, 15 May 1925, N.L.I., Boundary Commission Papers, Pos 6515.
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instance from Leitrim or indeed from Monaghan from which 454 Protestants had fled to Fermanagh. 118

The Decline in the Protestant Population.

There was however a large drop in the non-Catholic population of the county between 1911 and 1926. The census returns for 1926 show this fall to have been 26.6% compared to a fall of 8% in the Catholic population. The comparable figures for Saorstát Éireann were 32.5% and 2.2% while the figures for Connacht were 36.3% and 8.5%. Of the five Connacht counties, Sligo, with the largest percentage of non-Catholics in 1911, had the smallest percentage drop in non-Catholic population during this period. Leitrim with the next largest percentage non-Catholic population had the second smallest population drop in the province. 119

Table 10.1: Decrease in the non-Catholic population of each of the counties of Connacht, 1911-26.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTIES</th>
<th>1911 Census</th>
<th>% drop 1911-1926</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sligo</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures for ten Connacht towns show the same general pattern i.e. the larger the percentage of non-Catholics the smaller the percentage drop in their numbers in the period 1911-1926. 120 In Sligo town the non-Catholic population decreased by 35.6% while Galway town non-Catholics who represented only 2.7% of the population dropped by almost 52%.

119 Percentage increase or decrease from 1911 to 1926 of persons of each religion in each county in Saorstát Éireann on 18 April 1926, Volume III Table 8B, Saorstát Éireann, Census of Population 1926.
120 Sligo, Tuam, Westport, Boyle, Ballina, Castlebar, Loughrea, Galway, Roscommon, Ballinasloe.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

Graph 10.3: Percentage decline in the non-Catholic population in Sligo and in Ireland, 1861-1926.

Graph 10.4: Non-Catholics as a percentage of total population of Sligo and of Ireland, 1861-1911.

during the same period. This may have been due to the impact of violence during the troubled times but it is just as likely to be due to lack of social amenities and pressure from mixed marriages. While the drop in question in County Sligo was large it was part of a

\[121\] Number of persons of each religion in each town of 1500 or more in Saorstát Éireann on 18 April 1926 showing percentage changes from 1911 to 1926, Volume III Table 7, Saorstát Éireann, Census of Population 1926.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

pattern already evident. The rate of non-Catholic population decline had been falling in Ireland since 1881 but in Sligo the rate of percentage decrease had been increasing since 1871. The non-Catholic percentage of the population of Ireland had been increasing since 1861 but this was not the case in county Sligo where the pattern was the reverse. A trend was therefore already evident well before the outbreak of the War of Independence of increasing fall in the non-Catholic population of County Sligo. The outbreak of hostilities and the effect of these hostilities on a community who were perceived and who largely regarded themselves as out of tune with the expressed aims of the majority, could only be expected to accelerate this decrease.

The emigration of non-Irish Protestants in response to the setting up of the Free State may account for some of the population drop. According to the 1911 Census there were 1,022 residents in County Sligo who had been born in England, Scotland or Wales. Their religion is not given but it is fair to assume that many, probably most, were Protestant. In addition 611 residents had been born in the six counties of Northern Ireland. The departure of a sizable number of these would have had an influence on the figures.122 Likewise there were twenty-two non-Catholic army members and twenty-two non-Catholic navy members in County Sligo when the census was taken.123 There were also forty-five non-Catholic civil servants and thirty-one non-Catholic policemen in the county.124 This makes a total of 120 non-Catholics who possibly would have left. If we allow half these to be married with an average of three children each we are dealing with a maximum of about 400 persons whose departure would have also made an impact of the population figures.

The decline over the period 1911 to 1926 in the population of the various denominations of non-Catholics in the county was not uniform. Protestant Episcopalian numbers fell by almost 23%, Methodist numbers fell by 31% but the fall in the number of Presbyterians was dramatic, a decline of 55%. To examine why this should have happened it is first necessary to look at the differing distribution patterns for each denomination. Protestant Episcopalians were the most numerous and most evenly distributed of the Protestant groups. A comparison of the distribution of this denomination over three

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123 Twelve of these were pensioners.
124 Table XX, Occupations of Males by Ages, Religious Professions, and Education in the County of Sligo, Census of Ireland 1911, pp 48-52.
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

different areas of the county in 1911 and in 1926 shows that this congregation suffered an almost uniform drop all over the county. The minutes of the Select Vestry of St. John’s Church of Ireland Parish in Sligo town provide no evidence that there was a crisis in numbers at the specific 1921-23 period. The parochial finances were in a poor state in early 1921 but the treasurer put this down to difficulty in securing subscriptions with many members in arrears. A general meeting of the congregation was then called and the financial position outlined. By October of the same year the treasurer could report a great improvement in the finances as a result of increased subscriptions from old members and a substantial sum, £55-15-0 from new subscribers. In March 1922 the list of registered vestry men and women was revised and the names of all those who had left and who had died were removed. When the names of new members were added there were then 200 names as against 118 for the previous year. When the list was revised in 1923, twenty-two persons who had left or died were removed but the same number of new names were added. In February 1924 Vestryman J.J. Nelson did however suggest "that an effort should be made by the present generation to secure the continuance of the Church work for all time because with the present continuous falling away of the Church population, a day might come when the congregation of St. John’s may not have sufficient funds to carry on the good work".

The distribution of the Presbyterian faithful in County Sligo in 1911 was dispersed with 59%, just over 400, living either in Sligo town or in its immediate hinterland. The remainder were widely scattered, 99 living in the Barony of Tireragh from Ballisodare all along the coast to Ballina while 177 lived in south east Sligo from Collooney towards Boyle. The south western area was almost devoid of Presbyterians. The intercensal drop in population was widespread but the dispersed country areas suffered most. While 59% of the Presbyterian population lived in Sligo and its environs in 1911 this had risen to 72% in 1926. The population of the Tireragh area fell by 74% and of the south east Sligo area by 59%. The population of the Sligo town area fell by a lower figure, 45%. The more remote the area the greater the population drop.

127 Minutes of meeting 8 Feb. 1924, St. John’s Vestry Minute Book, Representative Church Body Library, Dublin.
Records from the three Presbyterian congregations in County Sligo, Dromore West, Ballymote and Sligo for the period in question show that there was in all cases a large drop
in the number of families in each in the period 1921-1923.\textsuperscript{128} This drop is most marked in the case of the smallest rural congregation, Dromore West, where the republicans held sway for most of the Civil War. This suggests that the more dispersed distribution of the Presbyterians made them prone to more pressure whether this was from hostile elements within the independence movement or from the greater necessity or possibility of intermarriage with other denominations. It also suggests that the drop in the Presbyterian population during the 1911 to 1926 period was more marked in the turbulent Civil War period.

The Methodists on the other hand though fewer in number formed more concentrated communities with almost the entire rural population in 1926 concentrated in twelve contiguous district electoral divisions in the Collooney - Ballymote - Riverstown area of south east Sligo. The fact that it appears to have been a tightly knit community must account to a great degree for the relatively low percentage drop in population. In fact the percentage population drop in the rural areas between 1911 and 1926 was only 19\% while that in the Sligo town area was 36\%.

Map 10.3: Number of Methodists in each parish in Sligo. (1911 Census).

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{128} Statistics of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for years ending 1914 - 1924, Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Vols 12 (1911-1915), 13 (1916-1920) & 14 (1921-1924).}
Sligo Protestants after the revolution.

Actual membership figures for the five Methodist church areas in the county for the period 1914-1924 show a marked decline during the 1921-23 period in the case of the Sligo town and north Sligo Methodist congregations but no such decline in the case of the more rural communities in south and east Sligo.\footnote{129} These latter communities were in areas of relative peace during the Civil War where there were no concentrations of anti-Treaty forces. The general picture here is of a gradual decline in population during the whole period.

The three main Protestant denominations then show different patterns of decline and these patterns seem to be heavily influenced by the distribution of each denomination. This information, taken with the information on non-Catholic population decline in the counties of Connacht, strongly suggest that the decline was general and gradual and affected denominations who were a small minority, especially if they were also dispersed and did not form concentrated local groups. Such a small dispersed group as the Presbyterians

\footnote{129 Information supplied from Sligo Methodist records by Rev. Ian Henderson, Methodist Manse, Ardgowen, Sligo.}
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appear to have been especially affected during the period of the independence struggle and the subsequent Civil War.

Conclusion.

The evidence then points to an acceleration of the already increasing decline in the non-Catholic population in County Sligo over the 1911-26 period. There is some evidence that this decline was more marked in the Truce and Civil War period. Small dispersed communities of non-Catholics, especially those in areas where the anti-Treaty forces held sway for long periods, were most affected. On the other hand there is little evidence that this decline resulted from specific violence against these people. The area where the greatest decline in Presbyterian numbers occurred, the barony of Tireragh, had no claimant to the Irish Grants Committee. These claims demonstrate a large amount of fear and intimidation but that this was in general uncoordinated and did not constitute a concerted anti-Protestant campaign. Rather it was a mixture of continued agrarian agitation and the seizing of opportunities for "inflicting injuries on obnoxious persons, for paying off old scores and for widespread looting". Protestants were often targeted in County Sligo over this period but seldom because of their religion alone.

However the accumulation of disappointments and dashed hopes during the whole second decade of the century, the feeling that the nadir had been reached only to find that further depths were still to be plumbed caused many Protestant loyalists at various times during the period to give up and leave County Sligo. Most stayed and looked for security and comfort in increased membership of fraternal organisations and business organisations.

130 Though this was the area which saw the only murder of a non-Catholic during the period.
131 McDowell, Crisis and Decline, p. 120.
CONCLUSION.

The cessation of Civil War violence in mid-1923 was greeted in County Sligo with no elation, no pronouncements welcoming victory and no flags. Instead the tone was a weary air of acceptance. This was in marked contrast to the rapturous welcome which had greeted the Truce of 1921. Sligo had experienced little hardship and just enough violent activity during 1919-21 to be able to claim, no matter what others said, that it had played an important part in the glorious revolution of those years. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution however, Sligo experienced the growth and proliferation of dissention and division which resulted in a degree of violence and disruption greater than that of the War of Independence which affected most people in the county to some degree. Small wonder then that the ending of the Civil War was greeted with almost indifference by a war-weary populace. In a sense there were no winners. The county had suffered in many ways, infrastructure had been badly damaged, the economy had been injured, social and sporting activity had been seriously curtailed and many relationships had been poisoned. The republicans had survived in Sligo, some of their leaders had not been captured and they were still able to carry out small scale nuisance operations. The previous year had seen much military action by both side but few glorious victories. Indeed both sides had committed shameful deeds which were destined to be recalled for years by the other side. This thesis has investigated the whole period 1921 to 1923 with a view to answering the questions posed in the introduction.

I have endeavoured in the first place to investigate how County Sligo, the epitome of nationalist orthodoxy during the first two decades of the century, became a thorn in the side of the new post-Treaty regime and how a county so lacking in war-like activities during the Anglo-Irish conflict could become such a centre of conflict during the Civil War. It is clear that what headquarters claimed of the county as regards the War of Independence was to a great extent true, Sligo's level of activity during that struggle was low. This was due to a range of interdependent factors, the level of political orthodoxy, the lack of early radical organisation and activity, the lack of experience of the IRA leaders, the poor armament of the IRA and the slow pace of the escalation of violence. Criticism by headquarters in the period just before the Truce stung the Sligo leadership and no doubt engendered a desire to prove themselves.
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The Truce period then came at an opportune moment for the Sligo IRA giving them the time to re-organise, arm and train their members, the impotence of the RIC giving them almost a free rein. The Sligo IRA leaders, soon to be elevated to divisional officerships, seemed determined to establish themselves as the dominant force in the county with scant regard for any dissenting voices including those of Sinn Féin representatives. In Local Government in particular there were bitter divisions which reflected the resentment of vested local interests at any attempt at effective and reforming central control. Those IRA councillors again at liberty to attend meetings allied themselves with these local interests and attempted to control Sligo's local authorities, expressing their belief in the supremacy of the "men of action" over the "men of words". They opposed the Dáil Local Government Department amalgamation scheme and fought tooth and nail to thwart its implementation. Eventually they failed. This split in the local authorities especially in Sligo County Council mirrored to a large degree the Treaty split. At the outbreak of the Civil War the active anti-Treaty IRA members once again found themselves unable to attend council meetings. Thus the pro-Treaty councillors were given ample time to develop local government under the amalgamation scheme and by the time anti-Treaty members were again able to attend in numbers the new order of local democracy had been well established.

The power and independence which the Sligo IRA claimed and enjoyed during the Truce period was fundamentally threatened by the signing of the Treaty and it was natural that a majority of that group would oppose it. At the same time events caught them typically unprepared and they failed to formulate a quick and coherent opposition, allowing the pro-Treaty side to take the initiative. The popular verdict in favour of the Treaty was clear and the leading Sligo newspaper, the *Sligo Champion*, was to the fore in expressing this. Many of those who had been at the receiving end of the IRA's vituperation during the Truce period delighted in combining against them now. The bitterness of the divisions in the county suggested that it would be very difficult to heal the split and the long drawn out nature of the events of the following six months with postponements of the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis and of the election, the numerous incidents within the county, and the involvement of the Sligo IRA in such actions as the Limerick crisis and the guerilla warfare along the border all helped to reinforce the Sligo IRA's opposition to the new regime and their confidence in their own righteousness.
Conclusion.

I have shown that the fact that a majority of voters gave their first preferences to anti-Treaty candidates in Sligo - Mayo East constituency in the Pact election of June was a factor of the geographical distribution of the candidates rather than a reflection of the voters' opinion of the Treaty. The pro-Treaty candidates were unfavourably clustered in south Sligo while their opponents were strategically placed in east Mayo and north and south Sligo. In spite of this there is no doubt but that the results in the constituency gave a great boost to the anti-Treaty side.

The outbreak of Civil War found the Sligo IRA strong in resolve but weak in ideas. Old animosities and lack of offensive planning and co-ordinated action combined to deprive the anti-Treaty side of the fruits of the numerical advantage they enjoyed at the start of hostilities. They waited for the enemy to advance against them and then abandoned or were driven out of their posts to resume the more familiar guerilla war. The Free State troops established positions in towns and only very slowly increased their hold on the country areas. The anti-Treaty forces proved hardest to defeat in the mountaineous areas especially in the north-west and east of the county. As the war progressed the government forces utilised large-scale sweeps to break up anti-Treaty concentrations. These sweeps gradually diminished the areas under the control of the anti-Treaty forces and coupled with arrests and deaths reduced their numbers and influence. Because of problems of poor organisation and morale, and difficulties with supplies, transport and numbers the government forces were not at any time strong enough to inflict a decisive defeat on their opponents. On the other hand the IRA seemed content to survive and inflict irregular severe blows such as the burning of Sligo Railway Station. Because of the IRA's lack of co-operation and lack of realistic offensive strategy it was inevitable that the government troops would eventually wear them down and clear republican strongholds, allowing normality to return to most of the county while at the same time unable to finish them off completely. That most of the IRA leadership in the county were apparently against the cease-fire, believing that they could survive indefinitely, is a tribute both to their capacity for survival and the inability of the Free State army to deliver the coup de grace.

While the strongholds of the anti-Treaty forces were in the remote mountainous regions, most incidents occurred in the areas of better land near towns where government posts were situated. Attacks on lines of communications also ensured that
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such areas as the central north - south corridor of communication saw plenty of action.

My analysis of the background of those Sligo people who participated on each side in the Civil War demonstrates clearly the absence of a social basis for the Civil War in County Sligo. While fewer recruits for both sides came from the poorer areas of the county the distribution of anti-Treaty internees and pro-government army recruits is similar over the whole county. My examination of the personal backgrounds of the participants, parents' occupation, valuation of house and land holding shows that neither group of activists came predominantly from a clearly defined social strata. In particular there is no evidence to support the notion that the republican activists were overwhelmingly from the "men of no property" or that the Free State army members came from the propertied classes. In fact there is clear evidence that the latter were more likely to come from the lower strata of society than the anti-Treaty activists and this pattern is more marked in the Sligo urban area. While these conclusions refer only to activists my analysis shows the danger in ascribing a simplistic class basis for the divisions which occurred in Ireland in 1921-3.

To what extent did the Civil War disrupt daily life in Sligo? The volume of military activity during the that war was much greater than during the War of Independence and so the conflict was much more likely to impinge on everyday life. Estimates and statistics suggest that at its height the war involved over 800 armed men in County Sligo, about 500 on the government side and over 300 on the anti-Treaty side. Thus the likelihood of being affected by the war was much greater and disruption and destruction were much more widespread. The evidence which I have collated demonstrates clearly the hardship which was inflicted on the populace during the period. The dramatic fall in the numbers of social and sporting functions testifies to a period in which normal daily life was circumscribed with non-essential journeys and outings serverly curtailed. The country areas, more dependent on road and rail transport and less likely to be protected by a government post, suffered to a greater degree than did the town of Sligo, and a recovery in early 1923 manifested itself earlier in the urban area. In particular the deterioration of the transport infrastructure through destruction by the anti-Treaty forces and the lack of any repairs or maintenance imposed considerable hardship.

The extent to which livestock prices and food prices were affected is difficult to
ascertain but the figures I have considered certainly suggest that the general depression in livestock prices at that time was worsened by the effect of the war. The apparent rise in the cost of some foodstuffs in the period after the outbreak of war and the drop in the turnover of most of Sligo's co-operative creamery societies in 1923 are evidence of difficulties caused by the war. On the other hand the evidence, admittedly scant, from the business house of Meehan Brothers in Sligo town suggests that the conflict made little impact on its turnover but some on the ability of its customers to pay cash.

The lack of a functioning system of justice caused considerable hardship and disruption. No widely recognised or effective system of police or courts had been in operation in the county since early 1920 and while the Dáil Courts were slowly reorganised during the Truce period and after the lack of an effective police force meant that they were ultimately powerless. The confusion of the post-Treaty period as regards law and order and the rise of factional strife led to a rise in lawlessness in early 1922. Petty crime, hooliganism and robbery intermingled with and were often indistinguishable from agrarian agitation, intimidation of Protestants, attacks on ex-RIC and politically motivated crime. For most of the Civil War period large areas of the county were without effective law. If anything the areas nominally under control by the government forces seem to have been subject to lawlessness more than those areas under strong republican control. Towards the end of the war as the threat from anti-Treaty forces dwindled the newly established Civic Guard began to occupy barracks and courts began to function again. As the Civil War ended the county was still in a state of disturbance and unrest but appears to have settled down remarkably quickly afterwards.

What of the vulnerable non-Catholic population in this period? There is no doubt that over the 1911-26 period there was an acceleration in the decline of the non-Catholic population in County Sligo. All Protestant denominations were affected but there were differences and these were related to the dispersal patterns of each in the county. The small, widely dispersed Presbyterian community in the country areas seems to have especially declined, while more concentrated Methodist communities seem to have suffered less. There is some inconclusive evidence that this decline was more marked during the Truce and Civil War period. The evidence I have presented suggests that this decline was due to the accumulation of disappointments and dashed hopes during the whole second decade of the century which caused many Protestant loyalists at various
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times during the period to give up and leave County Sligo. There was also an amount of violence directed against the non-Catholic population in uncoordinated campaigns such as agrarianism, the Belfast Boycott, looting, requisitioning of materials by the IRA, and some settling of old scores. That these did not constitute a co-ordinated campaign of intimidation with the aim of removing the Protestants from County Sligo is clear. Most Protestants remained in Sligo and looked for security and comfort in increased membership of fraternal and business organisations. In particular, urban Protestants businessmen while understandably apprehensive about their future in the new state still appeared confident that they had an important role to play in that state.

They, like most others in the county, were delighted when the confusion, the unpredictability and the personal danger of the post-revolution era finished with the dumping of arms by the remaining anti-Treaty forces and Sligo as elsewhere in the country could begin to come to terms with the havoc and destruction wreaked over the previous two years. The years of revolution with their vision of an imminent golden age of freedom had been years of hope and glorious anticipation, but the Civil War shattered that vision and provided a bitter aftermath of division, violence and hardship.
APPENDIX 1.

OCCUPATION CLASSES.

These occupations were grouped in the following classes for the purpose of analysing parents' occupations among both groups of participants in chapter seven.

1. Farmer & Fisherman.


4. *Skilled Craftsmen/Artisans*: Carpenter, Mason, Building Contractor, Linotype Operator, Blacksmith, Baker, Shoemaker, Coach Builder, Barber, Metal Moulder, Tailor, Painter,

5. *Clerical*: Postman, RIC Pensioner, RIC Constable, Naval Pensioner, Station Master, Sanitary Sub-officer, Army Pensioner,


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P7/A/63: Reports on raids on railways, Apr. 1922.
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