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'Official Propaganda in the Irish Free State'

By Kevin Hora

Submitted to

The Department of History

In fulfilment of the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

28 October, 2011

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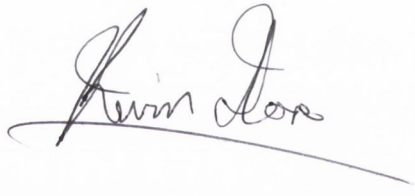



Kevin Hora

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Synopsis

This thesis examines official propaganda in the Irish Free State. It takes the perspective that propaganda helped build the state and had a beneficial purpose. This differs from traditional views of state propaganda in this period, especially relating to European states which spiralled into totalitarianism. It assesses the propaganda campaigns and other activities of Free State governments, and establishes that, while propaganda suffered from a lack of funding and official commitment, often stemming from civil service preoccupations, nonetheless governments enjoyed some propaganda successes. A brief insight into comparable campaigns and policy in Northern Ireland is offered throughout. The work comprises two sections: chapters one to three, and chapters four to eight. This permits a view of, firstly, the context of propaganda, and, secondly, the contexts, or arenas, in which propaganda was practised.

Chapter one explores what propaganda was held to mean in early twentieth century Ireland, and examines both nationalist and unionist propaganda. It takes as its point of departure the emergence of commercial propaganda in the United States, which had a profound influence on Great War and political propaganda there and also examines propaganda in Britain. This is done in three periods: turn of the century to the outbreak of the Great War, the war itself, and the post-war period to the late 1930s. The chapter suggests that propaganda in Ireland was organised, but, as in Britain, lagged behind America in organisation and development. This sluggishness is contextualised in chapter two, which deals with the funding of propaganda. It examines state estimates and records of expenditure from department files and demonstrates that propaganda was starved of adequate funding by a Finance department that exercised an unhealthy control over official policy, and had no comprehension of the benefits of propaganda for commercial or social reasons.

Emerging media are dealt with in chapter three. Film had already begun to have an impact on propaganda in Ireland, and the chapter deals with political attitudes towards using the medium, and controlling its use by others; the censorship regime is used to demonstrate how this blunt instrument of control was used to inculcate values deemed important to the state. Radio began during the early days of the state, and politicians quickly accustomed themselves to it, again while controlling its use and content. The

chapter shows that politicians, who ultimately became adept at utilising these media, were also inherently dubious of them, and approached them with mistrust.

The second section looks at the practice of propaganda. Chapters four and five address the creation of a Catholic, Gaelic and Celtic nation and state. In chapter four, religion and sport are taken as examples of nation-building. The funerals of patriots and celebrations of the centenary of Catholic Emancipation and the Eucharistic Congress demonstrate how religion was used to propagate identity. The Tailteann Games provide examples of sporting and cultural propaganda. The state was brought to stability through propaganda centred on the army and Garda Síochána, presented in chapter five. It is suggested that both forces helped to create a state in the image of the nation that had been carefully constructed: both forces were exemplars of modern patriotism, Catholic values, sporting prowess and Irish language proficiency. Exemplars, however, sometimes suffer from feet of clay, as the chapter outlines.

Trade and tourism helped create wealth, and are dealt with in separate chapters. The former comprises two periods: Cumann na nGaedheal efforts at opening the state to international markets, and Fianna Fáil efforts to create a self-sufficient economy. Agriculture and energy are the focus of this chapter, which also looks at overseas propaganda. Tourism was one of the few industries that had been well-developed before independence, but it had fallen into a state of ruin. Chapter seven looks at efforts to create a tourism industry, focussed on American and European markets. It examines official views on tourism which ranged from dismissively hostile to fanciful, and treats the relationship between officials and the Irish Tourist Association.

Finally, the thesis examines efforts to use diplomacy as a form of propaganda. Chapter eight, while treading on very familiar ground, looks at diplomacy from the perspective of the publicity value of having legations, rather than the diplomatic influence they offered. The chapter suggests that foreign diplomacy was promoted domestically (through public ceremonies for newly-arrived ministers plenipotentiary, or visiting state guests) to win support for a foreign policy, which itself was frequently regarded as a low priority. The impact of diplomatic propaganda is examined with reference to Imperial conferences, the Boundary Commission, and economic war with Britain.

List of Abbreviations

DÉ	Dáil Éireann	
EPS	Estimates for Public Services	
HC	House of Commons	
HIS	Hoover Institute, Stanford	
HL	House of Lords	
MAI	Military Archives of Ireland	
MLP	Mudd Library, Princeton	
NAI	National Archives of Ireland	
	D/Ag	Department of Agriculture
	D/FA	Department of Foreign Affairs
	D/FA/ES	Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassy Series
	D/Fin	Department of Finance
	D/IC	Department of Industry and Commerce
	D/J	Department of Justice
	D/J/FCO	Department of Justice, Film Censor's Office
	D/T	Department of An Taoiseach
NLI	National Library of Ireland	
SÉ	Seanad Éireann	
SP	Stormont Parliament	
TCDM	Trinity College, Dublin Manuscripts Department	
UCDA	University College, Dublin Archives Department	

Official Propaganda in the Irish Free State

Introduction

I

This study stems from a recognition that the story of political propaganda in the Free State has largely been neglected. It attempts to address the abridged version of propaganda in Ireland that halts abruptly with the end of the revolution and civil war period and ignores the Free State. It does so through an exploration of the practice of propaganda by national politicians in the Free State. It assesses attitudes towards propaganda, and identifies its uses, successes and limitations. The work comprises two distinct sections: chapters one to three deal with the context of propaganda; they assess what propaganda was understood to mean in the Free State, how it was funded, and how governments adapted to new forms of media, specifically cinema and radio. The remaining chapters deal with the contexts within which propaganda was conducted. These are: propaganda for building the nation, the state, trade, tourism and external affairs. It should be noted that the focus in these chapters is on the communication of government policy and activities rather than a dissection of policies *per se*. Throughout, a brief comparison is offered with propaganda in Northern Ireland. This is not intended to be anything other than a cursory exploration of propaganda there, but rather serves to suggest that both states faced similar social, economic and political issues, and responded by using propaganda campaigns. The activities of the Stormont Parliament in propagating Ulster were substantial, and are worthy of further research in their own right.

Why there has been no major study of propaganda in the Free State is open to conjecture. Studies of propaganda in Germany, Italy and Russia may have established a narrative for propaganda that revolves around dictatorship, warfare and race, and these elements were not evident in the Free State. Indeed, after its uses to buttress the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, propaganda as a term was so damaged that no communications endeavour could use the word with impunity. Perhaps, martial conflict in Ireland having concluded, the propaganda of peace was deemed insufficiently attractive to merit closer attention, and was subordinated to the weightier matters of state, politics and, in more recent years, culture and society. This is at odds with propaganda in other countries,

notably Britain and the United States, where, respectively, the successes of the Empire Marketing Board (EMB)- particularly its documentary film unit – and the growth of commercial public relations between world wars have been well-documented.

A number of key objectives are addressed in the research. The first is to show that organised propaganda was conducted as a means of building the nation and state in the aftermath of a lengthy period of armed conflict. The somewhat uneven transition from bellicose to peaceful communication will be assessed in this context. Differences in the propaganda of Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil governments will be presented; essentially the former used propaganda for the benefit of the nation and state at home and abroad, while the latter, thanks to a constitution that declared it not a political party but a national movement, were adept at re-imagining Louis XIV's apocryphal *l'état, c'est moi* for the twentieth century. It will be shown that Cumann na nGaedheal tended to practise a more transparent form of propaganda than their main political adversaries. Finally, propaganda as a term has come to be understood as something sinister, manipulative and inherently deceitful. This research aims to rescue propaganda from its infamy. While, undoubtedly, this reputation is merited in many cases, the propaganda practised by Free State politicians in government will be shown to be more benign and constructive than the commonly accepted negative meaning.

Sources of information on official Free State propaganda are scattered around a number of archives. Often important files lie buried within collections; regrettably few sources are so obliging as to be clearly labelled propaganda, and an inquisitive, at times intuitive, approach to finding information was required. Certain primary sources were indispensible. In particular, assiduous trawling of indexes to files in the Departments of An Taoiseach, Foreign Affairs, and Finance yielded a veritable treasure trove. Less precious, but useful nonetheless, Industry and Commerce provided detail on specific areas of propaganda practice. These were supplemented by Oireachtas debates, and private collections of papers of many of the protagonists: amongst others, Desmond FitzGerald, Sean Lester, Patrick McGilligan and Eamon de Valera in the UCD Manuscripts Department, Ivy Ledbetter Lee in Princeton and George Creel in Stanford. Contemporary publications, which carried accounts of events and campaigns for which propaganda was conducted, present difficulties in that editorialising of official propaganda messages was commonplace. Nevertheless, the *Irish Times, Irish Independent*

(and the Independent Newspapers photographic archive in the National Library), *An t-Óglach* and *The Irish Bulletin* were especially useful in providing examples of propaganda in print and image. Cinema footage from British Pathé was similarly helpful in providing visual examples of propaganda, supplementing the Irish Film Institute's newsreel, documentary and feature film collections. It should be noted that the *Irish Press*, while consulted, was ultimately not used, for two principal reasons. Firstly, it was a partisan publication, owned and overseen by de Valera, and it functioned as a propaganda vehicle for Fianna Fáil. It did not, therefore, apply the same level of editorial integrity over news content as the *Irish Independent* and *Irish Times*, which, while prone to occasional pontification and partiality, were nevertheless in independent ownership. Secondly, these two newspapers were published throughout the entire period of the Free State and offer an overview of the era that the *Irish Press*, as a late arrival, cannot.

These sources were particularly important given that so little has been written of official propaganda in the Free State compared to the revolutionary and civil war period. Keiko Inoue, Ben Novick, Ian Kenneally and Maurice Walsh, among others, have produced important work that establishes the prevalence of persuasive communication in news and other media in Ireland between 1914 and 1922.[1] There is a uniformity in these studies that provides a base of solid theory for studies of propaganda in time of conflict. Novick, particularly, in his exploration of advanced nationalist propaganda during the Great War provides a short but compelling analysis of the meaning of propaganda, drawing on contemporary and modern ideas in his research.[2] Kenneally and Walsh have both done sterling work in assessing the role of print media, and the degree to which they were utilised by propagandists both for the Castle administration and insurrectionists. In addition, the reissue of Frank Gallagher's *The Four Glorious Years* provides a stirring account of the propaganda war from one of its most able prosecutors.[3] However, these works have focussed almost exclusively on propaganda during time of conflict, and, to some degree, as a weapon of conflict. They stop abruptly with the formal conclusion of hostilities.

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[1] Inoue, 1997, 1998, Novick, 2001, Kenneally,2008, and Walsh, 2008.

[2] Novick, *op. cit.*: 37-42

[3] Gallagher, 2005

While there have been useful papers on aspects of Free State activity that included some element of propaganda, there has been no major study of propaganda as a force for building the new state.[4] This is unusual, given that the major propagandists of the revolutionary period, Desmond FitzGerald, Frank Gallagher, Sean Lester and Bulmer Hobson for instance, were also the major propagandists of the new state. Their legacies, today, rest on reasons other than their propaganda prowess. Lester's biography, written by his son-in-law Douglas Gageby, passes over his time as propagandist for the government as if it were a mere diversion on his path from journalism to diplomatic greatness.[5] (It may be surmised that, as a former editor of the *Irish Times*, Gageby's expurgation of this aspect of Lester's eventful career may have been influenced by the journalist's dislike of propaganda and, in its modern incarnation, public relations). Gallagher's post-revolutionary legacy may rest more firmly on his journalistic and literary writings than on his Free State (and further) career as de Valera's most trusted propagandist. Though Walker offers an astute short assessment of his legacy it is deserving of greater study.[6] FitzGerald, meanwhile, may have the distinction of having his substantial legacy surpassed by his son, former Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald. Hobson, though the subject of a recent major biography by Marnie Hay, is probably best known in school textbooks for his involvement in the establishment of the Dungannon Clubs.[7]

However, recent works have begun to deal more directly with some of the propaganda themes presented here. Ewan Morris's treatment of the potency of symbolism in the new state, in particular regarding a national anthem and flag, currency and other official symbols of state, renders incalculable service to the historian of propaganda. His assertion that 'far from being incidental to politics, symbols are intrinsic to it' bridges the gap between politically-motivated state-builders and the citizen, on whose continued support they rely.[8] This idea is also present in Anne Dolan's work on commemoration of the civil war, which weaves public and private memorialisation in a narrative that

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[4] Among the wide range of papers where an inquisitive gaze alights briefly on the topic of propaganda are those dealing with diplomacy (Davis, 1996), commemoration and memorialisation (Fitzpatrick, 2001), religion (MacIntosh, 1999), culture (Cronin, 2003 and 2005) and trade (Cronin, 2004).

[5] Gageby, 1999

[6] Walker, 1992

[7] Hay, 2009

[8] Morris, 2005: 1

emphasises the shared experiences of politicians and the public in state building. Her dissection of the 'elephant on the lawn' – the ultimately shoddy and artistically ill-conceived cenotaph for Griffith and Collins - suggests the centrality of symbolism as a means of political engagement with the citizenry: 'Pure or otherwise, the Cenotaph came of mixed motives. There was pressure to act, to commemorate, spurred if nothing else by the funerals which had paralysed the country a year before, the personalities, too, demanded pageantry; the proximity of their deaths, the tragic double loss, commanded a worthy anniversary.'[9] While Morris and Dolan examine the propagation of official messages, Peter Martin's work highlights something of the dark side of propaganda: the control of messages.[10] His exploration of censorship on both sides of the border does much to highlight politicians' uneasiness at the availability of published and broadcast material that, aside from being morally objectionable, was likely to promote sedition. His thesis, that the common concerns shared in both jurisdictions were congruent with views on censorship in Britain and the USA, does much to shift the view of Free State censorship as an insular, parochial concern and places it in a broader international context of inculcating civic values through coercive means.

These treatments have been possible largely because of a shift in the historiography of the period from the mid 1990s. While cognizant of established histories, which focussed on the political development of the state in the aftermath of conflict, and which, not unnaturally, presented a narrative of the legacies of treatyites and anti-treatyites, later historians have begun to unpick the complexities of the period. In so doing, they have cast a critical eye on the nature of statehood, and its manifestation in the Free State. Tom Garvin neatly juxtaposes the administrative efficiencies of the Provisional Government and its succeeding Cumann na nGaedheal governments with the 'romantic indignation' of hard-line republicans.[11] The effect is to transform the parameters of debate on statehood and state building from purely revolutionary terms, laden with barely contested assumptions (such as the notion that England was the first nation state and Ireland, accordingly, the first real colony)[12] to encompass more nuanced perspectives. Implicit in the analysis is Cumann na nGaedheal's need to effectively

[9] Dolan, 2003: 11

[10] Martin, 2006

[11] Garvin, 1996: 98

[12] *Ibid.*:1

propagate ideologies at variance with the ideal of republican heroism and sacrifice, which would later be propounded by Fianna Fáil.

John M. Regan, too, offers fresh insights into the manner in which the state was constructed. Amplifying Garvin's view of administrative and revolutionary themes, he notes that in the wake of Griffith's and Collins' deaths, Cosgrave 'reconciled the militarist and moderate traditions' of the pro-treaty side.[13] His depiction of the emergence of a ruling elite is particularly compelling: revolving around the close friendship of Kevin O'Higgins and Patrick Hogan, and their cultural commonalities with fellow Francophone, Desmond FitzGerald, it offers a view of an educated, middle class, Catholic elite, at variance with the rough and tumble politics of many of their fellow revolutionaries. Indeed, he notes O'Higgins' and Hogan's 'clear understanding that Treatyite republicanism, militarism and aggressive nationalism posed real threats to their place within the new regime.'[14] Against this backdrop, the social conservatism and harshness of early Cumann na nGaedheal governments – it was, after all, O'Higgins who, *pour encourager les autres*, called for executions in every county during the civil war – is rendered less the martial and legislative measures to secure a state, and more a reflection of the ideologies of an elite.

Bill Kissane explores official ruthlessness, noting that the while state was democratic, its constitution was, nevertheless, vulnerable to suspension when needs dictated.[15] During the civil war, the introduction of military courts empowered with imposing death sentences came at the expense of *habeas corpus*. In October, 1931 Cumann na nGaedheal proscribed no less than a dozen organisations at one fell swoop.[16] Occupying mainly the left of the political spectrum and republican strands, these groups threatened the state and its democratic elite, and were subjected to propaganda's extremes – condemnation, censorship and proscription. In office, Fianna Fáil was similarly inclined to such extremes, again in the interest of the state, proscribing Eoin O'Duffy's Army Comrades Association and its variously titled reincarnations, and, in 1936, having failed to achieve

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[13] Regan, 1999: 78

[14] *Ibid*: 89

[15] Kissane, 2004: 157

[16] *Ibid.*: 161

its voluntary dissolution four years earlier, the IRA itself.[17] When organisations proved intractable, the state demonstrated its willingness to replace democratic propaganda with direct action.

Such themes are taken up by Ciara Meehan, whose research on Cumann na nGaedheal reveals the party's single-minded pursuit of political and electoral success.[18] She records heavy expenditure on advertising, particularly at election time. Campaigns were not always intended to promote only a positive image of the party; Cumann na nGaedheal's forays into negative campaigning in 1932 encompassed hysterical demonisation of Fianna Fáil, conflating bolshevism and bullets. The adoption of negative tactics by the party indicates a degree of naivety: engaging with likeminded elites gave it little more than a rickety soapbox from which to address the electorate. This contrasts with Fianna Fáil, whose assiduous courting of mass appeal gave it stable foundations for sixteen years of government from 1932. Regan highlights the 'Fianna Fáil Leviathan' - the popular support mobilised during the 1932 election campaign - which contrasted with Cumann na nGaedheal's addressing of likeminded elites, and vitriolic attacks on their republican opponents.[19] This is indicative of a subtle, yet critical, difference in their propaganda: where Cosgrave's party frequently spoke to those who formed public opinion, de Valera's spoke to the public itself.

By establishing a framework for reviewing the development of the state, these works suggest that a deeper exploration of official propaganda will yield new insights. However, this study does not seek to engage with these works on an interpretative or theoretical level, but rather to add a new dimension to the historiography of the Free State implied by them; it seeks to develop new themes by opening new avenues of inquiry. Novelty, of course, presents its own problems, not least of which is how, when events between 1922 and 1937 have been so well documented, is it possible to justify selecting only a comparatively few examples of propaganda in action? For every worthy inclusion, many more must be excluded. One of the key determinants in selecting the events and incidents chosen in this work is that they yield themselves to a new analytical perspective that looks at the practical application of communications techniques. For

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[17] *Ibid.*:162

[18] Meehan, 2010

[19] Regan, *op. cit.*:315

example, Irish cinema has been widely assessed from a social, moral or cultural perspective in the last decade, but its importance in promulgating official messages has received less attention.[20] By assessing official views of film propaganda and officialdom's interaction with independent film makers, the examples chosen will complement existing research while challenging how film policies, censorship and the films themselves are seen. Similarly, occasions of religious worship and official relations with the Catholic church have been extensively surveyed, building on Keogh's pioneering work.[21] They have, however, tended to focus on church-state relations, or the social implications of religious worship. However, events such as the centennial celebrations of Catholic Emancipation and the Eucharistic Congress yield a fresh perspective that highlights the importance of propaganda as a more pervasive current in official affairs than has hitherto been acknowledged. However, the nature of this work forces a degree of brevity that means that the examples proffered can never aspire to other than an illustrative effect.

II

Any study of the history of propaganda faces immediate difficulties in arriving at a workable definition of the term. This is partly because most definitions are more modern than the phenomenon that they attempt to describe. This places them at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the original intent of propagandists, many of whose views, as chapter one demonstrates, held that propaganda, despite the partisan uses to which it was frequently put, was ideally a neutral process of providing information. Even the terminology used to describe governmental communications through propaganda is contentious. No modern public relations textbook dares refer to propaganda unless it is by way of denigration, or with a mitigating apology for past sins in communications during periods of national duress. Edwards, for example, refers to British propaganda in the Great War: 'Truth, here, was not so critical but its sacrifice was justified in light of the need to win at all costs.'[22] But, in the 1920s and 1930s, propaganda was an honourable term. It simply meant the dissemination of persuasive information to a mass public, and was a recognised practice of both government and industry. Its use for perverse purposes in

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[20] These themes in Irish film history are particularly well treated by Rocket, 2004, while an insightful overview of cinema's early days in Ireland may be found in Condon, 2008.

[21] Keogh, 1986 and 1995 provided the academic framework for assessing church-state relations, and was in turn amplified by, among others, MacIntosh, 1999, Holmes, 2000 and Murray, 2000.

[22] Edwards, 2006: 11-12

Nazi Germany was the death knell for the term, although Nessmann, in his study of the origins of propaganda in Germany and Austria from the late nineteenth century, records that the more modern, and much less pejorative term public relations, was introduced to Germany in 1937.[23]

Modern definitions tend to propagate propaganda's dark side. Jowett and O'Donnell note that though it has common ground 'with information and persuasion, propaganda does not seek mutual understanding or mutual fulfilment of needs. Propaganda deliberately and systematically seeks to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.'[24] This is rather bland, and could be read to suggest that, for example, the 'Dig for Victory' campaign in Second World War Britain did not meet mutual needs of the government and the people. It is, however, a rare definition that does not seek to identify manipulative or deceitful intent on the propagandist's part. McQuail posits:

> It is the "enemy" that makes propaganda, while "our side" provides information, evidence and argument. In our time the first association of propaganda is generally with conflict between states, but the term can be applied to religion, politics and other matters of strong belief. It differs in some respects from simple persuasion attempts. It usually occurs on some strongly contested issue; it is often coercive and aggressive in manner; it is not objective and has little regard for truth, even if not necessarily false. It comes in a range of types from "black" (deceptive, frightening and unscrupulous) to "white" (soft and with a selective use of truth). Finally, it is always carried out to further some interest of the propagandist, not the target audience.[25]

Chomsky's harsh view of propaganda equates it with totalitarianism: 'State propaganda, when supported by the educated classes and when no deviation is permitted from it, can have a big effect. It was a lesson learned by Hitler and many others, and it has been pursued to this day.'[26] Where does that leave the issue of ethics versus effectiveness? To put it simply, the propaganda of Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini can be said to have been effective because it achieved party goals, even though it led to the ultimate destruction of their states. Neither Cumann na nGaedheal nor Fianna Fáil could claim to be unsullied

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[23] Nessmann, 2000: 216-7. It was used in a paper entitled 'Public Relations: ein Reklamekongreß für Werbefachleute der Banken in der USA' (Public Relations: a publicity congress for advertisers in banking in the USA).

[24] Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992: 35

[25] McQuail, 2000: 446

[26] Chomsky, 2002: 13

purists propagating only benign messages within a pluralist society. Cumann na nGaedheal's actions were at times harsh examples of statecraft, while Fianna Fáil's were overtly party political and created a cult of leader. But both succeeded in building a stable democracy, albeit in different ways; the former created an international reputation for the state, while the latter's use of propaganda saw it play to the domestic gallery. However, ethical considerations cannot be disregarded purely because of the apparent successes of propaganda. The long term implications are critical, and partisan propaganda was unlikely to serve the state's best interests.

This leads to the problem of distinguishing between official and partisan propaganda; sometimes the distinction is so slight as to be meaningless. Both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil engaged in the two forms, often seamlessly, as a message propagating a state action could equally redound positively on the party. A further issue arises when attempting to distinguish between propaganda and counter-propaganda: almost every message can be viewed from both perspectives, depending on the position ascribed to the participants – were, for example, state sanctioned executions propaganda against republicans, or a counter to republican propaganda which threatened the existence of the state? Indeed, with a democratic mandate establishing its legitimacy, can it said that any state engages in counter-propaganda? Such issues are not easily resolved, and are worthy of investigation in their own right. In this work, official or state propaganda is understood to mean propaganda by a party of government intended to benefit the state and nation, and accruing only incidental benefit to the party.

Grunig and Hunt treat propaganda a little more gently. They locate propaganda within the first of their Four Models of Public Relations, namely the press agentry model: 'Public relations serves a propaganda function in the press agentry/publicity model. Practitioners spread the faith of the organisation involved, often through incomplete, distorted or half-true information.'[27] Public relations, while no less easy to define, manages to convey elements of persuasive communication, albeit with a sense of the anodyne replacing Machiavellian overtones. The Public Relations Society of America defined it thus in 1988: 'Public Relations helps an organization and its publics adapt

[27] Grunig and Hunt, 1984: 21. The Four Models of Public Relations have shaped much of modern public relations theory. Denoting types of public relations and the eras in which they were or are most widely used, the models are: press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical and, the model's preference for modern public relations, two-way symmetrical communication.

mutually to each other.'[28] The Chartered Institute of Public Relations in Britain focuses on reputation management in its definition, alongside establishing and maintaining goodwill and mutual understanding. These definitions echo early definitions of propaganda by practitioners for hire in the United States, and the notion that truthfulness lies at the heart of all propaganda communications which, in Ireland, FitzGerald and Lester propounded.

These late twentieth-century definitions suggest that the historiography of propaganda has been beset by ideological difficulties. Modern public relations theory, much of it stemming from pioneering work by Grunig, recognises propaganda as its forebear, but expresses this with cautionary didactism. Thus attempts to provide critical, unbiased histories of propaganda are beset with difficulties. It is worth noting that most histories of public relations or propaganda have been written either by public relations academics with little formal training as historians, or by historians with no formal training in public relations.[29] This causes great difficulty in establishing a credible narrative. On the one hand, public relations historians, eager to provide the profession with a veneer of respectability, tend to highlight key personalities or successful public relations campaigns as exemplars of a proud modern profession, and gloss over unsavoury elements of its early propaganda history. Moloney, who views public relations as an historical act of manipulation against democracy conducted by power-seeking political forces and corporate interests, is a notable exception.[30] On the other hand, historians of public relations tend to demonise the profession, highlighting its nefarious impact on society. From such extremes, it is difficult to gain a real perspective on the history of propaganda.

Public relations writers have generally neglected to look beyond a narrow definition of history in their attempts to define the industry. Specifically, most public relations histories, such as those below, present a sequence of facts and a gallery of players, but not the critical appraisal of these that rigorous historiography requires. Moreover, unless an event or character have been clearly labelled as part of this history they are likely to be neglected. The potted histories of college textbooks aside, a review of public relations

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[28] Edwards, 2006: 6

[29] The distance between the public relations historian and the historian of public relations may best be gauged by comparing Cutlip, 1994 and Ewen, 1996.

[30] Moloney, 2000

literature reveals only a handful of books that treat the history of public relations as a serious academic pursuit. Cutlip *et al* write:

> Studying how public relations evolved provides insights into its functions, its strengths, and its weaknesses. Many practitioners do not have a sense of their calling's history and thus do not fully understand its place and purpose in society.... Published histories typically oversimplify what is a complex and dramatic story by emphasizing novelty and a few colourful characters.[31]

Though their impact has been patchy, nonetheless there have been valiant attempts to write national histories of public relations that encompass propaganda. Cutlip's history of American public relations, while voluminous in its detail, is largely an uncritical narrative regrettably lacking in sources, and reliant on hearsay and industry tales. Ewen's cultural history of public relations' influence in America is more reliable, but sceptical of its subject.[32] Colley's thin volume on Irish public relations is noble but insubstantial; like Cutlip he proffers information from dubious sources, but also includes some factual errors.[33] L'Etang's history of the development of public relations in Britain, while more reliable, offers another perspective in the historiography of propaganda by placing a modern sociological reading on her subject.[34]

Broadly speaking there are two schools of modern public relations theory. Most academics tend to favour either Grunig's management-driven work, or the philosophical and rhetorical perspective espoused by, among others, L'Etang and Elizabeth Toth, Grunig's successor in the University of Maryland. Grunig casts a long shadow as the *eminence grise* of public relations theory; his work with Hunt on identifying four models of public relations practice became, until the last decade or so, the accepted point of departure for most modern studies of public relations. It is, however, a mechanistic theory that takes little account of the human element in communication. Instead it relies heavily on the information or systems theory approaches that informed the scientific school of management theory, and seeks to portray public relations practice as an element within an open system comprising many variables. In contrast, the philosophical or rhetorical approach seeks to understand public relations as a communications process between an organisation and its publics, and is cognizant of the social, economic,

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[31] Cutlip *et al*, 2000: 101

[32] Ewen, *op. cit.*.

[33] Colley, 1993

[34] L'Etang, 2004

political and cultural factors that affect communication. Neither school, however, is founded on a deep understanding of historical public relations and propaganda. Thus, most public relations writers, who follow either of these points of view, tend to approach propaganda from a less than sound footing, expunging the word from any contemporary usage that equates it with public relations. Rather like a rakish uncle about whom nobody in the family wishes to talk, propaganda is an embarrassment to modern public relations. This is because through a process of oversimplification it has been accepted that public relations grew from propaganda, and that propaganda is inherently undemocratic.

Yet propaganda is a word that should be viewed in a neutral, dispassionate way. The act of placing information into the public domain, in and of itself, does not constitute anything unethical: that is governed by the intent and meaning of the communicator, and the receptiveness of the audience. To label the propaganda of Goebbels the same as the propaganda of Lester, despised by the Nazis for his role as High Commissioner for Danzig, is to accept a lazy and inaccurate use of the term. Throughout this work, it will be shown that the practice of Free State governments was to use information in a persuasive manner in order to win the support of the populace for their policies and politicians. In this, it differed little from – and may, arguably, be considered more ethical than - modern governmental communication, with its predilection for spinning and dissembling. Throughout this thesis, the term propaganda is preferred to public relations. This is because the latter term was not established in everyday use in the Free State while the former was. More importantly, using the contemporary term attempts to avoid viewing the inter-war practice of official communication through the subjective inflection of modern terminology.

Finally, the background in public relations practice and academia of the writer of this thesis should be noted. Personal experience of lecturing in public relations and political communication for over a decade, and membership of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) and the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) have informed a reading and understanding of the discipline that reflects current academic trends in public relations theory. In particular, adherence to professional codes of conduct can render unhelpful personal subjectivity to the interpretation and evaluation of the merits and demerits of historical campaigns, unless

kept in check.[35] Perspectives on propaganda in public relations academia often appear quite different to views espoused by historians. Therefore, throughout this work, a neutral viewpoint has been preferred that seeks to understand propaganda in the context of a particular time and political, social and cultural mores.

[35] Members of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland are bound by three codes of conduct. The Code of Athens (1965) is a global code, redolent of the UN Charter of Human Rights; the Code of Lisbon (1978) is a European version; and the institute's own code on public affairs and lobbying (2003) was an attempt to bring order to an industry that had featured prominently – and dishonourably - in early sessions of the Flood Tribunal.

Chapter One

The Origins of Free State Propaganda.

I

In the early twentieth century, American propagandists, particularly Ivy Lee, displayed an attachment to honesty and integrity, to allowing the public, aware of the sources of information, to think independently. There was, too, a determined attempt to professionalise propaganda, to make it more acceptable as a business and social function, through the adoption of psychology as its cornerstone. As the twentieth century developed, as radio and cinema offered new possibilities for mass communication, propaganda began to reach further into the public sphere, driving it, as Ewen notes, from the parlour to which it had retreated late in the previous century.[1]

From the mid-nineteenth century the American public was exposed to organised publicity ranging from Phineas T. Barnum's calculated bombast, to the 1896 presidential campaign, which produced 'a heavy stream of pamphlets, posters, press releases and other campaign propaganda.'[2] The era also witnessed the emergence of large corporations with the economic power to influence federal and state policies. Linking commerce and politics, campaigning journalists like George Creel, later the architect of America's Great War propaganda, Walter Lippmann, Ida Tarbell and Henry Demarest Lloyd (who wrote a searing treatise on business malpractice culminating in his maxim that 'publicity is the great moral disinfectant')[3] publicised business malpractices, forcing corporations into public defences of misdemeanours. The first propaganda firm for hire opened in Boston in 1900: The Publicity Bureau, which existed until 1912, listed clients in industry and education, including Harvard and MIT. By 1901, it claimed addresses in Boston, Washington and Paris.[4]

Prominent among early propagandists, Ivy Lee established his New York-based firm in 1907, following the dissolution of a 1904 partnership, Parker and Lee. A Princeton

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[1] Ewen, 1996: 52

[2] Cutlip, 1994: 2

[3] Lloyd, 1881: 317-34

[4] Cutlip, *op. cit.*: 3-4

student of Woodrow Wilson, Lee was a modestly talented journalist who came to propaganda via political campaigning.[5] He viewed propaganda as a social good:

> Many people object to what they call propaganda. It is a bad word and I wish there were some substitute for it, but after all it means the effort to propagate ideas ... All that can be involved in propaganda is a demand, which the public is entitled to make, that when it is given information upon which it is expected to form conclusions, it shall know who is doing the telling, who is responsible for the information.[6]

Lee was aware of the misuses of propaganda, and attempted to tread the fine line between representing controversial clients including the Rockefeller family, railroad interests, and, in the 1930s, German company IG Farben, and disseminating truthful editorial material to the press:

> There is, of course, a wrong use of propaganda. When public utilities buy newspapers and don't let the public know that they bought them they are obviously making wrong use of propaganda. When power companies have school books written by professors in colleges and have these books put into schools without the knowledge of the people as to who is responsible for putting them there, that is wrong use of propaganda.[7]

While propaganda developed as a commercial activity, it drew on politics, sociology and psychology for credibility. Where propaganda had been intuitive, it became cerebral in an effort to make it acceptable and professional: propagandists were publicising their own *métier*. The psychology of Gabriel Tarde, Gustave le Bon and Sigmund Freud crossed the Atlantic, and their theories were appropriated to explain how propaganda functioned. Creel fleetingly referred to discussions on Freud and Jung in fashionable New York salons in 1911,[8] and in 1914 Ivy Lee promoted the importance of influencing crowd behaviour: 'From the beginning of history, popular leaders have taken account of the fact that the people in the mass act upon impulses. Such leaders have not been disposed to exaggerate the intellectuality of mankind at large.'[9] He noted four 'elements in the psychology of the multitude' that leaders needed to understand: that 'crowds do not reason'; 'crowds are led by symbols and phrases'; 'success in dealing with crowds... rest upon the art of getting believed in'; and 'the problem of influencing the people en

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[5] *Ibid.:* 43-4. Lee campaigned on Seth Low's failed New York mayoral bid in 1903, and was recruited by his future business partner, George Parker, to work for the 1904 Democratic Party presidential campaign. Parker had been Grover Cleveland's publicity manager in the 1892 election.

[6] MLP, Lee, 6/11: undated. Emphasis in the original.

[7] MLP, Lee, 8/2: 23 February, 1930

[8] Creel, 1947: 96

[9] MLP, Lee, 8/11: 19 May, 1914.

masse is that of providing leaders who can fertilize the imagination and organize the will of crowds.'[10] Lee took his views from le Bon and Gerald Stanley Lee (no relation), a quondam pastor and polymath, whose writings were imbued with religious references that resonated with Lee, a preacher's son from Georgia: 'This art of steering heads inside which has come to be the secret art of all the other arts, the secret religion of all the religions, is also the secret of building and maintaining a civilization and a successful and permanent business.'[11]

Lippmann regarded psychology as a framework for propaganda but disagreed with many psychologists, whose work, he felt, lacked political application: 'the trouble with them is that the "psychology" is weak and uninformed, distorted by moral enthusiasms, and put out without any particular reference to the task of statesmanship.'[12] He was hopeful for Freudianism, and adapted Freud's dream theory to espouse the supremacy of symbols, seeing the 'strategic employment of media images as the secret to modern power.'[13] He wrote:

> unconscious casuistry deceives us all.... A wealth of evidence could be adduced to support this from the studies of dreams and fantasies made by the Freudian school of psychologists. They have shown how constantly the mind cloaks a deep meaning in a shallow incident - how the superficial is all the time being shoved into the light of consciousness in order to conceal a buried intention; how inveterate is our use of symbols.[14]

For Freud, dreams signified unexpressed anxieties that required illumination to be understood. Dreams provided visual clues that permitted psychoanalysts to unlock the individual's unconscious. These symbols, Lippmann held, permitted access to the unconscious of the masses rather than individual. Adopting his theory, American propagandists began to use symbols to communicate with and, later, to steer the masses.

Unlike the commercial focus of American propaganda, in Britain the state, which used propaganda as a means of mass education and garnering public support for policies, was the primary instigator, although public bodies, too, developed propaganda activities. Ingham credits a Post Office advertising campaign in 1876 as the first organised

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[10] *Ibid.*.

[11] MLP, Lee, 7/9, unpubl. mss: undated, c. mid 1920s.

[12] Lippmann, 2005: 75

[13] Ewen, *op. cit.*: 157

[14] Lippmann, *op. cit.*: 142

governmental propaganda campaign. The establishment of two state publications, the *Board of Trade Journal* (1886) and the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* (1893) 'both of which supplied factual information and statistics to businessmen' were also important propaganda antecedents.[15] From the outset, propaganda activities were undertaken by untrained civil servants in a 'random and piecemeal' process and it was not until the 1920s that state propaganda, using lessons from the Great War, was conducted professionally.[16]

L'Etang posits that the establishment of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) in 1905 was a signal development in British propaganda. The organisation, set up to inform the public about the activities and social role of local government, and to lobby on behalf of its members, considered forming a 'Press Gang' to help with publicity in 1906.[17] The British Medical Organisation initiated a campaign in 1909 to raise awareness among midwives and general practitioners of cervical cancer.[18] Ingham notes that the Insurance Commission, acting on the directions of Lloyd George, embarked on a campaign in 1912, employing lecturers to explain the 1911 Insurance Act to employers and workers.[19]

Although the Conservative Party established a Press Bureau in 1911, a perusal of House of Commons debates reveals that propaganda was frequently used as a pejorative term indicating specious or malicious misinformation. The role of propaganda in spreading ideas that were detrimental to the well-being of society exercised parliamentarians, and between 1900 and 1914 propaganda received dishonourable mentions in debates as diverse as the Boer War, Irish nationalism, and the provision of education in public schools. However, there were occasions when the activities of popular movements elicited respect from members. In 1908, Philip Snowden said of the Suffragists that: 'there was not in the country at the present time, with the single exception of the Socialist

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[15] Ingham, 2003: 34

[16] *Ibid.:* 35

[17] L'Etang, 2004: 22

[18] Moscucci, 2005: 1319

[19] Ingham, *op. cit.:* 34

movement, a movement which was so vigorous and so active, which carried on such persistent and consistent propaganda, as that for the enfranchisement of women.'[20]

The activities of suffragists gained much attention. Theirs was an example of a mass campaign that did not originate with the government, and indeed actively campaigned against administrations. Ivy Lee, a regular visitor to England, recalled that:

> The movement as if it were a single human entity cried out for expression. The spiritual need for creative action was upon it. In that year [1908] there began a series of extraordinary public demonstrations, the more surprising because they were a direct attack upon the citadels of chivalry, because they flew in the face of tradition and because in some instances they went to such extremes that the general public was horrified. The immediate motive in all these instances was the will to create propaganda. There was a policy established favoring what the suffragettes called 'meaningful acts'.[21]

Political thinker Graham Wallas, in an echo of the psychology that was finding favour in America, observed that among the suffragists 'was one who had received a serious academic training in psychology, and... the tactics actually employed were in large part due to her plea that in order to make men think one must begin by making them feel.'[22]

While British governments may have had issue with propaganda carried out against it, there was a sense that it was an unavoidable element of public discourse. To proscribe undesirable propaganda was, itself, undemocratic, and the best method of dealing with it was to drown it under a wave of state propaganda. Thus, propaganda in Britain grew out of 'state propaganda and bureaucratic intelligence' with a strong ethos of delivering public service.[23] However, the Great War and revolution in Ireland would later put this functionally transparent execution of propaganda to the test.

Propaganda in Ireland was political. There was no burgeoning industry as in America, and commercial publicity was the simple advertisement. There was, too, an absence of domestic governmental propaganda, although extraordinary events such as the Boer War were propagandised through recruiting campaigns and official press coverage. What distinguishes Irish separatist and nationalist propaganda from British and American was the absence of a national government: all governmental propaganda was external, and

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[20] HC, vol. 185, 28 February 1908, col. 268

[21] MLP, Lee, 7/12, unpubl. mss.: undated, 1928

[22] Wallas, 1948: 177

[23] Koper, 2004: 471

efforts to press a case on government necessitated an international dimension. Unionists, however, saw governmental propaganda as a domestic matter. Nonetheless, the two main forces on the island, nationalism and unionism, elected members to an overseas parliament, and were forced to win support in Ireland and on the British mainland.

Unionist propaganda in Britain was particularly well-organised. Founded as a counter-propaganda organisation to Parnellism in 1885, the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union (ILPU) had political, social and economic aims: increasing Ireland's wealth and improving local government were as important as electing unionist politicians.[24] Influencing public opinion was a policy of the organisation from its inception. Edward Caulfield Houston wrote to Lord Castletown expressing the view that: 'It is hoped that... the founding of the Association... may afford facilities to men of position and standing in Ireland to take their proper part in influencing public opinion.'[25] Having developed into the Irish Unionist Alliance, by 1898 the organisation maintained a London office. C.A. Owen Lewis, secretary of the Alliance wrote to Castletown: 'The London Offices are being kept open for the diffusion of information throughout Great Britain'. He also noted that a 'record is being carefully kept and tabulated of all information likely to be of service at any time, and a file is being kept of all the leading newspapers published in Ireland and England.'[26]

In 1906, the Alliance was the pre-eminent unionist organisation in Britain. It welcomed news that another unionist organisation was to be established there and issued a report to the new body, the Union Defence League (UDL), of its activities so that overlap could be avoided:

> The Alliance has for many years supplied speakers for English platforms, during the recent General Election it sent... over 130 speakers....
> The Alliance publishes each month a journal called Notes from Ireland.... This journal is sent to Members of Parliament, Editor of Newspapers, Reading Rooms and Unionists generally....
> The Alliance supplies also articles each week to English Newspapers. These Articles are entitled 'The Outlook in Ireland'.... This branch of the work of the Alliance could be largely extended if the members of the Union Defence League

[24] NLI, Castletown, 35,320(6): undated, c.1887

[25] *Ibid.*.

[26] *Ibid.*, 35,320(7): undated, June 1898

> would bring pressure to bear on newspapers with which they are in touch to accept and publish these articles....
> But the principal work of the Alliance with regard to literature is the publication and distribution of pamphlets and leaflets.... In this work the Alliance not only aims at reaching readers at home, but has also endeavoured to influence opinion in the Colonies....
> Besides the foregoing the Alliance organise meetings and demonstrations in Ireland which give expression to Unionist feeling and opinion.[27]

Despite the outwardly friendly tone, and suggestion of how the UDL could assist, the Alliance felt compelled to set down a marker on fundraising activities:

> With regard to the collection of funds the Committee fear that it would be impossible to avoid over-lapping.... The Committee think that so far as Ireland is concerned the collection of subscriptions should be left to the Alliance and to the Ulster organisations. With regard to the collection of funds in England they would suggest... that some acknowledgement should be made by the Union Defence League, in their application for financial support, of the work that is being done by the Alliance, and the desire of the League not to interfere with subscriptions at present sent to the Alliance.[28]

The Unionist Association of Ireland, established in 1908, wrote in its first annual report of a successful campaign of public meetings in England and Scotland

> At all of these meetings a large and new collection of lantern slides... was exhibited.... The pictures give graphic views of occurrences in the disturbed districts, of boycotted harvesters working under police protection, of country houses that have been fired into, and portraits of persons who have been the victims of United Irish League terrorism and are under constant police protection. It is not too much to say that these realistic photographs of places and persons closely associated with the prevailing and still unchecked lawlessness in Ireland have created a profound impression....[29]

Further on the report claims that 'the meetings have done much to establish a sounder feeling across the Channel with regard to Irish affairs, and they have served to strengthen British opinion with regard to the importance of maintaining unimpaired the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland.'[30]

Unionist propaganda was highly developed, with a strong network of wealthy, influential members and was clearly capable of campaigning in Ireland and Britain. Indeed, that capability was a necessity. Persistent propaganda by advocates of land ownership reform,

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[27] NLI, Clonbrock, 35,780(5): 9 November, 1906. Emphasis in the original.

[28] *Ibid.*.

[29] *Ibid.*, 35,780(6): Undated, c.1909

[30] *Ibid.*.

home rule and cultural nationalism had, over the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, presented unionism with forceful adversaries. That these adversaries espoused methods that were, according to each one's needs and status, legal or illegal, and sometimes combining both, presented unionism with the difficulty of addressing their arguments in the correct public arena. The Irish Parliamentary Party, though constitutional and law-abiding, nevertheless initiated unpopular and ungentlemanly debating procedures in Westminster, the better 'to educate English opinion about Irish needs.'[31] The Land League, although avowedly law-abiding, nonetheless profited in propaganda terms from the plethora of agrarian disturbances perpetrated under its banner. Meanwhile, socially attractive organisations and movements, such as the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association, gives some indication of the diversity of the opponents faced by unionism.

However, by the first decade of the century, these constitutional, social and agrarian forms of nationalism were being overtaken by a new, separatist nationalist propaganda that was a mélange of cultural, political and revolutionary ideals. In the vanguard were Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers and Dungannon Clubs. Thus in 1901, while Clonbrock was establishing a Galway branch of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Help Society, a benevolent fund for ex-servicemen and their families,[32] nationalist propaganda against Boer War recruitment was increasing. Drawing on late eighteenth century Irish republican ideals, the emergence of Dungannon Clubs from 1904 crystallised anti-recruitment propaganda, and became a focal point for extreme nationalism. The manifesto of the clubs claimed:

> England governs this country against the wishes of its people. Ethically her occupation of Ireland is immoral and indefensible - but John Bull is not worried with points of ethics or conscience. But so long as he governs this land against the will of its people, he has got to expect the utmost opposition from the people he insists on governing.[33]

Arthur Griffith's reputation as a propagandist rests on his output as a journalist and pamphleteer. His was not a visceral propaganda of demonisation or verbal legerdemain, but was the propaganda of the wordsmith, of crafted prose that succinctly and persuasively delineated arguments. Informing his writing was an intellect capable of transforming dry facts into a potent argument. *The Resurrection of Hungary* set the tone for

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[31] Lyons, 1973: 155

[32] NLI, Clonbrock, 35,782(5): 13 May, 1901

[33] NLI, Hobson, 13,166(4): c. August, 1905

intellectualised constitutional nationalist propaganda that continued over the next two decades, most notably with Desmond FitzGerald: 'a policy of Passive Resistance and a policy of Parliamentarianism are very different things, although the people of Ireland have been drugged into believing that the only alternative to armed resistance is speech-making in the British Parliament.'[34] FitzGerald was an admirer of Griffith's propaganda, and credited him as the greatest influence on Irish nationalism:

> The little paper he edited had a restricted sale. The smallness of its circulation might well have led people to assume that it was not likely to have an effect on the country, for people always think that influence must be direct and visible. Whereas in the realm of ideas it is more frequently indirect and occult....
>
> ...people who thought that Arthur Griffith only affected the minute circle who read his paper were gravely in error.... And... if you went into a newsagent's in a small town and asked for Griffith's paper, the reply was that they did not stock it, or that they only had a certain number for people who ordered it, but if you moved on from there to some place where people were gathered together to talk and argue you would find somebody giving voice to Griffith's teaching or even quoting him by name.[35]

In contrast to Griffith, Patrick Pearse's writing was incendiary. Opening *The Murder Machine* he wrote:

> A French writer has paid the English a very well-deserved compliment. He says that they never commit a useless crime. When they hire a man to assassinate an Irish patriot, when they blow a Sepoy from the mouth of a cannon, when they produce a famine in one of their dependencies, they have always an ulterior motive. They do not do it for fun. Humorous as these crimes are, it is not the humour of them, but their utility, that appeals to the English. Unlike Gilbert's Mikado, they would see nothing humorous in boiling oil. If they retained boiling oil in their penal code, they would retain it, as they retain flogging before execution in Egypt, strictly because it has been found useful.[36]

Yet, there was subtlety in Pearse's fiction, poetry and drama, though the content was manifestly Christian, Gaelic and preoccupied with sacrificing one's life for a greater good. The young Giolla na Naomh (The Saint's Gilly) in *The King* succeeds to the kingship when the profane incumbent, forsaken by God, renounces it. The youth leads his army in victorious battle, but is killed. The final line proclaims: 'Do not keen this child, for he hath purchased freedom for his people. Let shouts of exultation be raised and let a canticle be sung in praise of God.'[37]

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[34] Griffith, 2003: 5-6

[35] FitzGerald *et al*, 1968: 2-3

[36] Pearse, 1976: 5

[37] O'Buachalla, 1979: 79-80

Literature as social propaganda, already evident in tales of derring-do in the style of Kipling and Ryder Haggard, and the prosaic reportage of missionaries and proselytisers, became increasingly popular in Britain during the Great War. In Ireland, that process was already underway. Douglas Hyde's efforts to collate folk tales were a characteristic endeavour from a man whose *The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland* concluded:

> I would earnestly appeal to every one, whether Unionist or Nationalist, who wishes to see the Irish nation produce its best - surely whatever our politics are we all wish that - to set his face against this constant running to England for our books, literature, music, games, fashions, and ideas. I appeal to every one whatever his politics - for this is no political matter - to do his best to help the Irish race to develop in future upon Irish lines, even at the risk of encouraging national aspirations, because upon Irish lines alone can the Irish race once more become what it was of yore - one of the most original, artistic, literary, and charming peoples of Europe.[38]

Celtic studies, particularly Hyde and Kuno Meyer's work, gave respectability to ancient legends and the Irish language.

It was not enough to admire ancient legends, and profess interest in the language: it was almost *de rigeur* for the committed nationalist to learn Irish. The founding of the GAA also rendered service by inculcating a sense of Gaelic sporting identity. Sporting prowess and nationalism dovetailed neatly, with Celtic lore linking contemporary hurling with the mythology of Cuchulainn, a major figure for Pearse. Gaelic games were a manifestation of purity of spirit, and an exemplar of a sporting tradition pre-existing British rule by millennia. Active participation in sport by the ordinary citizen became a most assertive form of propaganda. But propaganda by action was not solely a nationalist phenomenon. Unionist propaganda was also propaganda by action, as the creation of the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Larne gun-running and the Ulster and British covenants demonstrate. However, with the attractions of a distinct language and literature, and unique sports like hurling which brought resonances of an heroic past, nationalism was able to offer participants something unionism could not. Though both traditions espoused propaganda by action, culturally and socially nationalism stole a march on unionism by establishing itself within communities with forms of propaganda like language acquisition and sporting prowess that were not necessarily political or confrontational.

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[38] O'Conaire, 1986: 170

The establishment of GAA and Gaelic League clubs was an organisational prototype for nationalists. Though mass movements had existed before, they had been neither so widespread, nor so embedded in their communities. Nationalist propaganda reached a wide audience through dissemination of pamphlets, Griffith's variously titled newspapers, and participation. It created a vibrant, informed and active society that ultimately became the birthplace of more forceful organisations, with more branches of Sinn Fein, the Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan appearing before the Great War.

II

Despite its late entry to the Great War, America embarked on a formidable propaganda campaign. Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI) under George Creel's chairmanship. State and military propaganda for the war effort was channelled through the committee. Recollecting his chairmanship of the CPI, Creel commented that the committee produced 'propaganda in the truest sense of the word, meaning the "propagation of the faith."'[39] He observed that 'before a sound, steadfast public opinion could be formed, it had to be informed. Not manipulated, not tricked, and not wheedled, but given every fact in the case.'[40] Though Creel disliked censorship, and distinguished between necessary secrecy and censorship, he accepted:

> the need of a large measure of secrecy... but insisted that the desired results could be obtained without... a censorship law.... Suspicious enough by reason of natural anxieties, a straight-out censorship would inevitably stir demoralizing fears in the heart of every father and mother and open the door to every variety of rumor.[41]

While Creel's institution of a voluntary press code of self-censorship became a stick for critics to beat him,[42] the CPI's Division of News was instructed to furnish the press with information that did not defer to 'generals and admirals reared in a school of iron silence'; approximately 16,000 local newspapers received the division's weekly war news

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[39] Creel, *op. cit.:* 158. Creel's understanding of the word reflected its etymology and seventeenth-century ecclesiastical origins: established by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda was a counter-reformation movement to reinforce Catholicism in western Europe, and spread its message throughout the new world.

[40] *Ibid.:* 161

[41] *Ibid.:* 157

[42] HIS, Creel, 1/5, 'The New Yorker' article by Harvey O'Higgins: undated. O'Higgins, a volunteer syndicated features writer on the CPI, defended Creel against the newspapers' complaints.

digest.[43] Indeed, the CPI's only direct censorship was over outgoing cable communications, which had little effect on the press, including the international and non-English language press in America, to which the CPI paid especial attention. The Division of Foreign Language Newspapers monitored the international press, and translated pamphlets for distribution domestically and internationally. The Foreign Press Bureau relayed 1,000 words daily by radio across Europe, Central and South America, and prepared material for publication in international newspapers. Naturalized citizens and aliens resident within America were targeted by the CPI and other volunteer organisations such as the National Security League and the American Defense Society.

The CPI saw itself as an educative organisation and incorporated a Division of Civil and Educational Cooperation which published pamphlets written by its own staff and 'more than 3,000 writers, chiefly college professors, historians and publicists.' Its reach was immense: the National Historical Board 'at the instance of the division, is also stimulating the study of the war by teachers, pupils and communities' while 'six great associations of universities and colleges... are cooperating to distribute to their faculties and students the publications of this division.' Public schools received pamphlets with teaching instructions, and the Boy Scout movement functioned as a distribution agency.[44] In all, over a dozen national organisations were involved in disseminating and teaching the division's output, with over eighteen million pamphlets distributed by the end of 1917 alone. Possibly the most effective CPI educational propaganda was the Division of Four Minute Men, 'the leading patriotic citizens of the community.'[45] All volunteers, they spoke at public gatherings for approximately four minutes on propaganda topics distributed by the committee in a weekly bulletin. At their peak they numbered 15,000. The success of the venture persuaded Major General William Biddle to request that speech notes be sent to training camp commanders,[46] while a Junior Four Minute Men youth group, with school competitions monitored by teachers, was also established.[47]

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[43] HIS, Creel, 2/18, 'Activities of the Committee on Public Information': 8

[44] *Ibid.*: 8-9

[45] *Ibid.*: 12

[46] *Ibid.*.

[47] Ewen, *op. cit.*: 118

Creel recognised the role technology played in propaganda, and established Divisions of Film, and of Foreign Picture Service which filmed army and navy manoeuvres, military sporting events and liberty loan features. The CPI formulated a coercive clause that prevented producers selling films abroad unless buyers agreed to screen CPI productions[48] and the committee offered an advisory service to producers 'making patriotic pictures'.[49] Creel's partiality towards cinema came from practical experience: he had written film treatments for a Hollywood studio, and had acted in a Western movie in 1910.[50]

A formidable pool of talent ensured the CPI's success: Creel, Edward Bernays and Carl Byoir worked on it, while a young Major Douglas McArthur served as Creel's military attaché. Ivy Lee, representing the American Red Cross, worked in tandem with it. Many employees were already journalists, propagandists or academics, in contrast to British and French efforts. Creel's experience points to interesting differences between the allies' vision of propaganda. Although Charles Dana Gibson, director of the Division of Pictorial Publicity, did use emotive images of German atrocities in posters that promoted xenophobia and fear among the American public, Creel distrusted atrocity propaganda:

> From the first we held that undocumented 'atrocity stories' were bound to have bad reactions, for if the Germans could manage to refute one single charge, they would use it to discredit our entire department. This view was shared by the President and the War Department, and once on the authority of General Pershing, and again by direction of General March, we issued denials of 'horror stuff' unsupported by date and place.[51]

While America's allies used atrocity propaganda, Creel 'did not like the ideas of either the British or the French' and despite Lord Northcliffe calling several conferences on joint Allied propaganda no formal co-operation emerged.[52] Creel's recollection of the deployment as a propagandist in America of 'Sir Frederick Smith, a brilliant man, but with the true British gift of offensiveness' may attest to cultural differences.[53]

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[48] Creel, *op. cit.:* 169

[49] HIS, Creel, 2/18 'Activities': 15

[50] Creel, *op. cit.:* 132-8

[51] *Ibid.:* 196

[52] *Ibid.:* 172

[53] *Ibid.:* 162. It is not inconceivable that Creel, an ardent supporter of Irish nationalism, took a personal dislike to Smith for his anti-Irish politics and, as Attorney General, prosecution of Sir Roger Casement.

Nonetheless, a reciprocal arrangement was instituted with France and Britain to exchange war photographs for propaganda purposes.[54]

Remarkably, but consistent with the commercial development of propaganda in America, the CPI was part-funded by its own activities, with the film division particularly profitable. Accounts from April to December 1917 indicated that the committee disbursed over three million dollars.[55] However, by the war's end, final accounts showed $6.85m granted from the President's Fund and Congress, and commercial earnings of $2,937,447 returned to the treasury. The figures suggest that the committee succeeded in achieving its objective of propagandising the war by being run as an efficient commercial operation. It was a contrast to British war propaganda.

Negative connotations of propaganda in pre-war Britain contributed to a lack of preparedness when hostilities commenced. While Germany had experience of state propaganda, mainly in military bodies and its diplomatic service,[56] British responses were clumsy, with a Press Bureau established in August, 1914 and a War Propaganda Bureau in September. Ingham describes Britain's disorganisation in 1914, and glosses over Charles Masterson's involvement.[57] Yet Masterson, head of the War Propaganda Bureau, was a shrewd propagandist who quickly identified novel means of achieving propaganda. However, propaganda was hindered by governmental vacillation: under Asquith, the Home Office, Foreign Office and War Office, among others, shared responsibility for propaganda. It was not until Lloyd George's premiership that propaganda was centralised within a Department of Information, which, nine months before the Armistice, eventually became the Ministry of Information.

The flamboyant Frederick Smith was unfortunate to be appointed Director of the Press Bureau with responsibility for censorship. Personally ill-equipped for the position, and with no press experience, he held the directorship for just seven weeks. From the outset, the nature of the office was in question, with Kitchener advocating strict censorship over material injurious to the war effort, while Churchill, aware that in the absence of official

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[54] HIS, Creel, 2/18, 'Activities': 13

[55] *Ibid.:* 19-20

[56] Ingham, *op. cit.:* 35

[57] *Ibid.:* 35. Ingham does not name Masterson, but simply refers to him by his ministerial title of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

material 'newspapers, in default of facts, are rather inclined to fill up their columns with gossip' preferred that it institute 'a steady stream of trustworthy information... which... will serve to keep the country properly and truthfully informed... of what can be told, and what is fair and reasonable.'[58]

By early 1915 propaganda was beginning to take effect, and cable and postal censorship was in operation. The Press Bureau, too, was improved, with a larger staff than Smith had enjoyed, as Robert Crewe Milnes explained:

> the Solicitor-General has undertaken the control. He has two experienced assistants... Sir Frank Swettenham, who had a distinguished Colonial career, and Sir Edward Cook, who is well known as a writer and publicist. My right hon. friend has about fifty assistants, naval, military and civil. The naval censors have been selected by the Admiralty, the military by the War Office, and the civil by the Director. All Press cable messages pass through the office and are censored there. They are censored in accordance with instructions, some received from the War Office, some from the Admiralty, some from the Foreign Office, and some from other public Departments.[59]

While Northcliffe argued against any official policy of secrecy, and won rights for correspondents to report from the front lines provided that the material would contribute to improving national morale,[60] it is apparent that British press censorship was more stringent than in America.

American thinking dictated that propagandists mediated between leaders and the masses, but British propagandists were leaders in their own right. Following a stint in service in France (where he was engaged behind the lines as a regimental recorder) Smith became Attorney General and, later, Lord Birkenhead. Politicians and novelists John Buchan and H.G. Wells, and press magnates Lords Beaverbrook and Northcliffe were all prominent propagandists, with the latter becoming Director of Propaganda under Lloyd George. In his memoir, Buchan glosses over his wartime activities in 'the queer circumspect world of the Secret Service'[61] to which Masterson recruited him. Buchan closely observed Masterson's recruitment of novelists and artists to propagandise the war effort: 'I saw at close quarters the intricate mechanism which directed the War at home, one of the

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[58] HC, vol. 65, 7 August, 1914, cols 2153-6. See also Campbell, 1983: 374-5.

[59] HL, vol. 18, 5 May, 1915, cols 919-20

[60] Clarke, undated, c.1950: 109

[61] Buchan, 1984: 169

strangest mixtures of amateur and professional, talent and charlatanry, the patriot and the arriviste which history has known.'[62]

Masterson's perspicacity saw fiction writing as a persuasive force, and Buchan's contribution to wartime propaganda was more tangible than he avowed: his espionage novels *The Thirty Nine Steps*, *Greenmantle* and, in 1919, *Mr Standfast* provided Britons with a hero, Richard Hannay, who demonstrated explicitly British values, but was remarkable for his ordinariness. In Wells' *Mr Britling Sees it Through*, the eponymous protagonist, whose surname may well parody the stereotypical little Englander, experiences the war for himself:

> This isn't the sort of war... that is settled by counting guns and rifles. Something that has oppressed us all has become intolerable.... And it will be ended. I don't know what soldiers and politicians think... but I do know... that all we millions of reasonable civilised onlookers are prepared to spend our last shillings and give all our lives now, rather than see Germany unbeaten. I know that the same thing is felt in America, and that given half a chance... America also will be in this war by our side. Italy will come in.... France will fight like one man. I'm quite prepared to believe that the Germans have countless rifles and guns; have got the most perfect maps, spies, plans... that they have got a thousand tremendous surprises in equipment up their sleeves. I'm quite prepared for sweeping victories for them and appalling disasters for us. Those are the first things. What I do know is that the Germans understand nothing of the spirit of man; that they do not dream for a moment of the devil of resentment this war will arouse....[63]

Atrocity propaganda was an aspect of British propaganda that, for all it created a mythology around victims, was largely factual. Posters and pamphlets on the execution of Edith Cavell and the rape of Belgian nuns created paragons while demonising the enemy. While such exhortations may have worked in Britain, the reaction of Irish nationalists suggests that British atrocity propaganda was not merely of little effect in Ireland, but served to galvanise opinion against Britain. Greater subtlety was required, but the Easter Rising and subsequent unrest meant that Ireland became another arena for British warfare by propaganda.

British Great War propaganda was regimented by government policy. It lacked the freedom and authority of its American counterpart, and was, unlike the CPI, reliant on state subvention. Both, of course, profited from the free propaganda provided by the

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[62] *Ibid.:* 170

[63] Wells, 1985: 172-3

press, but Britain was more likely to make use of atrocity propaganda, and a fictive narrative in literature. That it was felt to smack of the underhand and the devious was evident in post-war Britain, when state propaganda was looked on as an untrustworthy endeavour to which a peacetime British public could not be subjected.

Nationalist propaganda during the Great War divided those who viewed supporting Britain in a short war as the best way of achieving Home Rule, and physical force nationalists – constitutional and advanced factions. McConnel documents that, despite advocating enlistment, the Irish Parliamentary Party historically attracted few members with a military background, and few of the party's MPs were young enough to serve: only six enlisted for duty.[64] One, Stephen Gwynn, became a captain in the Connaught Rangers. His poem, 'The Irish Brigade, 1914' was a stirring call to arms for Irishmen, vaunting them to the premier ranks of the British army, over and above other nations serving the colours:

> Must English fill the Connaughts' ranks? Welsh pad the Munsters' line?
> Where stood the Dublin Fusiliers, Scots give the countersign?
> Or when the Iniskillings faint, shall Sikhs the trench re-man?
> Pathan and Gurkha finish what the Irish Guards began?
>
> No shame for comrades help to seek; but when the Irish fall,
> To Ireland for more Irishmen first comes the clarion call.
> Who says she cannot spare her sons to pay her honour's debt?
> Poor Ireland is poor Ireland still – but abject never yet.[65]

The IPP came to be seen as the central nationalist organisation in pro-recruitment propaganda in Ireland. Its efforts to promulgate voluntary enlistment as the best means of achieving Home Rule were, however, constantly undermined by British desire to institute conscription, and Sinn Féin determination to use it as a propaganda weapon.

During the war the unusual circumstance occurred of an element within nationalism agitating for the same cause, albeit for different ideologies, as unionism. Thus, IPP efforts at promoting recruitment were mirrored by unionist organisations. R.W. Simmons wrote to Clonbrock thanking him for his support in recruiting: 'I am indeed grateful to you for your letter of 5th inst expressing appreciation of my giving the theatre for the Recruiting Rally on Saturday. I only wish I could do more in the great cause for

[64] McConnel, 2007: 415-6

[65] NLI, Clonbrock, 35,782(10): undated

which we are fighting.'[66] The Honorary Secretary of the Galway Recruiting Committee, J.S. Young, also expressed his gratitude to Clonbrock and informed him that 23 recruits had signed up.[67] Meanwhile, Lady Clonbrock was active in charitable work, harnessing the support of various Galway organisations and committees to send food and clothing to troops.[68] She was also involved in notifying serving or discharged servicemen to apply to either the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society, or the Galway War Fund Association for assistance.[69]

Much of advanced nationalist propaganda during the war was, specifically, counter-propaganda. The Central Council for the Organising of Recruitment in Ireland (CCORI) and the Irish Recruitment Council (IRC) expended large sums in propaganda, and anti-war propaganda was drowned out by recruitment campaigns and patriotic, charitable actions. Yet recruitment was a focal point for advanced nationalism, which re-trod the familiar route of earlier anti-Boer War recruitment. A plethora of nationalist newspapers, many short-lived, took an anti-recruitment stance, with Griffith prominent. Novick notes that balladry and poetry were potent forms of anti-recruitment propaganda.[70] These found a home in popular culture and the advanced nationalist press.

However, advanced nationalist propaganda was not merely press-focussed. It was, rather the propaganda of action, and no propaganda was as effective as the doomed Easter Rising, and Britain's heavy-handed response. The rebels could hardly have been shown leniency, but the imposition of martial law, the enactment of the Defence of the Realm Act and the threat of conscription gave Sinn Féin and the IRB ample propaganda material. As Foster comments: 'the British authorities behaved more and more in the manner that IRB propaganda desired.'[71] More importantly, capitalising on an upsurge in support, advanced nationalism quickly engaged in electoral politics, and in the 'campaign of the snows' the Sinn Féin electoral propaganda machine, assisted by Cumann na mBan and Fr Michael O'Flanagan succeeded in having Count Plunkett elected as MP for North Roscommon in 1917, seizing an IPP seat.

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[66] *Ibid.:* 6 October, 1915

[67] *Ibid.:* 6 October, 1915

[68] NLI, Clonbrock, 35,796(6): undated, c.1919

[69] *Ibid.*, 35,796(5): undated

[70] Novick, *op. cit.*: 33-6

[71] Foster, 1988: 485

The type of propaganda carried out by advanced nationalists varied greatly. It was by times humorous, Christian, Celtic, rooted in the tragedy of British conquest and calling to mind the contemporary fate of Belgium at the hands of Germany. Outside Ireland, the work of freelance propagandists sympathetic to the nationalist cause was important, but more likely to be vitriolic. Limerick-born Thomas St John Gaffney, a Germanophile and American diplomat in Munich, excoriated Britain in a pamphlet written in German and later translated into English:

> Last year Ireland again rose in arms in order that the **sham pretences of the British tyrant might be exposed to a deluded and deceived world**. My readers will remember the riot of bloodshed in which this insurrection was suppressed. There is no crime that the English charge against the Germans in Belgium that the English themselves did not commit in Ireland. The murder of the innocent, shooting of women, children and priests, and open robbery and loot were of daily occurrence. Without court martial or hearing, men of character and standing were shot in cold blood by orders of the British officers.
> **When the Black Book recording the English atrocities in Ireland during this rising is published, Lord Bryce's story of the Belgian and Armenian atrocities will sink into insignificance by comparison.**[72]

Creel recalled meeting the Sinn Féin leadership in early 1919, and was impressed by their demeanour: 'For all their implacability, the Sinn Feiners were far more reasonable than the Irish-American group in Paris.'[73] It would appear that even with similar goals, advanced nationalist propagandists in Ireland were more adept at garnering support than supporters overseas, whose propaganda during the war was more likely to be declamatory and harsh.

III

War taught American propagandists how to sell a message, and a wave of commercial propagandists and in-house departments ensued. While Byoir, Pendleton Dudley and Tommy Ross (Ivy Lee's business partner, who ran the firm after Lee's death) built respected agencies, the most influential post-war American propagandist was Bernays, whose propensity for self-aggrandisement, and remarkable longevity, overshadowed his

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[72]HIS, St John Gaffney, Box 1, 'England's Guilt and England's Hypocrisy': undated, c.1917. Emphasis in the original.

[73] Creel, *op. cit.*: 220

rivals.[74] His view of propaganda was less altruistic than Creel's or Lee's: 'The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element of democratic society.'[75] Politicians did not have to be the people's servants:

> It is not necessary for the politician to be the slave of the public's group prejudices, if he can learn how to mold the mind of the voters in conformity with his own ideas of public welfare and public service. The important thing for the statesman of our age is not so much to know how to please the public, but to know how to sway the public. In theory, this education might be done by means of learned pamphlets explaining the intricacies of public question. In actual fact, it can be done only by meeting the conditions of the public mind, by creating circumstances which set up trains of thought, by dramatizing personalities, by establishing contact with the group leaders who control the opinions of their publics.[76]

His thinking was influenced by Lippmann, whose works Bernays cited. Lippmann espoused a neo-Platonic view of society, which was composed of leaders, the masses, and the intelligentsia who advised leaders and translated their decisions to the masses. Discourse between leaders and the masses was deliberately limited in Lippmann's view. The masses were incapable of entering into public discourse because they were unable to fulfil their democratic function: 'The one thing that no democrat may assume is that the people are dear good souls, fully competent for their task.' [77]

Ewen contentiously proposes Roosevelt's 'New Deal' as a greater propaganda vehicle than the CPI.[78] Certainly, Roosevelt had a greater grasp of propaganda than his processors, Coolidge and Hoover: Louis McHenry Howe, a long-time confidante, advised him on the propaganda advantages of radio, while former Paramount Washington correspondent Stephen Early was appointed presidential press secretary. Roosevelt broadcast by radio over thirty fireside chats in which he addressed Americans directly. This contradicted Lippmann's ideology and, in the trying circumstances of the Depression, offered empathy and leadership. His creation of the Farm Security Administration as a New Deal agency to combat agricultural poverty ultimately failed,

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[74] With typical immodesty Bernays claimed to be working continually until shortly before his death in 1996. His collected papers, located in the Library of Congress, amount to over 250,000 items.

[75] Bernays, 1928: 2

[76] *Ibid.*: 55

[77] Lippmann, *op. cit.*: 241

[78] Ewen, *op. cit.*: 262

but the photographic archive of material gathered by its staff provided a compelling depiction of agrarian poverty.

While British and Irish propaganda emerged as a practical, little-theorised adjunct of political and social control, and propagandists like Smith tumbled accidentally into their roles, in America the propagandist's attributes were examined. Ivy Lee held that:

> Given a man with... a social viewpoint... who has studied... expression, the meaning of words, typography... and the effects of various combinations of those upon public opinion, it follows that he can do better work than the man without those attainments.
> If... he... has not only a liberal education but... knowledge... of social, economic, artistic and political affairs... of the world at large, then... the best... publicity may be expected.
> Such a man takes the problems put before him... with a view to translating... knowledge into forms that will be interesting and educative....
> I believe it better that he be not too intimately acquainted... in the particular field in which he is to work as a publicity man. It is better that his viewpoint be somewhat detached....
> Since publicity must be sincere, honest, fair and careful, and not given to... exaggeration... the publicity man... must be marked by these same attributes.[79]

The nomenclature for propaganda was as diverse as the practice itself. Cutlip posits that when Wilson's heavily propagandised aim of securing global democracy remained unrealised after Versailles, the word fell from everyday use in America.[80] Ivy Lee preferred 'advisor in public relations – for such a man should be far more than a mere publicity agent.'[81] Bernays observed that 'the propagandist in his modern state is most often confounded with the old-time press agent.'[82] In 1923 Bernays proffered public relations counsellor. Lee disapproved, later tartly commenting to Harvard students: that 'a man takes an entire book to try to justify the use of the phrase, "Counsel in public relations."'[83] He explored his antipathy in an address to journalism teachers:

> Question: Publicity counsel, then, would be a good phrase?
> Mr Lee: I wish I knew a phrase to better describe the work. I never have heard one. When you say 'publicity counsel' it looks as though you were referring merely to the publicity which is to be given under a certain policy.
> Question: Counsel on public relations?

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[79] MLP, Lee, 7/13: undated

[80] Cutlip, *op. cit.*: 106

[81] MLP, Lee, 7/2: c. 1917

[82] *Ibid.*, 8/6: undated

[83] *Ibid.*, 7/6: 14 May, 1924

> Mr Lee: That phrase has a great deal to commend it; but it is not altogether the phrase. One of the best phrases I ever saw covering that point was contained in a book by Gerald Lee, and it was 'Helping Millionaires to Think' (Laughter)[84]

However, he did come round to Bernays' legalistic viewpoint:

> The 'press agent' is to publicity what the conveyancer is to... law. The conveyancer merely draws up... the policies and contracts determined by the principals. All that is needed to make a good 'press agent' is a good newspaper reporter.
> Publicity... is a learned profession which demands as much vision and wisdom and statesmanship as... the law. But while law concerns itself only with the legal rights of men, publicity and... public relations... concern themselves with the progress of man and improvement of civilization, with the world as it ought to be.
> The lawyer's responsibility primarily is... that his client obtains what is rightfully his... or... frames his policies... in accord with the law. The function of the adviser in public relations is to assist in the development of policies which are... in accord with the law... sound public policy and... the social conscience.[85]

Propaganda began to draw more on psychology. Yet the adoption of psychology had fortunate circumstances: Bernays was Freud's paternal and maternal nephew. When the Great War eroded Freud's savings, Bernays promoted Freudianism and arranged American publication of Freud's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. Avuncular affection did not conceal Freud's dislike of publicity, or belief that American publishers' pandering to low tastes would dilute his work's importance. His reputation and erudition guaranteed publicity, but his intransigence prevented the *tour de force* Bernays desired.[86] Bernays believed Freudianism offered propaganda a scientific rationale:

> the psychologists of the school of Freud... have pointed out that many of man's thoughts and actions are compensatory substitutes for desires which he has been obliged to suppress. A thing may be desired not for its intrinsic worth or usefulness, but because he has unconsciously come to see in it a symbol of something else, the desire for which he is ashamed to admit to himself.[87]

However, Bernays, dubbed a 'professional nephew' for his ceaseless references to Freud, used psychology manipulatively:

> He was as driven as his uncle to know what subconscious forces motivated people, and he used Freud's writings to help him understand. But while the esteemed analyst tried to use psychology to free his patients from emotional

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[84] *Ibid.*, 6/11: 20 December, 1924

[85] *Ibid.*, 7/9, unpubl. mss: undated, c. mid 1920s

[86] Cutlip, *op. cit.:* 170-6

[87] Bernays, *op. cit.:* 25

> crutches, Bernays used it to rob consumers of their free will, helping his clients predict, then manipulate, the very way their customers thought and acted....[88]

Bernays' campaign for Lucky Strike cigarettes illustrates this. He hired a psychoanalyst who advised that cigarettes symbolised freedom. To attract female smokers, he hired models to smoke publicly; in the New York Easter parade, they carried placards identifying cigarettes as torches of liberty. Symbolising spring and hopefulness, green, the brand's packaging colour, was designated the year's fashion colour: fashion editors and department stores were notified, and Bernays organised a Green Ball and Luncheon.[89]

After the Great War, Lippmann developed pseudo-environment theory. Psychoanalysis regarded the individual's external environment as a *sine qua non*, and enabled the individual to relate to it. Propaganda was concerned with the individual's conception of that environment, and how symbols could be used to direct the subconscious:

> Freudians are concerned with the maladjustment of distinct individuals to other individuals and to concrete circumstances... But public opinion deals with indirect, unseen, and puzzling facts.... The psychoanalyst... assumes that the environment is... if not knowable then at least bearable.... This assumption... is the problem of public opinion. Instead of taking for granted an environment that is readily known, the social analyst is most concerned in studying how the larger political environment is conceived, and how it can be conceived more successfully.[90]

As the masses, incapable of speedy independent thought, needed rule by enlightened elites, Lippmann formulated stereotype theory, another Freudian refinement: people interpreted their environment using pre-determined cultural and psychological impulses, which propagandists could influence. Like the Freudian subconscious, a repository for potentially dangerous memories, stereotypes had a defensive function and were 'highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy.'[91] The perfect stereotype was impressed upon the masses without realisation.[92]

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[88] Tye, 1998: 97

[89] Pollay, 1990: 41

[90] Bernays, *op. cit.*: 17

[91] Lippmann, 1997: 64

[92] *Ibid.*: 65

Once impressed, 'the character of the stereotypes, and the gullibility with which we employ them' became important. [93] Bernays, too, saw the usefulness of stereotypes:

> So vast are the numbers of minds which can be regimented, and so tenacious are they when regimented, that a group at times offers an irresistible pressure before which legislators, editors, and teachers are helpless. The group will cling to its stereotype... making of... the leaders of public opinion, mere bits of driftwood in the surf. [94]

The notion of leadership, or the hero, le Bon wrote, was fundamental to crowd motivation. Of greater importance than the leader's appeal was the raw emotiveness of the rabble-rouser, in making 'an abusive use of violent affirmations'.[95] In order to motivate a crowd, simplicity was required. For le Bon, that meant imagery; Freud concurred:

> A group is extraordinarily credulous and open to influence, it has no critical faculty, and the improbable does not exist for it. It thinks in images, which call one another up by association (just as they arise with individuals in states of free imagination), and whose agreement with reality is never checked by any reasonable agency. The feelings of a group are always very simple and very exaggerated. So that a group knows neither doubt nor uncertainty.[96]

The origins of Lippmann's convoluted theories of stereotypes and the pseudo-environment, were rooted in European psychology. Crowd psychology established among American propagandists the recognition that, presented with imagery requiring no reasoning to interpret, the malleable crowd was capable of attaining dogmatic homogeneity, and adopting an *idée fixe*.

After the war, propaganda was considered un-British and unsuited to democracy, perhaps tacitly recognising that wartime propaganda had been less than truthful.[97] In the early 1920s politicians denounced propaganda as something practised against the state. Particularly concerning was Bolshevism and, until the Treaty, Sinn Féin. Parliamentary debates suggest that British propaganda was diffident, practised only as a last resort and then always in an honest and transparent fashion. While this may have been true domestically, it obfuscates the reality that in Ireland until 1922 Britain engaged in a propaganda war as active and strategic as anything undertaken against Germany. A

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[93] *Ibid.:* 60

[94] Bernays, *op. cit.:* 11

[95] Le Bon, 1896: 32

[96] Freud, 1959: 13-14

[97] L'Etang, *op. cit.:* 28

propaganda division operated within Dublin Castle, and the actions of nationalist propagandists make it clear that war with Britain was both an armed and propaganda struggle: indeed, for nationalists international pressure on Britain was more likely to achieve independence than any guerrilla campaign. British propaganda in Ireland must be seen in the context of an armed conflict and subject to the rules that governed its wartime propaganda.

British efforts may be seen as counter-propaganda to nationalists. Yet this ignores the censorship that was fundamental to the Castle's propaganda and which forced nationalists to develop creative ways of propagating their message. Replacing the Defence of the Realm Act, the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, 1920 provided for stringent censorship that allowed the forced closure of newspapers for publishing material likely to cause disaffection, even if the material was truthful reportage.[98] British propaganda against nationalists was distorted and based on disinformation. Hamar Greenwood, in the House of Commons, initially denied that the army was destroying Irish creameries in reprisals, and then placed the blame for damage on the creameries as dens of rebelliousness:

> The creamery in Ireland is one of the most beneficent institutions in that country. It is the rendezvous... very often of from 200 to 300 farmers and their sons in the locality. These creameries are sometimes the rendezvous of the Republican Army, from which orders to the local brigade are issued. One in particular has been actually an ambush for the destruction of the police. Many of them have been suspected by the police of having been the very centre of the plots now waged against them.
> ...in a previous Debate... I said I had not a tittle of evidence of any creamery having been destroyed by the uniformed forces of the Crown.... Since that speech I have gone into the question, and undoubtedly... some creameries have been destroyed by the forces of the Crown. In some cases they were justified in the destruction. In the cases that were justified there will be no compensation paid by the House of Commons if I have my way.[99]

The government was reluctant to acknowledge that it propagandised domestically, as evinced by Bonar Law's 1920 response to a query on the numbers of government departments conducting propaganda:

> Propaganda in the usually accepted sense is not carried out departmentally. A number of Departments, however, circulate information on some subjects connected with their Department, such as new regulations, dissemination of

[98] Kenneally, 2008: 13

[99] HC, vol. 135, 24 November 1920, col. 499

> technical intelligence and kindred subjects, the cost of which is borne by the Department concerned. Experience has shown that considerable value attaches to this work.[100]

A decade later, a dozen government departments employed 44 publicists.[101] By the late 1930s, increased propaganda activity was not enough to prevent one commentator from observing that 'official propaganda tends to be semi-official propaganda'[102] and 'the general belief that Britain will somehow muddle through ... continue to present serious difficulties to the progress of official propaganda.'[103]

Alfred Mond alluded to propaganda's nefarious nature in a 1925 debate: 'Propaganda is quite useless. Propaganda is persuading somebody to believe in something for your own benefit. Education is persuading somebody to believe in something for his benefit. We do not want propaganda, but we do want education.'[104] This was a significant difference between American and British propaganda. After the war British politicians used propaganda to inculcate a sense of British identity against the changing nature of the empire; propaganda was acceptable if couched as education: 'They believed stability and continuity... would come through education provided by propaganda.... They sought to project a confident and prosperous UK through the Empire Marketing Board and the British Council. PR for them was mass communication of official messages.'[105] Governmental propaganda became an element of diplomacy and social affairs that took educating the domestic and broader commonwealth public about political decisions as its focus.[106] The British Council was crucial overseas:

> The Council has... established or strengthened British Institutes and cultural societies abroad, has founded professorships at foreign universities, made grants to British schools abroad, has added to foreign libraries of English books and periodicals, granted scholarships to foreign students for study in Great Britain, has sent John Masefield, Myra Hess, Bruce Lockhart... on foreign... tours, has organized exhibits of British art in foreign countries and has entertained... Scandinavian journalists in England.[107]

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[100] HC, vol. 128, 26 April 1920, col. 848

[101] L'Etang, *op. cit.:* 29

[102] Schuyler Foster, 1939: 264

[103] *Ibid.:* 271

[104] HC, vol. 170, 12 March 1924, col. 2390

[105] Moloney, 2000: 75

[106] L'Etang, *op. cit.:* 29

[107] Schuyler Foster, *op. cit.:* 268.

Charles Higham differentiated between objective and subjective publicity: the former sought to influence things, while the latter sought to influence minds. While commercial propaganda required objective publicity, measured in financial terms, he posited that:

> in many educational campaigns the aim is subjective – that is to say, it is not concerned with a return in things, but in a return in states of mind. The ideas, emotions, or opinions so engendered bring in no definite sum in gold. One is staking often a large amount of money on the hope of clearing an atmosphere, producing harmony of feeling or in altering a mental attitude. To do this effectively needs considerable courage, faith and psychological sense.[108]

The idea of a settled state in which each citizen had his role and the public weal prospered is exemplified by Scottish documentary-maker John Grierson. Recruited to the Empire Marketing Board by Stephen Tallents, his first film for the organisation, *Drifters* (1929), promoted Scottish herring fishing in an unglamorous, didactic fashion. Grierson expressed the supremacy of film as a means of state education:

> The elect has its duty.
> I look on the cinema as a pulpit and use it as a propagandist.
> The State is the machinery by which the best interests of the people are secured.
> Since the needs of the State come first, understanding of those needs comes first in education.[109]

A philosophy graduate, Grierson found his vocation after a spell in the United States as a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation. In New York, he met Lippmann and was impressed by the American's insistence that mediated information sufficed to educate the citizen:

> I talked to him one day of the labour involved in following the development of the yellow press through the evanescent drama of local politics. He mentioned that one would do better to follow the dramatic patterns of the film through the changing character of our time, and that the box-office records of success and failure were on file.[110]

Funding bedevilled the EMB, and Tallents lamented the difficulty in getting government subvention, when the official mindset decided 'it was sheer waste of money… to think of increasing the sale of Empire products by means of the cinema.'[111] He was relieved at the unexpected commercial success of *Drifters*, recognising that 'here was a medium of

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[108] Higham, 1920: 94

[109] John Grierson, undated. The quote is cited in McDonald, 1977: 20

[110] Hardy, 1979: 34

[111] Tallents, Pamphlet Part A, 1969: 6

publicity that could be made, in part at least, self-supporting.'[112] A parliamentary debate recognised the worth of the EMB:

> *Captain Sir William Brass*: Does not the hon. Gentleman... realise that cinema propaganda is the best kind of propaganda for the Empire?
> *Mr. Lunn*: It is no doubt very good propaganda. The Empire Marketing Board is only beginning to undertake the production of films, and it is willing to extend its operations considerably. [113]

Of interest to the Free State, in 1929 Grierson recruited J.N.G. (Norris) Davidson to his film unit.[114] Davidson, who arrived from Cambridge where he had edited Granta, later became an Irish Tourist Association director, responsible for producing tourism propaganda films. Irish links with the EMB did not end there, however. Eminent Free State artists Sean Keating and Margaret Clarke were commissioned by the board to produce artistic posters depicting Free State produce, though the country was generally badly publicised by the EMB throughout the empire.[115]

One possible reason for governmental reluctance to conduct propaganda was the obsequiousness of journalists towards politicians. Unchallenged, politicians' words reached the masses without any directive influence. Indeed, Beaverbrook was content for his journalists to self-censor in deference to politicians:

> It is often said by the cynic that it is the interest of the Press to oppose the Government. The very reverse is the truth. Opposition to the considered opinion of a Prime Minister is a course which the journalist would avoid if it were possible. Such a difference of opinion must involve a heavy burden of responsibility on the journalist. He must be very certain that he is right in assuming this critical attitude. The easier course is that of compliance with the established and presumably well-informed authority.[116]

This suggests that state propaganda was unlikely to be parsed by the British press. That, naturally, facilitated great man leadership and the communication to masses of information deemed necessary for their well-being by the ruling class. It was a class-conscious variation of Lippmann's thinking, differing from American propaganda which acknowledged the necessity of a ruling elite, but representing a technically classless society. Britain clung to the supremacy of titled leadership and it was not until the rise of

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[112] *Ibid.*, Pamphlet Part B: 2

[113] HC, vol. 239, 28 May, 1930, col. 1284. William Lunn was the Secretary for Overseas Trade. Brass chaired the British Film Institute between 1939 and 1945.

[114] Hardy, *op. cit.*: 58

[115] Cronin, 2004: 132-43

[116] Aitken, 1925: 44

Tallents and Grierson, with their innovative use of documentary and portrayal of the everyman, that state propaganda began to be more populist.

After the Great War, nationalist propaganda changed from being anti-British to seeking to legitimise the Irish Republic in the international community. The official organ of the Dáil, the *Irish Bulletin*, detailed British activities in Ireland in a way that appealed to the neutral reader:

> The purpose of the daily 'Bulletin' is not to publish current news of events, but to present special articles and notes on current events and on various aspects of the political struggle, together with statements and summaries useful not only as propaganda but as permanent historical records.
> The utmost care is taken to check all facts and figures and ensure accuracy in every statement made. The tone aimed at is one of dignity and restraint without loss of forcible exposition.[117]

With ministerial responsibility for executing propaganda before and after the foundation of the state, FitzGerald recognised the benefits of befriending the press in London: 'I consider it important, not only that we should continue to supply them with our Daily Bulletin and other material, but that we should maintain personal contact with them.'[118] He observed that the British press exhibited reluctance to accept material, no matter how official its provenance: 'their experiences during the war has made them very chary of anything in the nature of propaganda.'[119] The inference that British war propaganda had soured relations with the press is inescapable, as is the notion that nationalists were endeavouring not to make that error. His treatment of the press worked in his favour as, following his arrest, newspaper cuttings in his collected papers testify that: 'The news of Mr FitzGerald's arrest has aroused wide-spread interest in journalistic circles abroad, where he is regarded as an outstanding figure in the national struggle.' Another referred to 'the very able chief of the publicity and propaganda side of the Sinn Fein organisation.' Henri Beraud, of *Le Petit Parisien* wrote: 'All the journalists who have met him have liked him – even the English reporters'.[120]

During his ministry nationalist propaganda extended into Britain, with the assistance of the Irish Self-Determination League (ISDL), an organisation of Irish nationalists in

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[117] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/14(31): undated, c. March - August, 1921

[118] *Ibid.*, P80/14(1): 1 Jan 1920

[119] *Ibid.*.

[120] *Ibid.*, P80/14(12): undated

England. Dominated by Sinn Féin, its propaganda activities included fundraising, public meetings and distributing the *Bulletin*. In America, the Friends of Irish Freedom carried out similar functions. France, too, was an important arena for nationalist propaganda, and much effort was invested in producing material in French. Having Francophone propagandists in Charles Gavan Duffy, Count Gerald O'Kelly and former Legionnaire Michael MacWhite was critical. Domestic propaganda was translated into French, as, for example, when the self-titled 'Délégation du Gouvernement Elu de la République Irlandaise' issued a pamphlet quoting Lenten pastoral letters of Irish bishops. Two compared Ireland's treatment by Britain with Belgium's treatment by Germany. Cardinal Logue, Primate of All Ireland wrote:

> A military regime of a severity one finds only in the most despotic and unpitying governments; sentences absolutely disproportionate to alleged crimes; arbitrary arrests, lettres de cachet even more numerous than in ancient France; deportations like those which lately provoked a cry of reprobation and anger against the Germans during their military occupation of Belgium.[121]

Monsignor O'Doherty, Bishop of Clonfert wrote: 'While the episcopacy and the clergy and the Belgian people made their protestation against the Prussian domination heard, they were heroes in English eyes; here, he who protests against a domination as brutal is considered a traitor.'[122] Although the tone and tenor contradicted FitzGerald's diktat on fact being paramount, emotive propaganda coming from a respectable third party was a valuable weapon.

An exceptionally clear-minded thinker on propaganda, FitzGerald wrote in 1920: 'The chief business of the Propaganda Department is the collection, co-ordination and distribution of information.'[123] Speaking in the Dáil, he called to mind the democratic function of propaganda: 'Our propaganda during the war was based on democratic principles - what the people stood for was what we should advertise.'[124] Lester's papers show a continued focus on intelligence-gathering as a source of accurate and reliable

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[121] HIS, Healy, Box 6: undated. Author's translation. The original quote is: 'Un régime militaire d'une sévérité qu'on ne trouve que chez les gouvernements les plus despotiques et les plus impitoyable; des sentences absolument disproportionnées aux prétendues contraventions, des arrestations arbitraires, des lettres de cachet, plus nombreuses encore que dans l'ancienne France; des déportations pareilles à celles qui provoquaient naguère ce cri de réprobation et de colère contre les Allemands pendant leur occupation militaire de la Belgique.'

[122] *Ibid.*. Author's translation. The original quote is: 'Lorsque l'épiscopat et le clergé et le peuple Belges firent entendre leur protestation contre la domination prussienne, ils étaient des héros aux yeux des Anglais; ici, celui qui proteste contre une domination toute aussi brutale est considéré comme un traître.'

[123] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/14(6): 25 June, 1920

[124] DÉ, vol. 2, 18 May, 1922, col. 446

information, and a formidable aptitude for using propaganda as an instrument of statecraft.[125] The contrast between these men and Gallagher, who worked with FitzGerald before the Treaty, is great. Where FitzGerald was the consummate thinker, rationalising the effect of propaganda, and Lester the skilled interpreter of propaganda and state administration, Gallagher was the street-fighter, promoting the nationalist cause with ferocious fundamentalism. From his hunger strike in Kilmainham, to his prolific writing output in fiction, journalism and publicity material, he espoused propaganda as a persuasive, one-sided narrative, as a mélange of fact and fiction, Catholicism and politics, imagery and symbolism: 'In his considerable corpus of writings, Frank Gallagher demonstrated that the creed for which he laboured tended to be self-righteously narrow and characterised by images and myths which were exclusive in their implicit denial of an alternative vision of Ireland and Irishness.'[126] Gallagher's perspective drew on the mystical and emotive writings of Pearse; it made him useful to de Valera as propagandist and *Irish Press* editor.

When attention turned from propaganda against Britain to developing Treaty propaganda, a more vexatious circumstance arose. The factional divide robbed nationalism of a coherent approach. It also, arguably, robbed it of focus, and necessitated a change of footing to accommodate the divide. An early report compiled by F.T. Cremins on pro-Treaty propaganda made for dispiriting reading: 'There is hardly yet such a thing in existence as a live propaganda committee. Most of the members hardly know that they are on it, and there has never been a full meeting which has lasted more than five minutes.'[127] The anti-Treaty side fared little better. Captured IRA reports showed they also experienced difficulties in finding suitable people. Propaganda was: 'Not satisfactory as yet, as it is difficult to get a disciplined person in charge of this Department as most of our dealings with publicity are such as would avoid threading in [sic] people's corns'.[128] The implication of a ragged, amateurish approach to domestic politics in contrast to the more easily executed propaganda against the enemy is redolent of Britain itself and its uneasy shift from war propaganda to domestic information campaigns.

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[125] UCDA, Lester, P203/9: undated. The file contains a forensic analysis by Lester of the suppression of the Spartacist rising in Germany using a combination of military action and propaganda.

[126] Walker, 1992: 163

[127] UCDA, Tierney, LA30/315: undated

[128] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/763(18): 16 August, 1922

American propagandists were likely to be university educated and enter the arena via the press; in Britain they were drawn from elite society. In Ireland, FitzGerald, Lester, Gallagher, Robert Brennan, and Hobson had journalism careers before becoming propagandists, but were not all university educated. As Fitzpatrick notes, 'Griffith and de Valera made journalists out of fighting men and ambassadors out of journalists.'[129] Gallagher acknowledged the value of a press career to the propagandist: 'Bob Brennan... had been nominated... Director of Publicity. I went to work with him sometime in the Fall of 1918. Both of us as journalists knew the value of the printed word, and as the election came nearer we lived in a snowstorm of handbills and pamphlets, leaflets and posters.'[130] Gallagher was a propagandist of prodigious talent, whose practice of propaganda was experiential rather than theoretical. His hunger strike diary from 1918 demonstrates a subtle awareness of the potential of the staged propaganda event, and the international opprobrium that attached to Britain's stance.

Harry Boland, a tailor by profession, is often overlooked as a propagandist, yet is a prime example of the autodidact propagandist, learning while his revolutionary and political career progressed. A competent orator, he was comfortable with the press, and demonstrated diplomatic capabilities by building coalitions of support among the maze of Irish-American organisations, and by preparing the ground for de Valera's arrival in 1919, when the two formed a doughty double act that garnered valuable press coverage for the putative Republic.[131] In contrast, Davis observes that de Valera's inability to avoid a feud with Irish-American leaders caused a 'bitter schism' there.[132] He also credits Boland with the perspicacity to distinguish between the American factions.[133] Undoubtedly Boland had the innate skills to be a propagandist, and his friendship with Creel served him well, when the American, in a diplomatic coup, arranged for Boland to have a meeting with Wilson's private secretary in December, 1919.

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[129] Fitzpatrick, 1988: 253

[130] Gallagher, 2005: 46

[131] Fitzpatrick, 2003: 123-38

[132] Davis, 2006: 66

[133] *Ibid.*: 71

There was nothing decorative about Irish nationalist propaganda, even when couched as diplomacy: it was utilitarian, and defined by budgetary constraints. Gavan Duffy wrote to FitzGerald enclosing a proposal for propaganda in France written by an anonymous 'Mr. M'. M proposed the:

> Immediate establishment of a propaganda centre in... a small private house, which would be both residence and embassy, and would include the necessary accommodation for office work as well as reception rooms for the visits of all the people of Paris who count. At the present moment, a social effort to enlist the intellectuals and the politicians of influence would be very promising. I can easily get at them and they will be very ready to come; it will be for you to convince them. A Frenchman is very liable to be convinced after a good luncheon, while smoking a good cigar, a method not to be disdained in diplomacy.[134]

The proposal was not acted upon.

The emergence of nationalist propagandists in the post Great War period owes much to their rebelliousness and resilience: unlike American propagandists, who evolved as a support for the political and commercial elite, in Ireland they were borne of the necessity to instigate insurrection against the British state, and relied on guerrilla tactics as much in propaganda as they did in warfare: an ambush from behind hedgerows was more effective than pitched battle, and so, too, was the *Irish Bulletin*, the blunt propaganda tool that reached its peak under the editorship of Gallagher, compared with the elegant drawing-room propaganda of Mael. Rebellion created the political and military need to make most efficient use of resources, and both journalistic experience and political cunning placed nationalist propagandists at least on an equal footing with Britain's propagandists.

[134] UCDA, Gavan Duffy, P152/110: 8 March, 1920. 'M' was identified as a M. Mael in correspondence from Diarmuid O'Hegarty to Gavan Duffy (*Ibid.*, P152/111: 25 March 1920)

Chapter 2

Funding Propaganda

I

In the revolutionary period before the founding of the Free State, nationalists were quick to recognise the value of a propaganda campaign against the British forces and government in Ireland, and, furthermore, to achieve international diplomatic recognition for the state. Propaganda's usefulness as a tool of insurrection and element of international diplomacy rendered it essential to the nationalist cause, although the failure of diplomacy and propaganda in the Peace Conference allowed prosecuting war with Britain to gain greater prominence. Military campaigning, notwithstanding the low cost of maintaining a volunteer guerrilla army, furnished with weapons and matériel captured from the enemy, was an expensive pursuit. So, too, was the cost of promoting an international political profile. Give the penurious position of the nationalist cause, no matter how strong a case nationalist propagandists could put for publicising their cause there was little prospect of it being handsomely funded.

This contrasts with Ulster, where propaganda to maintain the union was, arguably, more advanced and pervasive than nationalist propaganda. It was also better funded. The great public symbols of unionist propaganda, the Orange lodges, the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Ulster and British covenants, and the landing in Larne, in April 1914, of approximately 25,000 rifles and 2,500,000 rounds of ammunition, created an awareness of the potency of unionism. To unionists, the cost in coin of the realm, while substantial, was an essential investment in a policy of propaganda that, as Fitzpatrick suggests, took as its theme militancy and intimidation within Westminster.[1] Indeed, unionist propaganda went as far as seeking the mobilisation of Ulster and British society, even at the cost of unrest and dissidence. Within unionism the practical application of propaganda, that is, deed and message combined, was worth more than mere exposition of the message. Stewart neatly paraphrases Charles Craig MP, brother of James: 'he believed that... ten thousand pounds spent on rifles would be a thousand times stronger than the same amount spent on meetings, speeches and pamphlets.[2]

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[1] Fitzpatrick, 1998: 45

[2] Stewart, 1997: 71-2

For nationalists and republicans, imitation was sometimes the sincerest form of flattery, though their efforts, on the island at any rate, rarely offered anything like the expensive pageantry of unionism in full flow; the Irish Volunteers, especially, were a pale imitation of their northern counterparts, with poorer weaponry and uniforms, and inexperienced military leadership. But the reasons for this may be seen in financial, not just than military, terms. Bardon highlights the discrepancy between funds available to the imitative Irish Volunteer Force and its Ulster role-model. In December, 1913, with £70,000 'invested in a hazardous enterprise to being guns to Ulster' the northern force could also count on one million pounds in pledges. The pledged money included £10,000 each from Carson and Craig, and other northern notables.[3] Largely funded by Clan na Gael, the Irish Volunteers were practically paupers in comparison.[4]

Clearly, the funding methods of unionists differed in many respects to those of nationalists and republicans. Where the latter chose, or were forced by necessity, to extract monies from ordinary donors in dribs and drabs, the former were able to rely on the good offices of a small number of wealthy individuals whose donations and social status placed unionism on a different plane: 'It is not surprising, in view of their obvious interest in maintaining the Union to find the landowners of Ulster well represented among the UVF commanders. Unreservedly they placed their wealth, their time and their property at the service of the Force.'[5] Access to private property not only permitted a free location for military drill and education, and therefore had financial value, but also evoked an older propaganda appeal: 'In rural Ulster the UVF took on much of the character of the eighteenth-century Volunteers, training on demesnes including Donard Park, Castle Hume, Springhill, Slane's Castle and Killyleagh Castle.'[6] Unionist propaganda was better funded, and, at least initially, better organised than nationalist. But despite the riches at its disposal, unionists lost out in the propaganda war to nationalists and republicans, who used their lesser resources to play the international propaganda game far more adeptly.

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[3] *Ibid.*: 77

[4] Bardon, 1992: 443

[5] Stewart, *op. cit.*: 72

[6] Bardon, *op. cit.*: 440

However, in order for nationalists and republicans to fund propaganda campaigns, propaganda first had to fund itself; conveniently, fundraising as a form of political and cultural propaganda was a common pursuit among Irish visitors to the United States. The vast sums that could be elicited from expatriates and their descendants made the country a profitable locus for propaganda activities. Parnell had successfully raised almost £30,000 for distress relief in 1880.[7] In 1903, W.B. Yeats, at the suggestion of John Quinn, a New York based Irish-American lawyer, embarked on a lecture tour of the United States that augmented his meagre income by $3,240 (approximately £600).[8] Douglas Hyde, too, conducted an American tour at Quinn's suggestion, but reluctantly: only the Gaelic League's perilous finances persuaded Hyde of the tour's necessity. His trip from November 1905 to May 1906 took in the east and west coasts. Quinn again provided the organising genius, while Hyde became the main publicity attraction, giving newspaper interviews in each city. Despite the length of the tour, and the number of prestigious speaking engagements, the amount raised was modest. On his return to Ireland, Hyde claimed to have raised just over £10,000 (approximately $50,000).[9] The figure could have been higher but for two factors. Firstly, the riven nature of Irish-American organisations ensured that factionalism, rather than fundraising, took precedent at some engagements, and, secondly, Hyde's love affair with San Francisco: he returned $10,000 raised there following the 1906 earthquake. Nonetheless, the tour provided the League with funding for five years, and propagandised Gaelic cultural identity in America.

A more lucrative tour was conducted by de Valera and Harry Boland between 1919 and 1920. The Dáil had authorised Boland to raise bonds to the value of £250,000 in late 1919. In August 1920, de Valera was given discretion to increase the amount as the needs of the tour dictated. The first Republican bond raised just over $5,000,000 (approximately £1,000,000) from a quarter of a million American subscribers, with de Valera, alert to difficulties in repayment, cannily pleading liberty rather than financial return as the basis for investment. While a second bond drive yielded a disappointing $600,000 (£120,000), there was, nonetheless, substantial revenue available to the nascent

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[7] Lyons, *op. cit.*: 168

[8] *Ibid.*: 314

[9] Dunleavy and Dunleavy, 1991: 295

republic. However, less than one-fifth of the money made its way to Ireland; the remainder rested in American deposits, or invested in American bonds.

The monies raised allowed de Valera and Boland to engage in political largesse, and to spend heavily for political and propaganda purposes. Boland loaned $20,000 (£5,000) to the Russian government on a proviso of mutual recognition, an expensive but, in propaganda terms, useful investment.[10] He also availed of J.C. Walsh's Benjamin Franklin Bureau to disseminate propaganda in America: the bureau spent $12,000 (£2,400) buying the influence of opinion leaders in law and academia.[11] In all, the tour expended almost $1,500,000 (£300,000), the bulk of which, de Valera claimed, went on securing international propaganda. It was propaganda on a scale that nationalists had not seen before, and would not see during the Free State. But the tour enjoyed only qualified success: while the combined bonds returned a princely yield, and much propaganda was achieved, internecine feuding between Irish-American groups militated against political success for de Valera.[12]

Propaganda fundraising was profitable, too, in settings less grand than a trans-American pilgrimage. Laffan observes that Arthur Griffith's National Council's 'propagandistic nature is illustrated by its ability to raise more money in 1906-7 from the sale of pamphlets than from affiliation fees.'[13] Locally-organised events yielded only a fraction of the monies that could be realised by an American tour, but they provided funds domestically and immediately. Financial considerations notwithstanding, they were an opportunity to spread a message of nationalism and sedition:

> Céilidhes (Irish Dances) were always crowded. There one met only people who were all right, meaning separatists. Volunteer dances to collect monies for arms were supposedly for some imaginary club or literary society as they should have otherwise been suppressed. In between each dance were ballads, jigs, old songs and fierce recitations.[14]

Crucial to the success of this propaganda was having the organisational capacity to carry it out frequently and pervasively. Laffan notes of Sinn Féin:

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[10] Fitzpatrick, 2004: 139

[11] *Ibid.*: 199

[12] Ferriter, 2008: 34

[13] Laffan, 1999: 21

[14] O'Malley, 2002: 68

> Party members were urged to exploit all possible occasions for raising money – such as hurling and football matches, dances and pilgrimages to local shrines – and the police noted that the numerous Sinn Féin lectures and concerts served not only to propagate party doctrine but were also a fruitful source of revenue.[15]

The role of Cumann na nBan, the women's auxiliary to the Volunteers, which 'organized concerts and dances and helped the arms' fund',[16]was invaluable. So, too, was the political acumen of the organisation. Before the Easter Rising, Kathleen Clarke, whose husband and brother were both executed for their involvement, had been given a small sum of money to provide for the families of dead or imprisoned volunteers, who had lost their principal wage earner in the republic's cause.[17] Clarke's establishment of the Volunteers' Dependents' Fund in the aftermath of the rising provided a focal point of opposition to pro-British war fundraising and permitted the overt expression of anti-British sentiment, while simultaneously propagandising that the republic was capable of providing for its own.

Monies raised from propaganda were not always used to fund more propaganda. Indeed, nationalists were comforted in the knowledge that the international press would report on the perceived justness of their cause without need for direction or inducement. Thus, propaganda expenditure was not merely a gamble, it was unnecessary. However FitzGerald swiftly recognized the naïveté of this position: it was one thing to rely on a fair and free Irish press to give the nationalist agenda a public airing; it was quite another to rely on the same press when it was subjected to severe censorship. Under Lord Decies and, from August 1920, with the imposition of the Restoration of Order in Ireland legislation, newspapers were subjected to a voluntary code of censorship that was, in practice, obligatory. Gallagher's *modus operandi* to thwart the censor was as comedic as it was strategic: Decies was overwhelmed with a veritable avalanche of unpublishable articles in the hope that covertly seditious material might slip through unnoticed, and he was further distracted with conversation on horse-racing and taxation.[18] For his part, FitzGerald understood the importance of building relationships with journalists. But this was an expensive pursuit, necessitating a publicity office in

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[15] Laffan, *op. cit.*: 178

[16] *Ibid.*: 70

[17] Clarke and Litton, 1997: 60 and 115

[18] Kenneally, 2008: 7

London, and publication and postal distribution of the *Bulletin.* Reporting on the efforts of the London publicity bureau in June 1920, Fitzgerald recorded that:

> The cost of running this department during the last six months - 31st November to 31st May 1920 - has amounted to £889.17.10. Of this amount £392.15.0 has been paid by the Ministry of Finance in salaries: £235.10.0 was paid by the Ministry of Finance for printing of pamphlets... and stationery, while £261.12.10 has been paid out by me.[19]

The *Bulletin* was, arguably, the most important tactic of nationalist propaganda. Requiring little more than compiling statistics and reportage, the only costs were in printing and postal distribution to an influential, chosen readership rather than a mass audience. A Propaganda Department report from March 1921 recorded that it was issued to 200 English newspapers and public men daily, and 300 others weekly;[20] by August that year it was reaching 900 individuals weekly.[21] The *Bulletin's* success was such that Dublin Castle sought to undermine it by releasing its own *Weekly Summary*,[22] and, on one occasion, by forgery.[23] Assessing how officialdom propagandised the execution of Kevin Barry, Doherty opines that Britain was fighting a propaganda war that it could not win.[24] Nonetheless no expense was spared. The number of propagandists and administrators working in Britain's Publicity Information Branch, co-ordinated in Dublin Castle but including staff in London, indicates how strenuously officials fought the propaganda war, and how troublesome was nationalist propaganda, and the *Bulletin* in particular: between the Castle, Army GHQ, the Irish Office in London and other offices, nineteen civilian and military personnel were employed in countering nationalist propaganda.[25] It is an indication of the cost that the nationalist campaign would have had to incur were it not for the volunteer efforts of its propagandists.

There were efforts by others by others, often indirectly connected with the nationalist movement. Cartoonists visually lampooned and lambasted Britain; street balladeers composed songs, and lyrics for well-known melodies; and authors and dramatists created

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[19] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/14(7): June, 1920

[20] *Ibid.*, P80/14(13): 10 March, 1921

[21] *Ibid.*, P80/14(21): August, 1921

[22] *Ibid.*, P80/14(16): undated.

[23] Keneally, 2008: 21

[24] Doherty, 2000: 231

[25] *Ibid.*: 221-2

fictive depictions in support of independence. While many balladeers were anonymous or published pseudonymously others, like Peadar Kearney, came to some prominence. The sheet music for Kearney's song 'Dora' was published and copies sold for one shilling each, indicating, yet again, that in the nationalist mindset propaganda could be used profitably.[26] For nationalist propagandists this material, free of charge and in widespread circulation, was a boon. It facilitated revolution by redaction, as lyrics were changed by unknown authors to suit the exigencies of the moment and particular locations; O'Malley cites a version of Molly Malone popular during the Great War:

> In Dublin's fair city where the girls are pretty
> I first set my eyes on sweet Molly Malone
> As she wheeled her wheelbarrow
> Through the streets broad and narrow
> Crying Sinn Feiners, pro-Germans alive, alive, O![27]

While such material was outside the control of nationalist propagandists, nonetheless official use was made of it: in one instance, the publicity department of the Provisional Government reported that it was in receipt of short stories and poems that it intended to have published in English, American and continental publications.[28]

In France, Gavan Duffy grappled with the cost of mounting a propaganda campaign. Mael's proposals had whetted interest in Dublin, and Diarmuid O'Hegarty instructed him to produce a report outlining how £5,000 might be spent in executing certain of the proposals.[29] O'Hegarty was clear that the amount was not guaranteed, and was only to be used as a way of gauging what might be achieved. Noting that the pound sterling was worth about 66 French francs, Gavan Duffy estimated that 10,000 francs was required for each of: office space, a clerk, miscellaneous expenses and once-off expenditure for fixtures and fittings. He suggested that these figures be doubled if the Paris consulate was to be the main one for Europe, and advised Dublin that a salary of 30,000 francs would be required to attract the right candidate to lead the representation.[30] The total cost of 70,000 francs is approximately £1,060. Conscious of financial considerations, even though he had by no means exhausted his hypothetical budget, he asked Dublin whether the consulate would include a permanent show-room for Irish goods which

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[26] TCDM, Samuels, 5/145. The title was a well-known acronym for the Defence of the Realm Act.

[27] O'Malley, *op. cit.*: 68

[28] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/14(16): undated, but covering the period 16 March to 7 May, 1921

[29] UCDA, Gavan Duffy, P152/111: 25 March, 1920

[30] *Ibid.*, P152/115: 13 April, 1920

would be subsidised by the manufacturers themselves. Mael's plan also included financial inducements for the French regional press, and contracts for novelists to write fictive works about Ireland,[31] but as Gavan Duffy was not specifically requested to include these in his report, in omitting them, he may have erred on the side of financial caution.

With the Treaty awaiting ratification by the Dáil, propaganda to ensure its public acceptance became a necessity. But the organisation of the Provisional Government's propaganda had inauspicious beginnings. F.T. Cremins complained 'There is hardly yet such a thing in existence as a live propaganda committee. Most of the members hardly know that they are on it, and there has never been a full meeting which has lasted more than five minutes.'[32] The inadequacies of the Provisional Government's committee contrasted with the efficiency of pro-Treaty Sinn Féin, which organised a treaty committee that met regularly from March, filled the position of director of elections in each constituency, and engaged in determined fundraising: by August, £34,500 had been raised, largely from the business community.[33] The Provisional Government's Treaty committee recommended the employment of a full-time director of propaganda:

> We are strongly of the opinion that all propaganda ought to be co-ordinated for election purposes. At present the fraction of a voluntary committee which meets is not in touch with general propaganda activities to any extent. To this end, we strongly urge the appointment of a single paid Director of Propaganda, whose duty it will be to keep in touch with all election committees as a sort of liaison officer. He should also see after the circulation of literature, which a fugitive voluntary committee could not possibly do.[34]

The committee also estimated the cost of propaganda materials at £1,100. This provided for two million handbills (covering twenty different topics) at £350; 20,000 of four designs of posters at £250; 5,000 each of twelve booklets at £180 and 20,000 each of thirty different four-page leaflets at £330.[35]

Cannily, the propaganda committee was aware of propaganda's profitable nature. A minute from the Paper Sub-Committee, charged with organising *The Free State* ('a weekly

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[31] *Ibid.*, P152/110: 8 March, 1920

[32] UCDA, Tierney, LA30/315: undated, c.1922

[33] Laffan, *op. cit.*: 378-9

[34] UCDA, Tierney, LA30/315: undated, c.1922

[35] *Ibid.*.

journal advocating the Irish Free State') reveals that 17,000 copies of issue no. 6 were printed at a cost of £60, yielding £96 6*s.* 8*d.* from the cover price of 2d, and £51 11*s.* 6*d.* from advertising, for a total profit of £87 17*s.* 2*d.*.[36] The cover price suggests that approximately 11,560 copies were sold, which implies, even allowing for copies distributed freely to journalists and influencers of public opinion, a significant surfeit. It is surprising, therefore that the same committee, at its April 26th meeting, discussed quotations from printers for an increase to 20,000 copies, although the greater volume did permit economies of scale, with quotes ranging from Maunsell and Roberts printing firm, of £57 (0.68*d.* per copy) to Mahon printing firm of £68 12*s.* 0*d.* (0.82*d.* per copy) – a decrease from the original cost of 0.84*d.* per copy.[37]

At the same time, republican opponents of the Free State engaged in counter-propaganda. But their circumstances were even more impoverished than the Provisional Government's. Captured IRA documents dating from August to September 1922 indicate the problems they faced in editing a publication for dissemination among their troops. In the absence of an IRA-controlled publication one cost-effective method involved determining the identity of the editor of *The Fenian* newspaper: 'You should find out who are running "The Fenian" and give it all the assistance possible. You should have known this long ago.'[38] The same missive also requested: 'Can you arrange to send plenty of Publicity to England and America? A Duplicator would do a least a copy of all publicity for each Command for you.'[39] Duplication, with its poor quality of reproduction, was nonetheless a cheaper alternative than printing. Later that month, another captured document suggested that the depth of resources available to the IRA was diminishing: 'The girls are concentrating on the copious use of paint on walls situated in strategical [sic] positions in Dublin. It has found to be a very effective method of propaganda.'[40] It can be deduced that once the Republicans were reduced to daubing graffiti on walls, and relying for propaganda on publications that they themselves did not control, their financial resources for propaganda were most limited. One

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[36] *Ibid.*: 3 April, 1922

[37] *Ibid.*: 26 April, 1922

[38] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/763(27): 12 September, 1922

[39] *Ibid.*.

[40] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/763(39): 24 September, 1922

preferred fundraising activity 'the simple expedient of raiding banks'[41] could not be relied on to fund either its military and propaganda activities. Charged with maintaining law and order, the Free State government, likewise, was forced to look to alternative means of funding propaganda.

II

Propaganda expenditure was not always labelled as such, and distinct categories of expenditure are apparent: firstly, the state's official propaganda work, carried out by the Publicity Department and the Government Information Bureau, and secondly, informal propaganda expenditure of other departments. The former, particularly under Cosgrave's administrations, may be quantified with reasonable accuracy. It is harder, however, to arrive at a figure for the latter as the different departments of state employed inconsistent methods of recording their expenditure. The question also arises as to the intent of departments to engage in propaganda. Practically every department contained in its estimate an advertising subhead. It is likely that this was used for day-to-day purposes such as issuing public information notices, and was not propaganda *per se*. Such advertising was viewed as having functional rather than persuasive purposes. The Department of Education treated its advertising budget in an especially haphazard manner: its estimate clustered advertising, dry cleaning and miscellaneous provision under one subheading, further divided among its principal branches, thus making it impossible to estimate how much may have been spent on promoting the department or its aims.

The same is true of salaries. Although several departments engaged in propaganda, the estimates do not include salaries for designated departmental propaganda officers. Implicit in this is that such activities were carried out by civil servants in the ordinary course of their duties. Even in the Department of Agriculture, the most active department for domestic propaganda, there was no indication of a propaganda salary. One possible exception is the Department of Local Government and Public Health. Between 1930 and 1936, the department had an allowance of between £509 and £596 per annum for a position simply described as Intelligence Officer. It is instructive,

[41] Laffan, *op. cit.*: 380

before examining the minutiae of propaganda expenditure in the departments of External Affairs, Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, and Local Government and Public Health, to see what costs were incurred by the state in employing propagandists.

In January 1924, FitzGerald noted that eleven staff were attached to the publicity department.[42] This level of staffing seems extravagant, and it is unsurprising that the department was constantly under pressure to justify its expenditure. Even the salaries of minor civil servants engaged in routine tasks had to be justified. In a memorandum to FitzGerald, Lester provided details of the salaries of the newly reorganised Filing and Indexing room staff.[43] This office employed four of the department's staff. Two Established Copyists received salaries of £2 11*s.* 0*d.* and £2 5*s.* 0*d.* per week respectively, with an additional, unspecified bonus. Two temporary clerks received £4 19*s.* 4*d.* and £2 0*s.* 0*d.* per week respectively. The aggregate of the four salaries amounts to just over £631 annually, before bonuses were calculated. Lester indicated that any further rationalisation of the staff of the department would have repercussions on its ability to carry out its function.

This may have been a financial sleight of hand by Lester. By separating the duties of the filing and indexing staff from the other publicity staff it was easier to account for their salary cost under a different budget. Certainly, in November, Boland of Finance believed that the publicity staff numbered seven.[44] Responding to a November Finance query as to what savings had been made with the department having been disbanded, Boland gave the salaries of seven employees of the publicity department:

Officer	**Salary with bonus (£)**
Lester	1,000
Cremins	607
Temporary officers (2)	573
Temporary shorthand typists (2)	215
Unestablished messenger	133
Total	2,258

2.1: Salaries of Publicity Department Staff, November 1924

[42] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/404: 1 January, 1924

[43] NAI, D/FA, P/1/66: undated February 1924

[44] NAI, D/Fin, Fin 1/3496: 11 November, 1924

Given that the filing and indexing staff salaries did not include bonus payments, only an approximate salary total for the department can calculated. It was, however, at least £3,159. Lester's salary appears to have been high, and Boland notes in his memo that, following his redeployment, his salary was reduced to £600 plus bonus. It was, nonetheless, a far cry from an earlier estimate for the cost of running the department, which estimated total costs of £4,550, of which only £550 was to be expended on salaries. The only staff then employed were Cremins, whose annual salary of £365 was augmented by a bonus of £14, and Eimar O'Duffy, whose annual remuneration was £260.[45]

A broad indication of the cost of running the department can be seen in the public estimates. For the year ending the 31st of March 1924, publicity department costs were estimated at £14,492, including £3,937 on salaries.[46] By 1925, with the department in the process of being wound down, the estimate had decreased to £3,043.[47] When de Valera initiated the Government Information Bureau in 1934, lower salary costs were instituted. The 1935 estimates indicated that the bureau's director earned £904, while a Junior Executive Officer and Shorthand typist received £150 and £99 respectively.[48] With the civil service bonus added to their salaries, the total estimated salary cost of de Valera's department was £1,273. The 1936 estimate dropped to £1,238[49] before increasing to £1,274 in 1937.[50]

One of the largest expenses on the External Affairs vote was the cost of administering overseas legations. The representatives, while not engaged in full-time propaganda activities, nevertheless promoted the state economically, culturally and diplomatically, and their salaries, at least in portion, represent a constant element of the state's propaganda expenditure. For the year ending March 1924, the estimate for the representatives' salaries and their staff amounted to £22,353.[51] Salary costs for this function dropped

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[45] NAI, D/Fin, Fin 1/297, Estimates 1922-23: 15 November - 9 December, 1922.

[46] EPS 1924, External Affairs

[47] *Ibid.*, 1925, External Affairs

[48] *Ibid.*, 1935, President

[49] *Ibid.*, 1936, President

[50] *Ibid.*, 1937, President

[51] *Ibid.*, 1924, External Affairs

down to £17,778 in the following year's estimates,[52] though they were to increase gradually year-on-year after that, as more offices opened. The estimates for the year ending March 1932, the last year for which a Cumann na with nGaedheal government was responsible, were £38,410.[53] Thereafter, the cost of the overseas representation increased dramatically under Fianna Fáil, the party's propensity for isolationist policies notwithstanding. In its first estimate, Fianna Fáil budgeted £51,446 for overseas representation[54], reaching £57,527 in the 1937 estimate.[55]

The Publicity Department, though short-lived, was prominent in developing the state's propaganda. But it was woefully under-funded, and found itself in a perpetual skirmish with the parsimonious Finance department. In the first year of the External Affairs estimate publicity received no mention.[56] For the next year, the department was allocated, in addition to salaries, £9,700 for publication and distribution, and £845 for travelling and incidental expenses. The overseas representatives, meanwhile, were allocated £2,390 for publicity services.[57] One year later, the latter allowance had disappeared from the estimates; the figure for publication and distribution was reduced to £5,250 and travelling and incidental expenses had fallen to £400.[58] Publication and distribution had exceeded its estimate in the previous year by some £2,390, indicating that while the department had miscalculated its needs, the drop in funding for this activity was actually £6,840. By 1926, the department itself had disappeared from the estimates.[59]

Overt publicity was not the only expense that appeared on the ministry's charge. Official entertainment was an annual cost that varied greatly. It is, however, a difficult cost to assess in relation to its propaganda value. It was intended as an allowance for the entertainment of visiting dignitaries, and was a definite effort in diplomacy. In its first

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[52] *Ibid.*, 1925, External Affairs

[53] *Ibid.*, 1932 External Affairs

[54] *Ibid.*, 1933, External Affairs

[55] *Ibid.*, 1937, External Affairs

[56] *Ibid.*, 1923, External Affairs

[57] *Ibid.*, 1924, External Affairs

[58] *Ibid.*, 1925, External Affairs

[59] *Ibid.*, 1926, External Affairs

year in the estimates, a rather inadequate allowance of £150 was made.[60] Walshe appealed to Finance to increase the amount:

> The Minister... is satisfied that a certain amount of judicious entertainment is desirable as it is through this medium that information as to trade and commerce is obtained, and business requiring care and tact is initiated in foreign countries. It must be remembered that our Foreign representatives are in many instances only able to make indirect approach to big commercial firms likely to become interested in Saorstát Éireann both as a market for foreign goods and as a producing centre and it is necessary both politically and commercially to keep the potentialities of the newly-born state in the public eye.[61]

In the next two years, the function received an increase to £750, followed by a decrease to £500.[62] Thereafter, the function was given greater prominence within the ministry's budget. Until 1934 entertainment never fell below £1,000 (in 1928) and rose to £6,730 in 1933.[63] This figure, intended to cover the additional costs of the Eucharistic Congress was an overestimate; the actual expenditure, recorded in the following year, was £4,764 – still a considerable sum for diplomatic largesse.[64] As de Valera's régime settled into place this subheading was sharply reduced, indicating both congruency with Fianna Fáil austerity, and the increasing insularism that differentiated his party from Cumann na nGaedheal.

Part of the department's difficulty in its dealings with the conservative Finance department may stem from a basic inability to follow good book-keeping practice. Certainly, it gave the impression on occasion of not following the rule of applying for sanction from the Minister of Finance before committing to expenditure. In 1925, it belatedly applied for sanction for £250 11*s.* 10 ½*d.* accrued over seventeen months on newspapers, photographs, pamphlets and publications, and supplying them to journalists and the overseas representatives.[65] But Finance was also apt to be pernickety, and drew the department's sting over the cost of a national anthem, the arbitrarily chosen 'Let Erin Remember', supplied to the 1924 Olympics for the princely sum of eight shillings; Finance queried whether the Olympic movement itself could not have purchased the sheet music. Publicity caustically informed Finance that it was good state propaganda

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[60] *Ibid.*, 1924, External Affairs

[61] NAI, D/Fin, Fin 1/3514: 20 August, 1923

[62] EPS 1925, External Affairs and EPS 1926, External Affairs

[63] *Ibid.*, 1933, External Affairs

[64] *Ibid.*, 1934, External Affairs

[65] NAI, D/FA, P/1/66: undated

and that 'in the circumstances it was essential that a Government Department should call the tune – and pay the piper.'[66]

Finance queried not just the value of the Publicity Department, but also of External Affairs sections that had a propaganda function. William O'Brien in Finance wrote to Walshe in February, 1923 querying the role of the overseas representatives. Walshe's response was sharp. He saw in the query an unvoiced question as to whether the Free State needed foreign relations, and wrote a four-page report in reply to the Finance Secretary. He highlighted their role in achieving recognition for the state, and though he was unable to quantify in commercial terms the impact of the missions, he stated acerbically that 'even the most poverty-stricken have their representatives, many of them purely passive, scattered all over the world.'[67] He cited as examples Denmark, which spent £300,000 on foreign affairs, and Austria, which spent £75,000 in its London office alone, and challenged Finance's penny-pinching attitude:

> We have closed down five of our Continental offices, including one of vital importance, within the last six months. It is enough. Any further putting up of shutters can only lessen still further out dwindling capital of prestige. It would be regarded at home as political funk and abroad as the beginning of 'national obliteration'.[68]

External Affairs excepted, Agriculture was the principal department to engage in propaganda. It seems to have experienced little of the miserliness that the former had to endure. Using the estimates, it is possible to arrive at a conservative figure of over £91,000 allocated to propaganda and ancillary activities in the department. Analysing this figure, it becomes apparent that the department engaged in two principal types of propaganda. The most common propaganda was the printing and dissemination of the departmental journal and advisory leaflets, which was an almost annual cost on the departmental vote. In the department's early years, journal and leaflets were treated as a single cost on the estimates, but from 1926 the cost was individually itemised. In that year, provision was made for £100 expenditure on leaflets, the lowest figure of all years of the Free State;[69] under Fianna Fáil the provision grew to £950 in 1937.[70] The leaflets,

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[66] *Ibid.*.

[67] NAI, D/Fin, Fin 1/3513: 27 February, 1923 to 27 March, 1923

[68] *Ibid.*.

[69] EPS 1926, Agriculture

[70] *Ibid.*, 1937, Agriculture

which were available free of charge from the Department, covered topics aimed at improving the efficiency of farming methods, crop yields and animal husbandry, disease control and self-sufficiency in the guise of home-curing bacon, beekeeping and preserving fruit. Only a small number of the leaflets treated the marketing of agricultural produce, suggesting that their impact was felt in domestic rather than commercial practice.[71]

The department viewed its principal propaganda function as educating Irish farmers. Agriculture swiftly recognised the importance of the new 2RN radio station, and commenced broadcasting educational programmes that were tailored to meet the needs of an agrarian audience.[72] While they were light on overt propaganda, the programmes indicate an awareness of how improvements in agricultural practices could assist the state in generating wealth, and achieving greater self-sufficiency. Daly questions the value of the broadcasts, however, noting that so few citizens possessed a radio that their impact may have been negligible.[73] This may be true, but the tradition of social congregations in one home, especially prevalent in the rural townlands and villages that were the key audience for the broadcasts, could have substantially increased the programmes' listenership.

The department presented educational exhibits at agricultural shows around the country, with the Royal Dublin Society's shows deemed especially important. This expense peaked at £670 in 1929,[74] and dropped to a constant £500 under Fianna Fáil. Alongside this educational presence, the department sponsored prizes at Royal Dublin Society and Munster Agricultural Society shows. Starting in 1929, the value of the department's sponsorship was approximately £400 each year. Additionally, the department engaged in exhibiting Free State agricultural produce at exhibitions and fairs; the 1929 estimates record a first allocation of £1,320.[75] The cost fluctuated yearly with the highest outlay under Cumann na nGaedheal reaching £1,820 in 1930.[76] Unsurprisingly, given de

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[71] Department of Agriculture Leaflets Nos. 1 to 105, 1934. While the leaflets were free individually, this bound collection was available for purchase.

[72] Lynch, 1999: 42-5

[73] Daly, 2002: 106

[74] EPS 1929, Agriculture

[75] *Ibid.*.

[76] *Ibid.*, 1930, Agriculture

Valera's desire for agricultural self-sufficiency, and with economic war with Britain closing much of the agricultural export market, expenditure increased under Fianna Fáil from £2,300 in 1934 to £2,480 in 1938. Under Fianna Fáil, propaganda for agriculture assumed greater significance than under Cumann na nGaedheal. Within a year of taking office, Fianna Fáil had authorised the expenditure of £2,100 for the 1933 agricultural exhibition at the Irish Industrial and Agricultural Fair in Cork, spread over two years.[77] From 1935 onwards, a yearly allocation of £800 was made to promote the Irish bloodstock industry abroad. Irish horses were prized internationally, principally in show-jumping quarters, and this expenditure, coupled with state propaganda at the Royal Dublin Horse Show, served to further an economically viable trade.

It was much less frequent for the department to exercise a statutory publicity function. However, a raft of legislation from 1924 and 1925 required the department to promote the new acts, although the outlay, in 1928, was quite small at £350.[78] The legislation included the Livestock Breeding Act, 1925, the Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Act, 1924, and the Dairy Produce Act, 1924. Indeed, publicity as a subheading appeared only twice on its own in the department's Estimate, with a provision of £350 in 1927 and 1928.[79] Thereafter it was subsumed into a new subheading comprising advertising and publicity. Advertising had been a varying departmental expense (1923: £400; 1924: £1,700; 1925: 600).[80] Once counted with propaganda, the combined estimate between 1929 and 1934 was approximately £1,100 per annum. It soared in 1936 to £11,000, with the inclusion of £8,000 directed towards wheat-growing propaganda.[81] Although the estimate declined slightly in the remaining years of the Free State, it remained the single most expensive item of the department's propaganda.

The Department of Industry and Commerce did not engage in the same level of propaganda. Its sporadic efforts were geared towards large-scale special events, and differed from Agriculture's strategic propaganda. It is difficult to arrive at a precise figure for its propaganda expenditure, but under Cumann na nGaedheal governments,

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[77] *Ibid.*, 1933 and 1934, Agriculture

[78] *Ibid.*, 1928, Agriculture

[79] *Ibid.*, 1927 and 1928, Agriculture

[80] *Ibid.*, 1925, Agriculture

[81] *Ibid.*, 1936, Agriculture

£5,750 can be attributed towards three propaganda activities. The first, in 1923, was a contribution towards the cost of a stall at the *Daily Mirror* International Fashion Fair in London. The department estimated the cost 'including rent and fitting of stand and incidental expenses' at £1,000.[82] However, the department contributed only a portion of the cost, with Agriculture (£400) and the Congested Districts Board (£300) paying the balance. In the 1929 and 1930 estimates, provision was made for expenditure on cinematograph films. By far the biggest financial commitment to industrial propaganda under Cosgrave was an allowance of £3,800 towards the publication of the *Official Handbook for Saorstát Éireann*, a venture led by Bulmer Hobson that recouped £1,000 in advertising.[83] The handbook's format copied other publications edited by Hobson, the *Dublin Civic Week 1927 Official Handbook* and the Dublin Corporation-published *A Book of Dublin*. Both contained scholarly articles, with pages of advertisements at the front and back. Hobson was credited as the editor of the Free State publication, serving on a committee chaired by Michael Tierney, and including Cremins, Kevin O'Sheil, T.R. Price and W.J. Williams. In his preface Hobson acknowledged the ministerial sanction: 'This book has been written under the general direction of a committee appointed by the Minister for Industry and Commerce.'[84]

It is significant that following Fianna Fáil's accession to power, the frequency of industrial propaganda declined from the modest levels set by Cumann na nGaedheal, though the sums expended were higher. Only one year's estimates record propaganda expenditure under Fianna Fáil: the 1934 estimates recorded £4,700 for an exhibition of Free State industry in the Chicago World's Fair.[85] Grant in aid of £3,000 was also allocated to the Irish National Exhibition in Cork, while a Free State exhibition at the Paris Fair was allocated £450.[86] The drop in frequency of industrial propaganda was consistent with Fianna Fáil protectionist economics, which sought to create self-sufficiency through agriculture and the creation of small, locally based workshops rather than through large factories funded by foreign direct investment. It may, however, be closer to the truth to say that Fianna Fáil did not entirely abandon industrial propaganda;

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[82] *Ibid.*, 1924, Industry and Commerce

[83] *Ibid.*, 1932, Industry and Commerce

[84] Hobson, 1932: 15

[85] EPS 1934, Industry and Commerce

[86] *Ibid.*.

rather they diverted funds from to the Gaeltachtaí, Irish-language speaking regions with limited industrial output.

While these regions deserved promotion for their importance to the national sense of identity, their selection was in itself a vehicle for Fianna Fáil's own propaganda as the protector of all things Gaelic, and the small voter. It also distinguished the party from the mercantile and rancher middle class following of Cumann na nGaedheal. That the Gaeltachtaí had few indigenous industries beyond traditional cottage industries seems not to have been an inconvenience under Fianna Fáil. In the last year for which Cumann na nGaedheal prepared the estimate, the Fisheries and Gaeltacht Services received an allocation of £170 for advertising, an increase of £30 on the previous estimate.[87] However, almost instantly that Fianna Fáil took office, the Services enjoyed a substantially increased budget under new subheads 'H5 Exhibitions of Gaeltacht Products at Shows and Fairs' and 'H6 Advertising'. The former saw an allocation of £1,300 for the Cork Industrial Fair and £300 for other fairs, while the latter increased to £2,500.[88] The figures for 1934 were slightly less, and from 1935 Gaeltacht Services was treated separately to Fisheries, and the exhibitions and advertising subheads totalled £1,750.[89] From 1936 to 1938, the Services received allocations under a single Advertising and Publicity subhead that more than doubled to £1,100 in 1938. It is interesting to note that the peak estimates for expenditure appeared at the start and conclusion of the Economic War with Britain, and suggests an awareness of the need to communicate positive propaganda so that an internal market might replace the abruptly closed-off British market.

The last department, Local Government and Public Health, conducted very discreet propaganda. As noted, it had for a short period a position of Intelligence Officer. Given the nature of the type of propaganda that had emerged during the revolutionary period, intelligence gathering was an important function, and it is not unreasonable to regard this as a propaganda-style position. Yet the department had no visible expenditure on propaganda. However, there was one area of activity in which the state was reluctant to acknowledge its propaganda: sexual health. Howell's depiction of prostitution and

[87] *Ibid.*, 1932, Fisheries and Gaeltacht Services

[88] *Ibid.*, 1933, Fisheries and Gaeltacht Services

[89] *Ibid.*, 1935, Gaeltacht Services

venereal disease notes that the state rejected legislative regulation of the sex industry, preferring, instead, 'a moral regulation of sexuality marked by elements of Catholic social purity'.[90] Indeed, he highlights the extent to which denunciation of prostitution and disease was a nationalist anti-imperial propaganda that carried over into Free State discourse.[91] He and Riordan, though diametrically opposed in their reading of the politics of sexual health, both agree that the department was reluctant to become active in a public campaign to educate the populace about the dangers of sexual diseases. Riordan cites the department's response to an inter-departmental report on sexual disease, highlighting its reluctance to engage in publicity, and preference for a more subtle education scheme for medical officers and midwives.[92] She posits that the department's rejection of the report was done because it would 'prefer to continue in its own way, doing good by stealth.'[93] Clearly, the type of propaganda conducted by the department reflected a moral decision to avoid being overt; thus it is unsurprising that no record of expenditure other than brief, general references to sexual health legislation appeared in its estimates.

III

The Provisional Government suffered from a collective lack of administrative experience; as McBride notes, only one member, Cosgrave, had any experience in civil administration.[94] Establishing departments of state with suitably qualified ministers was a difficult task and the Department of External Affairs was one of the last to be created by the Free State. Consequently, it suffered from the lack of a firm administrative foundation, which other departments had already established. Moreover, the delay was partly caused by the new government's inability to determine the precise responsibilities of a department that had never been within the scope of the inherited civil service. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that politicians and civil servants were at a loss in their dealings with the department. Finance, recognising that: 'This Ministry has not heretofore been a charge upon the Exchequer Funds. Its organization is still being

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[90] Howell, 2003: 321

[91] *Ibid.*: 328-9

[92] Riordan, 2007: 361-2. The report was the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee of Inquiry Regarding Venereal Disease.

[93] *Ibid.*: 362

[94] McBride, 1991: 304

considered' advised the department to submit for its first estimate the round figure of £25,000 under two broad subheads covering salaries, and travel and incidental expenses.[95] Such imprecision even from the pedantic Finance department points to an inauspicious start for External Affairs, and the Publicity Department which, although already in existence and a known cost to the ministry, did not formally appear in the Estimates until the following year.

Indeed, it was the location of the Publicity Department within its vote that presented the ministry with its most contentious subhead. Its location owed more to FitzGerald's presence as minister rather than any strategic propaganda consideration, and its future existence was almost immediately in doubt. Walshe contacted Finance regarding the 1923-4 Estimate: 'Our Estimate is being prepared, but as the Publicity Department is probably about to be transferred to another Ministry it is extremely difficult to arrive even approximately at a figure.'[96] Walshe's helplessness was nothing new. Earlier that month he had written to Finance requesting assistance:

> as this Department is a completely new one... it seems essential that you should send to us for a few days an officer armed with full authority to clear up outstanding accounts, to make a provisional audit and to make all such orders as may be necessary to ensure an exact observance of your rules in this department.[97]

External Affairs' obvious accounting difficulties prompted C.A. Ryan in Finance to inform Walshe that he had attempted to get a temporary transfer of accounting expertise to the ministry.[98]

Yet even the additional accounting expertise of Finance did nothing to dispel the perception that External Affairs was unable to satisfactorily account for its expenditure. The Committee on Public Accounts, finding fault with a reporting mechanism that grouped domestic and international propaganda together under one subhead, ordered the department to delineate more clearly its expenditure:

> [Thomas Johnson]... Can you recollect the discussion that took place last year as to the Publicity Department, and the suggestion which was made that a distinction should be drawn between any expenditure for publicity in Ireland and outside of Ireland?

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[95] EPS 1923, External Affairs

[96] NAI, D/Fin, Fin 1/1716: 31 January, 1923

[97] *Ibid.*, Fin 1/2453: 19 January, 1923

[98] *Ibid.*, Fin 1/1716: 27 February, 1923

Witness. [Walshe] – Yes.
[Johnson] Has that been done? -- [Walshe] Yes; we have been able to segregate the Internal Publicity from the External Publicity for the year 1923-4. I have them here.
[Johnson] Will you tell the Committee what the separate expenditure was in those matters? – [Walshe] Under B.7. £634 9s. 1d. expended in foreign countries – external publicity. Under C.1. £3,466 5s. 0d. That is for the salaries of the Headquarters Publicity Staff, and about 30 per cent of that - £1,040 – was voted for foreign propaganda under that head. Under C.2. you have a sum of £241 19s. 1d., £72 of which was foreign, and under C.3. £6,736 10s. 11d., of which £4,896 16s was paid to the "Manchester Guardian" for issuing a special Irish Supplement for external purposes.
[Johnson] What was the nature of the internal propaganda? Could you give us a general idea? -- [Walshe] In April, 1923, there were 10,000 posters in connection with the Land Act. There was the publication of the Griffith-Collins Album. There was a small sum in November for photos for newspaper payment, and there was the purchase of newspapers, stationery and payment for printing.[99]
[Johnson] Am I right in assuming that there will be no further expenditure in subsequent accounts for internal publicity? -- [Walshe] Yes.

The ministry continued to receive forensic scrutiny from the committee. In 1926, with the Publicity Department having being almost completely wound up in the previous financial year, the committee sought reassurance that public monies had not been wasted on publicity. Johnson again put the committee's concerns to Walshe:

> [Johnson] Under subheads C.1, C.2 and C.3 (Publicity Department) I notice that the actual cost of publication and distribution expenditure estimated was £5,250, but the actual expenditure was only £757. Travelling and incidental expenses were estimated at £400, but the expenditure was only £67. The estimate for salaries, wages, etc., in connection with publicity work was £3,043 and the expenditure was £2,552. Perhaps you would explain that? Is there any change in the method of publicity? – [Walshe] The change in the publicity expenditure is explained by the fact that activities of that nature have got to be gradually suspended, not suspended all at once. There is a gradual disappearance of publicity work. It is quite impossible to estimate properly at the beginning of the year in a case like that.[100]

Unsatisfied with the explanation, Johnson pursued his inquiry.

> [Johnson] I would like an assurance that there was work done for the amount paid out, notwithstanding that travelling expenses and publication and distribution costs fell so greatly as compared with the Estimates? – [Walshe] There is always a certain amount of what one might call invisible publicity work

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[99] Interim Report and Final Report of the Committee of Public Accounts together with Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. 10 November, 1925, Vote 60 External Affairs: § 1165-9.

[100] Interim Report and Final Report of the Committee of Public Accounts together with Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. (Appropriation Accounts, 1924-25). 10 June, 1926. Vote 58 Dept of External Affairs: §1499

> going on in our Department. It was considerably more intense while those officials were with us than now they are gone.[101]

Concerned with protecting the public purse, Johnson did not accept Walshe's reply, though the nature of propaganda suggests at his truthfulness before the committee. Oblique answers, however, suggested to the committee that something was left unsaid in the ministry's accounts.

> [Johnson] I just want to bring out clearly the fact that you have related – that salaries were not paid to people for doing nothing – that there were actual services rendered for the salaries paid. Without an explanation of that kind, one would imagine that you paid salaries although no work was done? – [Walshe] It is very hard to see this unless you have an actual money return for the work done. That is especially the case in our type of work and that perhaps is the reason why our office is so much attacked. Our work is not appreciated because we cannot hand it out in certain measurements, to show what is being done.
> [Johnson] I was rather waiting for you to explain that work can be done without publication and that is a point that has to be brought out? – [Walshe] In fact our Department could quite easily have existed during the time it has existed, and nobody in this country need have heard of it. Yet its work could have been, and in effect has been, of the greatest advantage to the State.[102]

The impression that External Affairs was fighting a lonely battle defending a publicity department that was little understood, and less valued, is unavoidable. But the ministry's inability to follow correct accounting procedures, and to obey diktats from Finance, made it its own worst enemy and gave opponents of the publicity department ample ammunition to use against it. As late as 1930, Walshe was grilled by the committee over the protracted tenure of a civil servant employed on publicity within the ministry, despite Finance's instruction that he be transferred to the ministry proper. Appearing before the committee in 1928, Walshe had defended the ministry's dilatory efforts to effect the transfer, claiming the ministry was only slowly assuming an adequate staff and structure.[103] The matter was exacerbated by an overpayment of £26 to the civil servant in question, a trivial amount that seemingly confirmed External Affairs' incompetence. However, Walshe, whose defence amounted to little more than contrition, received only a gentle admonishment from an unusually forgiving committee.

> [Chairman] I think you made a point that there was a certain ambiguity in the instructions received from the Department of Finance in regard to this officer as

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[101] *Ibid.*:§1503

[102] *Ibid.*: §1508-9

[103] Report of the Committee of Public Accounts together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. (Appropriation Accounts, 1928-29). Thursday, 12 June, 1930. Vote 66 External Affairs: §1245

> to the interpretation of the word 'immediately'? – [Walshe] Yes, that was so. I took at the time the word 'immediately' to mean as soon as the urgent needs of the External Affairs Department permitted.[104]

Walshe further acknowledged that 'As I have become acquainted with the Department of Finance I have also become better aware of what the word "immediately" means in their instructions.'[105] The admission, rather than being met with disbelief or opprobrium, was accepted by the committee, with Bennett offering Walshe an easy escape route: '[Bennett] I think the whole thing devolves on this: at the time you were new to your duties and responsibilities as Accounting Officer. In the light of your further experience you would not take the view now that you took then? – [Walshe] I do not think so.'[106] Given his role in the ministry Walshe, legally, was not in a position to order the deployment of staff, which was the minister's prerogative. Moreover, at the time of receiving the Finance instruction, Walshe had already been *in situ* for several years, and was very experienced. In such circumstances, it becomes apparent that Walshe was defending a ministerial action or inaction not of his making, hence the leniency of the committee towards him.

The committee appears to have been severe in its treatment of External Affairs, compared with the treatment the ministry received from the Comptroller and Auditor General. That officer's annual reports, while almost always finding fault with the ministry's finances, treated anomalies as peccadilloes requiring explanation and a commitment from the ministry to avoid future financial carelessness. The entertainment of dignitaries, a propaganda activity which fell on the External Affairs vote, earned mild disapproval from the state's auditor: 'In many instances the vouching for charges on official entertainment... was not complete, and I consider it essential that definite rules should be laid down for guidance in the examination of such expenditure in future years.'[107] Official entertainment, while a necessary element of the ministry's expenditure, defended by Walshe as 'any expenditure which is used for the purpose of interesting

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[104] *Ibid.* §1252

[105] *Ibid.* §1253

[106] *Ibid.* §1254

[107] Appropriation Accounts of the Sums Granted by the Oireachtas for Public Services for the Year Ended 31st March, 1924, together with the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon, and his Reports on Certain Store Accounts: §86

foreigners in the country'[108] received only qualified support. Deputy Byrne, a businessman, expressed the view that business visitors to the state should pay their own way, though official visitors could be treated differently. He indicated also: 'There was a great outcry in connection with the expenditure on the Department of External Affairs and I think this point was bound to crop up in a committee such as this. A great many people look upon it as a great waste of money.'[109]

In contrast to the negativity External Affairs experienced regarding its propaganda activities, the Department of the President of the Executive Council, which from 1934 housed the newly established Government Information Bureau, enjoyed more benign relations with the state's financial overseers. The Comptroller and Auditor General's reports make no reference to the publicity within the department, and only FitzGerald, as chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, challenged the bureau's establishment. His query, however, concerning the supplementary estimate of £10 that had been voted by the Dáil to facilitate the establishment of the bureau, can be seen more as a continuation of his contretemps with de Valera over the funding and purpose of the bureau rather than as seeking to protect the public purse from maladministration and unnecessary expenditure.[110] Indeed, FitzGerald's rejection of de Valera's proposal for a vote of £10 concerned the ill-defined nature of the Bureau:

> Nominally we are asked to vote £10. Actually we are asked to incur immediately an additional expenditure of £900 to £1,000 a year, and as the President has just said he cannot even tell us what additional staff and expenditure will be involved.... It looks as if the unfortunate people of this country are being asked now to give some unnamed amount—but more than £1,000 a year— to provide the President with somebody near by whom he can have to ask him leading questions all the time.[111]

FitzGerald was clearly concerned with the partiality of the proposed Bureau, labelling its funding a tax to further Fianna Fáil propaganda: 'Here we are asked to establish a department for the purpose of saving the pockets of the Fianna Fáil people and to

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[108] Report of the Committee of Public Accounts together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. (Appropriation Accounts, 1925-26.) 17 November, 1927, Vote 59 External Affairs: §1622

[109] *Ibid.*: §1623-4

[110] Report of the Committee of Public Accounts together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. (Appropriation Accounts, 1933-34.) 6 June, 1935 Vote 3 Department of the President of the Executive Council: §770.

[111] DÉ, vol. 50, 15 February, 1934, col. 1601

impose on the public in this country a tax in order to propagand the tactics of this Party.'[112]

He was supported in his opposition by Deputy Frank MacDermot, who noted that the director of the bureau was:

> to receive as much as one of His Majesty's Ministers sitting on the bench opposite, and the Irish people are to be asked to find that money for the purpose of adding to the resources of Fianna Fáil publicity. I am at a loss to imagine on what reputable ground that action can be defended. I may say, by the way, that this Estimate appears to be somewhat of an insult to Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, who informed the world a few days ago that she held the position of Irish national propagandist. As that duty is already being performed free of charge, it seems rather unnecessary to pay a gentleman £1,000 a year to do the same thing, especially as there is to be a staff added later, which will greatly increase the expense.[113]

His caustic final remark regarding Sheehy-Skeffington may be viewed in the light of the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate, but it also suggests that within the body politic was an impression that there was no need for expenditure on propaganda, which was organic and could be conducted free of charge.

Deputy Richard Anthony also opposed the vote. In his opinion, the Fianna Fáil practice of making appointments to public jobs without recourse to the Appointments Commissioners was untenable. He queried whether the position had been advertised, according to normal civil service regulations, or whether journalists who were suitable for the position had been interviewed.[114] McGilligan placed the cost of the new director of publicity in a social context:

> Last night we spent our time... in debating the necessity for getting £1,000 from vocational education committees... and we were discussing how we might get an odd £10 or £15 from medical officers of health, and from poor law dispensary officers. The only argument put up in relation to their 'cuts' was that it would be unfair to leave these people untouched when everyone else was getting a whack. Here is one man who is not getting a whack. Here is one man who can stand up with a clear conscience and say: 'I have gained.' Someone is going to get £900 yearly, rising by £25 to £1,000, for giving out Government dope.[115]

The level of support that he enjoyed indicates that FitzGerald was not merely pursuing a personal vendetta against de Valera. There was, arguably, greater need for close

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[112] *Ibid.*, col. 1603

[113] *Ibid* col. 1621

[114] *Ibid.*, col. 1622

[115] *Ibid.*, col. 1623

supervision of the Government Information Bureau's expenditure. Unlike its progenitor, which slavishly listed its expenditure under precise subheadings, the new office did not. Implicit in this is that its expenditure was hidden from prying eyes. It is inconceivable that a propaganda service could function with salaries its only expense, yet this is precisely what the public estimates suggest. Given the scrutiny that External Affairs received over the payment of salaries without any visible propaganda work to show for it, it was scarcely even-handed to ignore annual salaries considerably in excess of £1,000 in de Valera's version of a state publicity office.

But de Valera's visions of state and party propaganda frequently blurred. He had little need to account for expenditure of his state publicity department when its principal function was to provide his own personal newspaper, the *Irish Press*, with information about the workings and successes of his Fianna Fáil government. His method of funding the establishment of the newspaper suggests a breathtaking hubris, and a blatant disregard for both financial probity and the interest of thousands of shareholders. Funds which de Valera had raised in America in 1919 and 1920 which had not been sent to the Free State were the subject of a court challenge in 1927, when the Free State government attempted to have them turned over to it. The New York Supreme Court ruled that as the Irish Republic had not been established the original purpose of the bond was null and void and all remaining funds should be returned to the original subscribers, who had to be satisfied with receiving just 58% of their original investment; the balance had either been spent on the tour or in the Free State.[116] De Valera moved swiftly to ask subscribers to turn their bonds over to him for the express purpose of establishing a newspaper that would represent the views of a genuine Irish Republic: approximately two thirds of the disputed monies were given to him in response to his plea. While this amounted to between £400,000 and £450,000, it did not prevent de Valera from returning to America, accompanied by Gallagher, on a fundraising tour a year later, again seeking money to establish a newspaper.[117] The convoluted mechanism de Valera employed to incorporate the firm in America suggests an awareness that his actions were not entirely above board. He established a holding company, 'American Corporation' in Delaware, a state notorious for its lax financial regulatory regime, and transferred 60,000 non-voting shares to his American investors, retaining the key 200 voting shares for his

[116] O'Brien, 2001: 8

[117] *Ibid.*: 18

own personal use. With all the voting power in the company, he installed himself as Controlling Director, a position which gave him direct control over editorial and staffing policies.[118] His 200 shares he placed in a holding trust, creating the impression of remoteness between the newspaper and himself. Coogan excoriates de Valera for this underhand scheming: 'All that is required to be said about this trust… is that it did what it was set up to do. It held the *Irish Press* for de Valera, and later his son and grandson, against all comers.'[119] It was an arrangement that continued unobserved until de Valera was challenged by Noel Browne in the Dáil in 1958.[120]

IV

It is apparent that the state used propaganda haphazardly, and either under-funded it, or discretely channelled funding towards it. The record of expenditure, and the manner of accounting for propaganda expenditure suggest that the state did not have the personnel to adequately deal with the administration of propaganda. It was one thing to write well, as did Lester and FitzGerald, but quite another to budget, execute and account for a large scale campaign. Yet what if the state had committed itself to a properly funded and professionally managed international propaganda campaign? In June, 1928 the government received 'a proposal for inaugurating a publicity campaign in the United States, Great Britain, and the Continent in the interests of Irish Free State industry and commerce.'[121] Prepared by American propaganda firm, Doremus, the proposals were sufficiently interesting for both Patrick Hogan and McGilligan to meet the firm's European manager, J. Walker Smyllie, and for Cosgrave to subsequently enter into correspondence with him. This was an unusually attentive response, as the state received many pitches for business from propaganda firms; invariably these were politely declined. The Doremus proposal was comprehensive, and Smyllie, an acquaintance of Ivy Lee,[122] pressed home the advantage his access had given him, sending Cosgrave a folder of American press clippings covering a month old speech by Cosgrave; Smyllie claimed that the volume would have been greater had he been able to use a more newsworthy and

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[118] *Ibid.*: 23

[119] Coogan, 1993: 420-1

[120] Browne, 1994: 234

[121] NAI, D/FA, 5/25: Proposals by Doremus and Co re publicity campaign for Saorstát. 13 June, 1928

[122] MLP, Lee, 6/5: 19 July, 1932

more recent speech of Cosgrave's.[123] Whatever interest Doremus' efficiency may have piqued, McGilligan balked at the annual cost of 5,000 guineas to execute the campaign. He recommended to Cosgrave that the proposal be turned down, or, failing that, he would canvas Irish industrialists for financial support to implement the campaign.[124] The cost of the campaign was certainly expensive for the state, yet McGilligan's second preferred option, entirely consistent with Cumann na nGaedheal's free trade economic policy, could have opened the way for a joint state and private sector campaign. Certainly, given the range of areas which Doremus undertook to propagandise, an argument could have been made for the Irish Tourist Association, the ESB and business representative bodies like Dublin Chamber of Commerce to subsidise a propaganda campaign.

But who were Doremus? The pitch document claimed that the organisation had been in existence for around quarter of a century, boasted offices in five American cities, and representatives in eighteen European countries. Owned by the Barron Estate, publishers of the *Wall Street Journal*, the Dow Jones ticker-tape service and other financial publications, it had access to a large, influential readership. Indeed, the ticker-tape service and Doremus shared offices in every city where both were present. The company claimed to represent the interests of 650 banking and industrial institutions 'many of the most important banking and financial interests in America'.[125] The list included Seligman and Co, the Bank of Montreal, the Bankers Trust Company and other leading finance houses. Demonstrating the company's connections and influence, the pitch claimed Doremus' credentials could be verified by financial luminaries including Dillon Read Corporation, Chase National Bank, Chase Securities Corporation, Blair and Company, and Lee Higginson and Company.[126] Alongside its corporate clients, Doremus synopsised propaganda campaigns conducted on behalf of the Swiss, Bolivian, Australian and South African governments, and indicated that among its current clients were the Italian, Cuban and Austrian governments. Unquestionably, Doremus were in a position to make good their offer to the state of access to financial and industrial markets, and to provide introductions to investors on behalf of the state.

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[123] NAI, D/FA, 5/25: 5 July, 1928

[124] *Ibid.*, 16 July, 1928

[125] NAI, D/FA, 5/25: 'Doremus and Company. Proposal for a Press Campaign on behalf of the Irish Free State': undated, c. July 1928.

[126] NAI, D/FA, 5/25: 'Supplementary Memorandum': undated, c. July 1928

Doremus presented their campaign to the state as an investment, clearly regarding 5,000 guineas as a competitive figure, and indeed, the campaign appears to have offered good value. It has been difficult to quantify exactly how much the state was already spending on overseas publicity by 1928, or more pertinently, how much was being misspent because of duplication, personal interests of the representatives and lack of clarity of their roles, but it is certain that salaries alone dwarfed the Doremus figure. Arguably, greater economies could have been achieved had the roles of the overseas representatives been more strictly defined, and their responsibility for propaganda in certain areas delegated to Doremus, whose reach across North America and Europe far exceeded that of the state. The result would have been the equivalent of placing a part-time state propagandist in a professional office in each country.

By way of comparison, it is useful to know how much organisations were spending propagandists for hire in America. Ivy Lee's audited accounts for 1927[127] and 1928[128] show that his largest clients spent approximately $15,000 and $20,000 in each year respectively. His total fee income from fees and services for both years was $249,145.91 and $304,171.60. With one pound being worth approximately $4.50 in 1928, his biggest clients spent approximately £4,400, while his total income was £55,000. The Doremus figure does not seem excessive in this regard. In relation to salary costs, Lee spent $21,791.52 and $26,283.53 on clerical salaries, and $50,005.60 and $60,498.41 on staff salaries over the same period. Notwithstanding the fact that the Doremus campaign had a built-in profit margin for the company, on the face of it, it would appear to have been a sensible idea for the government to consider the campaign on the basis that they would be paying only a portion of the salaries of professional propagandists.

The Doremus proposals focused on six key objectives. These included attracting capital to Irish enterprises, promoting Free State trade, attracting tourists to Ireland, promoting Free State bonds and achieving press coverage for the state regarding its international standing and business profile.[129] As far as the state was concerned, attracting tourists was a matter already in hand. The Irish Tourist Association was operating as the state's proxy

[127] MLP, Lee, 27/4: 9 August, 1927

[128] MLP, Lee, 27/5: 8 February, 1929

[129] NAI, D/FA, 5/25: 'Doremus Proposal': undated, c. July, 1928

in this respect. Thus, it made little sense to engage in unnecessary and costly duplication of tourism propaganda. Indeed, the list of promotional activities suggested by Doremus differed little from the activities of the ITA, with sporting, cultural, motoring, and historical tourism the major plank of their proposals. The rather generic objective of increasing the state's profile, similarly, was already being carried out by the state's overseas representatives, and while the Doremus proposal may have increased the frequency and range of Free State news, it would have been as a costly adjunct to the State's own propaganda.

However Doremus did possess a significant advantage over the state when it came to financial propaganda. Here, the proposal merited serious consideration as the firm had the capacity and contacts to realise substantial inward investment to the state. Boland, and de Valera's trip to America in 1919 had demonstrated to nationalists the difficulty of orchestrating a major bond sales drive. Doremus claimed to be able to better promote Free State bonds and illustrated their point:

> Suppose the borrower is seeking $20, 000, 000.... Without a publicity background, suppose that this money could be secured on bonds issued to the bankers at 95 and sold to the public at 98. The coupon rate, we will assume to be 7%. If through the prior use of constructive publicity the borrower could obtain from the same bonds 95 1/2, over $100, 000 would be gained.[130]

Given the state's parlous financial position, it may have made eminent sense to invest in the propaganda campaign. Moreover, the experience of Irish nationalists in 1919 had demonstrated that the majority of purchasers of Irish bonds in America were Irish citizens or second-generation Irish. What Doremus held out was the prospect of Free State bonds being sold by persuasive finance houses to savvy American investors primed as to their worth by a thorough and convincing publicity campaign:

> It is a fact, and one generally recognised in America, that publicity can and does play an important part in the distribution of securities and in fixing the prices at which securities are both purchased by bankers and sold to the public....
> American investors do not <u>buy</u> securities, but are 'sold' them. The system involves the employment of large staffs of bonds salesman by the bond houses.... The investor often buys bonds on the advice of a salesman without being thoroughly 'sold' on the true worth of the bond. This operation is somewhat uncertain, in as much as the purchaser of the bond is not very convinced the bonds that are suitable for him, and he is vulnerable to arguments put forth by other bonds salesman, constantly striving to make sales, who have

[130] *Ibid.*, 'Supplementary Memorandum': undated, c. July, 1928: 18

> no hesitancy in arguing that he should sells [sic] bonds he owns in order to secure funds for the purchase of bonds being offered by that salesman.[131]

The state clearly did not regard the Doremus proposal as a serious investment project. McGilligan and Walshe both saw it as an expensive waste of time. In February, 1929, Walshe telegraphed Smyllie with the curt message: 'Minister regrets impossible consider proposal this year.'[132] In a follow-up letter to Smyllie, he clarified the state's position as the prudent management of state funds.[133] Doremus did not go away after this refusal, and in 1932, following de Valera's general election success, Smyllie again pressed his case. This time, the company appears to have put resources on both sides of the Atlantic into winning the contract. A letter from the New York legation indicated that the correspondent had been in contact with one Mr Tomlinson, the head of Doremus:

> Mr Tomlinson's view is that we should ever embark on a publicity campaign "to put Ireland in the map" as they say here.
> Doremus & Company have teletypes by which a message is typewritten on what appears to be an ordinary typewriter and it practically simultaneously is printed in Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, etc. on similar machines in these places.... The advantage of an organisation like this one is that it thoroughly covers the entire United States and the Company's copywriters would, of course, put into form the information received from Dublin.[134]

Smyllie contacted de Valera. The communication is not extant, but de Valera's Private Secretary, Maurice Moynihan, wrote to Walshe for guidance on Smyllie's proposals. Walshe replied:

> 'Doremus' is a most expensive company. They blandly suggested £20,000 a year in conversation with me about three years ago.
> In any case I think it is our Minister's view that our best propaganda is to get on with the work and to create facts of interest and value to the world. When the plans at present being matured have been realized – and while they are being realized – we shall be sufficiently in the eyes of the world.
> On the Tourist side – propaganda is going – if anything – too fast in relation to our preparedness to receive visitors. Our hotels, our towns and villages are still dirty and decaying for the most part and it is better to wait until a good deal more brightening up has been done before we give any further help to Tourist propaganda. The situation on the international and intra-Commonwealth side is looking after itself. The English always get away with the first round – the justice of our case gradually brings the press to our side. We can't afford to compete with a big country in artificially stimulating the press of the world but our case is

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131 *Ibid.*: 14. Emphasis in the original.

132 NAI, D/FA, 5/25: 12 February, 1929

133 *Ibid.:* 15 February, 1929

134 *Ibid.*: 6 June, 1932

> still good when the stimulus is withdrawn. The inherent justice of our position is its greatest propaganda asset, and the fact that we are an established, recognised state makes it unnecessary for us to work on the lines of people who have no state existence.[135]

Had Walshe misremembered the cost of the campaign? The original proposal put by Smyllie was approximately $23,000, and it is unlikely, given the professional attention to detail of the pitch document, that Doremus had grossly underestimated its cost, or had deliberately stated a low figure just to beguile the government. What is clear from Walshe's remarks is that there was a signal reluctance to finance any form of propaganda, even if that meant losing out to English interests in the 'first round'. There was a reliance on the justness of the state's position, and a naïve, jingoistic belief that a gullible press would discern and communicate this to receptive audiences. That the state, a bare decade in existence, could scorn the need for propaganda as it was already established was nonsensical. Cutlip notes that between 1918 and 1919 Carl Byoir hired Edward Bernays to engage in propaganda work for the Lithuanian National Council, which sought American support for Lithuanian independence. The campaign involved articles for press and a canvass of senators, and successfully achieved a Senate vote recognising Lithuania. Byoir received $23,000 for the campaign.[136] In 1930, Byoir recruited Carl C. Dickey from Doremus, where he had worked on the Pan-Am account, to work on a tourism propaganda campaign for Cuba, for which Byoir had budgeted $50,000.[137] The claims made in the Doremus pitch of campaigns conducted on behalf of countries indicates that, for some states at least, professional propaganda was an essential part of state expenditure, and an investment in future economic wealth; in the Free State, however, propaganda was something to be achieved as cheaply as possible, and with the minimum of investment and effort. Walsh's claim that the state could not afford to compete with larger countries for propaganda suggests that the battle for a propaganda budget was already lost. If the state's most senior politicians and civil servants had no faith in the results such a campaign might yield, then, clearly, there was never likely to be any real investment in propaganda.

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[135] *Ibid.*: 3 July, 1932

[136] Cutlip, *op. cit.*: 166

[137] *Ibid.*: 543

V

It may be argued that the primary reason Free State governments did not expend substantial sums from the public coffers on propaganda lay in their pre-independence experiences, where good propaganda was often to be had for free. Successful fund-raising propaganda had also coloured perceptions of the value of general propaganda. The fact that the dissemination of nationalist messages had occasionally yielded a profit encouraged this type of propaganda, but at the expense of propaganda measures that would not pay their own way. This was a fundamental misapplication of propaganda: rarely did a Free State campaign bring in revenues sufficient to cover its expenses. Instead, propaganda expenditure should have been perceived as a factor, along with, for example, legislation and social change, in creating the conditions under which revenue from other sources would increase, agriculture, trade and tourism being principal examples. The influence of the Department of Finance, which insisted on an unbending application of accountancy standards, and discouraged schemes that were considered non-essential, unless they recouped their cost to the state, was all too obviously felt.

The disparity in funding between nationalist and British propagandists, and the perpetual threat of mosquito printing presses being closed and rebel propagandists arrested, inculcated a strong sense of thrift. Oratory and street balladry were far less expensive, yet no less pervasive, than posters and pamphlets which were liable to seizure, and their authors' arrest. Nationalists were helped, too, by British actions in Ireland: no matter how strict the censorship regime, atrocities by the Crown forces played into the hands of propagandists, whose most effective form of press propaganda was simply reportage. Denuded of commentary, material released to the Irish and international press was nonetheless too powerful to be ignored. However, the ardent attention paid to the rebels by journalists was to cause its own problems. The revolution and civil war were inherently newsworthy; no pressman, with an eye to good copy and circulation figures, would forbear to report at length on the conflicts. However, with the creation of the Free State, that changed. Cumann na nGaedheal administrations were slow to realise that the dull minutiae of legislation, and the ponderous work of state-building, while newsworthy in their own right, were not front-page material: they required patient exposition to the press corps and the citizenry at large. Stringent censorship during the Civil War, and the refusal to advertise in newspapers that did not support the state, did

little to build relationships between the state's propagandists and the press. Fianna Fáil's own problems stemmed from a different dynamic, and, perhaps, de Valera's near obsession with column inches. Having been the centre of press attention during his time in America, and enjoying a high profile domestically, the propaganda wilderness in which he and his new party found themselves was purgatorial; salvation, the ascension into power, required direct communication with an acquiescent press corps. The creation of the *Irish Press*, the party organ, at no expense to the Irish public satisfied this propaganda requirement.

That successive administrations questioned the value of propaganda, and even its validity in a democratic state, is clear from official sources. Thus, propaganda was something of an ugly sister to the Cinderella that was statecraft: from humble origins the state would rise to its pre-ordained greatness, but not through blatant self-promotion. Consequently, monies were given to propaganda, but reluctantly, as if self-promotion was unwholesome, and liable to redound with negative effect if the intended recipient of the propaganda had the temerity to reject it. The perspective of Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil on propaganda expenditure differed greatly. For the former, propaganda was a luxury that the state could ill-afford to indulge; for the latter, it was a necessity that the party could ill-afford to ignore. It is clear from the estimates for public services that under Cumann na nGaedheal propaganda expenditure, for all that it was scant, focussed on promoting the state internationally – hence the attention to external affairs, industry and tourism. Under Fianna Fáil, propaganda expenditure became an arm of the party rather than of the state. In neither instance was there a realisation that expenditure on propaganda was an investment that potentially offered a multiple return of its cost by way of increased taxation revenue, exchequer savings from improved civil and social conditions, and increased earnings by private industry and citizens. The state's reluctance to fund propaganda campaigns, whether initiated by its own public representatives and civil servants, or by commercial enterprises like Doremus, represented a missed opportunity to communicate strategically at home and overseas; worse, it contributed to retardation in the development of the economy and society.

Chapter 3

New Media and Propaganda

I

During the revolutionary period, nationalists favoured pamphlets, leaflets, posters, oratory, parades, ballads and poetry because of the reasonable amount of direct control that could be exercised over their content and distribution. Issues like censorship and reaction from opposing groups notwithstanding, they were methods that could be participated in, or circulated by, those with only peripheral involvement in the struggle: civilians, non-combatants, and auxiliary groups like Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna. The Dublin battalion of the latter acquired a small printing press that produced anti-recruiting literature at the start of the Great War,[1] while Cumann na mBan 'carried out effective publicity and propaganda work, issuing leaflets and painting slogans on the walls. So effective was this work that the whitewash brush was described as an instrument of the conscience of Ireland.'[2] Such propaganda was cheap and easy to produce. It required little professional expertise, but made ideal guerrilla propaganda – short-lived, fierce in content, liable to appear without warning, and easily replaced. But a poster tied to a lamp-post, or a ballad sung locally were static forms of propaganda whose reach was not guaranteed. It may be posited that their effectiveness lay in their volume and the repetitive nature of their content.

Newspapers demanded reasonably sound levels of literacy to be effective. Griffith's success as a newspaperman, coupled with FitzGerald's courting of the international press and production of the *Bulletin*, suggest that print was a major feature of the campaign for independence. That it remained a strong feature of politics in the Free State is a truism. However, this chapter is concerned with two propaganda channels that emerged during the revolutionary period and Free State era. Neither insurrectionists, their Free State successors, nor Ulster politicians, directly controlled film and radio; moreover, their proficiency in using these channels was gained exponentially. Nonetheless these became efficient propaganda channels, once propagandists became skilful in shaping messages for mass consumption.

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[1] Reynolds, 1947: 204

[2] Fox, 1947: 212

II

In Ulster, film-making had a distinguished role in the propagation of unionist ideals. Belfast's Willowfield cinema, the only cinema founded by political interests, served as the local unionist club though it had no distinct propaganda use.[3] By the mid 1930s, there were 122 cinemas in Ulster[4] screening a mixture of propaganda, Hollywood and British quota films. As in the Free State, film propaganda, though desired and facilitated by governments, was rarely directly conducted by politicians. Nonetheless, northern politicians enjoyed significant indirect control, usually through selecting the location, event, or dignitaries for filming.

Pathé footage concerning Ulster between 1912 and 1937 can be classified as political, commercial and cultural. Propaganda for politicians and political events mirrored that found in the Free State; doubtless the dominance of Pathé's style of filming and audience expectations dictated similarities. As early as 1912, James Craig used newsreels to promote Edward Carson's signing of the Ulster covenant.[5] In 1914, Carson's arrival in Belfast epitomised the politicians' arrival at public functions: an armed escort and the luxury of a motor car defined his august personage.[6] The act of voting was promoted: one newsreel noted that 'Decorated streets and open air ballot boxes are features of the Northern Elections.' The title came as a prelude to images of celebratory bunting hung between houses, and voters dutifully exercising their franchise.[7]

Advances in society and public spectacles boosted claims to cultural greatness. Footage of the Governor-General, the Duke of Abercorn, laying the foundation stone for Belfast law courts, and singing hymns with other dignitaries, promoted prosperity and justice.[8]

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[3] Farrelly, 1999: 134

[4] Petitt, 2000: 34

[5] Hill, 2006: 7

[6] Pathé, Film 1928.25

[7] Pathé, Film 234.49. Propaganda for voting was also known in the south. Footage of Michael Collins electioneering in Cork showed voters exiting the polling station. One enthusiastic elderly lady who told him he would be elected (the last intertitle in the film quotes her: 'Och shure you'll win Miceal') also manages to evince something of the importance of localism to politics on the island, and the creation of a cult of personality (Pathé, Film 270.31).

[8] Pathé, Film 806.16

Pathé captured the pageantry surrounding the 1930 visit of his wife to open Derry's Civic Week: footage included speeches from dignitaries and a parade of floats and vehicles watched by throngs of spectators.[9] Royal visits featured prominently among news footage from the era, promoting an image of a province that was cherished by Britain, and unquestionably loyal to it in turn.[10]

Feature films, facilitated by the British quota system, also propagandised Ulster. Richard Hayward's acting talents were complemented by his abilities as writer, singer, and preserver of Ulster speech and culture. The premiere of 'The Luck of the Irish', in which he starred, was sponsored by the Ulster Industrial Development Association, which had part-funded the production with the Ulster Tourism Development Association.[11] Though a unionist, he learned Irish in order to sing ballads.[12] His ability to cross the cultural and geographic divide allowed him to produce films that, while lauding Ulster, were warmly received in the Free State. After partition, unionists were forced to construct a new identity as British, and distinct to the Free State. With scenic views of Ulster, and homely portrayals of ordinary folk rallying against threats from outside, Hayward's films may have helped create this identity. However, American and British audiences, less sensitive to types of Irishness, maintained preconceptions of such films as generically Irish.[13] The involvement of Cambridge-educated Norris Davidson as producer of 'The Early Bird', also starring Hayward, [14] suggests that the distinction between Northern and Southern films existed more in aspiration than reality. Parallels between southern and northern films do not end there. The administrations, churches and religious lay groups held similar views on censorship. In the north, a preoccupation with morality governed censorship, and the south's stringent regime was admired by northern clergymen.[15]

Unionist politicians made a conscious attempt to use film to promote the province. While feature films requiring audience discernment over matters of cultural identity failed

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[9] Pathé, Film 745.21

[10] *See* Pathé, Film 746.22 and 929.08 for examples of royal visits

[11] Hill, 2006: 25

[12] *Ibid.*: 21-2

[13] *Ibid.*: 45-6

[14] Flynn, 2005: 39

[15] Barton, 2004: 36

to create a sense of Britishness, newsreels implied a veneer of Britishness. But the creation of this identity came about at the expense of the nationalist or Catholic population in Ulster, which was not featured prominently in news or feature films, unless, as in 'The Luck of the Irish,' in a villainous role. This contrasts with films in the south, which, especially before independence, tiptoed around religion and national identity. Nonetheless, Ulster film propaganda was reasonably well-organised and resourced, though it succeeded only in creating a fiction of Britishness.

Radio in Ulster took its cues from British broadcasting, where Reithian principles of education, information and entertainment drove the BBC, founded in 1922. However, radio in the province had an inauspicious start, as a broadcast signal from Glasgow, while not as good as one from within Ulster, had to suffice until instability in Ulster had ceased.[16] Nonetheless, radio in Ulster commenced two years earlier than in the Free State. By early 1927, there were 28,455 licensed radios in Northern Ireland, compared with 21,795 in the Free State.[17] The actual number of sets may have been higher, as in 1928 the *Irish Times* reported on a campaign to detect and prosecute unlicensed set owners.[18] Listenership on both sides of the border increased as more powerful stations were built and radios became more affordable. Estimated to have cost STG£100,000, a new 100 kilowatt station operating from Lisburn supplanted the old one kilowatt station in Belfast, and, though it would not compromise its signals, was more powerful than the Athlone 60 kilowatt station.[19] Free State figures for 1934 indicate that 59,992 licenses were held, compared to 65,621 in Northern Ireland.[20] By late 1937, the *Irish Times* was able to report that the total number of licensed sets in Northern Ireland had grown to 105,569.[21]

As listeners increased so, too, did radio's power as a propaganda channel. A perusal of daily schedules, published in newspapers, reveals that, like the BBC and 2RN, it was dominated by arts and entertainment. Nonetheless, programmes were aimed at interest groups. Farmers had regular broadcasts on market prices, and an address to them by the

[16] HC, vol. 153, 11 May, 1922, cols 2404-5

[17] *Irish Times*, 20 April, 1927: 3

[18] *Ibid.*, 5 June, 1928: 11

[19] *Ibid.*, 20, March 1936: 8

[20] *Ibid.*, 12 March, 1935: 4

[21] *Ibid.*, 16 October, 1937: 14

Northern Minister for Agriculture, Sir Basil Brooke, was lauded in a radio review for 'this use of radio... to take the public into his confidence and to exert leadership with the living voice.'[22] Events promoting Ulster were also evident. When the Ulster Grand Prix Motor Cycle race was selected as the *Grand Prix de l'Europe*, live commentary was broadcast.[23] Showing that radio could be used to promote itself, speeches by Craigavon and Leonard Dobbin of the Ulster Radio Traders Association at the opening of the Belfast Radio Exhibition, were scheduled, as were recitals and concerts held during the exhibition.[24] MacIntosh regards the BBC mission in Northern Ireland as creating an image of a 'unified homogenous unit' although its efforts were born of the necessary caution that avoided contentious issues – but nonetheless occasionally irked unionist audiences.[25] In a way, the BBC faced an impossible task in appealing to a divided province. When it offered a scheduling ethos akin to that in other British regions, it alienated Ulster nationalists; when it did not carry some essence of its London headquarters, it alienated unionists. What resulted was a form of broadcasting that reflected rather than promoted cultural and societal norms.

Within the Stormont parliament, broadcasting merited hardly a murmur of debate, though the few occasions when the matter was raised seem to indicate some concern for constituents. The first debate on broadcasting sought to ensure that a scheme to provide free wireless sets for the blind, enshrined in legislation, was not being thwarted by administrative negligence. Major Shillington, who raised the issue, singled out ex-servicemen as especially deserving – a category that, perhaps, hinted at his own constituents and service.[26] Lieutenant Colonel Gordon took issue with the broadcasting times of the weather forecasts (too late, especially for farmers) and news (too early).[27] In relation to the playing of the national anthem, Barbour, responding to a parliamentary question, intimated that the BBC concluded its service with a rendition of God Save the King 'on all suitable occasions' – a rather imprecise response that he clarified as meaning on occasions when the BBC in Ulster supplied a complete evening's broadcasts, and its

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[22] *Ibid.*, 27 September, 1937: 10

[23] *Ibid.*, 24 August, 1935: 6

[24] *Ibid.*, 5 October, 1934: 4

[25] MacIntosh, 1999: 69

[26] SP, vol. 8, 18 October, 1927, cols 2061-2

[27] *Ibid.*, vol. 15, 27 April, 1933, cols 1190-1

material was not merely an element in a larger schedule.[28] That the matter was raised at all suggests that radio was seen as a method of promoting loyalty within the province.

It would be erroneous to regard Northern broadcasting as parochial and beset with Ulster issues: there were efforts to achieve cross-border co-operation. Colonel Fitz Brase, director of the Free State's Army School of Music, was the guest conductor of the Northern Ireland Military Band for a studio performance broadcast from Belfast of, among others, his own compositions and Elgar.[29] Indeed, Brase's concert was a prelude to closer co-operation. The *Irish Times* Belfast correspondent reported that a joint programme of Belfast and Dublin artistes would mark the opening of the new Belfast station. T.J. Kiernan, head of 2RN, and his Northern Ireland counterpart were in discussions about sharing programmes, while Vincent O'Brien, Director of Music for 2RN, conducted the BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra.[30] It seems that radio had fewer concerns about creating an identity for Ulster, or maintaining a distinction between it and the Free State than did film. Elementary physics suggests that the mediumwave signal, no respecter of territorial boundaries, played a part in this. It is also possible that Ulster radio, as part of the BBC, held to public service broadcasting principles, and offered programmes of interest to nationalists living in Ulster.

III

The earliest extant film footage of Ireland, the actualities of Mitchell and Kenyon, portray a country content within the Empire: memorable 1904 footage from Cork featuring British flags flying proudly from buildings suggests subtle domestic propaganda. Indeed, their filmic record suggests modernity and advancement precisely because British symbols, like the flag, were adopted by a quiescent populace. How then, within the space of fifteen years, could the Union flag and all things British be reviled, and Cork become a stronghold of nationalist sentiment, inspiring a short, Sinn Féin, that focussed on three men from Youghal who went on hunger strike in prison?[31]

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[28] *Ibid.*, vol. 16, 15 March 1934, cols 539-40

[29] *Irish Times*, 7 January, 1936: 4

[30] *Ibid.*, 20, January, 1936: 8

[31] Condon, 2008: 187

An inkling of change came in the first feature films made in Ireland. Kalem, an American company, produced populist films with melodramatic and lightly nationalistic overtones. 'The Lad from Old Ireland,' 'Rory O'More' and 'The Colleen Bawn' portray the homogeneity of Irish communities, and the bravery of the community in the face of injustice. Villains were likelier to be informers and land agents than the British who, while displaced and unable to be part of the community, were honourable and fair.[32] The villain in 'Willie Reilly and His Colleen Bawn,' Sir Robin Whitecraft, is British, but the instrument of his dastardliness is the Red Rapparee, an Irishman on the fringes of the law. In contrast, the Protestant landlord, Squire Folliard, whose daughter is the object of Reilly's affections, and the Protestant minister, Reverend Brown, are gentlemen, putting aside religious differences in the interest of justice. Rockett *et al* posit that this was a naïve form of nationalist propaganda aimed at dissolving religious discord.[33] It may be more apposite to regard the depiction as being rooted firmly in a republican tradition stretching back to Edmund Burke and the United Irishmen. In such republicanism, citizens enjoyed political and economic equality, were equal and free, and participated in self-determination towards a common good.[34]

Republicanism is visible, too, in the Film Company of Ireland's 'Knocknagow.' For Barton, this heralded a politicised national cinema.[35] Gray, too, highlights its political overtones:

> The bitter social grievances folded between layers of romantic trifle in **Knocknagow** gave considerable concern to the British authorities at a time when Sinn Féin candidates were sweeping the elections in Ireland and the struggle for independence was getting out of the control of the London government. **Knocknagow** fared well commercially in the US in Irish immigrant communities, and also in Britain to the alarm of reviewers disturbed by its unapologetically nationalist tone.[36]

It also contains republican elements: tenants can count on the landlord's support against the unscrupulous land agent; violence is unbecoming of Catholics, who, instead, enjoy the protection of natural justice; and the notion of a common good is evident. Where 'Willie Reilly and His Colleen Bawn' sought religious harmony, 'Knocknagow' sought

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[32] Barton, 2004: 20

[33] Rockett *et al*, 1988: 27

[34] Held, 1996: 61

[35] Barton, *op. cit.*: 24-6

[36] Gray, 1999: 27. Emphasis in the original.

agrarian accord. Early Irish cinema implied that the enemy of the Irish and British was the rogue Irishman whose service to the British realised extremes repugnant to both communities.

Actuality and newsreel footage was more emphatic, bringing contemporary events to cinema audiences, and speedily disseminating political and subversive material. There were occasional similarities in the tone of newsreel and fiction films. Reflecting the republican tenor of features, one of advanced nationalism's first significant newsreels was the 1913 Wolfe Tone commemoration.[37] That year, showing how quickly advanced nationalists grasped cinema's significance, Thomas Clarke lauded its propaganda possibilities to John Devoy.[38] Thomas Ashe's funeral, depicting the lying in state, cortege, and burial was a template for funerals of nationalist figures; Collins adroitly stage-managed the event: after the interment, mourners regrouped at the cinema to view the newsreel.[39]

That footage was provided by General Film Supply, founded in 1910 by Norman Whitten and Gordon Lewis. The company produced commercial promotional films, newsreel footage and, incongruously, British army recruitment films.[40] As nationalist sentiment rose, the company met the demands of the new market: in 1917 they established the first Irish newsreel service, Irish Events, giving a green hue to news coverage, though British army news still featured.[41] The immediacy of cinema as a propaganda tool was evinced by their same-day coverage and screening of the 1917 Sinn Féin *árd fheis*.[42] It was further demonstrated by their coverage of the release of republican prisoners in June 1917: recorded in the morning, it was screened the same day, with former prisoners in attendance.[43] The RIC seized the company's 'Sinn Féin Review'[44] and banned it as seditious.[45] Banned, too, was Walter MacNamara's 'Ireland a Nation' an

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[37] Rockett *et al*, *op. cit.*: 33

[38] Farrelly, *op. cit.*: 133

[39] Condon, *op. cit.*: 189-91

[40] *Ibid.*: 187

[41] Barton, *op. cit.*: 16

[42] *Ibid.*: 15

[43] Rockett *et al*, *op. cit.*: 34

[44] *Ibid.*: 16-7

[45] Pettitt, *op.cit.*: 32

inaccurate account of Irish history which fell foul of the military authorities; a 1917 version was withdrawn after military opposition.[46]

Lacking official sanction, advanced nationalists took action against unwelcome films: Inghinidhe na hEireann and Na Fianna disrupted screenings of army recruitment films in 1913 and 1914.[47] Such disruptions continued into the Free State: when Dublin's Masterpiece Cinema screened 'The Somme' in 1925, armed raiders stole seven of the film's eight reels.[48] A new print was obtained, but the cinema was bombed almost immediately.[49] By then, the weight of cinema propaganda favoured the state, whose leaders showed they had taken at least some lessons from the campaign for independence.

Newsreel companies, capitalising on the state's newsworthiness, submitted frequent requests for interviews with politicians. The propaganda efforts of the state were frequently reactive and were it not for these requests few interviews may have been conducted. Free State politicians were reticent where filming was concerned. The style of filming in vogue in the silent era was to film politicians before or after events, or as groups self-consciously posing for the camera. With sound, the 'piece to camera' became more popular. The transition proved occasionally problematic. Lewis 'anxious not to miss this opportunity of giving the Government some valuable publicity' requested an interview with Cosgrave. [50] Agreeing to participate in a spoken film for the first time, Cosgrave clumsily essayed an informal tone:

> The apparatus through which I am now speaking for the first time affords one very stimulating thought: that it gives no opportunity for the opposition to interrupt or to tend towards pessimism and therefore I have, on a very dull morning, the field almost entirely to myself.

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[46] Barton, *op. cit.*: 18

[47] Rockett *et al*, *op. cit.*: 32-3 and Pettitt, *op. cit.*: 32.

[48] *Irish Times*, 17 November, 1925: 11. The raiders, James Lee and Maurice Fenlon, exhibited their robust form of censorship 'in the name of the republic.'

[49] *Ibid.*, 21 November, 1925: 7

[50] NAI, D/T, S2365: 11 November, 1930

He continued apocalyptically: 'The world today is full of great political and economic anxiety.'[51] More familiar with tried and trusted forms of propaganda, the government succeeded in placing a photograph of the filming in the next day's *Irish Independent.*[52]

Following a British Movietone News request for an interview, Cosgrave's office contacted External Affairs and was advised that 'The opportunity is a very good one from the propaganda angle.'[53] When the firm's American office grew interested, speeches for Britain (Anglo-Irish trade) and America (transatlantic flights) were agreed. External Affairs was instructed to draft the speeches.[54] The recordings were made on March 28, 1931. Fox, British Movietone's Irish representatives, arranged a private advance screening of the films. John Hearne and Cremins represented Cosgrave, and found the American film unsatisfactory. Demonstrating the state's power, Cremins sent detailed editing instructions to Fox, and requested another viewing before presidential consent would be given.[55]

Despite exercising control over the final print, the state usually accommodated newsreel companies. When Paramount News cameraman J.S. Hodgson sought tax exemption on blank film he was importing to interview Cosgrave, the Revenue Commissioners, appraised by External Affairs,[56] decided 'as a special concession' to allow him enter duty free provided he submitted his travel details in advance.[57] The concession suggests his firm was viewed favourably, as does later facilitation of the firm's request for broadcast facilities to interview Cosgrave. Cosgrave had agreed to a broadcast for American radio, which Paramount wanted to film. Filming was scheduled for after the broadcast, but as the studio light was insufficient, Cosgrave's home was used.[58]

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[51] *Ibid.*: 18 November 1930 and Pathé, Film 751.09. The version delivered to camera differed slightly to that originally drafted, which began: 'The apparatus though the medium of which I am now speaking for the first time possesses at least one stimulating property... it gives no opportunity to the opponent. Oppositions tend to pessimism and I welcome their absence on this occasion as it enables me to present, uninterrupted, a cheerful view of our position in Ireland.'

[52] *Irish Independent*, 19 November, 1930: 9

[53] NAI, D/T, S2366: 3 February, 1931

[54] *Ibid.*: 21 February, 1931

[55] *Ibid.*: 30 April, 1930

[56] NAI, D/FA, GR837-8: 7 September, 1927

[57] *Ibid.*: 9 September, 1927

[58] NAI, D/T, S2367: 17 March, 1931

The state's history and culture attracted film-makers desiring to produce Irish or Irish-themed films. While George Dewhurst, Denis Johnston, and Tom Cooper used local knowledge and contacts to make 'Irish Destiny,' 'Guests of the Nation' and 'The Dawn' respectively, more common was the appeal to the government for funding or resources. Domestic film makers, actual and aspiring, received generally helpful responses. Isaac Eppel sought names of Belgian film manufacturing or renting firms from the Belgian consul in Dublin.[59] The consulate passed it to O'Kelly who provided a list of firms, and advised how best to approach them.[60] Daniel Colohan, an Athlone native and self-styled field cinematographer, sought assistance from Industry and Commerce on screening Irish-produced films through Irish societies in New York; the legation provided a list of societies, but cautioned that most were unable to conduct screenings.[61] Undeterred, Colohan wrote to the Trade Commissioner in Paris, seeking information on 'securing a market in France for Irish motion pictures dealing with... Ancient Irish monuments, Castles, Churches, Stones, Forts, Places of religious Pilgrimage, Scenic views, Industrial progress in Ireland, Educational matters etc.'[62] The legation queried his bona fides. Industry and Commerce, eschewing a character reference, observed that 'it appears... that he has a good deal of local experience in the production of films'; they proposed that while no introductions be made on his behalf, the legation could provide information.[63]

Requests from well-established international companies fared better. Informed that the Fox Film Co. was sending a cameraman, Alfred Brick, to Ireland, Lindsay Crawford advised External Affairs of their desire to make 'an exhaustive picture survey of the chief industrial and other features of the Irish Free State for distribution this side' and expressed the wish that External Affairs would grasp the opportunity for propaganda.[64] Lester informed Justice, Defence, Industry and Commerce, Agriculture and, interestingly, Colonel Costello of Army Intelligence: 'You will remember our conversation concerning publicity. The enclosed copy of a letter may, therefore, appeal to you. If this man arrives and is going to do anything big my suggestion would be that we should have a little

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[59] NAI, D/FA, GR837-6: 7 January, 1926

[60] *Ibid.*: 14 January, 1926

[61] *Ibid.*, GR837-12: 20 June, 1930. Colohan is sometimes recorded as Colahan on the file.

[62] *Ibid.*: 4 July, 1930

[63] *Ibid.*: 7 August, 1930

[64] *Ibid.*, GR837-3: 16 July, 1925

discussion on the possibilities.'[65] Costello replied: 'I am arranging to have a programme drawn up of suitable items of Army doings that might be useful for Army publicity not alone in the U.S.A. but in Ireland and Great Britain if the Fox Co. would be agreeable.'[66] There is nothing to suggest what the programme was, though evidently Brick's trip was successful. Having attended a private screening of the film, an impressed Smiddy apprised External Affairs of its content - scenery, industry, politicians, the army and Garda Síochána: 'They will undoubtedly produce on American audiences an impression of Ireland quite different to that which many of them have. They give such an alluring character to Irish scenery and Irish life as to tempt many people who visit Europe to pass through Ireland either on their eastward or westward bound trip.'[67] Fox returned in 1929, when its itinerary included political buildings, Cosgrave at home, the Lusitania memorial, the Garda and Air Corps.[68]

International Newsreel Corporation, a Hearst company, also received enthusiastic treatment. In 1925 Lester facilitated contact between them and the Irish Tourist Association.[69] A year later, George F. Allison of the company's London office contacted Lester as he had been directed by the New York office to shoot footage of Ireland, 'striving particularly for beautiful effects with the idea of showing Ireland in a peaceful and prosperous light.'[70] He regretted having lost an itinerary that Lester had previously drawn up for him, and asked for a new copy. Lester, while noting that 'the Minister is pleased to hear that your company proposes again to take a series of Irish pictures', informed Allison that he was no longer responsible for publicity and advised him to contact the ITA.[71] Clearly the state was satisfied with International's films as a request in 1929 to film the various corps of the army was forwarded from External Affairs to Defence.[72]

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[65] *Ibid.*: 29 July, 1925

[66] *Ibid.*: 31 July, 1925

[67] *Ibid.*: 15 December, 1925

[68] *Ibid.*: 30 October, 1929

[69] *Ibid.*, GR837-6: 24 August, 1925

[70] *Ibid.*: 26 August, 1926

[71] *Ibid.*: 28 August, 1926

[72] *Ibid.*: 19 January, 1929

State assistance amounting to facilities and subjects was readily available; not so capital, despite whatever success applicants could claim. Carl Stearns Clancy, an Irish-American producer who successfully shot films in Ireland starring Will Rogers, made this error when he submitted a proposal to Crawford, who provided letters of introduction to External Affairs, Industry and Commerce, McConnell's Advertising Co., the Abbey Theatre and the Tourism Development Association for his visit to Ireland.[73] Clancy's proposal was ambitious: ten single-reel travel comedies, and series of five-reel romantic dramas, modern comedy dramas, one or two-reel legends, one-reel illustrated songs and poems, and epic historical dramas. His travel comedies aimed at motoring tourists would show modern Ireland, while recording its history, culture, and wit of its citizens. He anticipated vast audience figures and revenues:

> the Keith Vaudeville Circuit... will... book the series 'solid' in the 442 Keith houses at $7.70 per reel per day.
> As these theatres run six or seven days a week, this means a booking of 3000 days per reel. Therefore ENCHANTING ERIN... could gross $225,000 on the Keith Circuit alone.
> In addition these ten reels should play in at least 6000... picture theatres in America at a minimum average of $4.00 per reel per day.[74]

Profit was one thing, production costs another, and the figures must have confounded officials. Each single reel film would cost $3,500; each comedy $50,000; each romantic drama $150,000-200,000; and each epic from $350,000-500,000. In return for films that would 'assist Ireland and the Irish to regain their "place in the sun" and make money at the same time' Clancy required a five-year contract, with a profit-share and weekly salary. His pitch for public or private funds as 'investors, in addition to doing Ireland a loyal service, can safely expect to receive at least 25% dividends annually and possibly 100% a year' would have met with official resistance, no matter how generous the projected return.[75]

If a film professional failed to arouse interest, amateurs and opportunists had less chance. In 1923, Eliassof in London notified External Affairs that J.J. Ash, a publicity agent, had proposed:

> a scheme of cinema and other organised methods of advertising in Ireland, Great Britain and elsewhere, the loan, Irish industrial activities, etc.... The High

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[73] *Ibid.*, GR837-5: 18 August, 1926. Rogers, an actor and wit, was then one of cinema's biggest stars, with syndicated newspaper columns.

[74] *Ibid.*: 12 August, 1926. Emphasis in the original.

[75] *Ibid.*: 12 August, 1926

> Commissioner has no doubt that the needs for special methods of publicity has been and is being considered, and he will forward no proposals unless specifically required to do so.

The lukewarm tone suggests that Ash's proposals were deemed unnecessary and undesirable. In 1928, a Herr Thies wrote to Justice seeking £2,000 to produce a book and film on Ireland, with profits being split. Without specifying their reservations, Industry and Commerce, contacted by Justice, declared Thies an unsuitable character.[76] An unsolicited approach to the state's publicity officer (no such position existed) from J.R. Kemp of Jonray Films in London received similar treatment as Ash. Kemp offered to produce publicity films, and arrange low-cost screenings of films in the state's possession, provided they would attract advertising revenue.[77] External Affairs noncommittally promised to keep his proposal on file.[78]

A glib rewriting of history was proposed by a Monsieur Chauvelot to O'Kelly, who, horrified, notified Dublin that Chauvelot intended to produce an Irish propaganda film:

> he said that the plot was based upon the flight a generation ago of Irish Nationalists implicated in an uprising against England, and the return of their children who now find Ireland free.... M. Chauvelot... was going to begin with... the Phoenix Park murders of 1882. Two of the assassins were to have fled to Australia, and it was their children who were returning....
> When I had recovered my breath I suggested... he was about to write a most excellent British propaganda film against Ireland. He seemed quite undismayed and said he was prepared to change the plot to please me – or... anyone else.... I am using all my best efforts to make him forego it, as I shudder to think what he would produce if given the slightest encouragement.[79]

Fortunately the state did not need to discourage film-makers, when the blunt instrument of censorship was available. The Censorship of Films Act, 1923 signalled the state's moral intent. It may also have been an attempt to regain cultural and political stability after tumultuous years.[80] The censorship regime that the act presaged focussed on cultural or moral expurgation, requiring the censor to decide whether a 'picture ... is unfit for general exhibition... by reason of its being indecent, obscene or blasphemous or because the exhibition... would tend to inculcate principles contrary to public

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[76] *Ibid.*, GR837-9: 21 July, 1928

[77] *Ibid.*, GR837-19: 22 April, 1931

[78] *Ibid.*: 7 May, 1931

[79] *Ibid.*, GR837-18a: 10 February, 1932

[80] Pettitt, *op. cit.*: 33

morality or would be otherwise subversive of public morality.'[81] The censor, James Montgomery, whose avowed guide was the Ten Commandments,[82] demonstrated a devotion to duty that was more than the prudishness of the religious fundamentalist, or the superciliousness that regarded cinema as dangerous fodder for working-class minds. He was an officer of the state, appointed by the Minister for Justice, under whose Estimate censorship was borne.

Montgomery's views on films on the revolutionary period were closely aligned with official ideology. 'Ourselves Alone,' 'Beloved Enemy' and two versions of 'The Informer' rankled for their depictions of Ireland. Of Arthur Robison's 'The Informer', he commented: 'This sordid show of Chicago gunmen, prostitutes and armed police is the standard show of movieland. It is offered as a realistic picture of the underworld of Dublin. It would be funny if it were not mischievous. I refuse to issue a certificate for... such a libellous distortion.'[83] Ford's version was similarly eviscerated: 'A sordid & brutal travesty of the Black & Tan period. The prostitute and brothel tone... is very clever and artistic but... unfit for exhibition in this country. The issue of a cert... might be taken as the states [sic] approval of a gross libel.'[84] Montgomery dismissed 'Beloved Enemy' as 'Tripe,' explaining: 'The most extraordinary romanticising of Michael Collins.'[85] 'Ourselves Alone' brought an objection to sexual content ('1 woman hides guns in stockings') and 'Black and Tan War – to me it seems "fairly fair" to the British but not to us... the hero is a Bayard of the RIC. The leader of the gangster IRA is an Oxford man from the big house. I'd reject it if I could. It is likely to lead to protests.'[86] His prescience was well-founded: a week later, he wrote 'Old IRA sent me a protest which I sent to the Ministry.'[87]

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[81] No. 23/1923: Censorship of Films, Act, 1923, §7.2

[82] Rockett, 2001: 285

[83] NAI, D/J/FCO, Record of Films Censored September, 1929 – July, 1930, 98/27/5: 18 March, 1930

[84] NAI, D/J/FCO, RFC February, 1935 – October, 1935, 98/27/12: 28 June, 1935. Interestingly, Montgomery first wrote 'Black and Tan war' before amending the final word to 'period.'

[85] NAI, D/J/FCO, RFC April, 1937 – February, 1938, 98/27/15: 29 April, 1937

[86] NAI, D/J/FCO, RFC November, 1935 – August, 1936, 98/27/13: 5 May, 1936

[87] *Ibid.*: 12 May, 1936

Irish-made films received better treatment. 'The Dawn' was passed: 'A good attempt from our side. A good contrast to "Ourselves Alone."'[88] Imprimatur from the censor was essential, but no less so than Frank Aiken's ministerial approval. Cooper, whose amateur cast included War of Independence veterans, had requested the loan of army clothing, transport and matériel, which Aiken, Minister for Defence, granted.[89] Rockett *et al* suggest that the film ideologically resonated with Fianna Fáil, observing that the film's stra-line was the same as the motto of the *Irish Press*.[90] In contrast, Norris Davidson believed:

> This film is Ireland and the incredible thing is that men who had actually lived a part of the story should not have been too close to it to distinguish between what was important to them and what is important to an audience. The film is not propagandistic, it has no star to create, often its apparent understatement reveals something with dazzling simplicity.[91]

Arguably, the lack of planned propaganda supports Davidson's viewpoint. However, the propaganda value to Fianna Fáil increased by not having the state's fingerprints on the canisters. It might be argued that the film's true star was the republican ideology it espoused. Two other Irish films received discreet support. Acting as a technical advisor to the makers of 'Irish Destiny' was a former Adjutant of the Dublin Brigade of the IRA, 'Kit' O'Malley; he played an IRA Commandant in the film. The film's success prompted a meeting of the film industry in the state, at which J.J. Walsh and James Dolan, Cosgrave's Parliamentary Secretary, were among the speakers.[92] Later, Aiken was a guest at the premiere of 'Guests of the Nation', providing 'The Dawn' with a precedent, the producers had received military equipment as props.[93]

Foreign and domestic films differed in their representation of the conflict. Hollywood stereotypes (like Merle Oberon's chummy army driver, tormented by republican urchins in 'Beloved Enemy') were a sacrifice of historical detail for audience friendliness. Domestic features were more polemic. British soldiers were brutish, as in 'The Dawn,' but the RIC in the same film were Irish, and that mattered more than the uniform.

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[88] NAI, D/J/FCO, RFC November 1935 – August, 1936, 98/27/13: 23 May, 1936

[89] Flynn, *op. cit.*: 33-4

[90] Rockett *et al*, 1988: 63. The phrase was: Do-chum glóire Dé agus onóra na h-Éireann (For the glory of God and the honour of Ireland).

[91] Flynn, *op. cit.*: 37

[92] Rockett *et al*, *op. cit.*: 43-4

[93] *Ibid.*: 61

Whatever the reality (more policemen than soldiers perished during the conflict) the propaganda implication is that the disestablished force would be respectfully acknowledged as never having been the real enemy. When Ford, whose knowledge of Ireland surpassed many directors, has Gypo Nolan fell a constable with a punch it is a prelude to mirth, not an enemy vanquished. In domestic films, the IRA display courage and respect for law and order. Ford, too, uses this: an IRA court, established to identify the informer, treats a suspect, falsely accused by Gypo, courteously and sensitively; Gypo, too, receives a fair hearing. In 'Irish Destiny', the villain, Gilbert Beecher, produces illicit poitín and kidnaps the hero's sweetheart, before perishing in a conflagration at his still. Ford used a similar anti-liquor device in 'The Informer': as IRA men arrest Gypo in a bar, one chastises the landlady for being open after hours on a holy day. Moments before his arrest, Gypo gives £5 to an Englishwoman for her fare to Liverpool, a gesture intimating that, unlike the military, English people may be treated as friends. Similarly, the old woman's reaction to the execution of two English soldiers in 'Guests of the Nation', and the emotions it evokes in their captor-executioners, establishes Irish compassion even to enemies. What emerges from Irish films during the Free State is more than a passing nod towards the republicanism of 'Knocknagow' and 'Willie Reilly.' Protestant and Catholic, policeman and nationalist could co-exist in a state that respected the individual's liberty and the common good; religious tolerance was idealised, and the enemy of the republic were those who disrupted the social and political order: Beecher, Gypo and Sir Robin were role models of maleficence.

Censorship kept film's worst excesses off cinema screens, but while imported smut damaged the state's moral fibre, seditious films struck at democratic stability. If official censorship was inadequate to combat the threat, other powers were available. In 1930, the Dublin Film Society asked T.M. Healy to give it 'personal influence and support'.[94] Chary of an unknown entity, his staff asked the President's Department for information regarding the society.[95] Acting on information from Justice, Diarmuid O'Hegarty cautioned:

> the Society has as its promoters a group... who regard themselves as 'intellectuals'.... Paul Farrell is a re-instated Civil Servant with artistic leanings. Miss Manning... is a journalist in the Film and Fashion domain. The others...

[94] NAI, D/T, S6002: 11 February, 1930

[95] *Ibid.*.

> are interested in Art and Drama. With the possible exception of Mr. Farrell none of the promoters has been prominent in contemporary troubles.
> Nevertheless their programme is disturbing. The film 'Potemkin' is largely Bolshevist propaganda, - so also is 'Mother'; 'Storm Over Asia' is described... as an anti-British film and a gross libel on the British Army, - and while I have not particulars of the other films they seem to be ... 'of unusual interest'.
> We have some reason to fear, and this fear is not dictated by reference to the personnel of the Society, that Bolshevist propaganda agents look to this Society as a medium for the dissemination of films which would otherwise fail to secure publicity here. Apart from this I am somewhat nervous of the 'Cinema as an Art Medium' in the hands of a Society such as the present.[96]

Watching politically-sensitive films was sufficient to mark a citizen as potentially dangerous, though the belief that the society's members were unwitting dupes of dastardly Bolsheviks fits with the commonly-held view that cinema moulded malleable minds. Monitoring of the group did not end with O'Hegarty's advice; indeed, it appears the group was under Garda surveillance before O'Hegarty's communication: Justice provided O'Hegarty with a confidential Garda report identifying the committee members.[97] Aside from O'Farrell and Mary Manning, Lillian Dalton, whose father was a senior civil servant in Education, worked in the Belgian Consulate, and was described as 'an Imperialist and a supporter of the present government'; Trinity College student George E. Cowell was a supporter of the British government; and Harold Douglas was the consumptive son of Senator James Douglas. Respectability was no defence against a state determined to control its citizens' cinematic preferences.

Oddly that control rarely extended to desiring to produce films for educating or motivating the populace, neither in the Empire Marketing Board's cultural and industrial manner, nor in Nazism's hyperbolic and dangerous manner. Yet there were advocates in the administration who recognised the importance of films. O'Kelly was one, though with a melodramatic bent belying his pragmatism: he suggested that a film be made taking the Wild Geese, for its romantic story and removal from politics, as its theme.[98] In 1926, he extolled Belgian governmental film propaganda for industry and tourism: 'the film has been made under the auspices of the press section of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. That is precisely the type of publicity from which I think Saorstát Éireann could draw the greatest amount of value and I would strongly urge that the example

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[96] *Ibid.*: 19 February, 1930

[97] *Ibid.*: 3 March, 1930. The report refers to the society having held three meetings since the previous report.

[98] NAI, D/FA, DFA/P/1/VII: 22 November, 1924

given by Belgium in this matter would be followed at home.'[99] His letter aroused interest in External Affairs, who asked him to ascertain the nature of the film, production costs and methods of exhibition. The department acknowledged that 'The prospects of an official Irish film appear... to be somewhat remote but if further details of the Belgian venture were available, the attention of the Departments dealing with Tourist traffic, commerce and agriculture could be drawn to the matter.'[100] O'Kelly provided a synopsis, claiming that had he had such a film he could have shown it 'without the smallest effort on half a dozen different occasions in the last year'.[101] Evidently he regarded film as being useful for special screenings, not necessarily general release. Lester informed O'Kelly later that year that the Executive Council had given approval in principle for 'the production of a propagandist film relating to Saorstát activities and attractions.'[102]

Abstract approval was no guarantee of action, and though a state-sanctioned film, 'Ireland', was eventually produced, it was a protracted process hindered by misunderstandings, inter-departmental spats and typical Finance miserliness. Smiddy requested films on the state to give to the United States Bureau of Commercial Economics, a philanthropic organisation that had requested prints. His staff helpfully pointed out that 'His Excellency considers this Bureau does excellent publicity work.'[103] External Affairs asked Industry and Commerce and Agriculture for assistance.[104] This seems to have been a futile request: given that state films required an Executive Council decision, it should have been clear that none existed. Agriculture directed External Affairs to enquire with Industry and Commerce,[105] who referred to earlier communication on railway films.[106] Meanwhile, the Bureau persisted in its requests to Smiddy, who, labouring under a misapprehension, asked External Affairs to procure films from Industry and Commerce.[107] A breakdown in communication ensued.

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[99] *Ibid.*, GR837-2: 23 February, 1926

[100] *Ibid.*: 4 March, 1926

[101] *Ibid.*: 11 March, 1926

[102] NAI, DFA/ES, Brussels 173: 30 September, 1926

[103] NAI, D/FA, GR837-4: 11 July, 1925

[104] *Ibid.*: 1 August, 1925

[105] *Ibid.*: 31 August, 1925

[106] *Ibid.*: 4 September, 1925

[107] *Ibid.*: 29 April, 1926. The Bureau wrote to Smiddy on 9 October, 1925 and 28 April, 1926, with increasingly impatient, tones.

External Affairs asked Industry and Commerce to reconsider their decision, unspecified in the correspondence.[108] However, in copying Finance, Fisheries, Lands and Agriculture, and Justice they put the department in an invidious position, implying that it was deliberately obstructive. Industry and Commerce, agreeing that propaganda films were desirable, chastened External Affairs for believing that the department held otherwise and blamed Finance for rejecting several proposals. They suggested that External Affairs should bring the matter before the Executive Council.[109]

Recognising the damage to inter-departmental relations, External Affairs replied in a conciliatory tone, enclosing a copy of a secret memo from T. J. Kiernan, then secretary to the London delegation. The Imperial Institute and the Empire Marketing Board were considering film propaganda's merits, the former to build a collection of films, the latter to screen in cinemas alongside main features. The Empire Marketing Board, to keep expenses low, would ask dominions and colonies for films already produced. Consequently:

> consideration ought to be given to the preparation of industrial propaganda films in the Saorstát and... the films should be prepared in the Summer for use in the Autumn when (coincident with the arrival of the Dominion Prime Ministers for the Imperial Conference) the publicity of the campaign of the Empire Marketing Board is expected to be in full operation.[110]

External Affairs, indicating that this type of film came under Industry and Commerce's remit, assured them they would support new proposals.[111] The détente bore fruit. Industry and Commerce sent External Affairs a comprehensive memorandum for their perusal;[112] the document, a synopsis of extant inter-departmental files, was submitted unchanged to the Executive Council.

The memorandum outlined the overseas representatives' clamour for a film that would allow them to compete with countries displaying a greater proclivity towards publicity; it was noted that propaganda films were screened three times daily in Australia House, London. It observed that film propaganda in the state was haphazard, orchestrated by private interests, or subject to budgetary negotiations with film-makers:

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[108] *Ibid.*: 17 May, 1926

[109] *Ibid.*: 25 May, 1926 and 9 June, 1926

[110] *Ibid.*: 15 June, 1926

[111] *Ibid.*: 16 June, 1926

[112] *Ibid.*: 10 July, 1926

> A fair proportion of the film work hitherto done for the Saorstát could be regarded as being of value nationally for propagandist purposes but this work has been done... through motive of private interests.... Fordsons of Cork ... "Irish Destiny", and... "Ireland to-day"... are cases in point.
> It is understood that negotiations were in progress... for the filming of the Works of the Lee Boot Factory in Cork and the Shannon Electricity Works. The Irish Cattle Traders also contemplated the expenditure of £5,000. or £6,000. on the production of a film showing Irish pastures, cattle grazing, etc. But at least one film, national in character, and more of a propagandist type, such as has been produced and distributed by... other countries, now seems to be a necessity....
> It is suggested... giving earnest consideration to the many advantages to be derived from this form of publicity... especially in relation to the development of tourist traffic and the promotion of trade.... The advantages of circulating such a picture at home, as a means of educating the people to a better appreciation of the attractions of the country and of its economic possibilities are also worthy of consideration.[113]

The cost, which might have proved insurmountable, was negated by anticipated trade, tourism and tax revenues. The carrot to Agriculture, Industry and Fishing, the army and air force that they would be part of the film was as much a sop for support as it was a propaganda necessity.[114] The proposal was successful: the Executive Council mandated Industry and Commerce and Finance to examine it in detail.[115] The proposal evidently met with full approval as, responding to Smiddy's request for copies of films dealing with industrial, agricultural and social life, which he could lend to 'the Knights of Columbanus, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Universities and Museums, Y.M.C.A. etc.' Lester indicated that films had been sanctioned, but were not available.[116] Sanction seems to have been delayed while Finance displayed customary reluctance to open the public purse: External Affairs informed the Washington Legation nine months later that the proposals required a response from Finance.[117] Government records are mute thereafter until a 1929 letter from Industry and Commerce to the President's Office stated: 'the Official Saorstát film, for the production of which a contract was placed last year with Messrs, McConnell-Hartley Ltd., is now completed and ready for exhibition.'[118]

Why the state was slow to adopt film propaganda, and only in a minor way, may be explained by its inability to fully grasp what film propaganda entailed. Self-imposed

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[113] *Ibid.*, S5105: 28 July, 1926

[114] *Ibid.*: 28 July, 1926

[115] *Ibid.*: 17 August, 1926

[116] *Ibid.*, GR 459-28: 2 December, 1926

[117] *Ibid.*, GR837-4: 16 September, 1927

[118] *Ibid.*, S5105: 10 July, 1929

isolation from European film organisations scarcely helped. Invitations to participate in international symposia, and to join institutions promoting propaganda films were frequent. The French National Committee of Intellectual Cooperation invited the British government and universities to attend the 1926 International Cinematograph Congress. The Dominions Office extended the invitation to the state, apparently without avail.[119] A year later, another opportunity passed, as the invitation purported to be a conference on school or educational films. The Swiss organisers sought information on the 'aims and requirements of the educational film'. [120] The President's Office sent the query to Education, which confessed that it had 'no experience of the use of films of this kind, and... cannot give any information on the points raised.'[121]

The International Institute of Education Cinematography in Rome also met with apathy. The Italian ambassador to Britain sought to win support for the body, funded by the Italian government, but operating under the League of Nations.[122] His communication, forwarded to External Affairs cited the 'the great importance attaching to cinematography as a practical method of instruction and as an instrument of culture, education and healthy propaganda.' It listed Italian film achievements in technological, cultural, scientific, agricultural and health propaganda.[123] The document was passed to Education which narrowly interpreted educational film, notwithstanding the list supplied. Education was influenced by more than its own ignorance; the Dominions Office outlined Britain's position:

> educational use of the cinematograph is still in an early stage and... educational authorities hold divergent views as to the value of this method of instruction and the practicality of its employment.... Moreover... it seems doubtful whether the establishment of an Institute... would... serve any very useful purpose.... His Majesty's Government... feel that it would not be practicable for them to undertake... any official responsibilities in connection with the proposal.[124]

Five months later, External Affairs, having received Education's response, notified the Dominions Office of the state's unwillingness to offer support.[125] External Affairs, with

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[119] NAI, D/T: S5121: 9 August, 1926

[120] *Ibid.*, S5326: 12 February, 1927

[121] *Ibid.*: 25 March, 1927

[122] *Ibid.*, S5514: 12 August, 1927

[123] *Ibid.*: 7 September, 1927

[124] *Ibid.*: 21 September, 1927

[125] *Ibid.*: 29 February, 1928

its vestigial propaganda function, was more suitable than Education to deal with propaganda. Indeed it had received the 1926 Imperial Conference report on empire-produced films, which contradicted the Dominion's Office:

> The importance and far-reaching influence of the Cinema are now generally recognised. The Cinema is... a powerful instrument of education in the widest sense... and even where it is not used avowedly for purposes of instruction, advertisement or propaganda, it exercises indirectly a great influence in shaping the ideals of the very large numbers to whom it appeals. Its potentialities in this respect are almost unlimited.[126]

Education, untested in diplomacy, bowed to pressure. Whatever influence was felt then, in 1934 the state signed up to a League of Nations convention on customs exemptions on educational films – a convention overseen by the institute in Rome. For the state, the convention, by securing Customs exemptions on films of publicity value would 'prove of positive advantage to the Saorstát.'[127]

IV

When the 1916 insurgents broadcast word of their insurrection, they demonstrated remarkable foresight in the medium's power. Although broadcast in Morse code on the shipping frequency and received by few, if any,[128] it was still 'ahead of its time.'[129] A decade later, following robust Dáil debates and comprehensive reports, the Free State had its own radio station, 2RN, operating under the Postmaster-General and funded by a radio-set licence. Its genesis was marred by a whiff of scandal over Darrel Figgis' business links to an applicant for a broadcast licence; marked by J.J. Walsh, the Postmaster General's, dogmatism towards state control without funding; and hamstrung by Finance 'which appeared most often in the guise of the Wicked Fairy.'[130]

Modelled on the BBC, 2RN broadcast cultural and educational programmes, with factual news reportage. Walsh believed that everything broadcast was propaganda; this was consistent with contemporary sentiment, when control over airwaves and broadcast

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[126] Imperial Conference, 1926. General Economic Sub-Committee. Thirteenth Report. Exhibition within the empire of empire cinematograph films: §1

[127] NAI, D/T, S6529: 25 May, 1934

[128] Pine, 2002: 10-1

[129] Gorham, 1967: 3

[130] *Ibid.*: viii

content were equally important.[131] It is likely that the state took its propaganda cues from the necessity to inculcate social change following ruinous and divisive conflicts. Although it was not couched in propaganda terms, radio was considered too important to leave to private interests, and deliberations included using radio to promote Irish identity. In the Dáil, Hogan said:

> If we let control of this... means of cultivating our national distinctiveness pass... into private institutions... these... will be more interested in producing dividends than in doing any good for... the nation. It is from that angle that I... approach this subject... cultivation of the Irish language, Irish music, Irish literature and Irish culture.... For that reason... control of broadcasting... should... be entirely under State control.[132]

Hogan also looked to state-controlled radio to wean people off the vice of drink:

> If you have a State concern control will lie directly with the people's representatives.... I do not think... that houses licensed for the sale of drink should be allowed to instal [sic] sets and thereby draw custom that otherwise would never go to these houses. It would not make for good citizenship and it would not make for a sober country.[133]

William Hewat saw no potential for propaganda. It would be 'hard to get a broadcasting company to pay a great deal of attention to...propaganda, which... would not bring in any great amount of money.'[134]

Presenting the final report of the committee on broadcasting to the Dáil, Padraig Ó'Maille stated broadcasting was 'of incalculable value' but the committee felt that entertainment radio was:

> of vastly less importance than... commercial and cultural progress.... In connection with the... national language and... modern languages, so necessary to commerce, there is no agency which lends itself so readily to the wide and cheap propagation of knowledge.... In this way pupils may learn... principles of hygiene, of gardening, of fruit-growing, beekeeping, poultry-raising.... Similarly... reasons for and the application of new laws, lessons on the institutions of government and civics generally might be widely disseminated in an attractive fashion.[135]

His remarks echoed the first interim report on broadcasting, which, defining the debate, suggested informative and educative propaganda: 'the transmission of messages helpful to Agriculture and business generally... weather reports, market reports as to prices and

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[131] Pine, *op. cit.*: 13

[132] DÉ, vol. 6, 3 April, 1924, col. 2865

[133] *Ibid.*, cols 2869-70

[134] *Ibid.*, col. 2872

[135] DÉ, vol. 6, 28 March, 1924, cols 2610-11

supply, of lectures, educative or entertaining; and of communications of national interest and importance.'[136] The importance to farmers of educational agricultural broadcasts was underlined by lobbying by the Irish Agricultural Society which saw the benefits of market reports to the sector.[137]

However, Walsh displayed antipathy towards radio as a propaganda channel, and 2RN operated as a cultural broadcaster.[138] The first station director, Seamus Clandillon, a civil servant with no broadcasting experience, was a noted balladeer and folk music collector.[139] The station's opening ceremony, with Douglas Hyde's address in Irish, followed by an evening mainly of traditional music, set the tone for an expression of nationality that went beyond party politics into state-building. Conflict had created a situation where effective propaganda opposed something; positive propaganda was a novelty. Culture was more effective propaganda than politicised news, and radio became a propaganda channel despite political will. In instilling the virtue of sobriety, providing salutary lessons in civic spirit, promulgating what would later become de Valera's propaganda of self-sufficiency, and promoting a vision of the nation, 2RN was a propaganda medium that was more effective for not being politicised.

That changed somewhat when M.J. Heffernan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, appealed to Cosgrave for support in developing 2RN as a cultural, moral and social force:

> Owing to the disturbed period through which the country has recently passed... there has been a definite lowering of the ordinary standard of culture, civic virtue, honesty, etc.... In consequence... it is the practice at Elections to appeal to the crudest and most primitive feelings of the population. It is regarded as almost waste of time [sic] to endeavour to appeal to intelligence and reason by developing rational and logical argument. Appeals to emotions such as jealousy and cupidity have been found the most effective. The widespread use of Broadcasting would improve immeasurably... civic virtues. It will help to inculcate a sense of citizenship and collective responsibility. Its effect on the cultural side of life cannot easily be realised.... There is little incentive here to

[136] First Interim Report of the Special Committee to Consider the Wireless Broadcasting Report, 15 January, 1924: §6

[137] Hawkins, 2001: 45

[138] Horgan, 2001: 18

[139] Pine, *op. cit.*: 139

> improve, knowing the very limited public to which we appeal when broadcasting.[140]

Heffernan also saw radio's political uses, and was cognizant of successes in America and Britain:

> President Hoover attributes his very large majority to his ability to reach the female population with reasoned broadcast talks. During the recent General Election in Great Britain wireless broadcasting was availed of to a very great extent by the opposing parties. It enables the bulk of the population to hear the carefully prepared speeches of the leaders of the political parties. Their voices were not altogether drowned, as here, by the cross-road, soap-box orator, spouting vile calumnies when there is not a Press reporter present. It relieves political party leaders of an almost unbearable physical strain.[141]

Undoubtedly the rabble-rousers were Fianna Fáil, whom Heffernan believed radio could defeat. The Executive Council approved the erection of a 60 kilowatt station, provided that no expenditure would be incurred until the next financial year.[142] Ironically, this benefited Fianna Fáil more than Cumann na nGaedheal who used the infrastructure to increase their profile on the airwaves.

2RN had a restricted capacity to broadcast news: only government announcements could be broadcast before seven o'clock and, at the request of newspapers, descriptive news was not allowed.[143] The first news broadcasts were a reworking of evening newspapers and BBC material. It quickly became apparent that a proper service was needed. Post and Telegraphs reported to Finance that news would come under four headings, general foreign, general home, market reports and stock exchange quotations, and recommended employing an editor who 'would be expected… to be in attendance during the sittings of the Dáil and to be in constant touch with the Station and to supervise the whole of the news gathering and shaping.'[144] Johnson observed that while the position was part-time, the duties were those of a full-time, experienced journalist.[145] His colleague William Norton noted 'the miserably low wage... for the responsible work expected. We are told… that the person should have a good knowledge of reporting... of journalistic

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[140] NAI, D/T, S3532/1: I January, 1930. The title of Postmaster General had, by this stage been superseded by new nomenclature, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs.

[141] *Ibid.*.

[142] *Ibid.*: 23 January, 1930

[143] Pine, *op. cit.*: 111

[144] NAI, D/Fin, S104/0005/32: 12 May 1926

[145] DÉ, vol. 17, 30 November, 1926, cols 360-5

work... of editing, and... of Irish.'[146] Walsh countered that the duties were suggestions, that only those which could reasonably be executed were expected, and that the salary was aligned with regional newspapers' remuneration. [147] The miserliness suggests that, even were it policy, it would be difficult to broadcast news propaganda.

Providing politicians with a propaganda outlet was frowned on, and Walsh was denied Council approval to broadcast the 1926 budget.[148] Clearly, news was to be unsullied by comment; in this, 2RN took the same position as the BBC, which feared being seen as a propaganda channel.[149] The furore surrounding Walsh's 1927 leak of Cumann na nGaedheal's post-election considerations may have increased nervousness among ministers and the station's employees over broadcasting political material. It was not until 1931 that press communiqués from state departments were considered suitable. Post and Telegraphs wrote 'it is desired that all official announcements &c., issued by Departments to the Press for publication should also be made available for inclusion in the Broadcasting News bulletins.'[150] It operated less well than expected. In 1936, Kiernan, the station's director, circulated departments requesting that departmental secretaries, or senior officials, allow themselves be interviewed on radio on the work of departments. He anticipated a positive outcome: 'A great deal of interest is certain to be roused... and much more general co-operation on the part of the public secured'.[151] The appeal was ignored. An External Affairs note summarised the response: 'This matter was discussed at a meeting of Heads of Departs. The general view was opposed to acceptance.'[152]

Politicians' broadcasts which were uncontroversial adjuncts to their public positions were acceptable, but disapproval met overt propaganda. Peadar Doyle asked the Dáil 'whether reports of the proceedings of... the Oireachtas are or have been supplied by the Government Information Bureau; and, if so, whether in view of the terms of a recent broadcast of a speech of the President's arrangements will be made to prevent such

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[146] *Ibid.*, 366-7. The salary was £4 per week.

[147] *Ibid.*, cols 369-73

[148] Pine, *op. cit.*: 169

[149] Curran and Seaton, 2003: 113

[150] NAI, D/FA, 33/13: 2 July, 1931

[151] NAI, D/FA, 33/157: 7 November, 1936

[152] NAI, D/FA, 33/157: undated

undesirable occurrences in future.'[153] Gerard Boland, then Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, suggested that maintaining the impartiality of news broadcasting was receiving official consideration: 'Reports of the proceedings of the Oireachtas are not, and have not been, supplied by the Government Information Bureau. It is the policy of the Government that the broadcast news should be given without comment.'[154] Unsatisfied that radio was being used fairly, Mulcahy asked Oscar Traynor, then Minister, for details of broadcasts by politicians between January, 1935 and March, 1937. Traynor provided a comprehensive response:

Minister (M/) or Parliamentary Secretary (PS/)	**No. of Broadcasts**	**Total Minutes**
M/Agriculture	6	127
M/Defence	1	17
M/Education	2	30
M/Finance	3	30
M/Industry and Commerce	5	94
M/Lands	1	39
M/Local Government and Public Health	1	8.5
President, Executive Council	9	119.5
PS to President	1	18.5
Joint broadcasts between two ministries	2	38
Total	**31**	**521.5**

Table 3.1: 2RN Broadcasts by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, January 1935-March 1937.[155]

Other Dáil Deputies	**Total Minutes**
C Breathnach	15
A. Byrne (twice)	17
W.T. Cosgrave	15
W.T. Cosgrave and C. Maguire	30
F. Fahy	5
J. Good	10
P. Kehoe	5½
P. McGilligan	12
R.J. Rowlette	9½

Table 3.2: 2RN Broadcasts by Dáil deputies, January 1935-March 1937.[156]

[153] DÉ, vol. 53, 12 June, 1934, col. 2

[154] NAI, D/Fin, S104/0005/32: 12 June, 1934

[155] DÉ, vol. 66, 20 April, 1937, cols 1188-92. The total minutes in this and the following tables include the total duration of programmes, during which time officials were not always on air.

[156] *Ibid.*.

Ministers (M/) and Other Dáil Deputies	Total Minutes
President and McGilligan	60
M/Industry and Commerce and A. Byrne	16

Table 3.3: 2RN Broadcasts by Ministers and Dáil Deputies, January 1935-March 1937.[157]

Opportunities afforded to ministers dwarfed those available to the opposition, and occasions on which the microphone was shared were not for political discourse. This may have reflected the policy of broadcasting factual rather than discursive material, or highlighted Fianna Fáil's unwillingness to allow opposition arguments dilute its propaganda.

Efforts to relax restrictions on political debates were made. Traynor presented a memorandum to the Council in 1937 explaining that political broadcasts had not been allowed, with the exception of budget statements in 1935 and 1936 by speakers from the main parties. Indeed, a proposal to allow each party a broadcast before the 1932 general election had been rejected. Kiernan, he wrote, had suggested relaxing the prohibition before the next general election, and offered three proposals:

> (a) which he prefers. A debate in the Studio by candidates one from each party with a Chairman not attached to any particular party ....
> (b) A candidate from each party to broadcast separately on successive nights ... and also a voter selected at random....
> (c) Instead of the candidates, a prominent supporter (voter) to be selected from each party....

His departmental secretary recommended maintaining the prohibition 'in view of the obvious dangers of an inflammatory atmosphere' but if it were to be dispensed with, he preferred that invitations be confined to the three main parties, who would select their speaker for a 15 minute broadcast on the same date, 'with the scripts scrutinised by the Director except where a Minister is concerned and the Government representative to have the choice of the order of speaking.'[158] Reasonable though the options were, the Council rejected them.

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[157] *Ibid.*.

[158] NAI, D/T, S9908: 28 May, 1937

On assuming power, de Valera set about changing 2RN's programming. F. O'Reilly KCSG, Executive Secretary of the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, sent him a memorandum on programming changes. O'Reilly's treatment mirrored de Valera's insularism as he emphasised the importance of state control, and suggested radio could propagandise the state abroad better than diplomats:

> The broadcasting authority has great power to organise propaganda, and accordingly it should be the State itself or some body or corporation... controlled by the State.
> The broadcast service should represent the widest possible range of culture: it should be fully worthy of the country, particularly as it is largely the measure by which nowadays our country is judged by foreigners. (Note... that it would be cheaper to organise national propaganda abroad by means of a generally and consistently good broadcast service than by the employment of some of our diplomatic representatives abroad, and the good broadcasts would be of cultural service to our listeners at the same time.)[159]

O'Reilly's view of suitable programming was unimaginative and cautious:

> Nothing should be broadcast that is likely to give offence on any score - religion, politics, national susceptibilities, etc., - at home or abroad. The service should aim at creating friends for those broadcasting, for the broadcasting authority, and for the country. Speakers should be expository rather than hortatory. They should avoid the controversal [*sic*] manner.[160]

He noted that the current schedule of programmes was 'overburdened with propaganda and educative, as distinct from entertainment items. These items are quite good, but they obtrude unduly in short programmes.'[161]

Culture aside, quite what was propagandistic about 2RN is unclear. Certainly, it had avoided political imbroglios after Walsh's 1927 difficulties. Perhaps O'Reilly was obliquely attacking the previous administration, including P.S. O'Hegarty, secretary in Posts and Telegraphs, whose vehement disavowal of one-time comrades earned from them opprobrium and venom.[162] The appointment of Kiernan as director, John MacDonagh, Abbey actor and brother of Thomas, as director of programming, and Gallagher, de Valera's long time propaganda lieutenant, as deputy director presaged a republican drive for control. It also gave 2RN leadership that was focussed on the realpolitik of radio as a propaganda channel, contrasting with Clandillon's administrative

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[159] NAI, D/T, S3532/2 A: 7 March, 1935

[160] *Ibid.*.

[161] *Ibid.*.

[162] O'Hegarty excoriated de Valera in *The Victory of Sinn Fein*. Leon O'Broin records that between 1933 and 1936, O'Hegarty had no personal contact with Gerry Boland, then his minister at Posts and Telegrahs (O'Broin, 1986: 161)

stewardship. Kiernan, a doctor of economics, brought statistical expertise and commissioned reports to analyse programming output:

Programme type	Broadcast time 1935 (%)	Broadcast time Jan-Mar 1936 (%)
Music (including gramophone)	50.9	48.7
Advertising	15.2	14.2
News	7.6	8.3
Plays and variety	6.3	2.7
Talks and debates	7.1	10.8
Children	8.3	6.9
Sports commentaries	2.9	6.7
Religious services	0.6	--
Women's talks	0.6	1.0
Special transmissions	0.5	--
Schools broadcasts	--	0.7
Total	100	100

Table 3.4: Percentage of programme types broadcast, January 1935 to March 1936.[163]

It is, perhaps, coincidental that news output increased slightly following Gallagher's appointment as there had already been a slight shift towards including political material: 'On Budget Day, 15th May, 1935, the Minister for Finance spoke on the successful position of the country and was followed on succeeding days by Mr. Patrick Gilligan... Mr. Luke Duffy... and Mr. Sean Lemass. These were the first talks of their kind broadcast from our Stations.'[164] The increase of time for sport suggests that listeners desired that content but it also served to promote the state, Gaelic games and equestrian sports. Short stories and radio plays from new writers enhanced cultural propaganda. Included in the new authors was Francis Carty, later a surprise de Valera appointment as *Irish Press* editor. Bolstering Irish language content, the Gaelic League accepted an advisory role.[165] From 1935, traditional music played by solo fiddlers or pipers was largely replaced by bands, while 'Encouragement has been given to introduce traditional Irish music into variety and plays. The first broadcast of an opera in Irish ('An Cailín

[163] Data extracted from the 'Report on Broadcasting in the Calendar Year 1935' and the 'Quarterly Report on Broadcasting'. (See NAI, D/FA, 33/146)

[164] 'Report on Broadcasting' 4

[165] *Ibid.*: 10-1

Bán') was given on the 7th of July, 1935.'[166] Pageantry and re-enactment of illustrious events, including the Easter Rising and the 1919 Declaration of Independence, featured in both years,[167] promulgating the state's republican credentials. Luminaries in the latter included Fr Michael O'Flanagan, Robert Barton, Eamonn Duggan, Píarais Béaslaí and Sean T. O'Kelly.

Kiernan took his duties seriously, and questioned the gratuitous use of radio for advertising. When de Valera requested his views, Kiernan detailed his criticisms:

> The Royal Dublin Society have been given three Talks before the Spring Show and three Talks before the Horse Show; the Gaelic Athletic Association have been given three talks before the Hurling Final and three before the Football Final; the Army Tattoo have been given three talks. These are really advertisements.... We are being asked to relay speeches by the Minister for Industry and Commerce opening new industries. The Irish Tourist Association have been given special relays.... The broadcasting service has advertised recently the Shrine at Knock; the cause for the Canonisation of Blessed Oliver Plunkett. These are advertising Talks. There is an important question of policy here involved. As our programmes become more lively, the value of these cloaked advertisements becomes greater. Where are we to draw the line? What policy should I follow?[168]

Kiernan's dilemma was whether radio could be used for commercial propaganda. As licence-fee revenue decreased, a funding shortfall emerged. Post and Telegraphs presented a memorandum outlining how a contract for advertising had produced spectacularly poor results.[169] Advertisements carried were mainly for foreign products for British audiences, which 'creates an impression in the public mind that the State Broadcasting Stations are being exploited in the interests of foreign trade.' Moreover, 'the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs considers that these undesirable features are incompatible with the Government's policy of economic and cultural national development and are generally derogatory to the national tone of the broadcasting programmes.'[170] The department recommended ceasing the contract. Finance objected as it would make the station exchequer dependent, and, furthermore, the advertisements

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[166] *Ibid.*: 2

[167] Ibid.: 8 and 'Quarterly Report': 5-6

[168] NAI, D/T, S3532/2 A: undated, c. September, 1935

[169] NAI, D/T, S9520A: 4 April, 1934. A one-year contract to sell radio advertising was reissued to New Ireland Assurance after the Athlone Radio Publicity Co folded when it could not sell the requisite advertising.

[170] *Ibid.*.

were similar to those already in the telephone directory.[171] But it was a fight Finance, unusually, did not win: the Council decided against renewal. Communicated a day later to Finance, the decision, cultural and economic considerations to the fore, stated that the 'Minister for Posts & Telegraphs was authorised to make arrangements for advertising broadcasting programmes subject to the condition that only Saorstát products and enterprises should be advertised.'[172]

If the State's will in controlling radio was apparent, nonetheless that did not prevent enterprising parties from seeking broadcast licences. From 1934-6, at least four proposals, were rejected – no trifling matter, given the personalities involved. G. Shanks sought support from John Charles McQuaid, who sent de Valera a copy of Shanks' proposal for a Cork-based radio station:

> Ireland is too big a country to serve the needs of its population through the medium of one broadcasting station only. In order to satisfy public opinion, two programmes are essential; one programme should revive and foster the ancient Irish culture and be of an educational nature; the other station should broadcast programmes of more ordinary type of entertainment as well as help the building up of the State by means of its intercourse with neighbouring nations and commercial propaganda.

It outlined the station's benefit to the state:

> It will... unite all the Irish scattered throughout the world, remind the travelling public of the beauties of Ireland and thus link up the old culture of Ireland with the modern world. The commercial station will establish a definite link with a leading Free State newspaper in order to circularise the world with true facts about Ireland and increase its circulation in the Free State.[173]

Given the folly of appraising de Valera of intent to partner a rival newspaper, the *Irish Press* may be inferred. Lord ffrench also urged that Shanks' station would 'provide the Free State with a medium of self expression as regards the development of its new industries and Irish culture in general.'[174] The representations succeeded: Industry and Commerce circulated a memorandum to Council on the International Broadcasting Company's proposal for a Cork-based commercial station. The memorandum, with ministerial endorsement, noted the proposal's advantages in employment and industry, and rebutted Post and Telegraphs opposition to political propaganda implications: 'The proposed scheme does not envisage political broadcasting. As regards commercial

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[171] *Ibid.*, 7 April, 1934

[172] *Ibid.*, 14 April, 1934

[173] NAI, D/T, S2726A: 20 February, 1934

[174] *Ibid.*: 22 February, 1934

broadcasting Governments have the power to nullify any commercial propaganda by restricting or prohibiting entirely imports of the goods concerned.'[175] Authorised to investigate further, External Affairs rejected the scheme as international agreements prohibited broadcasting propaganda across borders. While that permitted broadcasts that inescapably reached other countries, governments could not allow stations to target other countries.[176] Posts and Telegraphs foresaw no opportunity of obtaining two wavelengths: 'thus the question arises as to which aspect of our broadcasting activities is the more important, the National programme intended for our own people, or the commercial programme intended to advertise non-Irish goods outside Ireland.' It observed dryly: 'The two schemes seem to be mutually destructive.'[177] Brought before Council again, the scheme was rejected.[178]

Another 1934 scheme lacked influential supporters and seemed dubious to civil servants. London solicitor Herbert Linley wrote to the High Commissioner on behalf of unnamed clients who, having successfully sold their product using radio advertising, sought a radio licence to transmit their own broadcasts. The British Postmaster General having turned them down, they wanted to broadcast from the Free State, or, anticipating broadcasting piracy of later decades, on a ship registered in the state anchored outside British waters.[179] Post and Telegraphs, canvassed for advice by External Affairs, scuppered the idea: 'The proposal for broadcasting from a ship registered in the Irish Free State and anchored at sea outside British territorial waters is fantastic in conception and could not in any circumstances be seriously considered.'[180]

An undated 1936 proposal[181] from Florence Schlesinger and Rory More O'Ferrall alluded to propaganda and publicity opportunities for the state, but a departmental memorandum noted that the promoters' aims were to broadcast advertisements to Britain, and highlighted problems: 'The initiative in selecting programmes would be with

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[175] *Ibid.:* 9 March, 1934

[176] *Ibid.:* 30 April, 1934

[177] *Ibid.*: 29 September, 1934

[178] *Ibid.*: 9 October, 1934

[179] NAI, D/FA, 33/81: 16 January, 1934

[180] *Ibid.*: 27 January, 1934

[181] NAI, D/T, S9520A: undated, but 23/12/36 was handwritten on the first page, suggesting it was sent or received on that date.

the controllers of the station. The state could exercise at best only the negative influence of a censorship.' Moreover: 'The proposal, besides being nationally bad in that it would give control of one of the most important of cultural agencies to a group whose aims are purely mercenary, would also involve a breach of international courtesy, if not of an international agreement.'[182]

The international opprobrium that would redound on the state was a factor. Raymond Postgate and Catherine Marshall proposed establishing a station that would broadcast information and news to central European countries that were otherwise accustomed to receiving propaganda.[183] External Affairs decided the state could not permit the venture. Broadcasting advertisements into countries where the national broadcaster prohibited advertising was bad enough, but it would be against:

> international comity to allow propaganda to be broadcast... which would... disturb the relations between Government of any country and their nationals. Any country lending itself to the broadcasting of such propaganda would soon be regarded as a disturbing element in international affairs, and its dignity and prestige would be decidedly lowered.[184]

While controlling domestic propaganda was desirable, accessing international airwaves to promote the state was important for Free State politicians. It was not until adequate radio infrastructure existed that requests for interviews and broadcasts began to materialise. Having the technology, however, mattered little if speakers were ill-accustomed to the medium. An early broadcast to America caused controversy. Cosgrave received a telegram from the New York legation advising that:

> De Valera broadcasts Thursday his Irish Republic ideas through local station stop International Broadcasting Corporation operating station with national connections offers you its full facilities to broadcast statement refuting De Valera's statements that Ireland is poorer in wealth and population and is disloyal to the Free State Government stop International Broadcasting Corporation will gladly spread throughout America your message to America setting forth the truth about Ireland today stop.[185]

The state prepared a statement. However, it was so vehement the broadcaster censored it. American newspapers detailed the incident. The *New York Herald Tribune* headline

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[182] *Ibid.*: undated.

[183] NAI, D/FA, 27/175: undated, c. late 1936

[184] *Ibid.*: undated, c. late 1936

[185] NAI, D/T, S5111/3: 14 March, 1927

claimed 'WGL Censors Cosgrave Views On De Valera'[186], while the *New York Times* headline stated: 'COSGRAVE MESSAGE CENSORED FOR RADIO; Station WGL Deletes Cabled Attack on de Valera's 'Insane Campaign of 1922 and 1923.''[187] It was a salient lesson that robust political debate was sometimes unsuitable for sensitive listeners, or, perhaps, broadcasters' libel lawyers. Indeed, for a later broadcast into America that touched on international amity, MacNeill, writing Cosgrave's script, took pains to avoid controversy: 'I did not specifically name either Kellogg or the League of Nations, because either would be sure to make some set blaspheme. Those that want the bouquet won't fail to reach for it.'[188]

Nonetheless, that broadcast irked the Colombia Broadcasting System. They had written to MacWhite inviting Cosgrave to speak on Irish-American relations. The invitation highlighted the propaganda opportunity of the address:

> The potential radio audience in the United States that may be reached by the 74 stations of the Colombia Broadcasting System numbers around 50 million.... Of course a radio talk... by Mr Cosgrave would be accompanied by unusual newspaper publicity, which would also contribute greatly toward cementing the good will between your country and ours.[189]

Casually emphasising the power of radio, Colombia stated: 'Incidentally, our State Department has been fully appraised of this proposal.... The Department professes a friendly interest.' MacWhite recommended acceptance, and Cosgrave agreed.[190] However, a delay ensued until César Saerchinger, director of Colombia's European Service, wrote to McGilligan inviting Cosgrave to deliver his address on St Patrick's Day, 1931.[191] Taking publicity seriously Saerchinger requested 'any publicity material released by the Irish Free State to the press, in order that it may be used when announcing the broadcast in America.'[192]

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[186] *Ibid.*: 18 March, 1927

[187] *New York Times*, 18 March 1927. Emphasis in the original.

[188] NAI, D/T, S5111/6: 10 March, 1931

[189] *Ibid.*, S5111/5: undated, but c. early August 1930 (MacWhite forwarded the invitation to Dublin on 15 August, 1930)

[190] *Ibid.*: 1 October, 1930

[191] *Ibid.*, S5111/7: 5 January, 1931

[192] NAI, D/FA, 33/10: 3 February, 1931

However, the state's naivety damaged relations. Colombia, believing theirs was an exclusive interview, were horrified to learn Cosgrave was giving an address on a rival network two days before them. The Washington Legation disapproved:

> Colombia Broadcast much annoyed President speaking over rival system two days ahead of their previously arranged programme. I am convinced that he would have double the audience on Patrick's Day than on combined dates as talking fifteenth deprives address of novelty and consequent publicity. Could not Sunday talk be postponed a week or two?[193]

The President's Office responded to External Affairs' disapproval. The response suggests an over-awed Cosgrave unwise to media relations; the National Broadcasting Company, owned by the *Chicago Tribune*, had its London representative, John Steele, Clara Fargo Thomas, and the American Minister to the Free State meet Cosgrave:[194] 'They pressed strongly for the talk on the 15th. The President informed them of the previous undertaking on the 17th. Apparently Mrs. Thomas had good credentials, and the President agreed to the proposal.'[195] Recognising Cosgrave's uncomfortable position, his office cabled Washington a mitigating message regarding the *Tribune* broadcast: 'Care is being taken however to keep this talk on very general lines and to ensure that it will not in any way detract from value of Saint Patrick's Day message which will be addressed particularly to the Irish in America.'[196] This was misleading. While the Colombia address was important, that McNeill was drafted in as speechwriter suggested the *Tribune* broadcast required more delicate construction. The *Tribune* agreed that Cosgrave would speak on the 1932 Eucharistic Congress, the 1933 Chicago Fair, international amity and Irish-American ties, while the fifteen-minute programme would also incorporate Colonel Fitz Brase's arrangement of Amhrán na bhFian.[197]

Despite having annoyed Colombia, and rejected the advice of his American mission, Cosgrave's broadcasts were successful. Delighted, he thanked McNeill for the speech for which 'congratulatory messages are pouring in.'[198] The National Broadcasting Company wrote that the 'broadcast was very successful and we wish to thank you again for your

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[193] NAI, D/T, S5111/7: 10 March, 1931 and D/FA, 33/10: 10 March, 1931

[194] *Ibid.*, S5111/6: 9 February, 1931

[195] *Ibid.*, S5111/7: 12 March, 1931 and D/FA, 33/10: 10 March, 1931

[196] NAI, D/FA, 33/10: 13 March, 1931

[197] NAI, D/T, S5111/6: 9 February, 1931

[198] *Ibid.*: 16 March, 1931

assistance.'[199] Although Colombia had reason to feel aggrieved, it did not spoil their relationship with the state's representatives in America: MacWhite forwarded Cosgrave a copy of a letter of thanks from Colombia for participating in a series of political talks.[200]

America was a fertile ground for broadcasts, and the state's representatives were very adroit at using the medium for propaganda. W.J.B. Macaulay informed External Affairs that a radio station, WNYC, would broadcast a speech: 'The hour is 7.15 p.m. which, of course, is the very best as regards reaching a large audience.' He asked specifically: 'I should like to know whether this opportunity should be seized to say something other than the usual banalities which are so exceedingly non-controversial. The Foreign Affairs Forum is interested in informing the public on international affairs, foreign politics and so on.'[201] Most speeches for American audiences emphasised the state's religious devotion, culture and emergence from oppression, but imparted little of interest. Macaulay wanted his broadcast to lay down a marker. Walshe asked the Secretary of the Markets Advisory Committee whether they wished 'to take advantage of this opportunity to stimulate the interest of the American public in Saorstát exports to the U.S.A..'[202] The Committee did not share Macaulay's enthusiasm, and saw no 'possibility of remunerative trade with the United States of America in agricultural products.'[203] That did not prevent Macaulay from writing a speech that, although delivered on his behalf, eschewed literary and cultural allusions in favour of economic and political propaganda.[204] His St Patrick's Day message, broadcast in 1933, was in the traditional style, though his ending was unusually direct as he noted the State's opportunity to show leadership in social reconstruction, and observed that de Valera's government was bringing modern industrial advancement.[205]

De Valera, it may be surmised, showed a great grasp of radio's propaganda power, but he was also cautious about broadcasting. He was invited by Kenneth L. Hall, the London manager of the Imperial Radio Programmes, an Australian company, to broadcast a

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[199] *Ibid.*: 19 March, 1931

[200] *Ibid.*, S5111/9: 16 May, 1931

[201] NAI, D/FA, 5/98: 3 February, 1933

[202] *Ibid.*: 27 February, 1933

[203] *Ibid.*: 1 March, 1933

[204] *Ibid.*: undated

[205] *Ibid.*: undated

message from Dublin. His staff sent the invitation to Kiernan for vetting. He advised that Hall represented a group of Australian advertising-funded stations and suggested ascertaining whether Hall would organise the logistics, and enquiring whether the broadcast might be censored. He noted Hall's stations catered 'for a large listening public and... there should be no objection in principle, to a broadcast by the President through a representative group of such Stations.'[206]

There was, however, something petty about de Valera's relations with the BBC, which generally enjoyed good relations with 2RN. Gorham notes that Reith had been a member of the selection board tasked with appointing the station's first director,[207] while formalised exchanges of programmes between 2RN and the BBC took place.[208] A copy of the BBC's 1927 annual report suggests that 2RN's broadcasting of musical, educational and general interest programmes was broadly similar to the BBC.[209] A BBC request to borrow 2RN facilities, and 'a first class speaker' of the State's choosing to broadcast from the 1935 Dublin Horse Show received a prompt response from Kiernan himself.[210] Kiernan had an open mind on the usefulness of working with the BBC: on receipt of a request to participate in its Christmas Day programme, he notified de Valera's office, enclosing the previous year's schedule when the state had contributed a three-minute piece, 'Men of Aran,' and professed his preference for participating.[211] John Moynihan turned down the invitation: 'The decision is that we should not participate in the Christmas Day Programme this year, as some misunderstanding was caused by our participation in previous years.'[212] Although Moynihan's dismissal left the misunderstanding unexplained, it may have emanated from strained relations between Britain and the State occasioned by economic warfare than from broadcasting policy *per se*.

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[206] *Ibid.*, 33/1: 19 November, 1935

[207] Gorham, *op. cit.*: 19

[208] NAI, D/Fin, 104/0005/34

[209] NAI, D/Fin, S106/0006/28: 30 June, 1928

[210] NAI, D/FA, 33/125: 7-8 August, 1935

[211] NAI, D/T, S5111/4: 11 October, 1935

[212] *Ibid.*: 1 November, 1935

V

Of great importance to politicians in the Free State was controlling new media. Debates on the establishment of radio suggest that it was a medium to be feared were it in hands other than the state's. Nonetheless, for all that it was state-controlled, it was not seen as belonging to the people, but rather was something to be guarded from, and for, them: state radio was radio of the government of the day. That radio could produce even pro-state propaganda was mildly repugnant to Cumann na nGaedheal - a peculiarity, given the party's experience of propaganda during the conflict – but not so with Fianna Fáil. That party exercised tight control over 2RN through key appointments and restrictions on advertising. The type of propaganda that emerged from 1932 onwards, and especially the imbalance between government and opposition speakers on radio, suggests that the airwaves were controlled to ensure maximum exposure for Fianna Fáil.

Less clear was the attitude towards film. It may be argued that with the death of Collins, the state lost its one politician with a grasp of the medium's potency. Certainly, those who succeeded him had little of Collins' intuitive grasp, and the view seemed to prevail that cinema was merely fodder for unquestioning minds. Highbrow preoccupations, voiced by FitzGerald and O'Hegarty, saw little cultural value in film: this resulted in a failure to explore its potential, unlike in Britain with Tallents and Grierson at the Empire Marketing Board. Control over film, though more difficult in that the state had no direct involvement in film production or distribution, was achieved through severe censorship. It is not unfair to suggest that, under Cumann na nGaedheal, this was a consequence of a moral imperative and religious influence, while under Fianna Fáil it was a continuation of this, with the added element of a carefully-constructed notion of a self-contained Irish identity coming from the depths of the party's own ideology. Rockett posits that it was no surprise 'that cinema, a technologically-based urban medium... would be regarded with suspicion by those who sought to create a mythical Gaelic past.'[213]

New media were challenging forms of propaganda. They required innovation and flexibility from propagandists accustomed to the printed word. Radio continued to emphasise the power of language and was a medium that suited the austere de Valera, whose time spent in the United States, where radio was pioneered, stood him in good

[213] Rockett, *op. cit.*: 25

stead. Film required concentration on the visual element until sound films allowed the marriage of words and image to create a more potent message. Both could have been used more frequently or expertly, but early wariness and antipathy, and financial considerations, were issues that had to be overcome. Given that both media were in their infancy, it is to the credit of Free State politicians and propagandists that they grew proficient in using them, and that state control, for all its severity and stifling of creativity, never led to the propaganda excesses experienced elsewhere in Europe.

Chapter 4

Propaganda and nation-building

I

Who comprised the nation was a vexed question. Lyons described a state with Gaelic, Ulster Protestant, English and Anglo-Irish traditions jostling for attention, with the first pre-eminent. He highlighted the 'instinctive recoil from anything that does not square with the idealized national stereotype'[1] and noted the increasingly resigned, indeed, besieged, position of the ascendancy class. Yet, despite being outside the pale where a notional sense of Gaelic identity was concerned, the state was at pains to include them in legal interpretations of citizenship. However, Irish suggested not British, despite the Anglo-Irish treaty's provisions. Negotiations on nationality during the Treaty talks resulted in the state's citizens being British subjects.[2] Article 3 of the Treaty defined the qualifications for citizenship, but avoided defining nationality:

> Every person, without distinction of sex, domiciled in the area of the jurisdiction of the Irish Free State at the time of the coming into operation of this Constitution, who was born in Ireland or either of whose parents was born in Ireland or who has been ordinarily resident in the area of the jurisdiction of the Irish Free State and shall within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Irish Free State enjoy the privileges and be subject to the obligations of such citizenship: Provided that any such person being a citizen of another State may elect not to accept the citizenship hereby conferred: and the conditions governing the future acquisition and termination of citizenship in the Irish Free State shall be determined by law.

Though it failed to address the rights of persons after the state's establishment, or those seeking naturalisation, the wording maintained a necessary mantle of nationalism. In tandem with Article One, which described the state as a co-equal member of the Commonwealth, it permitted citizens with British loyalties to be British subjects. However, FitzGerald's decision to issue passports identifying holders as Free State citizens and, contrary to British government sentiment, merely indirectly as British subjects quickly established the state's intentions regarding nationality. In April 1924, to the consternation of the Foreign Office in London, the state issued its first passports,

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[1] Lyons, *op. cit.:* 67

[2] O'Grady, 1989: 396-7

expunging the words 'British subject.'[3] That the Colonial Office endeavoured to reach accommodation suggests that the political reality of the state's position was sufficiently well-expressed, and domestically well-received, to count as a notable propaganda achievement. A further cleaving came with the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act, 1935, which legislated for Irish citizenship, and offered formal recognition of Commonwealth citizen and British subjects.

Clearly, Irish citizenship was predicated on not being identifiable with British or Commonwealth identities. However, a close reading of the Treaty and the 1935 act indicate that geographic considerations were the principal determinants of to the right to a Free State passport. Nowhere in the two documents was there any attempt to identify what considerations other than place of birth or domicile might make individuals identify themselves as part of the Irish nation. Such an omission is hardly surprising, given that any attempt to state that there was a definitive national identity within the Free State is fraught with difficulty. Indeed, this was carried forward into the 1937 constitution. The first three articles dealt with the nation, but only the first referred to it directly: 'The Irish nation hereby affirms its inalienable, indefeasible, and sovereign right to choose its own form of Government, to determine its relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economic and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions.' Articles two and three referred to the national territory in a clumsy attempt at reaffirming the impression that geography, too, formed the nation.[4] However, with their contesting visions of the nation, the Irish Ireland movement, nationalists, republicans, unionists and Anglo-Irish had created their own geniuses and traditions in the decades before independence. Fringe interests such as labour, socialism and fascism had identifiable identities, and were attractive to a sizeable number of adherents. Politicians of differing hue, who had created various impressions of the nation, continued to advance their views, even as they professed to reflect the will of the majority of the people. Thus, ideas of nation were based on notions of religion and heritage that had become essential to advanced nationalism, and ultimately republicanism.

Creating a national identity was politically important. The civil war had divided a country where, since the Irish Ireland movement, the majority of the population had been

[3] *Ibid.*: 403-4 and Daly, 2001: 379-80 succinctly describe events leading to the state's action.

[4] *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, 1937: §1-3

cultivated to express a unified, Celtic, Catholic identity. It was incumbent on Cumann na nGaedheal to propagandise a vision of nationality that would re-unite the Gael within and without the state, and simultaneously reach out to sceptical Anglo-Irish brethren and Ulster unionists. Fianna Fáil's vision of the nation was domestically focussed. It was, arguably, more ideologically driven than Cumann na nGaedheal, which was forced to recognise pressing political and social realities such as national perception of the value of being Irish, and of the new state. Fianna Fáil, where de Valera's view of parochial contentment and bucolic self-sufficiency held sway, was inclined to perceive the nation as a tractable extension of the party's identity. Indeed, the party's constitution designated it a national movement rather than a political party, suggesting that the nation and Fianna Fáil were as one.

This chapter examines the creation of a national Celtic, Catholic identity. Juxtaposing Catholicism and pagan Celticism may appear to be an oxymoron, but this chapter contends the latter was reconciled with religious identity. Celtic mythology embodied a physical sporting culture, and pride in artistic endeavour. Sporting prowess, particularly through Gaelic games, was not merely endorsed by the Church, but, through active participation of its clerics in sporting events – often throwing in the ball to start football and hurling matches – was idealised into the embodiment of pure Christian living in a propagandised version of *mens sana in corpore sano*: sport and religion were guarantors of a virtuous national life. Moreover, oral history that lionised mythological figures, especially those who, like Cuchulainn, laid down their lives for a cause, equated neatly with Christian martyrdom and nationalists who died in the struggle for independence.

Meanwhile, national identity in Northern Ireland meant a unionist identity. The government there created a state that reflected the demographic superiority of loyal citizens over subversive nationalists. It was thus, overwhelmingly loyal and Protestant in composition. The Free State may not have been the most welcoming place for those who differed in interpretations of the nation, but it was rather less sectarian than Northern Ireland. To maintain unionist dominance political machinations removed nationalists from the political spectrum, first marginalising their representatives in Stormont and secondly through the twin methods of introducing the Proportional Representation system of voting (though Hennessy suggests this was largely directed at preventing the Labour Party and Independent Unionists gaining the upper hand over

Craig's party)[5] and gerrymandering constituencies to maximise unionist representation. The result was not only the state disenfranchising of nationalists, but their self-disenfranchisement as they turned their backs on the political system. For unionists, it created a convenient propaganda narrative of blame: that nationalists did not engage in politics was public proof of their disloyalty.

In both jurisdictions, propaganda against perceived threats to the nation was often effected through official channels. The case of the Irish language is a useful illustration. In the Free State, compulsory Irish in schools and zealous promotion that bordered on obsessive by language enthusiasts created outsiders of those who did not speak the language, and cast those who did in an idealised fashion. State organisations like the civil service, army and Garda, for instance, heavily propagandised Irish to ensure official bilingualism, though in practice the policy was an abject failure. In the North, Craig was attacked in Stormont for withdrawing £1,500 budgeted for teaching Irish in schools. Twelve thousand children were learning Irish in Northern schools, and a decision to treat Irish as a foreign language 'reveals a provincialism and obscurantism that are almost unthinkable.'[6] Craig retaliated: 'What use is it to us here in this progressive, busy part of the Empire to teach our children the Irish language? What use would it be to them? Is it not leading them along a road which has no practical value? We have not stopped such teaching; we have stopped the grants... because we do not see that these boys being taught Irish would be any better citizens.'[7]

The northern nation was predicated on remembrance of historical events; plantation, 1641 and the Battle of the Boyne were practically current affairs (the poet W.R. Rodgers later succinctly encapsulated this: 'dogging / The fled horse of Irish history and the Boyne.')[8] McIntosh notes the historical writing that made the past vivid in the North, and created the stereotypical Ulsterman, suspicious of northern culture as a breeding ground for nationalist culture, which was absolutely to be rejected.[9] Propaganda for provincial and political identity was a necessity if Ulster was to survive. As the Free State

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[5] Hennessy, 1997: 44

[6] SP, vol. 18, 24 March, 1936, col. 640

[7] *Ibid.*, cols 645-6

[8] Longley, 1993: 98

[9] McIntosh, *op. cit.*: 19-21

embraced Catholicism, so Ulster embraced Protestantism; as the south looked to pre-Norman times to give historical legitimacy, so the north looked to the victories and glories under British rule. Commemoration and parades, especially those associated with the Orange Order, were a potent way of publicising the requirements of citizenship of Ulster: respect for tradition, belief in the unionist hegemony and, above all, loyalty.

For the Free State, there was no shortage of events that were used for nation-building propaganda. In sport, the Tailteann Games (a sporting festival from Celtic antiquity that encompassed the arts and traditional crafts), state participation at the Olympic games, the affirmation of the Gaelic Athletic Association as the principal sporting body, and successes in equestrianism offer ample opportunity for an extended assessment of sporting propaganda beyond the scope of a single chapter. An assessment of the Tailteann Games is presented as representative of sporting propaganda. The ability of governments to promulgate a vision of the nation is also examined through religious observance. With regards to religious observance, the focus will be on the centenary celebrations of Catholic Emancipation, and the Eucharistic Congress. However, the use of religious events, specifically funerals of prominent nationalists, will also be shown as crucial elements in building propaganda for the nation.

II

For a state born out of the blood sacrifice of 1916, it is unsurprising that one of its most poignant, politically charged symbols was the obsequies of fallen heroes of the revolution. Public and, especially, political participation in these funeral rites, from lying in state to graveside orations, evoked a national and personal sense of loss. There was, in the funerals of founders of the state, and of those who died without witnessing the freedom for which they fought, a coming together of citizens and politicians in an expression of loss and regret, commingled with a public declaration of support for the nation and institutions the deceased had given their lives to establish and protect. Funerals provided the state with the opportunity to celebrate the life of the deceased and their contribution to the nation. In particular, instances of violent death allowed for condemnatory propaganda, so that the act of public mourning became a panegyric as much for the nation as for the deceased, and an expression of repugnance towards the perpetrators. Free State authorities were far from innovators in this regard. Their

manipulation of funerals as a public statement followed a well-established pattern that was used to good effect in the revolutionary period.

Advanced nationalists exploited Thomas Ashe's death for propaganda. Having died shortly after his admission to Dublin's Mater Hospital, Sinn Féin quickly commandeered his hospital room as a shrine for paying respects: fifteen thousand people, stewarded by Irish Volunteers, filed past his remains. Next day, Sinn Féin organised a cortege from the hospital to the Pro-Cathedral:

> Preceding the hearse were about twenty Roman Catholic clergymen, and following it were Mr. Patrick Ashe, a cousin of the deceased man, Mr. Edmund [sic] de Valera, who was acting as commandant of the Volunteers, and other prominent *Sinn Féin* leaders. Around the hearse was a uniformed guard of Irish Volunteers. Immediately behind came the members of the Wolfe Tone Club and other similar organisations, and then three mourning coaches, the occupants of which included Mr. John Ashe, brother, and Miss Norah Ashe, sister of the deceased. Several thousand Irish Volunteers, headed by a draped *Sinn Féin* flag, marched behind, playing funeral airs. Then came the "Citizen Army," headed by Madame Markiewicz, who was attired in uniform, the *Sinn Féin* women's organisation and Boy Scouts.[10]

In the hierarchy of mourning, family grief was subordinated to establishing his nationalist and Catholic credentials, which asserted that Ashe had died for his faith and his country.

Three years later, the funerals, in quick succession, of two Lord Mayors of Cork, Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney, occasioned more propaganda. MacCurtain's cortege was preceded by two hundred priests, while Bishop Coholan drove his private carriage. Twenty thousand marched in the cortege, including eight thousand Volunteers, mayors from other Irish cities, and Griffith and MacSwiney representing Sinn Féin, while 'the old school of Irish nationalism' was represented by, among others, William O'Brien.[11] Even death abroad did nothing to diminish advanced nationalist propaganda. Though his death in Brixton Prison lessened its immediate public impact in Ireland, MacSwiney's lying in state at St George's Cathedral, Southwark brought the propaganda war into the British heartland. As his body was taken from prison, family and a Dáil deputation including Count Plunkett and Cosgrave formed the cortege. The coffin, draped in a tricolour, was carried into the Cathedral by a company of Cork Volunteers.

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[10] *Irish Times*, 28 September, 1917: 3. Emphasis in the original.

[11] *Ibid.*, 23 March, 1920: 5

These were relieved of their funerary duties by comrades from Dublin, in turn relieved by a contingent of London Volunteers.[12]

These deaths were manipulated for propaganda because so many others perished in prison at the hands of a firing squad or hangman. The execution of the 1916 leaders and, under the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, Kevin Barry and nine other republicans, gave advanced nationalism a legitimate reason for arousing feelings of grief and anger, but without the opportunity for the type of public mourning expected by a devoutly Catholic populace. Funerals became a peaceful manifestation of opposition and sedition, and the remains of the deceased were as essential to the armed struggle as munitions. But bodies of condemned prisoners were not released to families: unless lack of burial space was cited, they were interred within the prison where the sentence was executed. The *Irish Times* inquired into the controversy of the authorities' alleged refusal to give Barry's body to relatives: 'this matter was put yesterday to an official in Dublin Castle, who replied that... the Statute 'Capital Punishment Act, 1868' Section 6, expressly directs that burial in such cases must take place within the prison precincts.'[13]

It was one of the tragedies of nationalism and the Free State that conflict should have provided it with frequent opportunity for funerary propaganda. The rhetoric of the Free State government on the death of three of its architects, Griffith, Collins and O'Higgins, demonstrates that their deaths, while detrimental to state's well-being, were valuable propaganda against their enemies and enemies of the state. Many of these, former comrades, died in the early years of the state, but their translation from advanced nationalist to republican ensured their passing was officially downplayed. Boland's funeral was markedly ignored; the state's sole participation came in the form of a troop of soldiers who, encountering the cortege on O'Connell St, 'laid down their arms, removed their caps, and stood to attention' until it passed.[14] Constance Markiewicz' death while a *teachta dála* elect, coming so soon after O'Higgins' assassination, evinced the

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[12] *Ibid.*, 28 October, 1920: 5

[13] *Ibid.*, 3 November, 1920: 5. The legislation reads: 'The body of every offender executed shall be buried within the walls of the prison within which judgment of death is executed on him: Provided, that if one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State is satisfied on the representation of the visiting justices of a prison that there is not convenient space within the walls thereof for the burial of offenders executed therein, he may, by writing under his hand, appoint some other fit place for that purpose, and the same shall be used accordingly.'

[14] *Ibid.*, 5 August, 1922: 6

state's animosity against those whose agitations threatened insurrectionary recrudescence: Fianna Fáil claimed that the Dublin City Commissioners had refused the use of City Hall and the Mansion House as venues for her lying in state.[15] At her burial in Glasnevin Cemetery, there were 'about a hundred Free State soldiers with rifles' while the presence of detectives among the crowd of nearly a thousand suggested that the state feared potential republican propaganda and violence. [16] Moreover, in an act of propaganda by suppression of information, her death inspired no Dáil or Seanad tribute.

In contrast, Griffith's death enabled the state to idealise his memory and denigrate those who opposed his ideals. The official announcement of his death declared:

> The Irish Government places on record its deep sorrow... and its firm determination to carry on the work of his life to the achievement which he so nearly realised.
> The nation joins in the grief of his widow and family, and prays that Almighty God may support them in their overwhelming trouble.[17]

The final phrase, an appropriate expression of sympathy, may have been intended to evoke divine support for the turmoil befalling the country: if nation and family were joined in grief, trouble affecting one affected the other. Collins placed Griffith in a list of patriots whose untimely deaths had cost Ireland dearly. He observed:

> Only those who have worked him know what Arthur Griffith has done for Ireland: only they can realise how he has spent himself in his country's cause, and I have no shadow of doubt but that his end has been hastened by the mental anguish he has endured because of the actions of those who at this, the first time in the long and sorrowful history of our country when Ireland has the opportunity of becoming a nation, have acted as they have done and are doing still. The one bright spot in this fresh tragedy... would be for those who are against us, and who realise... what Arthur Griffith has done for Ireland, to be by his death brought to a better ideal of their own duty to the country which they profess to serve and love.[18]

Cosgrave's graveside panegyric praised Griffith as a patriot and democrat, testifying to his moral desolation caused by the Treaty's rejection; his despair notwithstanding, he strove to achieve national moral regeneration, and to build a united, free people.[19] The pronouncements conveyed precisely the same propaganda: Griffith was the true leader of the nation, and his successors would not waver in completing his work.

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[15] *Ibid.*, 16 July, 1927: 5

[16] *Ibid.*, 18 July, 1927: 5

[17] *Ibid.*, 14 August, 1922: 5

[18] *Ibid.*: 5

[19] *Ibid.*, 17 August, 1922: 5

For a nation already grieving at the loss of one leader, the death of its most charismatic statesman in an ambush a week later was a desperate blow. Again, the government quickly lionised the dead leader. An army statement extolled his courage: 'Towards the close of the engagement... the Commander-in-Chief was wounded in the head. Despite this mortal injury, General Collins, who fought throughout the action, set a splendid example.... He continued to fire from the ground until his strength failed, and he collapsed.'[20] The Publicity Department's communiqué addressed the nation directly: 'People of Ireland. – The greatest and bravest of our countrymen has been snatched from us at the moment when victory smiled through the clouds upon the uprising of the nation to which he had dedicated all the powers of his magnificent manhood.' Collins' legacy, it claimed, had led the nation to 'the triumphant end which had become almost a dream, and swept before it the domestic revolt which tried to pluck from your hands the fruits of that triumph – your unchallenged authority in the land.'[21]

A dubious *Irish Times* account of the skirmish, creating a convenient narrative for the government with themes of forgiveness and Catholic rites, could only have been written with access to official sources:

> a bullet struck General Collins at the back of the skull, and he fell prone. It was painfully obvious that he was mortally wounded, but he fired away until he became too weak to clasp his rifle.... Generals Dalton and O'Connell ran to his assistance, and recited an Act of Contrition into his ears. His life was ebbing fast, but he bore himself like a hero. 'Forgive them,' he faintly whispered: 'Let the Dublin Brigade bury me.' Then he died, surrounded by his heartbroken comrades, who tenderly placed his body on 'The Slieve-na-Mon,' while the ambushers, their foul work fully done, departed, carrying with them their dead and wounded.[22]

Mulcahy's oration dampened the enthusiasm of an *Irish Times* correspondent, who concentrated on 'this shy, rather awkward stripling' set to replace Collins, grudgingly crediting him as having 'the mind of a poet and the spirit of a Red Branch knight'.[23] Perhaps the back-handed compliment was retaliation for Mulcahy's repudiation of the newspaper's claims regarding Collins' dying words: 'Michael Collins never said... 'forgive

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[20] *Ibid.*, 24 August, 1922: 5

[21] *Ibid.*: 5

[22] *Ibid.*.

[23] *Ibid.*, 29 August, 1922: 5

them,' because his great big mind could not have entertained the obverse thought, and he knew those who sat around him and worked with him, that they were too big to harbour in their minds the obverse thought.' His references to Collins' personality and their friendship would have pleased cabinet colleagues, who needed Collins, even in his death, for the support his name would win. His finishing remarks evoked biblical symbolism, glorifying Collins as a Christ-like figure:

> We last looked at him in the City Hall and in the small church in St. Vincent's Hospital. And studying his face with an eager gaze, we found there the same old smile that met us always in our work. And seeing it there in the first dark hour of our blow, the mind could not help but travel back to the dark, storm-tossed sea of Galilee, and the frail bark tossed upon the waters there, and the strong, calm smile of the Great Sleeper in the stern of the boat...
> Men and Women of Ireland, we are all mariners on the deep, bound for a port still seen only through storm and spray, sailing still on a sea full of 'dangers and hardships and bitter toil.' But the Great Sleeper lies smiling in the stern of the boat, and we shall be filled with that spirit, which will walk bravely upon the waters.[24]

O'Higgins' assassination five years later rekindled memories of the conflict, highlighting the polarisation between the state's advocates and dissidents. Cosgrave issued a communiqué:

> In this hour of national loss and... mourning, mindful of the steadfast and heroic figure who has been sacrificed, the Irish people will not falter.
> O'Higgins, in his dauntless courage and unflinching determination, has trodden the path blazed by Griffith and Collins even unto death. Another great defender of the Irish Nation has passed away.
> The Irish people may rest assured that the assassin's bullet will not succeed in terrorising this country. There are, and will be, men, enheartened by the noble example of the late Vice-President... ready to step into his place, and to maintain his high tradition of devotion to the welfare and safety of the nation.[25]

Responding to expressions of sympathy from France and America, Cosgrave wrote: 'Kevin O'Higgins has been struck down, but he has written "Forward" on his country's banner. His country will obey the call.'[26] Expressions of sympathy from British politician's wives to O'Higgins' widow appeared in the press. The wife of L.S. Amery, Minister for the Dominions, denounced the 'mad act against your great and distinguished husband' while Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's wife wrote: 'I wanted you to know that there are those over in England who admired your husband as a man and as a patriot,

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[24] *Ibid.*: 6

[25] *Ibid.*, 11 July, 1927: 7

[26] *Ibid.*, 16 July, 1927: 5

and for the work that he was doing to help to make his country happier. That he should have been the victim of a cowardly murder fills us with unspeakable horror.'[27] How personal correspondence could have ended up for public consumption without official connivance is uncertain. Nonetheless, it marked O'Higgins as an international figure and family man; that he was slain while going to church enhanced his posthumous reputation, and further vilified his assassins.

Cosgrave's graveside oration noted O'Higgins' inspirational and hard-working attributes,[28] but it was in the Dáil he paid his finest tribute:

> The crime... is grievous beyond words. We are bereft of a colleague loyal, steadfast, of rare ability; the nation is robbed of a statesman invaluable in council, of unswerving purpose, who knew not fear or weakness, a very exemplar of public virtue.
> This crime has not been committed by private individuals against Kevin O'Higgins. It is the political assassination of a pillar of the State... the fruit of the steady, persistent attack against the State and its fundamental institutions. On the heads of those who have devoted their energies to the direction of that attack lies the blood-guilt.[29]

Photographic reportage of Griffith's, Collins' and O'Higgins' funerals shows how they followed religious patterns and were stage-managed for propaganda. Funerary propaganda encompassed lying in state, cortege and interment. The military guard at the lying in state of each man indicates their importance to state security; O'Higgins appears to have been the only one at which troops did not bear long arms. The troops flanking Griffith's coffin have rifles reversed in the formal drill position, *Ar Airm Aisiompaithe Lúig* (Rest on Arms Reversed). Although a candle obscures him, the position of the hands of the soldier to the right and rear of Collins' coffin seems identical to that of Griffith's guard of honour, and, almost certainly, he bore a rifle. The civil war images suggest state willingness to use its army in a show of force to stamp out rebellion, and to gain popular acceptance from its association with Griffith and Collins.

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[27] *Ibid.*, 13 July, 1927: 7

[28] *Ibid.*, 14 July, 1927: 7

[29] DÉ, vol. 20, 12 July, 1927, col. 757



Figure 4.1: Lying in state of Arthur Griffith (NLI, Keogh Collection)

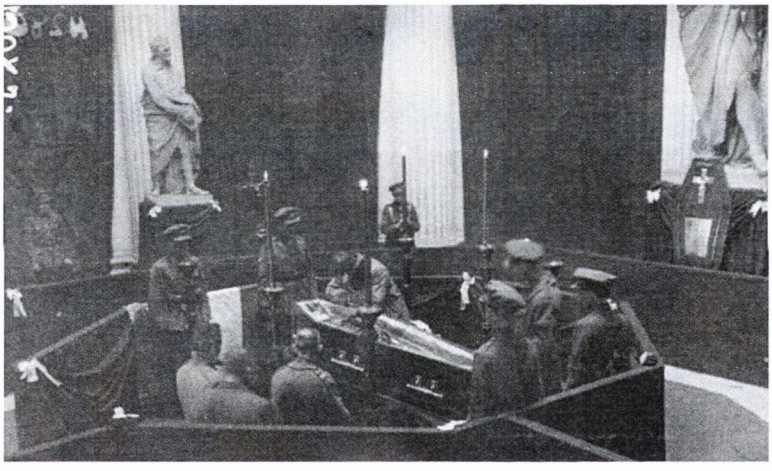

Figure 4.2: Lying in state of Michael Collins (NLI, Independent Newspapers Collection)

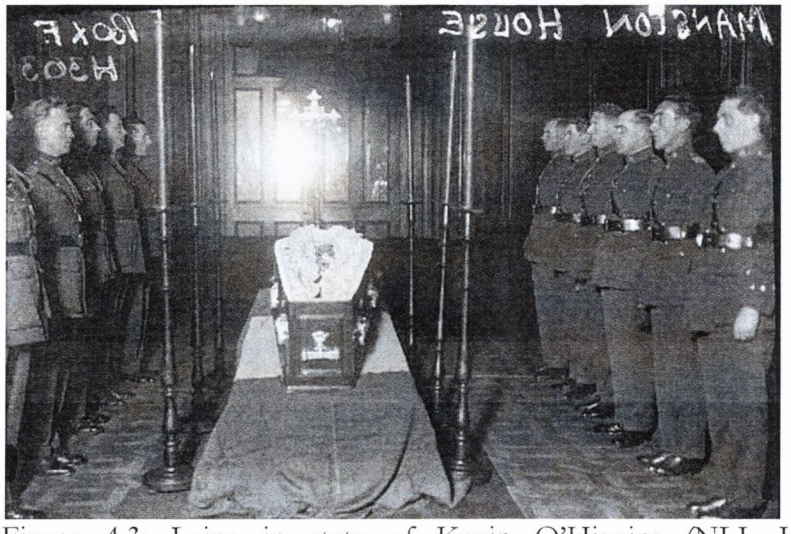

Figure 4.3: Lying in state of Kevin O'Higgins (NLI, Independent Newspapers Collection)

Figures 4.4 to 4.6 show crowds lining the funeral routes, with some men saluting or doffing hats as Griffith's cortege turns onto Parliament Street. Tricolours are visible on O'Higgins' and Collins' coffins, though the angle obscures Griffith's. A military guard of honour flanked the hearses followed by mourners, most likely led by public figures rather than family members. In O'Higgins' cortege over a dozen priests, monks and altar-boys were interposed between the hearse and a second vehicle, highlighting the faith of a politician assassinated on his way to church. The mode of conveying the deceased offers strong propaganda. Griffith's and O'Higgins' remains were drawn on horse-drawn hearses, as befitted statesmen. Collins' remains, honouring his military rank, were carried on a gun caisson. While appropriate, it also propagandised that the state had quickly acquired a professional artillery corps; his funeral was as much a declaration of military might as it was mourning for the dead commander in chief.



Figure 4.4: Cortege of Arthur Griffith (NLI, Keogh Collection)

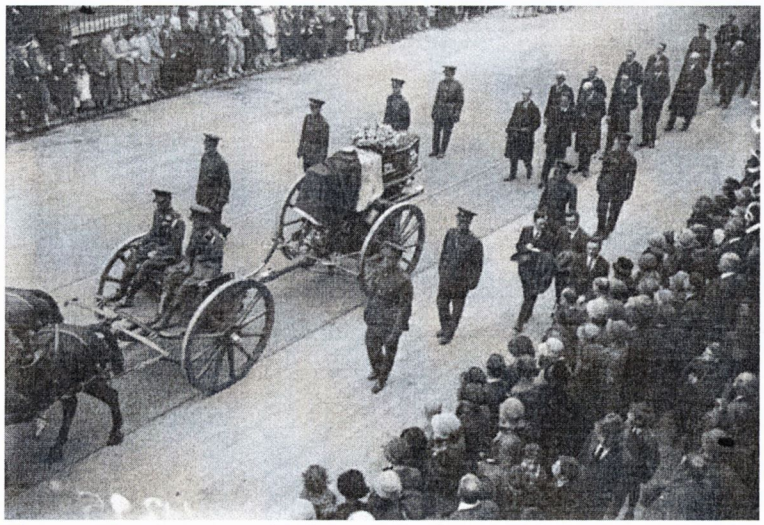

Figure 4.5: Cortege of Michael Collins (NLI, Independent Newspapers Collection)

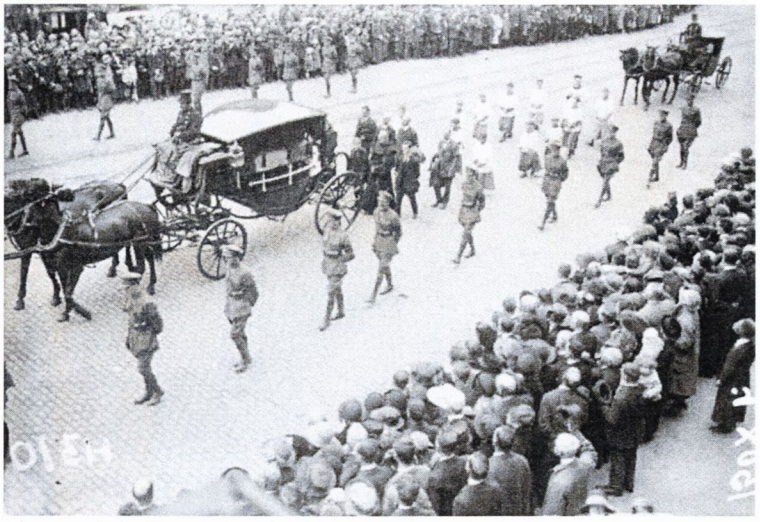

Figure 4.6: Cortege of Kevin O'Higgins (NLI, Independent Newspapers Collection)

Public mourning continued to the interment. Figure 4.7 shows Griffith's coffin, draped in a tricolour, borne shoulder high in Glasnevin cemetery. Although Mulcahy delivered the oratory at Collins' burial (Figure 4.8) thus confirming him as his military successor, the *Irish Independent* photographed Cosgrave with speech-notes in hand, surrounded by troops and clerics, establishing him as Collins' political successor, and suggesting an entente between state and church. At O'Higgins' burial (Figure 4.9), with the civil war concluded, the *Irish Independent* photographed O'Higgins' uncle, Governor-General T.M. Healy, at the graveside. His presence suggests that the propaganda associated with O'Higgins' death could reflect on his reputation as a statesman, and the measure of independence the state had won. If Healy was present in a familial context, it is probable he would have stood with O'Higgins' widow and other family members. O'Higgins' was a less militaristic, more political funeral than those of Griffith and Collins, propagating an established nation in mourning rather than seeking to unite a nascent nation rent in civil.



Figure 4.7: Interment of Arthur Griffith (NLI, Keogh Collection)



Figure 4.8: Interment of Michael Collins (NLI, Independent Newspapers Collection)



Figure 4.9: Interment of Kevin O'Higgins (NLI, Independent Newspapers Collection)

In 1937 Edward Carson died, provoking scenes of public mourning in Belfast where his remains were brought from England. Pathé recorded the cortege, with a stirring voiceover that emphasised his legacy:

> On a calm, misty morning the destroyer HMS Broke brings home the last remains of Edward, Lord Carson. To the young he is a symbol of loyalty victorious against long odds, but to the old who signed the Covenant with him, and who now watch him pass through the Belfast streets, he is the soldier, the statesman, the builder of modern Ulster. As the procession moves slowly on its mile long march to the Cathedral of St Anne there are few signs of sorrow among the crowds. For of Carson can it be said as of few other men he died completely victorious. Among the pallbearers is the Prime Minister, Lord Craigavon, and the widow and her son walk behind the coffin. The Governor of Northern Ireland, Lord Abercorn, arrives at the Cathedral to represent His Majesty the King. In the Cathedral Lord Carson will lie alone, for until he came no-one was buried there, a symbol of his unique position among Ulstermen.[30]

The narration leaves no doubt as to Carson's contribution to Northern Ireland. However, the images in the footage are no less striking in demonstrating this. From the

[30] Pathé, Film 859.04

first scenes of the coffin on the destroyer's deck, to the naval and police guard of honour as the coffin, draped in a Union flag and carried on a gun-limber, is drawn through the streets, what is suggested is not merely his political legacy to the province, but his military one also. As Abercorn enters the cathedral, he passes floral tributes to Carson. Two are particularly striking: one, circular, contains a red hand at its centre, while the other is simply a red hand. The cathedral excepted, there is no depiction of the religious symbolism or clerical participation prevalent in comparable Free State funerals, though the military and social motifs made it no less symbolic for unionists.

If Free State governments felt they shouldered the responsibility for directing a Catholic nation, they were fortunate that more joyful occasions of religious expression than funerals presented propaganda opportunities: the 1929 centenary celebrations of Catholic Emancipation and the 1932 Eucharistic Congress were focal points of engagement with the church of the majority of the nation's citizens. Although not a state celebration, the emancipation ceremonies, organised by Archbishop of McRory of Armagh, came at a fortunate time for Cosgrave's administration, keen to establish diplomatic ties with the Vatican, without forewarning the Irish hierarchy. Formalising relations with the Vatican was valuable: an increased perception of legitimacy at home and abroad would ensue, while the exchange of diplomats would give the administration leverage with an independently-minded domestic hierarchy, and influence over the anti-government Irish College in Rome.[31] Strengthening diplomatic ties had great resonance for the nation. McGilligan cited papal succour for the fled northern Gaelic lords after the Nine Years War, and support during the 1641 Rebellion, as precedents for closer bonds. He pleaded that it was with:

> considerable emotion that I took the steps... of informing the Holy See that the establishment of official relations would be a source of very great satisfaction, not only to the Irish people here... but also to the millions of our race all over the world. It was the feeling of my Government that the Irish Free State should definitely give to the world this sign that the attachment to the things of the spirit which had been the outstanding characteristic of our people in the days of persecution continued to be the chief characteristic of the organised Irish State. It seemed... especially appropriate that this... should take place ... when the Centenary of Catholic Emancipation was being celebrated....
> I hope every citizen of this State... will regard this... detached from the passing quarrels and jealousies of our time and will welcome the Papal representative as

[31] Keogh, 1995: 36-7

> the envoy, not only of the religious head of the vast majority of the Irish race, but also of the oldest and most glorious monarchy in the world.[32]

Fianna Fáil, welcoming closer ties, begrudged arrangements that neglected the whole island. O'Kelly railed that it was humiliating that:

> diplomatic relations can only be re-opened in the name, not of the Ireland that the Popes of by-gone days knew, but of a partitioned country.
> We have the very centre of Catholicism, Armagh, the Primatial See of Ireland, cut out and excluded from any connection with the diplomatic relations.... It is a humiliating position that... we have to acknowledge that it is England and England's Minister to the Vatican that is entitled to speak in the name of the Primatial See of this Catholic country.... It is particularly odious, when sending a representative to the Vatican, that the representative will have to play second fiddle to the British Envoy there.[33]

O'Kelly touched on an issue as symptomatic of Fianna Fáil's Catholic orthodoxy as it was embarrassing to Cumann na nGaedheal, whose diplomatic subterfuge made it vulnerable to criticism:

> You cannot send a Minister to the Vatican without the arrangement... that the Vatican sends a Minister here.... I would like to know... whether those who are very intimately and seriously concerned in this matter... were consulted, for instance, the Primate of All Ireland or the Archbishop of Dublin.... Was any bishop or any priest consulted before the Minister made this arrangement. [sic] I would be glad if the Minister would be kind enough to inform us whether these people were consulted and, if so, whether they are satisfied with the arrangement. If they are, so far as the Church is concerned I have nothing further to say....
> We of the Fianna Fáil Party believe that we speak for the big body of Catholic opinion. I think I could say... we represent the big element of Catholicity.[34]

Once the debates and tortuous negotiations were over, Charles Bewley took his cue from Dublin colleagues when presenting his credentials:

> My Government are especially gratified that the re-opening of diplomatic relations... should coincide with... the Centenary of Catholic Emancipation, and realise that the deep significance... is fully present in the mind of your Holiness. For is there any nation in the world whose history can show greater devotion to... Christianity than ours, or... whose history has been so determined... by its attachment to the Catholic Faith and to the Holy See.[35]

Both parties promoted themselves as the party of choice of Catholic voters. A list of donations for decorating Dublin during the Emancipation celebrations recorded five pounds from Fianna Fáil, and two guineas from Cosgrave. Donations from the

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[32] DÉ, vol. 30, 5 June, 1929, cols 769-70

[33] DÉ, vol. 30, 5 June, 1929, cols 817-8

[34] DÉ, vol. 30, 5 June, 1929, cols 820-1

[35] *Irish Independent*, 28 June, 1929: 7

Departments of Education and Local Government totalled two guineas, while other politicians and the Governor-General gave £14 2*s.* 0*d.*.[36] Both parties had to propagandise the validity of their position regarding the Vatican. Fianna Fáil had the harder task: uninvolved in the state's contributions towards the celebrations, and arguing, no matter how craftily, against stronger Vatican ties contradicted its core values, although this was not unfavourable to the hierarchy.[37] Cumann na nGaedheal achieved more effective propaganda. It was not central to organising the week-long event, but state resources facilitated propaganda: the Garda Síochána provided policing and stewarding, the army and its bands were used for ceremonial purposes, the Post Office printed commemorative stamps, and 2RN broadcast events. Moreover, politicians were prominent participants in formal events. J.M. O'Sullivan, Minister for Education, gave an address in the Mansion House on St Patrick's Apostleship.[38] Canopy bearers for the Host (carried only by the island's four Archbishops) included O'Sullivan, Cosgrave, Michael Hayes, Ceann Comhairle, and Senator Westropp-Bennett. De Valera bore the canopy as Chancellor of the National University with academics - not politicians.[39] The involvement of politicians and state bodies suggested that the instruments of the state were at the service of the nation, which performed admirably during the celebrations:

> The country's congratulations are due... not least – to itself. To have done a fine thing finely is... a tonic which strengthens the nation's confidence and self-respect. When we remember that only seven years ago lawlessness and disorder ran loose... the object-lesson in discipline, dignity and decorum which Dublin afforded yesterday must inspire every one of us with grateful and hopeful joy.[40]

But the nation was not just Catholic. Protestants, the *Irish Times* observed regretfully, were often disparaged, and denied their place in the nation:

> The culture of Irish Protestants is the more, not the less, Irish because it takes all culture for its province, and so follows the splendid tradition of those Irish missionaries who restored Christianity to Europe. In the breadth and sincerity of their aspirations for Ireland they yield nothing to the most patriotic of their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. They glory in the Free State's proud position as a Dominion of the British Commonwealth. They pray for the time when Ireland will be a united country. They are thankful for every act of either Irish Government that promotes her peace, her welfare or her fame. Irish Protestants

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[36] *Ibid.*, 1 June, 1929: 7

[37] Keogh, 1986: 144

[38] *Irish Times*, 19 June, 1929: 8

[39] *Ibid.*, 15 June, 1929: 9

[40] *Ibid.*, 24 June, 1929: 8

> hope that the present celebrations will make not only a fulfilment, but... the beginning of a great reconciliation, the birth of a new fellowship.[41]

If, as it claimed, Protestants had 'watched the crowning rites of Centenary Week with no other feelings that those of sympathy and admiration'[42] then Cosgrave's administration had achieved an unexpected propaganda dividend.

Whether Cumann na nGaedheal or Fianna Fáil were the more ardent self-publicists mattered little to the Church. Conspicuously, the hierarchy's formal statement of appreciation failed to thank Cosgrave's administration for providing state resources, but expressed gratitude to Dublin's poor for piously bedecking their homes.[43] There were also statements that expressed a desire to maintain the Gaelic nation that had emerged before independence: Fr J. Clenaghan hailed the Gaelic League for recreating a 'sacred tongue' where every 'salutation was a blessing' and free from 'bad or godless literature'.[44] McRory made clear what was expected of the government: 'if there is a Parliament in Dublin today, it is due to the spirit of self-respect and patriotism and independence... nurtured and called forth by the Gaelic League.'[45] He admonished that 'in one part of the country Catholics were not yet enjoying their full fruits' [46] – a warning to politicians that their job of creating an independent Catholic nation remained unfulfilled. It also reminded Cosgrave's administration that only one power exercised authority on the entire island; in this the Hierarchy was at one with Fianna Fáil. It was, moreover, a display of power by a church that was entirely displeased with Cumann na nGaedheal machinations in Vatican diplomacy.

Promoting a Catholic nation continued with the celebration of the Eucharistic Congress three years later. Again, the state exercised little control over the organisation of the event. Responsibility for this lay with the Executive Council: in 1930, mindful of the precedent set by the Emancipation celebrations, it considered whether to issue a commemorative stamp, before concluding that that had been a national celebration,

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[41] *Ibid.*, 22 June, 1929: 6

[42] *Ibid.*, 24 June, 1929: 8

[43] *Irish Independent*, 26 June, 1929: 7

[44] *Irish Times*, 22 June, 1929: 5

[45] *Ibid.*.

[46] *Ibid.*.

rather than 'a religious event of international importance' as the Congress would be.[47] That was, perhaps, a tactical withdrawal from engaging in politics with the bishops, after unsuccessful attempts to trump them in 1929. With Congress approaching, the Hierarchy was keen to ensure that the government's role would be no more prominent than diplomacy required. F. O'Reilly wrote to Walshe in early 1932:

> His Grace was very pleased to have the full co-operation of the Government in giving a suitable reception to the Cardinal Legate; but he instructed me to inform you... that he regarded himself as fully responsible for all arrangements, and he desires to get details of your proposals for his approval, before any instructions are issued.[48]

The state's dilatory response fostered this circumstance. Certainly, it was not until a month after this Episcopal crozier-waving that the Executive Council appointed a sub-committee to oversee the state's involvement. By then, the Hierarchy had seized the initiative and the state faced the prospect of being marginalised at an event for which it was footing a significant part of the bill. Unhappy at the state's sloth, Walshe wrote to McGilligan in June informing him that following a meeting with O'Reilly and Fr Dan Moloney the organisers 'had not yet a proper appreciation of the part the State should take in the celebrations.' He suggested that the Papal Legate's arrival at Dun Laoghaire and cavalcade to the Pro-Cathedral be in the hands of the state, while at the cathedral: 'Ministers and Governor-General to be present in the Sanctuary or immediately outside it in front of the Bishops who occupy most of the benches.' Walshe planned that from Monday to Wednesday of Congress week the state be given due prominence:

> the position occupied by the State's representatives at the Congress Ceremonies should symbolize its true relation with the Church....
> A final decision... is immediately urgent, as... people connected with the Congress... would use any indecision now as a means of giving the State a minor place in the programme.[49]

Cumann na nGaedheal politicians were reluctant to put political wrangling before the Congress. Indeed, Cosgrave's decision to hold a general election earlier than necessary in 1932 allowed the nation to concentrate on the event free from political electioneering. It backfired spectacularly: the party lost the electioneering opportunity offered by Congress to present itself as a Catholic party with close Vatican ties: But economics and public

[47] NAI, D/T, S6005/4: 7 July 1930

[48] NAI, D/FA, 34/43c: 13 January, 1932

[49] NAI, D/FA, 34/43b: 16 June, 1932

perception also coloured the party's position. In 1931, Walshe wrote to Cosgrave at McGilligan's behest:

> Taking together with the general economic depression... and the religious atmosphere which should prevail during the Eucharistic Congress... it would be better to abstain from... ostentatious or elaborate entertainment. He therefore suggests that the only entertainment given by the Government should be an evening reception. This reception would take the place of the Government dinner on the evening after the Legate's arrival.[50]

The matter was raised at the Executive Council, and a response, quoting a handwritten note by Cosgrave on the memorandum, was communicated to the ministry: 'the Archbishop was desirous of having a garden party in the evening or afternoon of the opening day. If we confine ourselves to a single function, the choice or wishes of His Grace ought to get the most favourable hearing.'[51] Although Cosgrave was willing to defer to Church requirements, the option of demurring could also have been a face-saver for the straitened state coffers.

Nonetheless, state spending on the Congress was generous. Some expenses, like refurbishing the state-owned Dublin Castle, had long-term value; a specially caparisoned troop of cavalry was an extravagance. De Valera requested a 'report on the advisability and cost of providing Dress uniform for the Cavalry troops who are to act as the escort of the Legate.'[52] Defence estimated £1,850, and de Valera authorised expenditure up to £2,000, with uniforms to be chosen by himself and Frank Aiken.[53] The *Irish Times* described the uniforms: 'the Congress colours – bright blue tunics and breeches with gold facings, and gold plumes nodding from their helmets.'[54] With the cavalry's visual impact and a cruciform military fly-over, Lauri's arrival in Dublin was an impressive set-piece, captured by Pathé as 'The Papal Legate's great Welcome! Pomp & pageantry & remarkable demonstrations of enthusiasm.'[55] Lauri's army escort was to convey him to the Pro-Cathedral for a service, after which it was intended 'the mounted escort will accompany the Legate to his residence, and... to the State reception at the Royal Dublin Society. A Guard of Honour composed of... infantry and trumpeters will... pay

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[50] NAI, D/T, S6005/6: 19 September, 1931

[51] *Ibid.*: undated

[52] *Ibid.*, S6005/5: 6 April, 1932

[53] *Ibid.*: 18 April, 1932

[54] *Irish Times*, 25 June, 1932: 2

[55] Pathé, Film 679.03

compliments outside the building, and No. 1 Army Band will... play the Papal Hymn upon the entry of the Legate.'[56] The No. 1 Army Band was under Brase's stewardship, and although the mooted RDS reception was foregone for one in Dublin Castle, the cost of mobilising cavalry, air, infantry and band units was money well spent for Fianna Fáil. The army's propaganda use was extended to providing a guard of honour on the high altar during the celebratory mass in Phoenix Park.[57] The publicity created the impression of a force loyal to the nation, irrespective of parliamentary leader, and continued Cumann na nGaedheal policy of publicly using the army for nation-building propaganda.

Plans for using the RDS for the state reception were dropped once the Office of Public Works estimated preparatory costs of £4,000.[58] Dublin Castle, though needing £3,700 of remedial work and decoration, was a better investment.[59] It provided more salubrious surroundings than the largely agricultural settings of the Ballsbridge venue for the 3,715 guests, for whom catering costing £575 4*s.* 6*d.* was provided. Though it was a significant sum, the reception publicised the state's participation in the celebrations: invitations were 'confined to distinguished foreign guests... and to representatives of all groups and sections in Ireland.'[60] Ordinary Irish people might well have been exhorted to join in public celebrations and worship, but Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil had definite views on who among the people were the best exemplars of a Catholic nation. The *Irish Times* noted the 'Brilliant Scene in Dublin Castle at Night' and called it and the Blackrock College Garden Party 'two of the greatest social functions connected with Eucharistic Congress'.[61] It is evident that the state enjoyed the public acclaim of being party to the Congress celebrations. The promotion of a Catholic nation by Catholic politicians showed that the people and their representatives were as one, esteemed by the Holy See.

III

The Tailteann Games, a festival of athleticism, culture and industry, were an incarnation of a Celtic past. Intended to showcase the sporting and cultural talent of the state, they

[56] NAI, D/FA, 34/43B: 19 January, 1932

[57] Pathé, Film 679.19

[58] NAI, D/FA, 34/43B: 5 February, 1932

[59] *Ibid.*: 6 April, 1932

[60] *Irish Times*, 3 June, 1932: 7

[61] *Ibid.*, 22 June, 1932: 9

idealised the nation in a propagandised celebration of Celtic, Christian and international Irishness. The festival highlighted the mystical Celtic heritage governments used to signify the state's historical legitimacy and culture, and to woo tourists and investors. Reaching out to the Irish diaspora allowed the creation of an image of a nation that could once more be brought to greatness, however displaced its people. They were an opportunity to prove that the country was united in a new era of peace, brought about by stable, patriotic governments.

The idea for the revival originated in the ill-starred and divisive Irish Race Conference in Paris. When the state was founded they were championed by a zealous J.J. Walsh, who battled with government colleagues for state funding and support. Walsh envisaged the games as the property of the state: he considered that the government, having originated the idea, was responsible for funding and facilitating the games for the nation's benefit. J.V. Lawless, chair of the festival's finance committee supported this view when seeking state financial assistance: 'the Council considered it the duty of the State, through its Government, (who it was, that previously held the function and financed it) to take it up in its entirety on revival.'[62] Walsh insisted that accounts be publicly available: 'The public are our shareholders and are entitled to every information.'[63] His preference for national ownership and state funding, combined with professional administration and volunteer organisation, made the Aonach Tailteann, initially a voluntary body and, from 1932, an incorporated company, almost a prototype of a commercial semi-state body.

Hosting the games was an onerous task for a country with poor sporting infrastructure. There was no single venue capable of hosting the myriad sporting and cultural events, many staged simultaneously. Croke Park, home to the GAA and scene of the Bloody Sunday massacre during the War of Independence, was a sporting shrine of Irish nationalism, and an obvious choice for patriotic reasons. Though it was selected for hurling, football and track and field events, it appears that no serious assessment of its suitability was carried out. It did not, for instance, have adequate capacity for spectators. Nor, it would seem, was consideration made of other sporting grounds. Whether, for example, Dalymount Park or Landsdowne Road were up to the task is moot, though both were accustomed to hosting international matches in soccer and rugby respectively.

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[62] NAI, D/Finance, S200/0002/28: 19 December, 1927

[63] *Ibid.*: 23 April, 1929

Perhaps their association with un-Irish sports was incompatible with the festival, but that charge could equally have been levelled at the RDS, where cultural activities of the *aonaigh* were held. Walsh's strong GAA ties may provide a clue. An erstwhile Chairman of the Cork County Committee of the GAA, the opportunity to render service to the association in return for a venue may have been a decisive factor. That service extended to securing £10,000 in state grants for the construction of stands at the ground.[64] Such largesse concerned Finance:

> With reference to... a Grant-in-Aid in connection with the Tailteann Games... I am directed by the Minister of Finance to say that he will be glad to receive your formal assurance that if any profits are made... these will accrue to the Exchequer at any rate up to the limit of any grants made by the Exchequer.
> Apart from this... the erection of the new stands at Croke Park will be of permanent value to the owners of the ground as well as of special value at the time of the Tailteann Games. For this reason it is clear that the owners... should make some return to the government for this Grant-in-Aid... and I am to enquire whether any arrangements have been made with this end. In the opinion of the Minister this payment should... be regarded in the nature of a loan and some annual repayment should be claimed from the owners.... I am to enquire whether any arrangements have been made in this connection and if not whether arrangement should now be made.[65]

Walsh replied:

> Aonach Tailteann is solely governmental. All the monies secured for its promotion, as well as those accruing from its production are alike the property of the Government and subject to audit by your Department.
> In the case of the Croke Park Grant... the conditions are somewhat different as these grounds are owned by the Gaelic Athletic Association...and the Grant was applied for and made on one condition only that is that the Grounds should be given free during the period of the Games. Whether this should apply to more than one festival I cannot say but this is a matter which you could discuss with the Association. My own opinion is that it ought to.[66]

His casual explanation occasioned scrutiny from the Committee of Public Accounts.[67] Meanwhile, Mulcahy challenged the selection of Croke Park. He advised Cosgrave that the ground was unsuitable for athletics: inadequate foot and cycle tracks would rapidly deteriorate with bad weather, a fact, he alleged, Walsh and the festival's general council knew.[68] Croke Park appears to have been chosen without due regard to the public purse and sporting requirements. It is conceivable that in his desire to stage the games Walsh

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[64] *Ibid.*, Fin 1/293: undated

[65] *Ibid.*, Fin 1/741: 14 July, 1922

[66] *Ibid.*: 17 July, 1922

[67] *Ibid.*: 12 June, 1924

[68] NAI, D/T, S1592: 2 March, 1924

allowed nationalist emotions and GAA connections to govern his decisions, and, furthermore, understood the propaganda value of associating the cathedral of sporting nationalism with Celtic history and lore.

Even a high profile venue did not free Walsh from opposition within government. Finance, not without justification, advanced customarily cautious opposition. The organising committee tended to regard government funding as a right, yet failed to charge admission prices to all events. Losses in 1924 and 1932, coupled with unpaid state loans, brought the organisers' financial acumen into question. In 1928, the organisers received a state loan of £2,000, but having made a profit returned the government's cheque uncashed. In 1932, the organisers only drew down a government loan of £1,000 when it became clear that a loss of approximately £960 had been incurred. This made the organisers appear amateurish or conniving, and Finance felt that rather than developing the festival, state funds were being used as a guarantor against debt.

Walsh could exert pressure on colleagues at the cabinet table. In opposition, he found in de Valera an opponent whose motives and ideas were subject to vacillation and political posturing as he moved from being supportive to hostile to obstructive. Initially, promotional literature prepared for the first intended festival in 1922 had praised de Valera's commitment:

> It was natural and appropriate to the character of the Games that their revival should be effected by Ireland's first representative Parliament, Dáil Éireann, which warmly commended the proposal of its first President, Eamonn [sic] De Valera, and voted the necessary funds to meet the preliminary expenses.

But in 1924, with the first *aonach* approaching, de Valera languished in prison. Fearing a Sinn Féin boycott would reduce the number of volunteers for organising events, and precipitate calamitous propaganda, Walsh pleaded with Cosgrave for an amnesty. If he thought he could mollify republicans, he was wrong: republican sentiment was not so easily bought. The *Irish Times* reported a strident Mary MacSwiney:

> Evidently, she said, the Free State Government thought that by letting out Mr. de Valera and most of the prisoners at the last moment they were going to make the so-called Tailteann Games a success. The chief reason why the Games could not be a success was that Aonach Tailteann belonged to a free and united Ireland. Today Ireland was neither united nor free.[69]

[69] *Irish Independent*, 21 July, 1924: 4

On his release, de Valera issued a pamphlet supporting a boycott, explaining in mitigation that the idea for the games had been taken by the Republican government. The *Irish Times* branded his stance 'very pitiful' and asked: 'What national purpose could de Valera have served by wrecking the Games? He has only succeeded in cutting an undignified figure.'[70] Out of government until 1932, de Valera was unable to mount anything other than symbolic opposition. But, on assuming power, anxious to make the most of the mass gathering, and with his public hostility towards the 1924 games either fully dissipated or at least held in abeyance for political benefit, it was de Valera who threw in the ball for a match between Irish hurlers and Scottish shinty-players.[71] Thereafter, his administration's response to requests by the Aonach Tailteann for meetings and funding met with prevarication and obfuscation, until, eventually, an interdepartmental committee dealt a political *coup de grâce*. The committee suggested postponing the festival until 1941, and, although it recommended a higher grant than the Aonach Tailteann sought, it was on the precondition of a government directorship, which the committee knew was unacceptable to the organisers.[72]

Why was de Valera opposed to the festival? Was it that, having been party to the initial suggestion he viewed his subsequent marginalisation and the festival's, admittedly limited, success through a state of permanent pique? Certainly, he had an antipathy towards the games' organisers and Irish-American backers. Political differences of opinion notwithstanding, the organisers' financial incompetence may have given him reason to regard the event disdainfully. The certainty that Free State athletes would be defeated by overseas athletes of Irish descent, or, worse, without any Irish blood would have been an embarrassment. Whatever his motive, it is likely that it would have presented no great difficulty had he decided to take control and transform the games into a reflection of his vision of the nation.

In contrast, Cosgrave's presidential message to the 1924 Games emphasised the importance to the nation of its people:

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[70] *Irish Times*, 9 August, 1924: 1

[71] *Ibid.*, 30 June 1932: 7

[72] NAI, D/T, S8369: undated

> Thomas Davis taught the people of Ireland that Nationality meant much more than affairs of state.... To his mind a nation was a people working out the whole scheme of civilisation and developing it in its own way, on its own lines, freely and not under external constraint, and consequently maintaining and fostering all that is good in its own traditions.

He asserted that men such as Davis, Croke and their type 'knew the young people must have a share in the national life if it was to be national life.' He presented the games as the continuation of a cycle that included the Land League, the Irish Ireland movement, the GAA and the Gaelic League, stating that they 'were real culture movements, the beginnings of an all-round national regeneration.'[73] The *Irish Independent* hoped that the games would build the Irish nation's reputation:

> We are reputed to be at once a sporting and a hospitable people. We have now the opportunity of proving our claim to both qualities, and it is to be hoped that we shall do so. For years the outside world has heard little of Ireland except reports of armed conflict and tales of bitter political dissension. It is time we ceased to have our daily lives and our social intercourse darkened by the shadows of these dissensions. The gun and the bomb have, we hope, definitely passed out of our lives; let us in the weeks that are coming prove we have more regard for the sports field than for the political platform.[74]

The newspaper amplified this wish: 'Games like those now revived in honour of Queen Tailte help our people to realise the unity of the Irish race, to... realise that the political issues now dividing Irishmen are minor things not worthy of the shedding of tears, much less of blood.'[75] Oliver St John Gogarty encapsulated the mix of Celtic and Christian endeavour the Games represented:

> To punish the body while it can stand the strain is your stalwart austerity and your virtue. You cannot hope to make it immortal, but, remembering that the highest form of energy is Beauty, you can delight the eye and win gratitude for making Grace manifest through your bodies, and for giving that benevolent Spirit a chance to bless our country and to reign. Great athletes are the best proof of a nation's well-being and good health.[76]

At a dinner for overseas athletes, Walsh, never slow to seize moderate achievement as success, iterated the importance of sporting legacy to the establishment of the nation: 'I hope that we, the Irish people, on our part have conducted ourselves in a manner befitting a sporting nation; that we have shown an example of fair treatment and

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[73] *Ibid.*, S1592: undated. The message appeared in a souvenir programme for the 1924 games.

[74] *Irish Independent*, 31 July, 1924: 6

[75] *Ibid.*, 25 August, 1924: 4

[76] *Irish Times*, 1 August, 1924: 6

impartiality as between man and man, regardless of nationality and geographic boundary.'[77]

In a sign of the festival's importance to the nation, the government stated its intention to have the GPO restored in time for the 1928 games, thereby linking the festival and government to the most potent of nationalist symbols.[78] Such propaganda could unite the nation in commemoration of the 1916 rising, when the leaders of both sides during the civil war were united, and conveniently overlook subsequent internecine strife. By 1932, the link was even more firmly established with the appropriation of the Easter Rising for an exhibition held coincidental with the festival: 'Among the exhibits shown are a revolver used by the same man in '67 and 1916, the day-to-day diary of Commandant Joseph Plunkett, written in the G.P.O., letters of P.H. Pearse, and a uniform used by the Citizen Army.'[79]

For the 1928 festival, the *Irish Independent* praised the organisers' tenacity in bringing together the Irish nation from far-flung parts: 'to preserve the racial solidarity of which Aonach Tailteann was once a living proof they had to make their rallying cry heard in the distant corners of the earth to which the children of the Gael have since been scattered.'[80] The sentiment grandiloquently suggested that the organisers had identified a distinct Irish identity that transcended any differences that could exist within the Irish nation. Those sentiments were hardly plucked from thin air, given Walsh's statement that 'the revival of our ancient games was proof of the tenacity with which our race had clung to the ideal of a distinctive place in the family of ancient peoples.'[81] Welcoming visiting athletes as 'na daoine d'ár gcine féin a tháining chugainn thar farraige chun bheith pairteach san Aonach so' Walsh emphasised the importance of Irish identity to the festival, which he hoped would bring 'added solidarity and glory to our Irish civilisation' and reaffirm 'our distinctive culture among the nations of the world.'[82] Impressions of that culture were strengthened with the festival performance of a pageant, 'The Coming of Fionn', which

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[77] *Irish Independent*, 14 August, 1924: 8

[78] *Ibid.*, 12 July, 1928: 10

[79] *Irish Times*, 22 June, 1922: 15

[80] *Irish Independent*, 27 August, 1928: 6

[81] *Ibid.*, 13 August, 1928: 8

[82] *Ibid.*, 13 August, 1928: 8. His words translate as 'people of our own race who came to us from overseas to share in this gathering.' (Author's translation)

interweaved hurling and the story of the founding of the Fianna by the legendary warrior.[83]

Pageantry was to assume great symbolic importance to the games. The connection to mythology was used to signify the nation's Celtic origins in 1932:

> A fanfare of trumpets will announce... the great procession.... headed by two youths in ancient native costume leading two Irish wolf-hounds. The Tailteann standard-bearer will follow. Then... the Pageant of Queen Tailte and her Court, also of Lugh... founder of the Games.... attended by huntsmen, warriors, bards, Brehons and druids.[84]

Lest the evocation of the pagan past prove too dramatic for spectators, and temporarily upset the nation's Catholic identity, the ceremony was officially opened by Cardinal McRory, neatly tying together two dominant themes in Irish nationality. McRory's imprimatur, which observed that the last of the ancient games was held in the year of the Norman invasion, 1169, praised the 'noble... patriotic thing that the Organising Committee are doing... in reviving the games of our forefathers. They will quicken our national pride... and they bring together the scattered millions of the Gaels.'[85]

By 1932, competitors were required to have Irish citizenship or ancestry. That had not previously been mandatory,[86] and had proven a source of discontent.[87] However, the failure of the 1932 festival to ignite public interest and break even led organisers to reconsider entries from athletes of non-Irish descent. Ned Broy agreed, but suggested that some events could remain confined to Irish nationals or their descendants. Walsh suggested that athletics should be organised 'on an inter-parish basis in order to encourage local talent' – an idea that certainly made the games more relevant to the nation, and could have ameliorated their apparent Dublin-centric focus.[88]

The move to genuinely Irish heritage, while limiting the competitive appeal of the games, was in line with the organisers' original intent, and was congruent with their attempts to build support for the Irish nation abroad. A 1923 report from the Aonach

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[83] *Irish Times*, 18 August, 1928: 13

[84] *Ibid.*, 24 June, 1932: 4

[85] *Ibid.*, 30 June, 1932: 7

[86] *Ibid.*: 6

[87] *Irish Independent*, 21 August, 1928: 10

[88] NAI, D/T, S200/0003/32: 8 December, 1932

Commissioner in the USA, F. O'Hanlon, noted that the GAA, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Knights of Columbanus were willing to help in any way, as were individual county associations. The Friends of Irish Freedom, the Irish Republic Party and the Drama Guild of the Oranges (300 leading Irishmen outside New York) were supportive, though less enthusiastically. More importantly press support was forthcoming:

> The Press seems to be anxious to assist.... The Editor of the Gaelic American, Mr John Devoy, the Editor of the Irish World, Mr Lawler, and the Sporting Editor of the Irish Advocate, Mr O'Shea, all assured me personally of their desire to co-operate.... I got in touch with New York's leading sporting writers and cartoonists... I feel fully assured that whenever publicity is required it will be forthcoming in the required quantity and... quality. I am enclosing some few cuttings to show that we have not been neglected in the way of publicity – but my judgment has, so far, been absolutely against any 'publicity drive'. My intention was... to set up... a really efficient machine to deal with the work we have on hand. That we are succeeding is evident from the attention the Press is now beginning to pay us. The Publicity Drive will come in good time.[89]

He indicated that Murray Hulbert, acting Mayor of New York, and President of the Board of Aldermen of New York, again agreed to act as Chairman of the Aonach in the USA, while E.L. Doheny, President of Mexican Petroleum Co., agreed to be Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee. His positive findings were later confirmed by David Burke, also Commissioner to North America: 'David Burke... states that both in Canada and the United States he found an encouraging interest in, and sympathy with, the Irish festival. In many of the principal cities influential committees have been set up to develop interest and secure competitors.'[90]

The attendance of American athletes suggested that they took the games seriously, although their greatest participation came in the years the games coincided with the Olympics being held in Europe. A review of newspaper articles for the three *aonaigh* reveals that the greater portion of foreign competitors were American, English, Scottish, Canadian and Australian. There were, however, occasional oddities, including the arrival of a Basque handball team in 1932, whose visit was reported as an opportunity to emulate the successful quest for independence of the Free State.[91]

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[89] *Ibid.*, S1592: 8 November, 1923

[90] *Irish Times*, 2 July, 1924: 4

[91] *Ibid.*, 24 June, 1932: 4

Aside from sport, arts and culture were important in the festival. W.B. Yeats, Lennox Robinson and George Russell formed the 1924 adjudication panel for literary endeavour by writers resident in Ireland and, with George Bernard Shaw, Andrew Jameson, Alice Stopford Green, Lewis Purser and St John Gogarty, subscribed money towards prizes. Gogarty, fresh from his success at the Paris Olympics where his 'Ode on the Tailteann Games' took first place in the literary section,[92] won a prize for verse, while James Stephens received the fiction prize. Though Stephen McKenna's translation of Plotinus won the non-fiction prize the committee offered an unconvincing apologia for not selecting a more Irish work:

> Dr. George O'Brien's 'Economic Histories of Ireland in 17th and 18th Centuries' and Dr. MacNeill's book on 'Ancient Irish History' anteceded in date of publication the period that concerns us, and we felt that we had to rule out such important books as Prof. Edmund Curtis's 'History of Medieval Ireland,' Mr. Stephen Gwynn's 'History of Ireland,' Dr. Gwynn's last volume of the Dennsenchus, and Miss Eleanor Knott's first volume of the Poems of Tadhg Dall O'Huiginn.[93]

The 1932 awards included two winners with well-established republican credentials. Francis Carty won second place in fiction for his novel *The Irish Volunteer*, while, incongruously, in the same category Frank Gallagher won a special award for his hunger-strike memoir, *Days of Fear*. Under his *nom de plûme*, David Hogan, Gallagher also won first place for his short story 'The Challenge of the Sentry'.[94]

Music also figured, and not just traditional forms. John McCormack performed and adjudicated at the inaugural festival, for which the *Irish Independent* reported that there would be 22 events for a bewildering array of bands, choirs, and soloists in military, civilian, traditional and other categories.[95] The article also adverted to the performance of Irish operas: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford's 'Shamus O'Brien', Harold White's 'Shaun the Post' and Molyneux Palmer's 'Sruth na Maoile'. While opera contrasts with the perception of folk-based, peasant music being the bedrock of a cultural musical tradition, the nation nonetheless encompassed the esoteric and it gave the Irish nation a veneer of high culture. Klein identifies at least nine other Celtic operas, by Irish or Irish-based composers between 1903 and 1930, with one, 'The Tinker and the Fairy', a collaboration

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[92] *Ibid.*, 2 July, 1924: 5

[93] *Irish Independent*, 11 August, 1924: 4

[94] *Irish Times*, 1 July 1932: 8

[95] *Irish Independent*, 15 July, 1924: 7

between Dublin-based Italian composer Michele Esposito and Douglas Hyde as librettist.[96]

The choice of Sir John Lavery as adjudicator gave a sense of gravitas to the inaugural Tailteann art competition. Cronin concludes that no national style of art emerged during the Free State period,[97] and it may be that the propaganda value of the exhibition lay in exhibiting 1,597 artefacts, including craft items, rather than defining a particular national style. That said, the award of the supreme prize, the Tailteann Trophy, to Seán Keating, and other awards to Margaret Clarke and Power O'Malley, and out-of-competition exhibitions by Lavery himself, Paul Henry, Charles Lamb, Dermod O'Brien and Mainie Jellet ensured that the viewing public was left in no doubt as to the talents of the cream of Irish art. Much the same group of artists dominated the 1928 exhibition, with Clarke and Keating again winning prizes.[98]

For all the positive feeling demonstrated by politicians, the Church and the press, the Aonach Tailteann ultimately failed to capture the imagination of the populace in sufficient numbers to secure its continuation. This may have been as a result of needing to attract top class athletes from outside the state to boost the games. The standard of domestic sports, contemporary newspaper reports suggest, was below international competition. Carefully constructed propaganda of a sporting nation did not bear on-field scrutiny. Some high profile Irish competitors, notably Pat O'Callaghan, Olympic hammer gold medallist, raised the profile of Irish athletes, but the prospect of being roundly beaten by American and British athletes must have struck at Fianna Fáil's chauvinistic sensibilities. There was, too, the nature of the sports themselves, which were anything but purely Celtic: golf, billiards, motor car racing and even, in 1924, a rodeo exhibition in Croke Park.[99] The organisers took an eclectic view of permitted sports that was nonetheless cognizant of nationalist sensibilities: 'The Council governing the Tailteann Games is formed of representatives of all national games, and those that do not conflict with such'.[100] That may explain why sports with substantial followings,

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[96] Klein, 2004/2005: 41-50

[97] Cronin, 2005: 70

[98] *Irish Times*, 6 August, 1928: 4

[99] *Ibid.*, 9 July, 1924: 7

[100] NAI, D/Fin, S200/0002/28: 19 December, 1927

chiefly cricket, rugby and association football, were ignored. Not only did they vie for support and resources, they were a relic of British rule, unfairly held to be the preserve of southern unionists or the Anglo-Irish. Soccer's soubriquet, the garrison game, propagandised its un-Irish tendencies.

IV

For all that their policies and political outlooks differed, the similarities between the nation-building propaganda of Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil were remarkably similar. Both took as their central theme the creation of a Catholic nation, imbued with a strong sense of Celtic tradition and mythology. Cumann na nGaedheal laid the foundations for the recreation of a national, solidarity-inducing identity in the aftermath of the civil war. For the party, promoting the nation was inextricably linked to building a virtuous, religious and sporting society; from such attributes an industrious, law-abiding, democratic citizenry would evolve and its merits would be recognised at home and abroad. When Fianna Fáil assumed power in 1932, much of that preparatory work in nation-building had been achieved and de Valera's party was able to concentrate on propaganda that ostensibly promoted the nation, but which promulgated a vision of a nation that was infused with Fianna Fail doctrine and exemplars.

The Catholic Church benefitted from this propaganda, too. Its pre-eminent position as a body directing the spiritual needs of the people and state policy was guaranteed by political efforts creating a Catholic nation. Murray contends that the Eucharistic Congress was one of de Valera's most enduring triumphs, as he led his once-estranged party back into the receiving embrace of Catholic orthodoxy.[101] This also confirmed a situation whereby the body politic, in its attempts to propagandise a Catholic nation made itself beholden to the Church, at the expense of other elements of the Irish nation. Mullarkey, assessing the papal encyclical 'Quadragesimo Anno', observes that Irish Catholics clung to their faith as a means of distinguishing themselves from Britain, even though that act left Protestants, socialists and liberals adrift in the definition of the nation. The encyclical, combined with legislation and policy, fostered social conservatism, with the ideal of citizenship being Catholic and Gaelic.[102] Propaganda to

[101] Murray, 2000: 262

[102] Mullarkey, 1999: 99

create an Irish nation succeeded in promoting a Catholic, Celtic and Gaelic nation. In looking to the past for inspiration, and creating Christ-like figures of martyrdom, politicians of the Free State perpetuated a mythology to define the nation. While it did much to achieve a peaceful country, it nonetheless created a cultural homeostasis that was both inflexible and conservative.

Chapter 5

Securing the State through Propaganda

I

Limited independence won, proving that the new regime had the vision and administrative nous to ensure the success of the state became essential. It was also basic governance, and propaganda demands necessitated that examples of good governance be used to stabilise the state. Yet: what to propagandise from the myriad elements of statecraft? The humdrum intricacies of administrative procedures, no matter how essential, failed to excite the press to paeans of praise. Indeed, the preference of civil servants to commit themselves to the tenebrous margins of unseen power ensured that the service was never exploitable for propaganda purposes. This was unfortunate, as Britain had only recently modernised the service. Local government had been modernised two decades previously, though it fell into disrepair during the revolutionary period. Neglect and the more pressing matter of building a new country ensured that local government was to remain largely dysfunctional, and the diminished role of county hall could not lend itself to state-building propaganda.

Images and artefacts had a role to play in building the state. The development of new coinage and the adoption of a national anthem and flag provided citizens with commercial and social embodiments of the state. How effective this was in securing the identity of the state will be examined. First, however, the state itself had to be secured. The descent into internecine conflict, and the enduring animosity it engendered, forced Cumann na nGaedheal to create machinery of state that was coercive, yet, paradoxically, protective of citizens. A volunteer army existed, yet it was an amateurish ragbag: some troops had military service, many - Trucileers especially - did not. It was also a split force with loyalties cleaved into pro- and anti-Treaty factions. Three police forces existed: the maligned RIC and Dublin Metropolitan Police, and, where the writ of crown law had yielded to insurrectionists, the Irish Republican Police. This chapter assesses efforts to secure the state. It will be shown that propaganda for state security was crucial in building a functioning democracy and creating a peaceful state, cast in the image of the nation that was carefully and simultaneously constructed. An exploration of propaganda

for the defence forces and An Garda Síochána indicates the importance that successive governments attached to security and defence.

II

It made perfect sense to promote the army as an instrument of the state, bound to secure its peace and deserving of unquestioning public support. Troops were idealised as courageous, loyal and Christian exemplars of the new state. But this view necessitated ignoring some painful realities. Particularly during the Civil War, propaganda for the army did not always have truthfulness at its core, and suppression of damaging information was frequent. Increasing to over 50,000 troops during the conflict, the army, or at least a sizeable number of individuals, was a source of embarrassment to the government. Its prosecution of the war led to accusations of brutality, perhaps most notoriously at Ballyseedy on the outskirts of Tralee where a number of Irregular prisoners were brutally slain. Its treatment of the civilian populace, too, frequently left much to be desired: 'The liberation, such as it was, from the tyrannies of the British forces and the IRA was short-lived as the newly-styled treatyite National Army soon acquired for itself an equally lamentable reputation for commandeering what it required and often a good deal more besides.'[1] Criminality and lawlessness, both petty and serious, dogged the army through the war and beyond. Robberies, assaults and murders, including that of two Jews in separate incidents in Dublin, were attributed to the army. A perusal of newspapers reveals a litany of court proceedings against serving or former troops, whose record of service, despite being ended, provided titillating content to enliven otherwise dull court reports. Thus, betting fraud,[2] possession of narcotics[3] and the extra-judicial beating given by serving troops to one of their own caught molesting a young girl[4] were merely examples of a general lack of discipline.

Ill-discipline included a threat to the army's moral fibre: venereal disease. Between 759 and 915 people died of sexually transmitted diseases in a four year period from 1918[5],

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[1] Regan, 1999: 102

[2] *Irish Times*, 29 July, 1927: 5

[3] *Ibid.*, 25 June, 1924: 8

[4] *Ibid.*, 4 June, 1927: 7

[5] Report of the Interdepartmental Committee of Inquiry regarding Venereal Disease, 1926: 15, 47-49.

and the army was not immune to the national pandemic. However, it virtually eradicated venereal disease within a few years by concentrating on preventative and curative measures. The establishment of the Army Medical Service in April, 1922[6] permitted the deployment of 800 medical personnel for weekly troop inspections.[7] The army toyed with establishing barrack disinfection posts, where troops might properly clean themselves after intercourse, but dismissed the idea fearing it would put 'wrong ideas into the men's heads, and might even tend to encourage promiscuous sexual intercourse.'[8] Instead prophylactic treatment centres were established in Dublin, lowering the number of infected cases from 382 in 1924, to 176 by October 1925.[9] Equally practical was the idea of instructing medical officers, company commanders or chaplains to lecture troops on the moral and physical dangers of promiscuity.[10] Literature on the dangers was circulated or posted within barracks. In the Curragh, a cinema was used in conjunction with lectures on the 'diseases more or less common in every army'.[11] Infected soldiers were treated sympathetically: the nature of their hospitalisation remained unknown to their units, and they were officially recorded as having unspecified illnesses requiring specialist attention.[12] This worked in two ways for the army: while it went some way towards rehabilitating troops, it also prevented unwanted publicity. Thus, army propaganda was internalised and focussed on ensuring that information was deliberately kept out of the public domain, particularly during the civil war.

The propaganda strategy formulated by Sean Lester was analytical and strategic, informed by studying the Bolshevik and Spartacus revolutions in Russia and Germany respectively. He deduced that revolutions against legitimate states failed when harshly suppressed, but governments permitting festering disaffection faced overthrow. He noted that after overthrowing Nicholas II, Russian revolutionaries had everything needed for control – popular support, and control of the treasury, army and press. But, having allowed dissent to foment, the minority Bolsheviks 'started a great propaganda push' and had four buttresses on gaining power: disciplined armed forces, secret service, a nationwide

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[6] Duggan, 1991: 109

[7] Report, Venereal Disease: 20

[8] *Ibid.*.

[9] *Ibid.*: 24

[10] *Ibid.*: 21

[11] *An t-Óglach*, 24 March, 1923: 18

[12] Report, Venereal Disease: 21

political organisation and a monopoly on producing propaganda. Indeed: 'After the Army, most time and money was devoted to propaganda. The best brains amongst the Soviet ranks were employed on this task. All propaganda and information, except Soviet propaganda and information, was throttled.' Consequently, a complex publicity organisation emerged: 'They pressed into the propaganda service not merely the Press, journals, posters and the cinema, but... propaganda trains... painted with symbolical figures and legends. At suitable places these trains stopped to enable the expert propagandists... explain the principles of Communism.' Lester decided that these bulwarks made the Bolsheviks invincible, and that the Spartacus revolution was won using shrewd military tactics and propaganda:

> an intense, continuous and well-sustained flood of propaganda was poured prodigally all over the country... from posters, newspapers, leaflets to the cinema. All the hoardings... the Government could command were covered with Government propaganda....
> By means of its publicity agency the Government worked up alleged atrocities on the part of the Spartacus (These were subsequently discovered to be either much exaggerated or wholly untrue) [13]

Lester suffered no perturbation at this falsity, or concealing sources, and not all Free State propaganda was directly attributable to the army. He skilfully arranged production of a number of pamphlets and publications against the Irregulars. Intended for Catholic bishops, the pamphlet 'A New Position' quoted Liam Deasy after his surrender when he accepted the war was lost and its continuation was 'a vendetta.'[14] The Dublin Press Agency offered a subscription service to newspapers: the 'Dublin Doings', subtitled 'Unedited views of a Metropolitan Journalist', was anti-Irregular propaganda that, amongst other broadsides, accused Mary MacSwiney with her 'school ma'am' attitude being bent on keeping de Valera at war.[15]

Nonetheless Lester was keen to obtain factual information for propaganda. Between May and August 1923 he received regular military intelligence reports, which formed the basis for propaganda.[16] This including denigrating republicans as a duplicitous, illegitimate, war-mongering rabble, in contrast to the honourable and steadfast Free State

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[13] UCDA, Lester, P203/9: undated

[14] MAI, A7557: 26 February, 1923

[15] *Ibid.*: 21 February, 1923

[16] UCDA, Lester, P203/19: 26 May - 11 August, 1923

trooper. Collins suggested that documents captured with Sean T. O'Kelly would discommode republicans:

> Good use may be made of these papers if they are written up in the proper way.... Poblacht na h-Eireann accused prominent Army men of belonging to the I.R.B.; they lauded De Valera and Boland for not having anything to do with Secret Societies. Now we see De Valera... as being not only a Secret Society man but the maker of a Secret Society.[17]

Collins' leak provoked republican rebuttals. A captured document from republican propagandist Aodh de Blacam outlined how republicans intended to create a schism between the state and Clan na Gael. The Publicity Department suggested for publicity purposes that the letters should include a memorandum 'indicating the true name of de Blacam. 'Hugh Blake'... and his place of birth 'London', + indicating that during the war with England he... gave no assistance either to the Army or to Publicity... neither his pen nor his sword was at the service of his Country – except so far as it was safe to serve.'[18] Official propaganda proclaimed de Valera as the greatest prophet for making real his prophecies of civil war. It accused Irregular leaders of hypocrisy in seeking prisoner of war status, and recognising the King in court, when recognising only the Republic outside it. Were Erskine Childers' trial not so serious it might:

> be described as comical. For we had Mr Childers recognising the King when it seemed necessary whilst... he proclaimed that the only authority he recognised was the 'Government of the Republic'. Again, we find it solemnly put forward that there was not war, and yet that Mr Childers had been taken as a prisoner of war![19]

Even maternal chastisement was used. Army Intelligence sent Lester a letter from a mother to her son, Joseph Connolly, imprisoned in Newbridge Barracks: 'How can you associated day by day with the murderers of General Collins the best and bravest Ireland ever had do try and wash your hands of the rotten thing. Even now I can't realise you ever meant to be with the rotten gang.'[20] FitzGerald's papers contain prisoners' letters expressing satisfaction with conditions of incarceration,[21] while a Publicity Department handbill extolled the diet, exercise, recreation and sanitation at Kilmainham.[22]

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[17] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/337. In particular Collins singled out a letter addressed to O'Kelly from Harry Boland regarding a Clan na Gael convention in New York.

[18] *Ibid.*, P80/736: 18 August, 1922. The authorship of the comment is unclear as the signature is indistinct. The archive suggests 'Cummins', but Cremins (F.T. Cremins) is more plausible.

[19] UCDA, Lester, P203/8, 'The Prophet': undated. The case cited was a Habeas Corpus hearing, The King (Erskine Childers) v The O.C. Portobello.

[20] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/340: 22 September, 1922

[21] *Ibid.*, P80/326: the series of letters runs from 13 October - 24 November, 1922.

[22] *Ibid.*, P80/319: undated

Using Irregulars' own words against them proved effective, but Lester found the army insufficiently alert to this, and wrote to Mulcahy in 1923:

> on the question for propaganda you agreed that captured documents formed one of our chief sources of material.
> Reasons for this include the strong appeal to Press and public of documents supposed to be secret, ensuring prominent and widespread publicity....

However:

> Intelligence Staff in perusing documents are doing so from their own point of view. Not... concerned with propaganda they probably pass... material that could be of great assistance to the Publicity Department....
> I would suggest... documents or copies of them could be inspected by a member of the Publicity Staff or that if copies are made one of each should be sent to us.[23]

Mulcahy instructed Lester to make suitable arrangements.[24]

Propaganda required press compliance, but military censorship was chaotic. An *Irish Independent* report that censorship had ended brought about an investigation by the Adjutant General's staff that blamed Lester for erroneously informing the newspaper of the regime's relaxation.[25] How censorship should be enforced remained a mystery to the army as late as October 1923. Captain Harry B. Murray contacted Mulcahy on behalf of the Director of Intelligence with a request indicating how haphazardly the system functioned: in several commands, Intelligence Officers were asking newspaper owners to submit matter to them before publication. The Director of Intelligence knew this was incorrect, but before issuing orders 'he would be glad if you would inform him exactly how the matter of Press Censorship in Ireland stands at the moment.'[26]

The Publicity Department monitored newspapers and forbade descriptions of republicans as armed men or forces, insisted 'Irregulars' be used, and took issue when newspapers deviated from official guidelines. On Collins' death, it criticised a *Sunday Independent* article for not condemning Collins' death:

> that article contained also... 'the children of Ireland love their mother with an unselfish intensity which is the envy of prouder Nations. It is a distress to any

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[23] MAI, A7557: 3 March, 1923

[24] *Ibid.*: 25 March, 1923

[25] *Ibid.*, A6812: 23 September, 1922

[26] *Ibid.*: undated, c. September-October, 1923

> mother that contention should break out among her sons, even if it be caused by love of her, by regard for her welfare and her dignity.'
> Such twaddle... Irregulars would like.... There is no suggestion that the Irregulars are doing all they can to... destroy the motherland and to murder the best sons of the Irish National [Army], and soft talk... is calculated to leave the reader to believe that the Irregulars are only harmless playboys.[27]

To counter this harmless playboy image, propaganda damned Irregulars' destruction of communications systems, vandalism by prisoners, and assassinations: 'the troubles of the day are but the leavings of slaves who are too weak to recognise that their chains have been removed'.[28] A leaflet outlined how the Irregular campaign had moved from fighting the army to damaging civilian property, and scorned sensationalist English newspapers:

> Just as one reading the 'Sunday' newspapers of England might be misled into the belief that there was scarcely a home in that proud country where the decencies of domestic life were observed, so the day by day record of the Irregular 'successes' over unarmed civilians and ungarrisoned homesteads might lead to the delusion that Ireland was in a state of complete anarchy.[29]

Two propaganda pieces outlined the war's cost. The first, a handbill, speculated how the £20,000,000 cost might have been better expended on housing and the 'diseased and rickety children of the poor'.[30] The second estimated a £50,000,000 cost and showed how £10,000,000 could have been spent for the state's immediate betterment, with £40,000,000 spread over five years.[31] Army press releases also emphasised the futility of Irregular tactics. The *Irish Times* quoted a communiqué from O'Duffy outlining successes in Galway: 'Occasionally such heroic things as cutting a telegraph wire or lifting a rail is resorted to, but the rout of the irregulars has been very complete.' He noted in Tipperary: 'The irregulars' activity is confined to bridge and railway destruction. While this does not... hamper the national troops, it tends to exasperate the civilian populace further... against the irregulars.'[32]

Difficulties in spreading good news about the army among the populace meant frustration, and a longing for propaganda as practiced elsewhere. But the army had its own journal, unusually on sale to the public, and, under Piarais Béaslaí's direction, efforts

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[27] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/295: undated

[28] Lester Mss, UCDA, P203/7, 'Destruction and Assassination': undated

[29] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/316: undated

[30] *Ibid.*, P80/318: undated

[31] *Ibid.*, P80/320: undated. Incongruously, the figure included £3,000,000 for a national parliament.

[32] *Irish Times*, 5 August, 1922: 1

had been made to increase its appeal from the latter stages of the civil war when he recommended employing 'two capable men of journalistic experience' or free-lancers to write about various Army activities or 'visit various posts... or... disturbed districts to... emphasise the wonderful work being done by the Army and the steady improvement.' If the work were sufficiently good he could 'take steps to get the daily Press to quote it freely.'[33] J.A. Power, formerly of the *Irish Times* and *The Freeman's Journal* was temporarily appointed in a civilian capacity to reorganise the journal. His duties, outlined in his letter of appointment, included 'general publicity work... under the heads of Publicity (Press, Photographic, Kinema); Army Advertising, Irish and English Press Surveys.'[34]

An t-Óglach demonstrated the army's role in creating the state. In November, 1922, it swiftly claimed Collins' legacy, and underlined its role in state-building:

> The National Army's duty is... to leave the road clear for the great work of national reconstruction which Ireland desires. Every soldier in his brave and arduous task should be inspired by a vision of the new Ireland which we seek to build up – that Gaelic state which will express the highest ideals of our race in concrete form.[35]

It was 'simply an instrument to enforce and protect the will of the people. The Army is of the people and for the people.'[36] Emotional and patriotic reasons for enlisting were also propagandised:

> When public opinion comes to measure... a man's life by his service to the State and to his fellows, rather than by the fortune he has amassed for selfish aims, then public opinion is worthy to control a great Nation....
> Our Nation to-day feels the stirrings of such an opinion, its best citizens are seeking means to give it unselfish individual service. If that spirit grows... we may accept a standard of service that will assure... a glorious future.[37]

Propaganda by neutral journalists that described the army in such positive tones was particularly desirable. As the war ground to a close, the *Manchester Guardian's* J.T. Gwynn, brother of Stephen, requested an interview with Mulcahy through Kevin O'Shiel, Assistant Legal Adviser to the state. O'Shiel informed Mulcahy: 'He says from what he has seen of the National Army... and from things he has been told... that certain British and Irish criticisms of the Army have not been at all fair. He is anxious... to give a true

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[33] MAI, *An t-Óglach* 07: 23 January, 1923

[34] *Ibid.*: 2 February, 1923

[35] *An t-Óglach*, vol. iv, no. 24 (New Series), 25 November, 1922: 2

[36] *Ibid.*, vol. iv, no. 26 (New Series), 9 December, 1922: 4

[37] *Ibid.*, vol. i, no. 1 (New Series), 24 February, 1923: 8. *An t-Óglach* had a number of incarnations, resulting in frequently changing series and volume numbers, all, confusingly, labelled as new series.

account... and to contradict many of these erroneous and hostile criticisms.'[38] The army acquitted itself well during the conflict. MacWhite wrote from Geneva that the army had won:

> many encomiums and... is regarded as most praiseworthy by those who are qualified to speak on military matters. On the contrary, the rank and file of the Irregulars are held to be no better than bandits and brigands whereas their leaders are looked upon, at best, as very bad losers who are lead from one stupidity to another by their exaggerated ideas of their own importance.[39]

With the conflict's end, troops faced demobilisation. The army crisis, when many officers claimed republican ideals, decried the treatment of War of Independence veterans, resigned, or stole weapons, presented a serious threat, jeopardising the carefully-constructed image of a force loyal to the state. An outraged Mulcahy bombarded the press with statements on the burgeoning crisis:

> Two Army officers have attempted to involve the Army in a challenge to the authority of the Government. This is an outrageous departure from the spirit of the Army. It will not be tolerated... by the officers and men of the Army who cherish its honour. They will stand over their posts... in the same watchful, determined spirit that has always been the spirit of the Army.[40]

Civil war loomed. With Cosgrave ill, O'Higgins spun the crisis as an unfortunate misunderstanding arising from mishandled demobilisation orders, a sleight of hand as breathtakingly audacious as it was patently misleading. The state benefitted from a closing of political ranks against mutineers. The *Irish Times* quoted Johnson's offer of Labour Party support:

> we will resist any attempt at military dictatorship. We will oppose any attempt to set up authority within the Army over the Army, and we shall assist... in maintaining civil control of the military authorities.
> We cannot... stand in favour of any attempt to override the civil government of this country by military government....[41]

Senator J.T. O'Farrell sought 'unanimity among all sane parties in assisting the Government to bring home to those responsible for the mutiny that the Army was the servant, not the master, of the civil power.'[42] Although demobilisation and mutiny

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[38] MAI, A7557: 18 April, 1923. Mulcahy communicated to O'Shiel on 23 April that he had granted the interview.

[39] NAI, D/FA, Early Series 1, Box 8/55: 1 August, 1922

[40] *Irish Times*, 10 March, 1924: 5

[41] Ibid..

[42] *Ibid.*.

threatened a propaganda disaster, it left a smaller, more manageable force whose authority lay in the Executive Council.

As the force accustomed itself to peacetime normality, Capt W.J. Brennan Whitmore (a future editor of *An t-Óglach*) proposed a new publication, the Army Review, which by 'a judicious fostering of friendly journalists... should be encouraged with a view to giving the public more light on the work the Army have to do, without featuring the Army for propaganda purposes in the same way that Organisations such as the G.A.A. are featured.'[43] He advocated removing all traces of humour from the journal. The new proposals sought a more educative journal, with informative articles. Power, now a Captain, retained the newspaperman's acumen and eviscerated the proposals, stating that troops wanted humour, and despised preaching and lecturing articles. He cited a drop in sales after the journal published an article on rifle maintenance.[44] Nonetheless, the publication became steadily less magazine-style under Brennan Whitmore.

While its format remained undecided, *An t-Óglach* called for propaganda to end cavilling about the army:

> The United States Army is... surrounded by captious civilian critics, and... military authorities there have awakened to the vital importance... of proper publicity... to bring home to the American people that there is no such thing as a military caste... but that the Army... is composed of their own kith and kin... in uniform solely in the interests of the people. In their publicity work American troops are constantly endeavouring to develop the friendly relations existing between the people and the soldiers.[45]

The editor later renewed his call: 'For any business or service to flourish in this publicity age it must not only be useful to society, but prove its usefulness.' The editorial bemoaned the fact the army was known only for ceremonial duties, or mentions in Dáil debates and quoted an American officer, Major A.G. Rudd, on military publicity: 'It will be a perfectly legitimate statement of facts concerning the army's work and mission provided by history and statistics and intended to disabuse the minds of those holding false beliefs of our service.' The editorial concluded that if army publicity was to be successful 'a number of our comrades throughout the country will have to considerably

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[43] MAI, *An t-Óglach* 07: 7 July 1925

[44] *Ibid.*: undated

[45] *An t-Óglach*, vol. iii, no. 7 (New Series), 28 March, 1925: 2

alter their viewpoint in this matter – or be made to alter it.'[46] Altering public perception to the army was difficult, with some critics seeing it as a means:

> to work off their spleen. When decayed and disgruntled politicians, and amateur journalists of the muckraking breed find the commonsense of the people elbowing them out of the limelight... the happy thought occurs to them: 'Let's throw a brick at the Army'.... Soldiers... suffer... outrageous vilifiers in silence; they are forbidden... to take up the cudgels in the Press, even in their own defence.[47]

Neither Defence nor the army displayed great initiative when it came to using radio for propaganda. In 1926, the Broadcasting Provisional Advisory Board invited Defence to 'broadcast statements regarding the work' of the department.[48] Pressed for detail, the board stated that it preferred a synopsis of activity once or twice annually, with attention given to future activities.[49] Whether the army availed of that opportunity is unclear, but its response to Kiernan's request for broadcast news for the BBC suggests an indolent attitude. Defence communicated to Lester that it had no objection provided that 'your Department would control the issue of each message, and that they would be broadcast in the terms as approved by your Department.'[50] Two years later, in what appears to have been a change in BBC policy, the broadcaster requested to be placed on the departmental press mailing list, but wanted only material that had not been published in the daily newspapers. The department, or army, would, therefore, incur extra cost in issuing unique press releases. When Defence notified External Affairs of its decision, it conveyed no sense of eagerness to facilitate the BBC: 'when it is considered expedient ... arrangements will be made to submit the necessary particulars to your Department.'[51]

An t-Óglach took umbrage with a letter in an unidentified newspaper suggesting that the army build roads, since, as defence required quick mobilisation, better roads benefitted everybody: 'making the country fit for tourists... the men who manned the Bearna Baoghail... shall degenerate into uniformed labourers, with their officers occupying the proud position of gangers. That is the fine destiny which our contemporary seeks for the

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[46] *Ibid.*, vol. iii, no. 169 (New Series), 8 August, 1925: 2

[47] *Ibid.*, vol. iii, no. 9 (New Series), 25 April, 1925: 2

[48] MAI, Publicity/1/2/49282: 14 December, 1926

[49] *Ibid.*: 6 January, 1927

[50] *Ibid.*: 21 July, 1927

[51] *Ibid.*: 22 May, 1929

Army of Ireland.'[52] The *Irish Times* advocated that Air Force pilots take up positions in civil aviation: 'the Free State never can hope to have an Air Force... capable of defending the country... but it can... turn out efficient commercial pilots.'[53] Worse than being regarded as labourers, or as a preparatory school for private enterprise, was the view that the army was an unnecessary expense, and dispensable. Despite troop reductions, the army had more troops per capita than any Commonwealth country; Deputy Michael Heffernan cited Canada's 8.78m citizens served by 3,500 troops and a reserve and militia of c.123,000.[54] O'Halpin acknowledges that a gendarmerie could have met the state's domestic security needs, but argues for maintaining an army for reasons of sovereignty, and, by averring descent from the Irish Volunteers, preventing the IRA from claiming this legitimisation.[55] The force was loyal to the state because it was an instrument of the state. Emphasising this, *An t-Óglach* reprinted an article by former German Chief of Staff, General von Seeckt:

> The army should become a state within the state, and it should be merged in the state through service... it should... become the purest image of the state.
> The army... is a striking embodiment of national unity and becomes one of the strongest ties in the structure of the state. Externally, it secures the stability of the state... and is thus the expression of the state's resolve to assert itself. The army... emphasises the duty of the individual to subordinate himself to the whole, to the state....
> In internal affairs, the army typifies the will and the strength of the state... and thus fulfils the task of providing political order and security for all.
> Like the state, the army does not exist for itself alone; both are forms in which a nation expresses the will to live and survive.[56]

Since the army existed as the state's physical expression of the nation, efforts were made to accommodate citizens from a minority within the nation. An *Irish Times* article during the Civil War, reprinted in *An t-Óglach*, related the experience of a Church of Ireland recruit. The anonymous writer observed that though his faith was recorded at recruitment he was not required to fall-in for church parade, but was offered an opportunity to attend a Church of Ireland service elsewhere. His comrades accepted his faith, and he encountered only the occasional, but respectful, 'sincere Catholic who has

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[52] *An t-Óglach*, vol. iv, no. 5: 13 February, 1926. The letter was written by Hewson Cowen, author of 'The British Empire, New York, and Other Poems.'

[53] *Irish Times*, 15 May, 1925: 6

[54] DÉ, vol. 15, 7 May, 1926, col. 1322

[55] O'Halpin, 1999: 82

[56] *An t-Óglach*, vol. iii, no.4, October, 1930: 36. The journal went from weekly to quarterly in 1927, occasioning yet another change in volume and issue numbers.

endeavoured to reason with one as to the 'wrong belief held". Moreover: 'Not being a Roman Catholic does not constitute a bar to promotion. The writer has risen from volunteer to lieutenant. Thus does our Army show the way to a peaceful Ireland, in which one may praise the Maker according to his desire, without fear or favour.'[57] Notwithstanding the low number of Church of Ireland recruits, in November, 1923 the army opened the first garrison Church of Ireland at the Curragh.[58] Harking to its early days, when it embraced schoolteachers and postal clerks as its leaders, and drew inspiration from the republicanism of the Protestant Wolfe Tone, the state portrayed the army as an instrument of all the people, from whom its ranks were drawn, at their service and the state's.

Social events helped to normalise perceptions. General Sean MacEoin's wedding was a display of military strength at the height of the Civil War. Forming a guard of honour, his North Longford flying column, clad evocatively in their War of Independence trench coat uniform, legitimised the army as successors of the nation's liberators. An army band, buglers, infantry and artillery, symbolising a modern, regular force, also attended. Griffith and Collins were among the guests, and Eoin O'Duffy was the best man.[59] Officers' matrimonies offered good publicity. *An t-Óglach* carried frequent articles on military nuptials, noting the marriage of Major General Dan Hogan to Elizabeth O'Flynn in 1924, with O'Duffy again best man,[60] and of Chief of Staff, Major General Peadar MacMahon to Annie Parkinson, daughter of celebrated race horse trainer J.J. Parkinson.[61] A photograph depicting a guard of honour of six officers was published to celebrate the marriage of Captain Patrick Kavanagh and Bridie Massey-Mohan in 1926.[62]

The army's importance to the state's social fabric transcended military functions. In a letter to *An t-Óglach*, the pseudonymous Seadna advocated greater engagement with civilians in sporting and social functions, and using the press for publicity to counter erroneous views that the army was 'the army of a political party'. [63] Mulcahy created the

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[57] *Irish Times*, 12 March, 1923: 4 and *An t-Óglach*, vol. i, No. 3 (New Series), 24 March, 1923: 7

[58] *Ibid.*, 21 November, 1923: 7

[59] Duggan, 1991: 80-1

[60] *An t-Óglach*, vol. ii, no. 1 (New Series), 12 January 1924: 14

[61] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, no. 7 (New series), 10 May, 1924: 2

[62] *Ibid.*, vol. v, no. 10, 1 September, 1926: 9

[63] *Ibid.*, vol. v, no. 2, 17 July, 1926: 7

Army School of Music in 1922[64] and the *Irish Times* lauded his vision, and the work of Dr J.F. Larchet who was 'at work upon the details of the Army school of music, whose aim will be to give us native bandmasters and native bands... at once a military asset and a source of pleasure and refinement to our people.' It reported that the Army had secured the services of 'Herr Fritz Brase, an outstanding figure in German music, and one of the greatest living bandmasters.'[65]

It was under the baton of Colonel 'Brassy', a quickly-acquired soubriquet, that army bands gained their excellent reputation. *An t-Óglach* praised the No. 1 Army Band: 'lingering remnants of the West British garrison may still sigh for the English soldier musicians, but, from the musical point of view, nobody any longer possesses the shadow of an excuse for lamenting the departure of the British bands. Colonel Brase and the Army School of Music have seen to that.'[66] Lest the journal be accused of partisanship, Brase and the band were widely acknowledged. The *Irish Times* praised its classical performances:

> The excellent programme... by the Number 1 Band... in the Theatre Royal, Dublin, was appreciated by an audience which filled the house.... The applause that followed the magnificent performances of the works of Liszt and Tschaikowsky [sic] came as the natural response to... the music.
> Colonel Fitz Brase and his band added to the reputation which they gained by their first concert....[67]

The bands played an important role in parades and commemorations, military tattoos in Dublin Civic Weeks, Catholic Emancipation celebrations and the Eucharistic Congress. But they were expensive. Johnson estimated their cost at £25,000-£30,000 per annum. Major Bryan Cooper, however, drew on his service experience in declaring them essential: he 'did not think that a better day's work for Ireland had ever been done than when Deputy Mulcahy induced Colonel Brase to come here.' In reply, the Minister for Defence claimed the band had done more to normalise the country than any other service, and its efforts would be appreciated in the future.[68]

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[64] Valiulis, 1992: 238

[65] *Irish Times*, 13 August, 1923: 8

[66] *An t-Óglach*, vol. ii, no. 12 (New Series), 19 June, 1924: 2

[67] *Irish Times*, 14 January, 1924: 4

[68] *Ibid.*, 8 May, 1926: 8

Public military displays bridged the gap between the nation and the state. Easter and St Patrick's Day parades were a show of force to enemies of the state, and displayed the ideal of fighting manhood: professional, impeccably turned out and highly disciplined. The 1925 St Patrick's Day parade won press plaudits:

> The smart turn-out of all ranks was the subject of favourable comment... the artillery especially upheld the traditions of efficiency on parade of the senior military arm. The new scarlet cap bands of the military police, all big, soldierly men, gave the relieving splash of colour. Old soldiers admired the skill of the armoured car drivers in keeping the regulation intervals.[69]

In 1924, the army went on manoeuvres in Phoenix Park. The Air Corps demonstrated formation and stunt flying, before a tactical manoeuvre of infantry, artillery, cavalry and air units.[70] Manoeuvres near Fermoy in 1925 disappointed one journalist[71] but Pathé filmed manoeuvres in Wicklow later that month.[72] Pathé also recorded footage of de Valera, mounted on horseback during torrential rain, inspecting troops on manoeuvres in 1933. Apart from fighting skills, the 1927 Dublin Civic Week allowed demonstration of other skills. A military tattoo was the centrepiece, while the participation of four brass and two pipe bands as a prelude to a *feu de joie* and a performance of Irish hymns by a 300-strong choir and the massed bands under Brase's baton was an impressive undertaking. This was followed by mass drill by 400 troops, pageantry celebrating Custume's 1691 defence of the bridge in Athlone, figure marching by 400 troops, a second pageant celebrating Irish soldiers from antiquity to the present and, finally, a performance of 'Let Erin Remember' by the choir and bands, and sounding of 'The Last Post.'[73] The 1929 tattoo was a resounding success, and the *Irish Times* enthused that it was:

> an effective advertisement for the Free State Army.... In physique and bearing, in smartness and discipline, the troops... need not fear comparison with... any army of Europe. Furthermore... they are conscious of Dublin's regard, and that... will strengthen their esprit de corps and their sense of duty to the State.[74]

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[69] *Ibid.*, 21 March, 1925: 9

[70] *Ibid.*, 4 October, 1924: 8

[71] *Ibid.*, 2 September 1925: 7. The correspondent's personal discomfort and antipathy to mud may have coloured his report: 'the Minister for Defence descended... to make his way to the field kitchens. When we Pressmen and others had wiped some of the County Cork loam from our faces, we stumbled painfully in the same direction.'

[72] Pathé, Film 638.06

[73] *Irish Times*, 14 September, 1927: 3

[74] *Ibid.*, 17 September, 1929: 6

Celebratory parades provided a rare touch of glamour with smart uniforms, the rare sight of military vehicles and, rarer still, airplanes. Commemorations of fallen patriots were more sombre. Rather than glamorising the state, the army was used to link it to a tradition stretching back to the republicanism of Wolfe Tone. Although no republic had been won, the state outwardly subscribed to republican values. Peter Hughes, Minister for Defence, addressed 1,400 troops at the 1926 Wolfe Tone commemoration, encouraging them to regard Tone as their 'model in all things military' and to defend their country against all enemies: 'If you... do this, your reward as citizens will be the gratitude of your country'.[75] In 1928, 1,200 troops paraded and the Air Corps provided a fly-over. FitzGerald told assembled troops that the army expected 'qualities that were so radiant in Tone – love of country, willing and unfaltering service, discipline and courage, generosity and magnanimity.'[76] Interestingly, by 1933, the commemoration was seen as a 'Fianna Fáil pilgrimage' with the army, despite parading about 2,000 troops, a support act to the new regime.[77] Fianna Fáil continued to downplay the army's involvement, preferring to promote the party rather than the instrument of the state. Indeed, 400 troops from a new army reserve, loyal to Fianna Fáil, paraded alongside their regular counterparts.[78]

Espousing the national language gave the army another propaganda opportunity. Mulcahy advocated an Irish-speaking battalion,[79] but army efforts bespoke the tokenism and linguistic bigotry that hindered a national revival. Creating one battalion in a force of 5,000 was hardly ardent revivalism, and by 1925 that battalion was under-strength with 360 troops. Testifying to the Gaeltacht Commission, presided over by Mulcahy, Colonel Patrick O'Connor highlighted problems in recruiting the 300 troops needed to bring the battalion up to strength:

> Irish speakers in other battalions did not volunteer for this battalion and concealed... knowledge of Irish.
> General [sic] O'Connor further stated that there was a feeling against the language... on the part of some officers... and this he attributed to jealousy and ignorance.[80]

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[75] *Ibid.*, 26 June, 1926: 6

[76] *Ibid.*, 18 June, 1928: 8

[77] *Ibid.*, 26 June, 1933: 5

[78] *Ibid.*, 17 June, 1935: 5

[79] Valiulis, *op. cit.*: 238

[80] *Irish Times*, 16 May, 1925: 8

If its most valiant exemplars scorned the national tongue, the state could not point to its army as an instrument of a Gaelic state. It was not impossible that daily affairs could be conducted in Irish, and language classes provided, but aside from drill commands, Irish was little-used.

Nonetheless, efforts at promoting Irish proceeded. *An t-Óglach* welcomed what it perceived as increased use of Irish: 'Gaelic speakers in the Army will be glad to learn that steps are being taken to improve the position of the National Language in the every-day life of the army. This is as it should be. There are thousands of Gaelic speakers in the Army.'[81] The Army Council decided that the first decoration to be conferred on troops was an emblem signifying their Irish-speaking ability. It would be limited to 'officers and men who have satisfied specially appointed examiners that they possess the necessary knowledge of the language'.[82] *An t-Óglach* published an English-Irish glossary of useful words with a pronunciation key, and occasional Irish articles. This was insufficient and, in 1926, a scheme of reorganisation for the publication observed difficulties deciding on:

> a definite policy which will be productive of tangible results rather than a pandering to the sentimental idea that you must have a bit of Irish in the journal.... Bilingual headings... Irish equivalents for military terms and... colloquial phrases might be one method.... Another... the insertion of short easy paragraphs... with an increase in their standard and scope as time went on.[83]

Power observed that *An t-Óglach* had attempted more Irish content, but had been driven to linguistic paralysis by the pedantic Major O'Briain, whom he sarcastically praised: 'no more staunch champion of the language in the Army or out of it'. O'Briain forbade publication of military terms in Irish until they had been definitively decided, and had ordered the discontinuation of the column of useful phrases.[84]

By the 1930s army efforts to nurture Irish had failed. In 1935, the Garda Síochána received a complaint regarding English language army posters in the all-Irish division of Galway West.[85] An army memorandum claimed that the only recent posters posted in the area had been in Irish, in line with policy. Arising from the complaint, the Adjutants of the Eastern, Southern and Western Commands were notified that future posters in

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[81] *An t-Óglach*, vol. i, no. 9 (New Series), 16 June, 1923: 2

[82] *Irish Times*, 23 July, 1923: 8

[83] MAI, *An t-Óglach* 07: 9 July, 1925

[84] *Ibid.*: undated

[85] *Ibid.*, Publicity/1/2/41146: 7 March, 1935

Irish would only be issued to Gaeltachtaí.[86] Perhaps this retreat under fire was an indication that the army with its limited resources and casual attitude towards the language could not hope to satisfy language zealots.

Greater publicity was achieved through sport. Rugged, physical sports projected an image of Celtic virility and sportsmanship. The army enthusiastically embraced Gaelic games, boxing, athletics and show-jumping, and the Army Athletics Association, influenced by the Garda, confined the army to games with Irish connections. *An t-Óglach* wrote: 'it would be a sad day when the Irish Army left aside their own games for games of foreign origin.' The AAA 'unanimously resolved to exclude Soccer and Rugby Football, Cricket and Hockey from those games for which the Association would cater'. But the adoption of a motion 'that tennis and golf be included in the games of the association' hints that the ban was an act of unsporting jingoism directed at English games, and not Scottish (golf) and French (tennis).[87] Golf, surprisingly, was particularly useful for propaganda: in 1924, the army defeated a press team in a challenge game at the Hermitage.[88] The ban was not universally welcomed within the army, where the officer cadre was largely middle class. A Command Council meeting at GHQ was mandated to discuss a motion 'recommending the inclusion of Rugby football in the programme of sports to be catered for' at a subsequent meeting.[89] However, the motion failed to win support as the ban was further strengthened at the AAA's reorganisation in 1927: 'No game banned by the G.A.A. shall be organised by the Association or played on Army grounds, nor can players of such games participate in hurling, football or handball championships.'[90]

Chauvinism allowed the army to concentrate on Gaelic games, while boxing and equestrianism, the latter particularly boosting the army, were also endorsed. Showjumping gained an excellent reputation, probably due to the riders' prowess and their prized Irish bloodstock. The quality of bloodstock made equestrianism one of the few areas where Irish sportsmen could compete on equal terms internationally, and army

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[86] *Ibid.*: 2 April, 1935

[87] *An t-Óglach*, vol. i, no. 4 (New Series), 7 April, 1923: 7

[88] *Irish Times*, 21 August, 1924: 8

[89] *Ibid.*, 11 January, 1926: 10

[90] *Ibid.*, 15 August, 1927: 11

riders in turn promoted Irish bloodstock. Within a few years, army riders had produced strong international performances. Pathé recorded the army team's jump-off loss to France in the Aga Khan Trophy at the Royal Dublin Horse Show in 1929,[91] and third place finish in 1931.[92] In the intervening year, Pathé reported that 'Switzerland - on Irish-bred horses! - wins the Aga Khan's magnificent Trophy'.[93] Having taken 28 prizes at shows in Olympia and Lucerne, including eight first prizes and the Nations' Cup, the army had garnered outstanding publicity for itself and Irish horse-breeding:

> The appreciation... of Irish horseflesh in Continental countries is... stressed by... the... Army horse jumping team, who have returned home, bringing with them many trophies....
> Colonel Hayes... remarked... that many offers of purchase for the competing animals had been made....
> The... team proved that the Irish horse cannot be beaten for bone and sinew, staying power and grace... and it was extremely likely... that horse breeding in this country would... be given a fillip....[94]

Domestically, equestrianism was integral to the state's social infrastructure, transcending class and politics. The popularity of Horse Show Week, racing festivals and gymkhana gave the army a ready-made audience for propaganda.

Boxing afforded rugged, martial propaganda portraying troops as capable, disciplined fighters. Inter-command competitions ensured large numbers practiced the sport, while national tournaments enhanced elite boxers' reputations. Good publicity was generated by images and reports of army boxers, many of whom were national champions, and Pathé filmed boxers undergoing medical tests prior to competing.[95] The appointment of Scottish boxer Tancy Lee as civilian instructor indicated how seriously boxing was pursued. Fitzpatrick's examination of a visit by British army boxers to participate in challenge matches with Irish troops and Gardaí notes the generous praise of one of its officers, Captain Noel Chamberlain: 'The boxing at the Curragh passed off well before the usual crowded house, and our boxers had their usual warm welcome.'[96] Pathé filmed both teams training for this 'Unique Boxing Event.'[97] The army, including two national

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[91] Pathé, Film 679.30

[92] *Ibid.*, Film 861.35

[93] *Ibid.*, Film 719.11

[94] *Irish Times*, 17 July, 1931: 4

[95] Pathé, Film 737.37

[96] Fitzpatrick, 1996: 230

[97] Pathé, Film 650.05

champions (lightweight Private M. Doyle, and bantamweight Corporal McDonagh), lost the first challenge 4-3, but an army and Garda team won by the same score two days later.[98] Chamberlain estimated over 3,000 attended, indicating that it had captured public imagination. It was a propaganda coup showing that the state could trade blows with its old foe in a sporting spirit. The AAA subsequently accepted an invitation to participate in a British Army Boxing Association tournament.[99]

It is likely that Fianna Fáil, on achieving power, wanted the army as an extension of the party's own expression of political power, as party and state were, in Fianna Fáil view, indelibly linked. Certainly, as bands continued to play, troops paraded in public and army sportsmen remained competitive, the impression of an army loyal to the state was maintained. But the party faced a similar challenge to Cumann na nGaedheal in 1922: would the army be loyal to the state, or flex its muscles in disobedience? Through demobilisation, the army had been purged of dissident republicans who might lean towards Fianna Fáil. The appointment of Frank Aiken, last civil war Chief of Staff of the IRA, as defence minister was a masterstroke, implying that the army was governed by a man with experience of soldiering. Sean McEntee was at pains to depict harmonious relations between the state and army:

> The Army had a certain history which had made certain elements... look... with aloof askance on the Army and to deny the Army the confidence which the Government felt in the Army. So far as the Army was concerned the Government wished that every citizen would regard it as a truly national Army... and to be cherished and regarded... as something to be proud of, honoured and sustained....[100]

He confirmed government reluctance to use troops to maintain internal order, except as a last resort. Nonetheless Fianna Fáil set about parading the army at party functions, in a show of power designed to legitimise the party with the general public. Thomas O'Higgins accused Aiken of treating the army as a party plaything:

> It was customary... that the President... or the Minister for Defence, or somebody representing them, would take the salute... but it was... beyond normal expectations to have Army units hurled helter-skelter all over the country... to pay tributes to members of a political party.... The impression was given that the Opposition could hold meetings only under the protection of the Army. Those performances were carried out as a bellicose gesture to any and all who differed

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[98] *Irish Times*, 30 October, 1926: 12

[99] *Ibid.*, 20 December, 1926: 10

[100] *Ibid.*, 17 August, 1933: 5

> from Fianna Fáil... with the result that they had the Army placed in the humiliating position of being shelled with rotten eggs.[101]

His party colleague, Mulcahy, also attacked Fianna Fáil:

> for the last nine months or so the Army had been thrown into the political situation, and was being 'monkeyed' with for the purpose of seeing whether it could... help in getting the Government out of some of its political difficulties. The Army was to be brought to Dublin on Easter Sunday for the collection of Fianna Fáil funds.[102]

Aiken denied politicisation of the army, but offered no evidence. He suggested that troops saluting ministers and parliamentary secretaries were saluting the people's government, a credible point that, nonetheless, avoided the substantive issue.

The restructuring of the army reserve into a Fianna Fáil force, controlled by local party supporters, was a cunning propaganda attempt. At a time when the Army Comrades Association provided a paramilitary presence at Cumann na nGaedheal events, Fianna Fáil recruited and trained reservists ostensibly against foreign aggression, but useful for domestic disturbances. The existing reserve was poorly organised and defined, with General Reserve Classes A and B, a Volunteer Reserve in Dublin and Cork, and a university-based Officer Training Corps. Nine new reserve regiments, totalling 22,000 troops, were planned. Each regiment was to have its own history and marching song and, to enhance ties between the regiments and their communities, local committees - sluaighte - of volunteer administrators. These were quickly dominated by Fianna Fáil supporters, creating a partisan element of civilian control. Lemass saw value in giving an alternative to young men who might be tempted to join subversive movements for excitement and paramilitary training.[103] FitzGerald objected to outsiders rather than former army-men receiving reserve commissions. It was an 'injustice to junior officers who had been in the Army since its inception, and who... could not be granted the promotion that they would have got otherwise.'[104] His party colleague, O'Higgins, questioned Aiken, with less circumspection:

> Why had men been... brought home from abroad who had been in arms against the National Army in order to officer the new Volunteer Force? Were members of the standing Army to... be told to go, that there were sufficient in the new force to take their place?... Very many members of the Army Reserve had been

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[101] *Ibid.*, 3 April, 1935: 8

[102] *Ibid.*.

[103] Joye, 1999: 245.

[104] *Irish Times*, 4 April, 1935: 8

> dismissed... because they had exercised the citizen's right to support the political organisation of United Ireland....
> This policy had been pursued with intensity and ferocity... stamped with the mark of the political tyrant.... His every action... was a deliberate attempt to steep the Army in politics or dictate the politics of the personnel of the Army....[105]

O'Higgins was iterating Cosgrave's belief that the reserve was a political stroke to rehabilitate civil war republicans within the state's military structure.[106] Concerns, like the reserve, were short-lived. After a flurry of publicity, and participation in the 1935 St Patrick's Day parade in Dublin and, in June, a military tattoo in the RDS, interest in the reserve waned, and it never achieved prominence.

III

Policing was in a curious position when the Free State was founded. The RIC, to which the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries had been attached, had become a reviled symbol of oppression. Its sister force, the Dublin Metropolitan Police was also disdained. However, the state had no real alternative to them. The Irish Republican Police was a poor substitute – badly trained and equipped, and without essential facilities such as jailhouses, it lacked the glamour of an active service unit and did not always attract the most efficient IRA-men. With Oriel House, Collins' plainclothes squad, acting generally in tandem with the IRP, policing was split between two traditions – one, efficient but unsustainable; the other, inefficient, but republican. A new, professional force was needed, and titles such as The People's Guard and Civic Guard were bandied about. It took a Dáil motion from Cathal O'Shannon that the latter appellation be dropped in favour of An Garda Síochána (Guardians of the Peace) to crystallise the new force's function as an arm of the state at the service of the people.[107] A year later, in an act to replace the temporary 1923 act, O'Higgins stated his vision of the relationship between force and state: 'this... is a National Police Force, and... it should not exist outside the authority of the Executive Council, in which is vested all the delegated power and authority of the people.'[108] Months later, he stated on the Dáil record:

> People are coming to realise that those men are the servants of the State, are out... in the interests of the people who are not criminal... for their protection and

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[105] *Ibid.*

[106] Joye, *op. cit.*: 147

[107] DÉ, vol. 4, 31 July, 1923, col. 1709

[108] *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 7 May, 1924, col. 379

> the protection of their property and the vindication of their rights. I would like to see... the realisation that these men are their officials and their servants, out simply to uphold the laws... made here by the people's representatives.[109]

It was intended that the force be separated from politics. Membership of political organisations was prohibited, O'Higgins declared, because:

> they have to serve... with the same discipline and... efficiency, succeeding Governments and... they have the duty... of seeing that the law is obeyed. Whether... they think that a particular law ought to be repealed or not, that happens to be their duty... and I do not think the undesirability of members... participating in political activity needs to be stressed.[110]

Whether such activity included the Gaelic League and the GAA exercised deputies. O'Higgins clarified that if a Guard had concerns:

> about joining the Gaelic League, he will... ask whether the declaration he has made excludes him, and similarly with the Gaelic Athletic Association. It is impossible to say... what is a political society. Political societies... come and go... the object... is to exclude members of the police force from joining political organisations or secret societies.[111]

O'Duffy, too, took impartiality as a prerequisite and, addressing Gardaí before despatching them to serve in polling stations during the 1923 general election, advised: 'political opinions held by the various parties with whom you come in contact are not your concern. Your duty is clearly defined. Be, in the truest sense, servants of the people.'[112] O'Higgins was similarly outspoken on impartiality, reminding the Dáil that Gardaí pledged 'service and obedience to Saorstát Éireann and its Constitution and Government' and that they did not belong to political or secret societies because propriety would not permit Gardaí 'to become associated... with partisan politics' or 'join an organisation the commitments of which are not publicly known.'[113]

Fianna Fáil attacks on the Garda made promoting the force as politically neutral even more necessary. Fitzgerald-Kenney rounded on Lemass and P.J. Ruttledge for verbal attacks on the Garda in 1928. Their speeches were:

> characterised by another attack in the vituperative campaign which they are steadily and consistently carrying on... against this fine, well-ordered, well-disciplined, thoroughly efficient force. It may be that they think by repeated

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[109] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 3 July, 1924, cols 381-2

[110] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 31 July, 1923, cols 1706-7

[111] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 31 July, 1923, col. 1707

[112] *Irish Independent*, 25 August, 1923: 6

[113] DÉ, vol. 7, 7 May, 1924, col. 379-80

> attacks they will be able to shake the morale and undermine the discipline of that force.... I know that force and... they will not succeed.[114]

When Richard Anthony rose to pay tribute to Gardaí who had 'justified themselves before the public'[115] Ruttledge, a future Minister for Justice, churlishly declined to follow suit.[116] In office, Fianna Fáil continued to view the Garda mistrustfully as Cumann na nGaedheal collaborators: the party did little to help the force in the 1930s in a show of tacit approval for the IRA.[117] In a calculated snub to local Gardaí, de Valera preferred to receive a guard of honour in Skibbereen from the local IRA unit.[118] In February, 1933, de Valera launched an offensive against the force with the unceremonious replacement of O'Duffy with Ned Broy. Under Broy, the force began a recruitment drive, hiring 79 new Special Branch Gardaí. These were mainly Fianna Fáil supporters employed as a counterweight to O'Duffy's Army Comrade's Association and the National Guard. Their zealous proclivity to protect Fianna Fáil and disrupt political opponents earned the dubious epithet the Broy Harriers, a pun on their Commissioner and the Bray Harriers athletics club. From 1933-5, 570 recruits, overwhelmingly Fianna Fáil supporters, joined the Garda.[119] Fianna Fáil had demonstrated that, like its treatment of the army, securing the state was best achieved by having a loyal coterie of supporters in positions of influence, prepared to put the party before the state.

Garda propaganda was similar to army propaganda. The Garda had its own journal, *The Garda Review*, edited by the former RIC journal editor, William Harding.[120] It replaced the short-lived *Iris an Ghárda* (1922-4) and even shorter-lived *Guth an Gharda* (1924). Their propaganda value was significantly less than *An t-Óglach*, as they were not on sale to the public. Consequently, they became an internal propaganda vehicle, preaching to a converted audience. McNiffe observes that by 1929, *The Garda Review* had about 6,000 subscribers[121] - the force's approximate strength. Under O'Duffy, the journals conveyed his idealised vision of the force as courageous, Christian, sporting and teetotal. Indeed,

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[114] *Ibid.*, vol. 22, 21 March, 1928, col. 1523

[115] *Ibid.*, vol. 26, 1 November, 1928, col. 1356

[116] *Ibid.*, vol. 26, 1 November, 1928, col. 1358

[117] McGarry, 2005: 192

[118] *Ibid.*: 193 and Brady, 1974: 163-4

[119] McNiffe, 1997: 42-5

[120] *Ibid.*: 151

[121] *Ibid.*: 152

they were a propaganda vehicle for the publicity-seeking commissioner himself. Many issues contained photographs of O'Duffy, who felt it necessary to arrange publication of letters complimentary of the force addressed to him, and, superfluous except for self-promotion, his replies: T. M. Healy's praise ('Serenity, blended with decision, marks an efficient police'[122]) and the Protestant Dean of Lismore's compliments to Gardaí for their sense of duty scarcely warranted public responses.[123] Frequent articles praising O'Duffy conveyed an impression that the journal existed more for his aggrandisement than the force's. That would be a pity, as the propaganda value of its articles, including tales of courageous performance of duty, a veritable crusade against illicit stills, sporting achievements and religious and cultural achievements, was immense. Had the journal been given a more widespread circulation, it may have helped more quickly establish Gardaí as the nation's protectors.

Early articles in *Iris an Ghárda* sought to ground the force in communities, as a benign force for good. A reprint of an O'Higgins press interview in which he commended citizens' acceptance of the force exemplifies this: 'The Civic Guard have driven roots in the country, and people are cooperating with them.'[124] Articles by Gardaí were hyperbolic, even sentimental. A letter to the journal from Garda E.C. Millard was redrafted as an article that exhorted every Guard to realise that 'he is part of a Force which has it in its power to put that happy smile back upon the faces of the people, by restoring order, making for the security of life and property, and... helping to restore confidence and hope in all the land.'[125] An article about Sean, an Everyman in the Guards read:

> Fellow Guards, Sean lives among you. His past may have been your own. As you are the Guardians of the Nation's Peace be also the Guardians of her Honour. You're routed England's soldiers; rout also her civilisation and her language. You have taught the generations to come how to die for Ireland; teach them now how ti [sic] live for Ireland.[126]

The eventual official journal, the *Review*, was more professional. Harding brought new standards and the journal maintained an independent stance, criticising politicians in

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[122] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 10, 30 April, 1923: 3

[123] *Ibid.*: vol. i, no. 42, 10 December, 1923: 3

[124] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 10, 30 April, 1923: 3

[125] *Ibid.*, vol. i, no. 11, 7 May, 1923: 4

[126] *Ibid.*, vol. i, no. 19, 2 July, 1923: 14

defence of Gardaí.[127] The *Irish Times* welcomed the first issue as a 'journal both interesting and useful to the Garda.'[128] All three Garda journals sought to propagandise internally, to convince the members of the force of their value to the state, and to impress upon them how readily the nation had accepted them. If civilian readers happened upon the journals and were inclined to be swayed by the words therein, that was a fortunate, though ultimately unconsidered, propaganda bonus.

More calculating was propaganda surrounding murdered Gardaí. As an unarmed force, Gardaí were vulnerable to assault and assassination. Being unarmed distinguished the new force from the RIC, and was as much propaganda as policing policy. It enabled Gardaí to assume moral authority as unarmed defenders of the state against lawlessness, though insurrectionists quickly seized on Garda defencelessness. McNiffe notes attacks on 60 barracks and 19 patrols between November 1922 and March 1923. Although these usually resulted in temporary imprisonment of Gardaí, Harry Phelan was the first Garda to be assassinated during the Civil War on 14 November, 1922.[129] McGarry observes that O'Duffy used funerals to rouse public support for fallen martyrs, and stiffen the resolve of the force.[130] Before 1931, ten such martyrs provided opportunities for propaganda. *Iris an Ghárda* editorialised on the 1923 death of Sergeant Seamus Woods in Scartaglin:

> are not the Garda Siothchana [sic] drawn from the foremost ranks of those sons of Ireland who risked their lives to free the land of their birth? Are the Gardai not drawn from the people... and, as a contemporary writes, 'to molest them even in the smallest way is to commit an act against the civic spirit which it should be the pride of every Irishman to uphold.'[131]

The journal editorialised the death of Garda Patrick Halloran, shot by bank robbers in Baltinglass in January, 1924.[132] A week later it reported on the funeral at which O'Duffy, delivering the oration, stated that Gardaí would be armed for a short period, if that was the will of the people.[133] Tipperary was the most dangerous county for serving Gardaí,

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[127] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 151-2

[128] *Irish Times*, 28 November, 1925: 17

[129] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 27. Phelan was not the first Garda fatality of the conflict: Garda Thomas Bolton was fatally wounded in a shooting accident on armed duty in Rathangan in September.

[130] McGarry, *op. cit.*: 125

[131] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 43, 17 December, 1923: 4

[132] *Ibid.*, vol. i, no. 50, 4 February, 1924: 5

[133] *Ibid.*, vol. i, no. 51, 11 February, 1924: 2-7

with five murders by March, 1931. The *Review* editorialised on the death of Superintendant Sean Curtin, a youthful 29: 'the tenth time the hand of the cowardly assassin has fallen heavily upon the Garda'. The other fatalities were Phelan, Sergeant Griffin and Garda Murrin (Carrick-on-Suir) and Garda Ward (Hollyford).[134] It also reported on his funeral and propagandised the evil of those who murdered unarmed Gardaí, paraphrasing the officiating priest who sermonised: 'obedience and respect was due to the duly constituted civil power. God had invested the civil authority with power... and those who were guilty of disobedience to the lawfully constituted civil authority incurred upon their souls the stain of mortal sin.'[135]

Acts of heroism alleviated the gloom of posthumous commemoration, and the Scott medal was instituted as an award for bravery. O'Duffy met Colonel Walter Scott at the 1923 international police conference in New York, and Scott donated $1,000 to establish a fund for medals. Scott travelled to Ireland to present the first medal to Garda James Mulroy in 1924, at a ceremony attended by 4,000 guests. To maximise publicity, awards were made at the Commissioner's Garden Party at Garda headquarters during the *Aonach an Gharda*, until de Valera discontinued the party, after which presentations were made publicly at headquarters.[136] Scott medals were awarded in bronze, silver and, more rarely, gold. In 1930 Fitzgerald-Kenney presented nine silver and bronze medals to Gardaí. His address was solid propaganda:

> whenever danger threatened... there had always been forthcoming from the Garda Siochana men willing to take risk, face all danger, and... imperil themselves in the cause of duty and humanity. In... the discharge of their work... they were... vigilant, skilful and attentive... animated always by the highest sense of duty. It was pleasant... to note how individuals, when called upon by some sudden and dangerous emergency to exercise all their powers, physical and moral, to utilise all the resources which nature had given them, and habit and training improved, showed themselves possessed of minds fertile in expedients, prompt in decision, and quick and fearless in action.... They were always ready to perform the highest act of Christian charity, and, if needs be, lay down their lives for their fellowmen.[137]

In 1933, a less effusive Ruttledge, then Minister for Justice, was reported as saying that 'he felt they would not have enough medals to present to the Guards if they all got the

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[134] Garda Review, vol. vi, no. 5, April, 1931: 475-6

[135] *Ibid.*: 520

[136] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 119-20

[137] *Irish Times*, 25 June, 1930: 10

opportunity of showing their bravery.' The presentations were overshadowed by questions of Garda loyalty to the government. Accompanied by de Valera and Lemass, Ruttledge alluded to the uneasy détente between the Garda and the government: 'Governments might come and Governments might go, but the Civic Guards would always remain loyal servants of the people and the Government asked nothing more of them.'[138] As the decade progressed and Garda loyalty to the state was assured, the ceremonies reverted to a celebration of courage. Pathé provided a laudatory voiceover for one ceremony:

> we have come to accept acts of bravery as part of their normal routine, so often and so inconspicuously are they performed, and this must make it terribly difficult to decide what are the outstanding deeds of courage, and to whom shall these honours fall. To those whose acts have not been acknowledged here, let us pay tribute, for their deeds have not passed unnoticed.[139]

With the majority of the state's citizens Catholic, it was apparent that the new force would likewise be of the same faith. Some 98.5% of the force during the first decade was Catholic, despite the fact that Protestants made up 7.5% of the population.[140] The force represented a particular view of the state, and it was warmly welcomed by local priests in towns and villages around the country.[141] That welcome could hardly have provided better propaganda for the force as it attempted to gain legitimacy from a populace that was, in republican areas at any rate, hostile. Attempts to establish the force as a Catholic one began soon after the force's establishment. In 1923, the Chaplain to the force, Reverend Patrick McAuliffe, consecrated the Sacred Heart in a ceremony in the Depot, with O'Duffy assisting in the ceremony. Barracks around the country replicated the ceremony.[142] *Iris an Ghárda* celebrated Garda-Church relations: 'It will invest the Civic Guard with a new character in the eyes of the people of Ireland... will inspire in the minds of the people an increased confidence in their own police force, and will give satisfaction and hope for Ireland's future to Catholics throughout the world.'[143]

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[138] *Ibid.*, 21 August, 1933: 4. The uncertainty overshadowed the ceremony at which a rare gold, one silver and two bronze medals were awarded.

[139] Pathé, Film 1913.08. The presentation honoured Sergeant Wynne, Garda Gillespie and Garda Quinn.

[140] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 39

[141] *Ibid.*: 28

[142] McGarry, *op. cit.*: 125

[143] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 6, 9 April, 1923: 8

McAuliffe was appointed after O'Duffy approached Dublin's Archbishop Byrne.[144] The force's Catholic credentials were already evident at that point with the establishment of a Pioneer Total Abstinent Association branch in 1922. Pioneers wore a Sacred Heart pin, pledged to abstain from alcohol and recited a daily prayer. The pin was, with the Fáinne, the only non-regulation badge Gardaí were permitted to wear on their uniform. By 1924, 1,000 Gardaí were pioneers, and more had taken a temporary pledge. Meanwhile, Garda action against illicit stills did much to popularise the force.[145] This elevated Garda policy to a moral crusade, informed by Catholic beliefs. A cartoon in *Iris an Ghárda* depicted a Guard arresting a poitín-maker in the act of distilling. 'A Study in "Still" Life' suggests that constant reminders, even informally, made the Garda's moral obligation second nature.[146] The same issue reported on Cosgrave's first visit to the Depot: 'Garda Stations are the outposts of the Government. The Government is judged by our conduct and discipline. Ours is a sacred trust.'[147] With belief in its own religious identity, the force rigorously committed itself to supporting a Catholic state. Within its own ranks, the re-organisation of the St Joseph's Young Priests Society (founded in 1895 by the RIC, and disbanded along with it) provided funds to facilitate the seminary studies of sons of Gardaí.[148]

Under O'Duffy overseas pilgrimages were regular features. Hundreds of Gardaí used their annual leave for religious travel, for which they received no financial support. In 1928, O'Duffy led a pilgrimage of 250 Gardaí to Rome, and, in full dress uniform, a papal audience. In 1930, a pilgrimage to Lourdes, though not conducted in full dress uniform, evinced praise from the *Irish Independent* for its 'scenes of great rejoicing and devotion'. The newspaper lauded O'Duffy for arranging pilgrimages since 1928, and remarked that he had 'caused 350 Gardaí to save and arrange their annual holidays' for the pilgrimage.[149] Arriving at their destination after midnight, the party was met by the bishop of Lourdes. Then:

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[144] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 135

[145] McGarry, *op. cit.*: 120

[146] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 48, 21 January, 1924: 2

[147] *Ibid.*: 3

[148] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 137

[149] *Irish Independent*, 10 October, 1930: 6

> After a few hours rest the pilgrims attended first mass at the Grotto, where they deposited the petitions of their friends at home and lighted candles at the memorable Shrine.
> ... Dutch, German, and Italian pilgrims stood in amazement as they looked on the Gardaí... and the hearts of our pilgrims were equally stirred by the courtesy and attention bestowed on them by all nationalities...[150]

Celebrations for Catholic Emancipation and the Eucharistic Congress saw the force demonstrating its piety and policing through participation and crowd control. O'Duffy was Chief Marshall on both occasions and, after the Congress, he addressed Gardaí in the Depot, linking their conduct to the exhibition of faith they had policed:

> I congratulate you most heartily.... it would not be possible for any police force to control a million people... were it not for the ardent devotion of the people of their faith and their desire to co-operate with those responsible for maintaining order.
> ....You exerted yourselves to the special satisfaction of the Archbishop of Dublin and the Congress Committee, and to me, as Chief Marshal. My own responsibility was a big one, and I would not have dreamed of acting in such a capacity were I not alive to the fact that I would have Gardaí behind me.

He concluded by informing them they had won the admiration of visiting prelates. [151]

Like the army, a pretence was maintained that the Garda was an Irish-speaking force. Time, merely, was required to achieve bilingualism. *Iris an Ghárda* claimed in 1923 that the 'Fainne, alongside the Total Abstinence badge, is as familiar as the three stripes on a sergeant's tunic.'[152] O'Duffy, self-confessedly no native speaker, sought to publicise Garda contribution to the language. He wrote to the *Irish Independent* in 1924 outlining the force's march towards bilingualism:

> A census was taken... in relation to Irish in the Garda. There were then 23 officers, 64 sergeants, and 154 Gardaí in possession of the Fáinne, or native speakers; and 99 officers, 679 sergeants, and 1,844 Gardaí with a fair knowledge....
> Since then 45 native speakers have been admitted. In addition, 25 Gardaí from the Depot... secured the Fáinne, and about 500 others... classified 'fair knowledge'. A further 29 are now ready for examination for the Fáinne....[153]

Recruits were instructed daily for two to three hours by five native speakers. Elsewhere, the *Coisti Ceanntar* provided native speakers as instructors in almost all divisions. But O'Duffy's claims to linguistic progress were rebutted by critics:

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[150] *Ibid.*.

[151] *Irish Times*, 28 June, 1932: 8

[152] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 33, 8 October, 1923: 3

[153] *Irish Independent*, 12 December, 1924: 9

> I do not doubt the Commissioner's bona fides, for he has been a sincere Irish-Irelander for many years; but... many of his Irish-speaking Gardaí have been very successful in concealing their knowledge of Irish from the inhabitants of the districts in which they are stationed.... Gardai wearing the Fainne ... stationed in a certain Irish-speaking district speak English habitually to all who understand even a little of it.[154]

Such observations did not deter O'Duffy who believed, however misguidedly, that the state would be Irish-speaking within a decade, and he intended that Gardaí would be to the fore of the revival. He ordered the purchase of a two-year Irish course on gramophone records, with textbooks, using state funds and contributions from Gardaí.[155] Although learning Irish was ostensibly a voluntary endeavour, compulsion was unavoidable, as Irish was included in training. There were many difficulties in establishing an Irish-speaking force: many native-speaking recruits were unable to read or write the spoken tongue, and, while Irish was widely spoken socially among Gardaí, at official level English was preferred. Moreover, as the army had found, once rank and file learned that bilingual proficiency guaranteed a transfer to a remote Gaeltacht, proficiency rates declined through disinterest, or concealment.[156] The Commission on the Gaeltacht recommended replacing English-speaking Gardaí in Gaeltachtaí with Irish speakers, but many bilingual Gardaí were among the most able in the force and transfers to stations where promotional prospects were few were undesirable.[157]

By 1928, cracks were visible in O'Duffy's policy, and Fitzgerald-Kenney was forced to defend Garda commitment to the language: 'Everything is done to encourage Irish amongst the Guards. Where possible, Irish speakers are sent to Irish-speaking districts, and Guards who know a smattering of Irish are sent to these districts also, so that... they may... build up a sound knowledge of the language.'[158] Propaganda blatantly contradicted individual Gardaí avoiding the language whenever possible. O'Duffy responded gradually as his dream of bilingualism petered out, dropping paternalistic exhortations and calls on national pride for imprecations that any Garda not bilingual by 1938 faced

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[154] *Ibid.*, 19 December, 1924: 8. The letter writer to the newspaper, presumably known to O'Duffy, used the pseudonym Taistealaidhe (Traveller) as 'For twenty years I have worked hard to forward the revival' and it probably suggests a Gaelic League activist, or one of its peripatetic tutors.

[155] Allen, 2005: 95

[156] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 124-5

[157] Allen, *op. cit.*: 96

[158] DÉ, vol. 26, 7 November, 1928, col. 1589

dismissal.[159] Yet it seemed that the measured approach might be best. *The Garda Review*, praising the Linguaphone scheme, indicated that it would commence a new feature, a glossary of terms in English and Irish of use to Gardaí in the course of their duty.[160] Broy took a more pragmatic approach. Presenting Scott medals in 1933, he hoped that 'every member of the Garda Síochána should be able to... use the national language in the performance of his duties... to convert every Garda station... into a miniature Gaeltacht. They were converting their dépôt, which was once a stronghold of Anglicisation into a bulwark of Gaelicisation.'[161] Galway West division became an all-Irish division. By 1935 there were three all-Irish districts in the Donegal division and two in Kerry.[162] In 1934, he ordered a pay increase of 7.5pc for Gaeltacht service. The Government Information Bureau announced that it would be paid to Gardaí in or transferred to the division 'as a recognition of the special service... not only in using nothing but Irish in their intercourse with the Irish-speaking public, but in mastering the technical difficulties of making Irish the official language of the force in the area.'[163]

How successful this policy was is moot, although McNiffe records that Gardaí speaking Irish in court occasionally delayed the implementation of justices as judges did not understand them.[164] A debate on 2RN, 'The Revival of Irish in the Garda Síochána,' between Ailfrid Ó'Liodain, secretary of the Garda branch of the Gaelic League, and Seán de Burca, an Irish-language teacher, touched on the matter. O'Liodain claimed that the legal profession in Gaeltachtaí had made efforts to learn Irish in order to match the linguistic ability of Gardaí. Gardaí were, according to Ó'Liodain, 'making it clear to the people that they were serious about the language and that it really was a living speech.'[165] It was, however, increasingly clear that official propaganda regarding the Irish-language ability of the rank and file was beginning to show signs of untruth and distortion.

Sport required little such distortion. As with any body of young men, sporting endeavour was expected of Gardaí, and many members excelled nationally and

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[159] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 128

[160] Garda Review, vol. vi, no. 3, February, 1931: 261-2

[161] Irish Times, 26 August, 1933: 17

[162] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 129

[163] *Irish Times*, 14 July, 1934: 9

[164] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 130

[165] *Irish Independent*, 7 August, 1936:14

internationally. Gardaí were regular contestants in the Tailteann Games, and in club and county championships in Gaelic games. This participation promoted a sporting elite, and made it accessible to the citizen as spectator, or fellow contestant. Of course, it cannot be discounted that sporting prowess helped O'Duffy bask in the reflected glory of Garda athletes. Both McGarry[166] and Allen[167] draw attention to his desire for publicity from displays of sporting prowess. While he initiated the first annual Garda sports championship in Kildare in 1922, it was the 1926 foundation of *Coiste Siamsa*, the Garda entertainment committee, that formally organised sports. That summer the first *Aonach an Gharda* was held at Landsdowne Road, attended by a sizeable crowd of spectators and filmed by Pathé.[168] The company frequently filmed Garda sports, generally Gaelic games and track and field, with prominence given to sports requiring physical strength such as the discus, tug-of-war and 35-pound over-bar throw. In the latter sport, the force claimed strong credentials, with Garda Ned Tobin's record breaking throw filmed at the 1937 *aonach*.[169]

Garda boxers were treated especially well. A former British army boxer, Tommy Maloney, whose salary was paid by the Garda sports fund, coached Garda teams. Garda boxers at headquarters were practically semi-professional, with less onerous duties than their peers.[170] Film footage of Garda boxers training and sparring suggests a high level of fitness and technique.[171] The competitive record of the force bears witness to this, with 13 international team contests, two European police titles, 15 national competitions and two Amateur Boxing Association championships won in the force's first decade alone.[172] Other sports also had their luminaries. Garda Paddy Perry, for instance, won a record eight all-Ireland senior softball singles in handball from 1930-7. During that period, he also won three all-Ireland softball doubles, and the 1932 Tailteann Games singles and doubles events.

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[166] McGarry, *op. cit.*: 99

[167] Allen, *op. cit.*: 99

[168] Pathé, Film 540.11

[169] Pathé, Film 931.09

[170] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 115

[171] Pathé, Film 682.11

[172] McNiffe, *op. cit.*: 116

While great sporting feats were not expected of all Gardaí they were expected to participate in sport for its own value, and the benefits it bestowed on their policing duties: 'The man who plays is bound to be a healthy and vigorous Guard, fit for duty in sunshine or in storm; he will participate in that indescribable pleasure... reserved for men who take part in the games of the Gael.'[173] An admonitory codicil to an *Irish Times* report on Garda sports could only have been inspired by a propaganda-conscious contact within the force as it reminded Gardaí that the 'advent of summer-time leaves more time for training' and suggested all Gardaí take advantage of the lengthy evenings.[174] The heyday for Garda sports, however, passed with the Free State. An ageing force, whose members had new, familial responsibilities, was unable to maintain the successes that had done so much to promote it and win acceptance from the citizenry.

IV

Establishing state symbols that resonated with the nation was difficult. A myriad of symbols required attention: language, currency, national and merchant flags, anthem, emblem, postage stamps, seals of state and office. The most prominent images of Ireland can largely be classified as Celtic, Catholic or nationalist: bestiary associated with myths, shamrocks and round towers, the tricolour. However, the disparate nature of the nation suggests universal acceptance of any symbol was impossible. This section assesses the use of official propaganda to gain acceptance of three public symbols, an anthem, flag and coinage.

The origins of the song that became the national anthem were inauspicious. Written by Peader Kearney and Patrick Heaney around 1907, although 'The Soldier's Song' was adopted as an Irish Volunteers' marching song, it made little impression until after the 1916 Rising. That popularity caused difficulties for the first Free State governments, as they and their foes used the song for different political purposes. It was necessary, if Cumann na nGaedheal was to promulgate its own legitimacy, that it controlled an anthem. However, it failed to legislate for an anthem, perhaps hoping that 'The Soldier's Song' would gradually be accepted. Lester pressed for adoption of an anthem, and suggested that august institutions such as the Royal Irish Academy be persuaded to

[173] *Iris an Ghárda*, vol. i, no. 16, 11 June, 1923: 3

[174] *Irish Times*, 16 April, 1927: 13

request an official competition. Failing that, he suggested that eminent poets be asked to write new lyrics for 'Let Erin Remember,' though, cognizant that among the nation's greatest poets were those who spoke no Irish, he added: 'The words would have to be in Irish but if written first in English it might be easier to make a satisfactory translation into Irish.[175] Finding little support, he reiterated his call, noting that an approved anthem would be 'a psychological factor of importance... with the younger generation at home and as one of the declarations of nationhood when used abroad.'[176]

Lester declared unsuitable the lyrics to 'Let Erin Remember', a significantly more overt statement than suggesting new lyrics. Though melodically stirring, with betrayal and subjugation as its major themes it was clearly unsuitable.[177] Alternative songs were tainted by association with other political entities. The IPP had appropriated 'A Nation Once Again'; and the King, although the titular head of state, was unlikely to hear nationalists chorusing his divine safeguarding. Indeed, the notion that 'God Save the King' could be used was disabused after Trinity College, Dublin insisted on playing it for a planned visit by the Governor-General, who consequently declined the university's invitation to attend its races.[178]

Two years after seeking a decision, Lester again queried the status of an anthem when Smiddy contacted External Affairs for sheet music and lyrics.[179] He was informed that, for consistency, 'The Soldier's Song' should be used domestically and abroad.[180] Days later, when Osmonde Esmond asked Cosgrave what the anthem was, the Ceann Comhairle, Michael Hayes, declared it outside the president's competency to decide on an anthem.[181] Esmond took exception at a perceived hilarity his question provoked. He pressed the Minister for Defence whether 'in his own Department solely as regards the

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[175] NAI, D/T, S3767a: 1 February, 1924.

[176] *Ibid.*: 24 April, 1924

[177] The song opens with 'Let Erin remember the days of old / Ere her faithless sons betrayed her' and further, 'Ere the emerald gem of the western world / Was set in the crown of a stranger.'

[178] *Irish Times*, 10 June, 1929: 7

[179] NAI, D/T, S3767a: 2 July, 1926

[180] *Ibid.*: 12 July, 1926

[181] DÉ, vol. 16, 20 July, 1926, cols 2196-7

Army ... he would state ... what is considered to be the National Anthem?' Hughes response ('The Soldier's Song') merely clarified a departmental stance.[182]

The matter drifted until March 1932, when a Presidential memorandum stated that the government informally adopted the music of the song for domestic use on May 27, 1924, but, as confusion continued on July 12, 1926 it was adopted for use at overseas events. That was deemed the formal date of adoption, but, remarkably 'This... was not gazetted nor otherwise formally promulgated.... It was simply put into effect'. [183] What governments hoped to achieve by quietly adopting the anthem is unclear. Avoiding a decision ensured that if the populace disapproved of the anthem, Cumann na nGaedheal could disclaim its interest and choose an alternative. Moreover, by allowing for popular adoption, Cumann na nGaedheal was seemingly intent on prising loose a republican grip on the song, thereby associating it with the state, not politics. That a Fianna Fáil government purchased the copyright from Kearney and Heaney's estate suggests that that failed, as it was recalcitrant republicans, evoked in the opening line, who benefitted. It may be argued that Cumann na nGaedheal's propaganda approach was less effective than Fianna Fáil's swift adoption of an anthem they had long professed to admire. Nonetheless, Fianna Fáil were similarly reticent about promoting the anthem: twice in the Dáil, the party's Education Minister rejected proposals to have it taught in schools.[184]

The tricolour of green, white and orange, introduced by the Young Irelanders and symbolising a truce between the island's two traditions, became an insurrectionary flag, replacing earlier Irish flags, which the *Irish Times* described: St Patrick's flag (blue, with a harp in the centre, changed to three crowns by Henry VIII); the newspaper speculated that the first use of green was influenced by the Royal Standard of Ulster (a yellow lion on a green background).[185] The tricolour was simply adopted as the Free State flag: the constitution contained no reference to it, and it was never legislated for. The lack of official guidance, however, facilitated non-compliance. Johnson objected to the Royal College of Physicians' failure to fly the tricolour for visiting American physicians, hosted by Cosgrave, although it flew the British and American flags: 'the College of Physicians,

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[182] *Ibid.*, cols 2197-8

[183] NAI, D/T, S3767a: 31 March, 1932

[184] DÉ, vol. 49, 25 July, 1933, col. 442 and vol. 51, 26 April, 1935, col. 2361

[185] *Irish Times*, 8 March, 1932: 13

having failed to associate in its public display of bunting the flag of the Irish Free State, is not representing the views of the great body of medical men in this country.'[186] It seems unfair to use Dáil privilege to cavil at the college, given that the tricolour had neither legal standing, nor universal approval. Almost a year later, Cosgrave used the same forum to reject calls by Osmond Esmonde to legislate for the flag:

> The PRESIDENT: It is not considered necessary to introduce legislation for the purpose of legalising the national flag, which has already been established for non-maritime purposes by usage.
> Mr. ESMONDE: Is the President aware that this is the only nation in Europe which has not legalised its national flag? ...does the President expect that Irish citizens will pay proper respect to a State which refuses to legalise its national flag?[187]

Perhaps, like the national anthem, the state preferred gradual acceptance. However, sport's partisan nature, exacerbated by partition, rendered this unrealistic. Northern opposition to participating under the tricolour at the 1928 Olympics was particularly problematic. Many sports bodies enjoyed an all-island basis, under the aegis of the Irish Olympic Council, which had registered the tricolour as the Irish flag for the games. Northern sports administrators suggested St Patrick's flag as a compromise. The official IOC response, articulated by its president, J.J. Keane, attempted to raise the flag above politics:

> what difference does a flag make or why should we interfere in sport? We are endeavouring... to maintain the unity of Ireland in sport, and while politicians have divided the country we... will use every means... to retain Ireland as an independent unit.
> ... if the politicians will only take a back seat... the flag question will not cause any difficulties.
> ... it is my intention, after these games, to see if it is possible that the old Irish flag would be acceptable to the Olympic Council. We see no reason why... a flag should make any difference to a man who wins for his country.[188]

As the flag was becoming an international matter, it was perhaps wise of successive governments to tiptoe around the issue, especially as sport, despite Keane's protestations, was heavily politicised. Sporting discussions continued into 1929, when the Tailteann games came into focus. The unfortunately named W. Cheater from Belfast, claimed that those 'he represented regarded the Free State Emblem as a rebel flag; and, of course, the Free State might regard the Union Jack as a rebel flag.'[189] His Ulster colleagues rejected

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[186] DÉ, vol. 12, 11 June, 1925, cols 844-5

[187] DÉ, vol. 15, 29 April, 1926, col. 739

[188] *Irish Times*, 30 May, 1928: 7

[189] *Irish Independent*, 20 May, 1929: 7

the explanation that as the tricolour was registered with the League of Nations Irish teams could use no other flag. Yet the tricolour was not always the chosen flag for international sports events. In 1931, Deputy Mullins upbraided McGilligan over 'the question of international matches, where a foreign flag and a foreign anthem are used when a team claiming to represent Ireland takes part.'[190]

This was a puzzling attack, notwithstanding Mullins' Fianna Fáil credentials, finely tuned to detect nationalist umbrage at the slightest provocation. It suggests that, having adopted the flag because of its revolutionary symbolism, and lodged it with the League of Nations, Cumann na nGaedheal was unwise not to publicise the tricolour's adoption. However, Fianna Fáil, too, were slow to propagandise the flag: a letter to the *Irish Independent* called on Derrig, then Minister for Education, to raise its prominence in schools: 'In America I understand there is a Flag on every school and the children are trained to salute it and pledge to the Flag every day. Our Tricolour is not made sacred enough by the "powers that be." I trust that Mr. O Deirg will see that something be done in our schools.'[191] Derrig did not hasten to comply, and the flag's status meandered until enshrined in the 1937 Constitution: 'The national flag is the tricolour of green white and orange' a description so scant that it may imply that the flag was sufficiently established to omit detail determining whether the bars would be vertical or horizontal, or of equal size.

Few propaganda symbols are as pervasive as those adopted by the masses for their own use and benefit, and issuing a new national coinage, which could communicate wealth and political messages, was a logical step for Cumann na nGaedheal. While the state would make a substantial profit on issuing coins, a financial boon to hard-pressed public coffers, the decision to issue coins was political rather than economic. Blythe's Dáil proposal claimed it would 'establish a separate and distinctive token coinage for the Saorstát.... we should have here a coinage distinctively our own, bearing the devices of this country.'[192] He was adamant that appropriate designs be adopted, and indicated his desire to appoint an artistic committee to oversee the selection. W.B. Yeats, later appointed chairman of the committee, thanked Blythe for promising:

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[190] DÉ, vol. 39, 1 July, 1931, col. 1237

[191] *Irish Independent*, 15 November, 1933: 4

[192] DÉ, vol. 14, 27 January 1926, col. 159

> a competent, artistic committee to advise on the designs.... The official designs of the Government, especially... postage stamps and coinage, may be described... as the silent ambassadors of national taste. The Government... has the right ambition.... our coinage design will, I hope, be such that even the humblest citizen will be proud of it.[193]

Blythe set preconditions for the committee: inscriptions were to be in Irish; a harp was to feature on most, if not all, denominations; and no representations of modern personages were permitted.[194] Yeats' acceptance of his commission gave the state the gravitas that ensured the process would enjoy artistic and cultural distinction. The committee canvassed the Royal Irish Academy, Royal Hibernian Academy and the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland for suggestions,[195] before embarking on a artistic design competition eventually won by a Yorkshire sculptor, Percy Metcalfe, whose entry featured native domestic animals.[196]

To stimulate interest in the coins, leather or card mounted collectors sets were sold at 15*s.* 6*d.* and 10*s.* respectively.[197] The *Irish Independent* reported a decision to mount exhibitions of the coinage in Dublin and nationwide, though plans for a photographic booklet were abandoned.[198] The exhibition opened in Dublin in November, 1928; Blythe delivered an address, and Bodkin gave an illustrated talk on the coins. [199] The *Irish Times* reported Blythe's speech:

> Now they had a coinage issued under the authority of a Parliament democratically elected by the people. The possession of a distinctive coinage was one of the indications of sovereignty. Under all the Home Rule Bills the Parliament would have been prevented from dealing with coinage among other matters.[200]

However, the negative reaction that the coins engendered made positive publicity rapidly fade. In the Dáil Blythe was asked:

> whether the design of a pig and her litter and other farmyard animals is calculated to inspire the public as to the standard of Gaelic culture that National Ireland is striving for to-day; whether something more in keeping with the Christian glories

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[193] SÉ, vol. 6, 3 March, 1926, cols 501-2

[194] *Irish Times*, 1 December, 1928: 9

[195] *Irish Times*, 22 June 1926: 7. The committee included: Dermod O'Brien (RHA), Lucius O'Callaghan, Thomas Bodkin (both National Gallery of Ireland) and Barry Egan.

[196] The coins were: farthing (woodcock); halfpenny (sow and litter); penny (hen and brood); threepence (hare); sixpence (Irish wolfhound); shilling (bull); florin (salmon) and half-crown (horse).

[197] *Irish Independent*, 22 November 1928: 8

[198] *Ibid.*, 2 August, 1928: 8

[199] *Ibid.*, 22 November, 1928: 8

[200] *Irish Times*, 1 December, 1928: 9

> of Ireland should not be substituted for... designs... regarded... as a travesty on our country.[201]

Objections from religious groups, concerned citizens, cultural nationalists, outraged republicans and unionists flooded the *Irish Times*' letters page. Yet the design held propaganda value: uniquely among the dominions, the coins replaced the king's head with a national symbol. The harp recalled Brian Boru, triumphant over invaders. Celtic claims could be made for the salmon, bull and wolfhound; all featured in mythology. Moreover, the depiction of animals reflected the importance of agriculture to the economy, which Bodkin highlighted:

> Wealth in the earliest times was always calculated in terms of cattle. Thence comes the word pecunia (money), derived from the pecus, the beast. The wealth of Ireland is still derived in overwhelming proportion from the products of her soil. What, therefore, could be more appropriate than the depiction upon our coinage of these products?[202]

The inclusion of Saorstát Éireann on the obverse, rather than its translated version, further served to publicise the coins' nationalist credentials.

V

Symbols in Northern Ireland were a peculiar admixture of Celtic, Protestant, British and provincial motifs, and it was not unusual to variously combine them. Ulster Protestant symbols were based on religious and historical themes, and on Freemason-inspired Orange Order motifs.[203] In terms of currency and anthem, nothing changed in Northern Ireland after partition. 'God Save the King' remained the anthem, for good or ill sparing nationalists a mirror of the interminable debate over the adoption of an anthem in the Free State, while the same coinage and notes circulated among unionists and nationalists. Even the Royal Ulster Constabulary, replacing the RIC in the province, retained their predecessors cap badge combining a harp, shamrock and crown.

Post-partition Ulster had a readymade flag in the Union flag. For Ulster unionists, the flag represented their enduring loyalty to the Empire, and became a powerful symbol of their identity as a region and distinct culture within the empire.[204] A sizeable nationalist

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[201] DÉ, vol. 20, 2 August 1927, col. 1199

[202] *Irish Times*, 8 December, 1928: 2

[203] Morris, *op. cit.*: 108

[204] *Ibid.*: 112

minority, preferring the tricolour, was obviously excluded, indeed, self-excluded, from sharing that identity. The flag had steadily increased in popularity throughout the Home Rule era: the unionist general election campaign of 1906, for instance, had bedecked the Ulster Hall with Union flag[205] while Pathé footage of a ceremonial presentation of colours in 1916 depicts the flag, and possibly the Red Hand of Ulster, being blessed by Protestant clerics.[206] It was a logical continuation of policy and tradition to retain it as the flag of the province, and as a means of distinguishing between the loyal and the disloyal. However, the flag did not fly on all public buildings except on customary days, associated with the monarchy or Empire for instance, and was not, from an official perspective at any rate, a provocation to nationalists. It did, however, fly from Orange Lodges, many public schools and other private buildings associated with unionism or Protestantism.[207] Meanwhile, republicans and nationalists in Northern Ireland differed in their interpretations of the flag of the Free State and of their respective ideologies,[208]although the tricolour, in a strict sense was not declared an illegal flag in the North.[209] The Special Powers Act, 1922 did, however, make provision for the RUC to prohibit displays that threatened disturbances of the peace, and this was widely used,[210] although it was not until the Flags and Emblems Act, 1954 that guaranteed the primacy of the Union flag above other unspecified – but clearly intended to mean the tricolour – flags.[211]

The military presence in Northern Ireland was substantial, a reminder of the need to maintain security and independence, and of the North's contribution to the British army. In all, some 16 battalions were in Northern Ireland in 1922.[212] Military commemoration served to idealise the army in Northern Ireland, but where the Free State looked to heroes of the rebellion, the Great War was used to promote awareness of the self-sacrifice of Ulstermen to preserve the Union. The slaughter of the Ulster Division at the

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[205] Boyle, 1962: 143

[206] Pathé, Film 2370.04

[207] Morris, *op. cit.:* 122

[208] *Ibid.:* 137-9

[209] *Ibid.*: 139

[210] Jeffrey, 2000: 79

[211] McIntosh, 1999: 125

[212] Coogan, 2003: 303. British battalion strength varied between 600 and 1,000 troops, suggesting approximately 10,000 to 16,000 troops serving in Northern Ireland, compared to the post-civil war complement of 5,000 in the Free State, which had approximately twice the population of the North.

Somme in 1916 became a focal part of unionist, and particularly Orange rhetoric: in death they inspired contemporaries to ensure the defeat of Home Rule, and future generations to ensure the preservation of the Northern Irish state.[213] This, Switzer posits, took place away from politics and politicians at local level, bringing together elements of unionist society – churches, police, army and loyal orders in emotionally stirring memorialisation.[214] However, their deeds being commemorated in a public exercise of propaganda did not put bread on the tables of ex-servicemen, many reduced to penury by the mid-1920s. Colonel Woods pressed Craig repeatedly for word of his announcement that a Chelsea-style hospital for veterans would be opened. Sales of the British Legion's poppy had been well-supported in Ulster, but it was insufficient to support needy former servicemen.[215] When Dawson Bates later stated that he was unaware of 'any appreciable number of ex-Servicemen in the workhouses of Northern Ireland outside Belfast' Beattie chided him 'that between 300 and 400 ex-Servicemen are in the workhouses of Northern Ireland owing to the inattention of the local authorities in their respective areas.'[216] The treatment of ex-servicemen fallen on hard times seems anomalous with the lionising of fallen soldiers; where the latter's sacrifices were glorified, the former's poverty seemed something the unionist government preferred to keep from view.

Closer to home than the military, largely composed of British, not Ulster, regiments the Royal Ulster Constabulary was a focal point for loyal pride. Though intended to be one-third Catholic (assimilating 1,000 former RIC officers),[217] it never achieved this figure as nationalists preferred to ignore it and its sister forces, the A, B and C constabularies, the latter garnering a reputation as violently sectarian. At the foundation of the state, 50,000 officers served among the various policing organisations.[218] Appeals to Catholics to join the reserve came from Craig himself, promoting the province as a tolerant state:

> Our Special Constabulary are open to all law-abiding Roman Catholics - (Hon. Members: Hear, hear) - and have always been open to them. We have officers and men who are Catholics in that force to-day, and I in this House repeat openly that we will welcome more and more the law-abiding citizens of the Catholic

[213] Switzer, 2007: 112

[214] *Ibid.*: 153

[215] SP, vol. 8, 8 December, 1927, cols 4181-2

[216] *Ibid.*, vol. 9, cols 1087-8

[217] Coogan, 2003: 300

[218] *Ibid.*: 303

> faith to enter our Constabulary Force in order to help us to keep law and order in Belfast.[219]

The failure of Catholics to join the force later became a propaganda stick with which to beat the nationalist community, which, in not embracing the proper authority for law and order, had once again proven its disloyalty.

Craig paid tribute to the efforts of the RUC in restoring law and order to Ulster in early 1923, and in particular their close cooperation with military forces.[220] The unionist view of law and order was for nationalists coercion and police complicity in murders and intimidation. Draconian legislation gave the RUC the authority to proscribe events deemed counter to good public order. The Special Powers Act, 1922 provided for not just heavy-handed policing and administration of justice, but also gave the state the power to censor society, and prevent nationalist (and labour) propaganda in the guise of public meetings and parades from being heard and seen. It was not merely an act of administrative coercion, it was in its own right a form of propaganda: Jeffery records that it was only used against unionist interests on three occasions in the inter-war period.

As in the Free State, efforts were made to promote the police as part of civic life. A proposal was made to send a detachment to the Ulster Pavilion at Wembley's British Empire Exhibition.[221] The idea was ultimately abandoned, but in referring to the presence of other police forces at the exhibition it suggested an awareness of boosting the international credentials (and thus the domestic propaganda) of the force. Similarly, sporting prowess was something to promote. Stormont heard a request to send an RUC boxing team to compete in the British Empire Games in 1934.[222] Aside from promoting the RUC team, it was also seen as a means of breaking from the Irish Amateur Boxing Association which, to the chagrin of unionists, was a Dublin-controlled organisation.

VI

Proof of the success in securing the state was that no further armed conflict erupted after the civil war ended, although the threat of strife simmered constantly. The army mutiny,

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[219] SP, vol. 2, 28 March, 1922, col. 230

[220] *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 27 February, 1923, col. 22

[221] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 27 March, 1924, cols 373-4,

[222] *Ibid.*, vol. 16, 13 March, 1934, col. 400

Fianna Fáil craftiness in moulding elements of the army and police in its image, and the political uncertainties occasioned by O'Duffy's Blueshirts and his questionable political judgement could have occasioned conflict. However, in the army and the Garda the state had two institutions that regarded themselves as its defenders. That was no small achievement, and it facilitated maintenance of civil order in which democracy could function. Both institutions demonstrated their absolute loyalty to the state, irrespective of the party of government, and this may be because both were modelled on the composition and aspirations of the nation: overtly Gaelic, Catholic and Celtic, with the republican values of inclusiveness and tolerance of traditions – largely unionist and imperialist – tacked on half-heartedly.

Propagandising the institutions propagandised the state, and both were presented to the nation as exemplars of statehood. Key attributes were selected in this regard: civic-mindedness combined with a sense of duty and loyalty towards the state that civilian were encouraged to mimic; a sporting, healthy way of living; and the espousal of a Gaelic, Catholic identity, however artificial the former proved to be. Their utility as propaganda vehicles was greater than other state institutions that retained a lingering whiff of British rule or simply British procedures, the civil service and local government, for instance. They provided a tangible link to the revolutionary period, and the near cult-like adoration of pre-civil war Volunteers, IRA and IRP - the bodies who had won independence, whose later recruits were imbued with a sense of reflected glory in those achievements, as was the nation at large.

The *quid pro quo* for the army and Garda was that they would be supported and promoted by the state, as they had done for the state. The use of both for parades, concerts, sports, and religious worship propagandised idealised Irishness, winning support for the uniform and, in turn, the state. However, while public regard for them was achieved, political support was less forthcoming. They were treated as possessions of the state, to be deployed when a political situation required propaganda. Their identities were either subsumed into the state's identity, the better to monitor and control potentially fractious elements, or were denied their full expression by the creation of politically-motivated parallel organisations. That both remained loyal to the state, particularly in the face of Fianna Fáil provocation, was the greatest propaganda they achieved in securing the state.

Chapter 6

Commercial Propaganda

I

By any reckoning, the economic outlook for the Free State at its inception was poor. The island's industrial base remained within the United Kingdom and, although the northern shipbuilding and linen industries were in slow decline, their value to the all-island economy remained substantial. The expectation of partial reunification, leading to an anticipated subsuming of the north-eastern corner, raised faint hopes that were dashed by the Boundary Commission's failure to initiate reunification. Northern Ireland appeared potentially wealthier, though, as will be shown below, that prospective wealth was illusory and propaganda was heavily politicised. The Free State produced very little: it had too few resources for heavy industry, and the industrial and agricultural revolutions that had transformed Britain had made little impression. The *Irish Times* reported Richard Mulcahy's blunt honesty in 1927:

> Compared with agriculture they could not be said to have an industrial policy... but it was clear that definite preliminaries towards such a policy had been taken by the Government. Until they had reached the stage at which they could say that there were a certain group or groups of industries which would be the foundation of their manufactures, their industrial ship must be rudderless and anchorless.[1]

The domestic market was too small to support manufacturing enterprises, though a small number of brands were known outside the island. However, the export market was too focussed on Britain's agricultural and alimentary needs and other markets were neglected.

Yet, to fulfil the basic services of a state, taxation on tradeable commodities, profits and income was needed, and the imbalanced public finances, with an excess of imports over exports, presented difficulties. Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil broached the problem in ways that reflected their ideologies, dragging the state from free trade to resolute protectionism, not simply for economic reasons but cultural and chauvinistic. The first decade saw efforts to improve the quality of agricultural produce, and to bring industrial modernity to the state through the establishment of semi-state companies, the quasi-socialist, yet capitalist bodies established with market monopolies. They injected

[1] *Irish Times*, 12 February, 1927: 5

capital into agriculture and industry, and, with the Shannon scheme, facilitated modern machinery and equipment. Efforts to stage a belated industrial revolution were as worthy of propaganda as the sectors they developed. From the Fianna Fáil takeover, however, propaganda for commerce preferred the cottage industry to the factory, making a virtue of production practices that were already antiquated and unviable without state support.

This chapter examines efforts to propagandise primary resources and industry for economic development. It will be shown that they were seen as sectors where the state had the natural resources and manpower to compete on international markets. Propaganda for semi-states will also be examined, with particular reference to the Shannon electrification scheme and Solus Teoranta, a lightbulb manufacturer, and the Irish Turf Board. It will be shown that whatever the pragmatic economic reasons for their creation, their promotion owed more to atavistic nationalism than to the less politically and socially sensitive consumer loyalty that brand and price conscious commercial propaganda would have inculcated. The chapter will conclude by looking at efforts to propagandise Free State produce domestically, in Britain, Europe and the United States.

II

With many members who had commercial or industrial experience and interests, the northern parliament was ideally poised to understand the needs of business, and to commit funds to promoting its traditional mainstay industries, linen and shipbuilding. Both, experiencing decline, needed propaganda. Linen, which provided employment across the province, was systemically important to the northern economy. John Milne Barbour proposed opening the public purse to an undeniably generous degree to fund a linen propaganda campaign in America. Private interests in Ulster were willing to contribute £2,000 each year for 1925 and 1926, and the administration had decided on a grant up to £10,000 for the period. Unlike in the Free State where official control over disbursement of propaganda monies was virtually sacrosanct, Barbour 'proposed to place the advertising scheme in the hands of a thoroughly informed Committee in New York.'[2] Labour leader Samuel Kyle endorsed the proposal, noting that Joseph Devlin had

[2] Sp, vol. 6, 30 October, 1925, col. 1675

proposed a similar scheme.[3] Whether unionists were open to accepting Labour or Nationalist counsel is highly debatable, and the scheme was most likely introduced to support business interests strongly represented in unionist ranks.

The scheme extended beyond the initial two years, and Barbour advised Stormont in 1927 that the New York committee, composed of local representatives of the linen manufacturers, was engaged in a broad range of promotional activities. These included a monthly trade magazine, trade and consumer advertising, booklets and literature, window displays and press relations. In addition, an educational programme was conducted in schools and colleges, while women's clubs and art exhibitions were also targeted.[4] Barbour told Stormont in 1928 that the scheme's success had encouraged the linen industry to include the dominions in future campaigns. Curiously, in reporting the success, he stated that the US market which purchased 47.6% of all pre-war British linen had declined to 42% in 1926.[5] This suggests that, at best, the campaign had arrested a decline, but not promoted growth. At worst, it hinted at failure so obvious that new markets needed to be developed before the decline became terminal. Certainly, earlier protestations of success had failed to convince Joseph Devlin, who commented of Barbour: 'he has given a grant of £10,000 a year to advertise linen, and because he advertises linen linen is being sold, when he knows it is not being sold at all.... He knows that the linen industry is of much more importance to the prosperity of this Province than even shipbuilding, and that it is in as bad a position as it possibly can be.'[6] Lloyd Campbell, too, while supporting Barbour's plan to promote linen in markets other than America, suggested all was not well despite generous funding of propaganda. If the linen industry 'could be brought back to its former state it would mean a very much larger circulation of money in the Province.'[7] Devlin maintained his attack on linen propaganda in 1929: 'What is the position in the linen trade? It is almost painful to recite it.... What is their panacea for this? They find £10,000 for putting placards on the dead walls in the

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 30 October, 1925, col. 1678

[4] *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 9 November, 1926, cols 2247-8

[5] *Ibid.*, vol. 9, 10 October, 1928, col. 2270

[6] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 8 December, 1927, col. 4097

[7] *Ibid.*, vol. 9, 6 March, 1928, cols 11-12

United States of America. That is what they have done for the linen trade.... The linen trade is not improving; it is going from bad to worse.'[8]

By 1936 Devlin's scathing words had become prophetic, and the parliament's vote of over £66,000 during the course of the campaign seemed an ill-considered and futile attempt to prevent the inevitable. The campaign was wound up in America in 1931, and efforts turned towards stimulating the home market. Barbour admitted that while 'it is not possible to assess with any degree of accuracy the value of the benefits accruing to the linen trade from these publicity campaigns, it is generally felt amongst the trade that... this money was instrumental in preventing a far heavier slump in linen exports than actually occurred.'[9] Success was redefined as not failing as badly as might have happened, hardly an optimistic note for a rapidly declining industry. A new scheme was proposed, with the government giving a more generous grant of 15s for every £1 contributed by the Irish Linen Guild, though it was capped at £2,250 with the monies being spent on developing the home market.[10] Labour's John Beattie scoffed ata the proposal: 'I know perfectly well that the competition in linen by many countries is meeting you at the doors. I do not think this propaganda is going to meet that competition. Therefore, we are going on a fool's journey in the spending of this money without having any results.'[11]

Economically, Ulster made much of its shipbuilding industry. It was not merely a world-class industry, it was integral to the loyalist, Protestant identity shared by the majority of Stormont's members, and its continued success was reassurance of a continuing hegemony. Pathé recorded repairs to the 'Lochmonar', which had split apart in 1927. Drydocked in Belfast, the '"Surgical" Shipbuilding Marvel!' and rejoining operation had propaganda value.[12] Four years later, the launch of the 28,000 ton liner 'Georgic' also attracted Pathé, giving the city and Harland and Wolfe's dockyard a promotional fillip.[13] Promoting the shipbuilding industry, the opening of a new channel and dock in Belfast

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[8] *Ibid.*, vol. 10, 26 February, 1929, col. 44

[9] *Ibid.*, vol. 18, 14 October, 1936, col. 2002

[10] *Ibid.*, vol. 18, 14 October, 1936, col. 2003

[11] *Ibid.*, vol. 18, 14 October, 1936, col. 2005

[12] Pathé, Film 736.17

[13] Pathé, Film 875.21

by the Duke of Abercorn with the Countess of Athlone was also broadcast.[14] These were, however, propaganda efforts that unsuccessfully sought to stem the tide for the industry. Like linen, shipbuilding was in terminal decline, and government efforts to promote the industry through the Loans Guarantee Acts, 1926-32 were virtually inconsequential: total employment at Belfast's shipyards fell from 20,000 in 1924 to 2,000 in 1933.[15]

For other aspects of Ulster's industrial and commercial activities, participation in trade fairs and exhibitions was useful propaganda. An extensive pavilion exhibited a wide range of Ulster agricultural and industrial produce at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley.[16] Governmental funding of £12,000 was made available to ensure its success.[17] Five banks also contributed £200 each to fund a linen exhibit at the event.[18] Participation was not entirely to promote Ulster industry. Lloyd Campbell, while noting that the Ministry of Commerce had participated in at least eight Empire Marketing Board events in the previous year, made it clear that exhibiting was about establishing that 'we all - Northern Ireland, Australia, Canada, and all the other units - are members of one great Commonwealth - the British Empire.'[19] While this was consistent with Empire Marketing Board aims, it could be argued that the development of overseas trade was second to promoting the province's loyal credentials. An inward-looking economic policy that sought to reduce imports by encouraging domestic consumption resulted in creation of the state-sponsored Ulster Industries Development Association, charged with stimulating domestic consumption and attracting new industry to the province.[20] The UIDA engaged in film propaganda, assisted by the Ministry of Commerce. Its most influential film 'The Star of Ulster' promoted Ulster produce, and the organisation's Star Associate scheme: the UIDA had a six pointed star representing the six counties.[21] The New industries (Development) Acts of 1932 and 1937 facilitated UIDA's efforts, but the latter itself required publicity; Barbour proposed voting £1,000 in the Estimates towards

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[14] *Irish Times*, 26 August, 1933: 4

[15] Hennessy, *op. cit.*: 56

[16] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 29 May, 1924, cols 1177-8

[17] *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 1 April, 1924, cols 427-8

[18] *Ibid.*, cols 435-6

[19] *Ibid.*, vol. 9, 6 March, 1928, cols 11-12

[20] *Ibid.*, vol. 11, 6 November, 1929, cols 989-90

[21] Hill, 2006.: 10-11

achieving this end.[22] As with so many official efforts to promote northern industry, the act was at best a modest success.[23]

III

With an economy that was largely agrarian, under-developed and under-resourced, it was logical for the Free State to look to the land and its produce for prosperity. Midway through the civil war, Lester sought publicity information from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and its nationwide network of instructors. He requested material that dealt with legislation, delegations to the department, and local reports that agriculture was returning to normal, despite the military circumstances.[24] He received several reports that, cumulatively, suggested a slow, steady amelioration. Agriculture thanked its instructors for their perspicacious reports, which Lester was able to publicise: 'it will have been observed from the Press that much of the information furnished in this connection was helpful.'[25]

Agriculture's return to normality after the civil war was only a partial boost. Indifference to modern farming methods and a lack of capital to exploit natural resources hampered farming's development. A cow testing scheme, pre-dating the state, was continued to breed out cows with low milk yields. Posters asked farmers 'Why Keep Poor Cows' and encouraged them to 'Grade Up Your Cattle'.[26] British Pathé captured the 1923 Spring Show in the RDS with Cosgrave and T. M. Healy ostentatiously inspecting cattle. The segment ended with a close-up of an imposing bull, highlighting the benefits of improved breeding.[27] Improving animal husbandry, tillage, sugar beet, and egg production preoccupied Agriculture in the 1920s. Early agricultural propaganda lacked focus: most efforts at publicising the need to improve addressed the farmer, rather than the industry. Legislation for the classification and marketing of eggs was publicised: the Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Act, 1924 forced farmers and exporters to improve the quality of their produce, or face penalties of fines and incarceration. However, FitzGerald

[22] SP, vol. 20, 30 November, 1937, cols 159-60

[23] Hennessy, *op. cit.:* 56

[24] NAI, D/Ag, 92/2/1996: 1 March, 1923

[25] *Ibid.:* 7 July, 1923

[26] NAI, D/Ag, 92/3/191

[27] Pathé, Film 306.08

acknowledged that exports were largely limited to Britain: 'Butter, bacon and eggs being commodities which several Continental countries export in order to compete on the British market with Irish produce, no special efforts have been made to seek on the Continent of Europe alternatives to the British market.'[28]

The quality of produce was so inferior it might have been deleterious for the agricultural industry to permit its export. Hogan informed the Dáil that:

> the price of home-made butter has absolutely collapsed. There is no market for it now except the butter factories; farmers' rough lumps cannot be exported, and rightly so. We will not allow it. It very often contains more than 16 per cent. of water, and there are other good reasons for preventing its export.[29]

The department continued its promotion of better farming practices, issuing instructive leaflets on topics as varied as soil quality, bee-keeping and pickling. It also employed instructors to demonstrate modern farming methods, particularly effective propaganda at fairs and industrial shows. The establishment of the Agricultural Credit Corporation, which included provision for loans for marketing produce also facilitated propaganda for farm improvements.[30] Hogan was adamant that agriculture's future lay in giving farmers capital to make their concerns profitable, and his propaganda for the ACC encapsulated this. He was keen also to present the corporation as a patriotic endeavour:

> If the ordinary decent farmer cannot get credit at present it is largely because he winks at other farmers trying to cod the banks and other mortgagees. Agriculture will never be able to get reasonable cheap credits in this country until the whole point of view in regard to the selling out of land, held as security, changes, and until it is looked on as a crime, as a dishonest act, to attempt by force to prevent a mortgagee from selling a farm on which he has a mortgage. It has got to be looked upon as robbery, just as we look on stealing money from banks, post offices, or individuals. Farmers must realise that it is dishonest, that there is nothing patriotic about it.[31]

The *Irish Times*, receptive to these propaganda flourishes, editorialised that if farmers 'show even a tithe of Mr. Hogan's enthusiasm in the conduct of their industry – if they recognise the necessity for honest dealing in their affairs and cultivate a spirit of independence in their attitude towards society – Irish agriculture will flourish.'[32]

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[28] DÉ, vol. 7, 25 April, 1924, col. 20

[29] *Ibid.*, vol. 18, 26 January, 1927, cols 136-7

[30] *Ibid.*, vol. 19, 26 April, 1927, cols 1518-9

[31] *Ibid.*, col. 1530

[32] *Irish Times*, 24 March, 1927: 8. See also 18 April, 1927: 6 for a similar treatment of Hogan's propaganda.

Coincidental with the ACC's establishment was the creation of co-operative creameries. Presented as a means of reducing costs and allowing farmers negotiate better prices, the complex scheme entailed the purchase and re-sale of privately owned creameries, and the closure of others, about 180 in all. The *Irish Times* hailed Hogan's vision as it was 'designed to bring the Irish Free State into line with the most progressive dairying countries in the world, and... to place the Irish producer on terms of equality with his foreign rivals.[33] Fianna Fáil disapproved, and Hogan met Dáil criticisms by alluding to its propaganda value:

> If this scheme was carried out in Denmark it would be written up in the English 'Times': it would be written up all over the world. It would be said, 'Who would do it but the Danes?' There would not be a party in Denmark but would make use of it for propaganda. It would be pointed out in this Dáil as an example of what a go-ahead and enterprising people they were. But because it is done in this country everybody is out to find fault and show how much better he could have done it.[34]

He presented the scheme as a patriotic one, defending farmers' interests:

> there are some foreign concerns which are very much concerned with the competition... from the creameries we have purchased. They would be delighted to come in and start factories here.... They have very big amounts of money behind them, and they would be very glad to come in here in the hope of wiping out the co-operative system and taking over part of the industry from the farmers again. We are determined to stop that.[35]

His efforts in legislating for improvements to agriculture were, perhaps, the propaganda most needed. They stressed that the government would strive to improve access to capital and quality of produce, and also enabled future propaganda to highlight the improved quality of dairy exports to Britain relative to European and Commonwealth rivals.

The horse industry prevailed upon the government for propaganda support. Ministerial attendance at the Royal Dublin Society's annual Horse Show, and the success of the army equestrian team, were useful propaganda. The centrepiece of the Horse Show, the Aga Khan Trophy, offered propaganda opportunities even in defeat for Irish jumpers: in 1930, McGilligan congratulated the Swiss team which won the Aga Khan trophy for the third time, observing that on each occasion the team competed on Irish horses. External Affairs publicised the Swiss response which stated that 90% of Swiss army officers were

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[33] *Ibid.*, 19 March, 1927: 8

[34] DÉ, vol. 21, 19 October, 1927, col. 253

[35] DÉ, vol. 25, 10 July, 1928, col. 154

mounted on Irish horses, while cavalry units were supplied with Irish remounts.[36] In 1932, having met a delegation from the Blood Stock Breeders Association, the state agreed to support an international publicity campaign by getting information from overseas representatives on the leading sports newspapers in their host countries.[37] The BBAI was a favoured body as 1934 cabinet minutes recorded: 'The Minister for Agriculture was authorised to inform the Bloodstock Breeders' Association of Ireland that the Government would sympathetically consider the question of contributing towards the cost of advertising Irish racehorses abroad, subject to the submission of a satisfactory scheme.' Irish horseflesh was a highly-prized commodity, and promoting a prosperous breeding industry in which the state could justifiably claim world class credentials, was a sensible action.

Fianna Fáil commenced an initiative to encourage greater production of wheat in order to reduce imports of the grain. While it was successful in increasing the acreage over a few years, it was hindered by Finance insisting on the lowest possible cost. Agriculture, authorised by the Executive Council in November 1932 to initiate an advertising campaign for wheat production, sent proposals to Finance for a five week, 36 local newspaper campaign, costing £600. In requesting a response by the end of the week, they antagonised Finance,[38] who stalled the proposal by requesting more information.[39] This being only slightly less opaque, and with a renewed appeal for urgency dictated by the looming growing season, Agriculture failed to satisfy Finance, who offered a choice of four cheaper campaigns.[40] Agriculture rejected the proposals as a poster campaign had been carried out in autumn by each county Committee of Agriculture, and insisted on newspaper advertising.[41] Finance queried how Agriculture's campaign was better than its own suggestions, and, ominously, why the poster propaganda had 'proved defective.'[42] Finance's delaying tactics meant the campaign was never undertaken, and the fallout saw

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[36] NAI, D/FA, 34/156: 15 October, 1930

[37] *Ibid.*, 32/34: 19 June, 1931

[38] NAI, D/Fin, S003/0009/32: 11 January, 1933

[39] *Ibid.*: 13 January, 1933

[40] *Ibid.*. The options were: 40,000 posters to be put up by Gardaí - £150; one insertion into provincial newspapers, and 40,000 posters - £276; one insertion in the provincial press and 8,000 posters to be put up by Gardaí - £151; or advertisements in three Dublin dailies and the *Cork Examiner* at regular (unspecified) intervals and 8,000 posters - £115.

[41] *Ibid.*: 24 January, 1933

[42] *Ibid.*: 27 January, 1933

the department responding angrily to a peevish Agriculture claim that it had deliberately sabotaged the scheme.[43]

Nonetheless, efforts to increase wheat production began to yield results. In July 1933, Agriculture sought sanction for a new campaign. The department pointed to results since the scheme's commencement - an increase from 28,000 to 64,000 acres by registered growers; 6,000 acres (growers too late to register) and 20,000 acres (private use) - though it remained under ten percent of the country's needs, far short of the desired increase to thirty percent.[44] The campaign required posters, lectures by Agricultural Instructors, and distribution of handbills and leaflets through schools and Committees of Agriculture. McConnells Advertising Service was hired to conduct the £7,500 poster and press campaign.[45] Agriculture also sought sanction to spend £20 on an unspecified agricultural show from a budget of £10,000 because the minister desired 'to test the possibilities of utilising local agricultural shows for the purpose of encouraging the development of the growing of wheat and other cereal crops to replace imported foods for human and animal consumption.'[46]

By 1935, more acreage was under winter wheat, and Agriculture communicated to Finance that:

> The experience which the Department have gained since the inauguration of the Government proposals for the increase of the area under wheat has convinced them that for propaganda... a system of publicity on the lines of the present campaign is the most effective and... cheapest way by which the aims of the Government as regards the extension of wheat growing can be secured.

The tone may have been intended to lessen Finance's pain at being asked to authorise an £8,000 continuation of the campaign.[47] A Finance memorandum wearily observed that as the wheat campaign was government policy, sanction could hardly be refused.[48] The press and poster elements were divided between two firms: O'Kennedy-Brindley received the £5,300 press contract, while McConnells continued to design and print posters at a cost of £1,200. Additionally, £1,200 was sanctioned for printing folders for educational

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[43] *Ibid.*: 16 February, 1933

[44] *Ibid.*, S046/0030/33: 27 July, 1933

[45] *Ibid.*: 29 August, 1933

[46] *Ibid.*: 30 August, 1933

[47] *Ibid.*: 11 January, 1935

[48] *Ibid.*: 15 January, 1935

propaganda.[49] Ever keen to reduce outlay, by 1936, a Finance memorandum queried why posters changed every year, before conceding that it was too late to act for the current year, but the department 'might, however, take up the point with regard to future years.'[50]

While the wheat campaign gathered some momentum, decade-long efforts to improve the quality of cattle had developed to the point that Agriculture could take offence at an *Irish Independent* article claiming there were insufficient suitable cattle in the state to satisfy the German market. The article, however, made it clear that this was due to excellence in Irish breeding, not deficiencies: 'The Germans want rough, strong cattle, cows and bulls, which sell cheaply. Practically all our young stock is too high class and too dear.... The roughly bred cattle which would suit the German market have not been bred in the Saorstat for a long time.'[51] Agriculture pursued its complaint directly to the editor: the Government Press Bureau secured a commitment from the newspaper that in future all facts would be checked with that office before publication.[52] The state's response was intriguing: castigating a newspaper for extolling the quality of Irish exports was perverse. However, as the complaint came coincidental with the Economic War, it may be that propaganda - no matter how positive - that did not square with Fianna Fáil policy was undesirable. Thus the implication that Irish beef was a premium product robbed of its British market highlighted the damage done by the Economic War to Irish farmers.

What to do with excess beef that could not be exported was problematic. Following a decision that Agriculture would encourage beef consumption, the department recorded that 'A free beef scheme has now been set in operation.'[53] A scheme to provide free food for society's neediest was a simpler method of increasing consumption than propagandising the benefits of produce beyond the means of many. The Irish Dairy Shorthorn Breeders Association and the Saorstát Oat and Maize Millers' Association sought increases in the consumption of milk and porridge. The former claimed that 89,000,000 gallons of milk were consumed annually: a daily increase of one half-pint per person would add 69,000,000 gallons, a considerable amount to hard-pressed dairy

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[49] *Ibid.*: 12 December,1935

[50] *Ibid.*: 7 October, 1936

[51] *Irish Independent*, 26 October, 1934: 7

[52] NAI, D/FA, 32/428: 20 November, 1934

[53] NAI, D/T, S2361: 15 January, 1935

farmers. The latter blamed a surplus in oat production on advertisements publicising fruit for breakfast. Both sought a grant for their propaganda, and Agriculture had agreed to grant £2 for every £1 they contributed, to a maximum of £1,500.[54] J.L. Lynd's vigorous objections defined Finance's viewpoint:

> I doubt whether an advertising campaign on the limited lines proposed will have much effect.... The appeal to drink more milk and eat more porridge will hardly appeal to the women folk in these days of slimming. Moreover... in this age of machinery the same amount of physical energy is not required now as formerly... and the change in the nature of the work done is reflected in a change in diet. I do not think that... porridge will ever regain its popularity as a breakfast food. The milk dealers ought to be able to finance an advertising campaign of their own, judging by the price they charge for milk.[55]

Two days later the President's department informed Agriculture that the scheme had received approval, and Lynd's objections remained unaddressed.[56]

In the 1930s, the nation consumed 100,000 tons of sugar annually, but the Carlow sugar processing plant provided only one-fifth of that, and the remainder was imported.[57] The creation of Comhlucht Siúicre Eireann in 1933 provided state support, and gave farmers an outlet for their produce. Acquiring the Carlow plant and establishing three others sought to make the state self-sufficient. Proposing the new company, McEntee said:

> I need not remind the House of the important part that the cultivation of sugar beet plays in... virtually every European country, nor the extensive organisation set up in most European countries for its manufacture into sugar. Nor need I remind the House how well suited to the cultivation of sugar beet are the soil and the agricultural methods that prevail here.... I understand that the sugar content of our beet is exceptional, and that the yield per acre is exceptional also almost in Europe.[58]

Growing beet to make a scarcely existent industry flourish required a sacrifice: consumers would have to pay more for home-grown sugar than imports, but it would reduce unemployment and keep money in the state, as Senator Douglas surmised:

> one would gather that the idea is to have three, or possibly four, new factories - to go ahead, put an embargo on sugar coming in, and provide the whole consumption of the Free State, 100,000 tons. If 100,000 tons cost £11 per ton more, that will be £1,100,000 more than the same amount of sugar could be got

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[54] NAI, D/Fin, S003/0001/34

[55] *Ibid.*: 1 January, 1934

[56] *Ibid.*: 3 January, 1934

[57] SÉ, vol. 17, 16 August, 1933, col. 908

[58] *Ibid.*, cols 907-8

> at from outside. I suggest that the justification for that lies entirely on the amount of employment which can be provided.[59]

Johnson raised fears that consumers were subsidising agriculture: 'I feel somewhat doubtful whether this method is the best way... the consuming public in this country can pay £1,000,000 a year to assist agriculture.... It is necessary... that the consuming public in the towns should sacrifice something to assist agriculture.'[60] To circumvent consumer unhappiness Fianna Fáil presented CSE as a patriotic endeavour. The *Irish Independent* reported McEntee opening the Thurles plant in 1934:

> From a narrow selfish point of view... every individual... engaged in growing beet or working in the factory might feel that it would be better to import sugar and buy it... cheaper. They must... realise that by providing work for those who were idle and hungry, even at a slight extra cost, they were doing good national work, and... helping themselves.
> The Government asked every section to bear its share of the burden of these factories, and he hoped that those engaged in... the great experiment would remember that others had made sacrifices to bring it about. He wanted them to realise that they were working in the interests of the community, and... showing the world and the doubting Thomases that... Irish workmen and Irish farmers could give as good service as any others. They should remember that they were working for the nation, and should work in a spirit of enthusiasm and zeal....
> He wanted the factory workers to play their part in helping the Government to build up a State which would excite the envy of their neighbours in the North, and convince them that in the Free State there were as good citizens as there were in the six counties, who were fit to be with them members of one great Irish nation.[61]

Perhaps it was the call to patriotism or profit, but the state's enthusiastic promotion created an unintended problem: oversupply. In 1933, with just Carlow operational, farmers grew more acreage than they had contracted, while others with no contract also produced beet. CSE addressed the matter in its annual report:

> There was a high yield... the highest since the establishment of the beet sugar industry in this country. The Carlow factory had, therefore, to deal with... 201,760 tons. This involved continuous working for 119 days, but... there was no serious stoppage and the very satisfactory average daily throughput of 1,695 tons was achieved. The average sugar content of the 1933 crop, namely, 18.51 p.c., was also a record for this country, and the total sugar production of the Carlow factory for the 1933-34 manufacturing season, or campaign, was 31,262 tons.[62]

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[59] *Ibid.*, vol. 17, 17 August, 1933, col. 925

[60] *Ibid.*, cols 943-4

[61] *Irish Times*, 3 December, 1934: 5

[62] *Irish Independent*, 6 October, 1934: 2

The following year CSE was obliged to use propaganda dissuading farmers from growing beet. Even with three factories operational, the acreage was unsustainable:

> The three new factories have... received applications for contracts... which represent acreages sufficient for an adequate supply of beet for each of the next three years. For example, the Tuam factory, to which the produce of over 5,000 acres of beet was diverted last year, has received this year applications for its full complement of 14,000 acres from farmers... west of the Shannon and in County Westmeath. Consequently, the Board decided to restrict the allocation of acreage for the coming three years to the respective districts whence the four factories would normally derive their supplies of beet.[63]

Labourers were restricted to sowing only a half acre, and CSE withheld contracts from farmers who had failed to meet previous contractual obligations. In the rush to promote a scheme benefitting a relatively small number of farmers, the government paid little regard to practicalities, and reality thwarted its propaganda.

Like agriculture, fishing was seen as an area of economic development capable of instantaneous transformation by increased consumption. However, the Department of Fisheries estimated that state loans to fishermen were £40,000 in arrears and, with £80,000-£100,000 not matured, more arrears were likely.[64] Propaganda to encourage consumption would benefit fishermen and retailers, and lessen state exposure to bad debts. Fisheries compared Irish consumption (13lbs per capita per annum) with Canadian (24lbs) and English (70lbs), and held that 25lbs was achievable, if a trial scheme in a handful of towns employing a Sales Organiser and Fish Dresser and Demonstrator succeeded. The latter would be 'required to give demonstrations from time to time for propaganda purposes as to the best methods of handling fish'. Fisheries suggested a scheme using sound propaganda methods: leaflets in fishmongers on the nutritional value of fish, recipe leaflets, press notices of cookery demonstrations, and a postal frank 'Eat More Fish'. A handbook on the history and commercial nature of the industry was contemplated. In keeping with propaganda's social engineering potential, Fisheries also recommended weekly instruction in schools on fish, with prizes for essays. But the campaign was not only for consumers:

> A scheme of propaganda... must be set working simultaneously at both ends... whilst interest is being aroused amongst prospective customers, producers must also be stirred. 'Magic Lantern' lectures could be arranged to be given at the principal fishing ports illustrating scenes from go-ahead countries like Denmark

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[63] *Irish Times*, 11 April, 1935: 4

[64] NAI, D/Fin, S027/0040/27: undated. The document is an extract from a D/Fisheries Estimate dated 5 September, 1923.

> and Norway, showing how the fisherfolk in these places did their part in helping to build up a national industry.[65]

Finance scorned the ideas. While it supported increased consumption, it suggested that as demand existed, the problem was one of supply. Consequently, beyond recipe leaflets, publicity was unnecessary.[66] Finance suggested that Fisheries work with Local Government to see if the home market could be stimulated without cost 'by developing a more regular supply of fish to the County Homes, Workhouses and other public institutions which are under the supervision of the latter ministry.'[67] Finance eventually sanctioned £1,000, with propaganda reduced to its suggestions, and the remainder for salary costs and administration.[68] Thus hobbled, success was unlikely. No fish dresser was appointed, and the sales officer, Captain Clayton Love, quit in frustration as his efforts at increasing the number of retail outlets floundered. Fisheries reported to Finance in 1925 that with no propaganda effort, and despite Love's efforts, the campaign had realised only modest achievements.[69]

IV

Industrial prosperity needed investment in energy. Water and peat for electricity generation were in abundant supply. The decision to create a hydro-electric plant on the Shannon was contentious, not least for its cost, and the need for outside expertise. Engaging Siemens to engineer the scheme was useful propaganda, indicating that the state was sufficiently developed to attract the services of a global company, and the scheme itself was crucial to state propaganda. The engineering works were propagandised as a tourist attraction, perhaps a fortunate coincidence of having J.C. Foley, president of the Cork branch of the Irish Tourist Association, on the board of the ESB.[70] Great Southern Railways ran excursion trains for 'people to visit the great Shannon power electricity works... and see the stupendous undertaking while the

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[65] NAI, D/Fin, S027/0040/27: 21 August, 1923

[66] *Ibid.*: 21 August, 1923

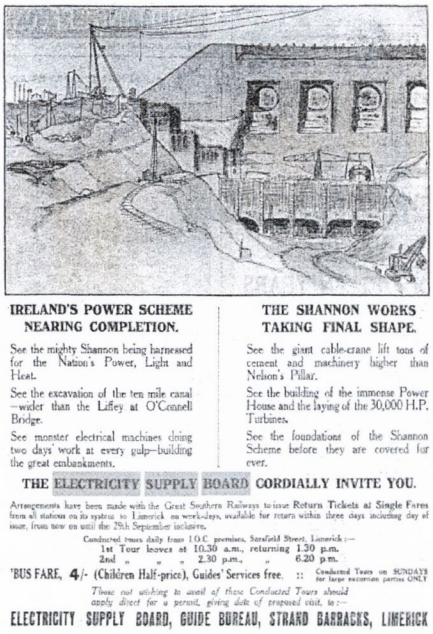
[67] *Ibid.*: 6 September, 1923

[68] *Ibid.*: 29 September, 1923

[69] *Ibid.*: 18 April, 1925

[70] *Irish Times*, 3 August, 1927: 7

construction is still in progress'[71] and worked with the ESB to attract visitors, as the advertisement below indicates:



IRELAND'S POWER SCHEME NEARING COMPLETION.

See the mighty Shannon being harnessed for the Nation's Power, Light and Heat.

See the excavation of the ten mile canal —wider than the Liffey at O'Connell Bridge.

See monster electrical machines doing two days' work at every gulp—building the great embankments.

THE SHANNON WORKS TAKING FINAL SHAPE.

See the giant cable-crane lift tons of cement and machinery higher than Nelson's Pillar.

See the building of the immense Power House and the laying of the 30,000 H.P. Turbines.

See the foundations of the Shannon Scheme before they are covered for ever.

THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD CORDIALLY INVITE YOU.

Arrangements have been made with the Great Southern Railways to issue Return Tickets at Single Fares from all stations on its system to Limerick on week-days, available for return within three days including day of issue, from now on until the 29th September inclusive.

Conducted tours daily from I.O.C. premises, Sarsfield Street, Limerick :—
1st Tour leaves at 10.30 a.m., returning 1.30 p.m.
2nd " " " 2.30 p.m., " 6.20 p.m.

'BUS FARE, 4/- (Children Half-price), Guides' Services free. :: Conducted Tours on SUNDAYS for large excursion parties ONLY

Those not wishing to avail of these Conducted Tours should apply direct for a permit, giving date of proposed visit, to :-

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD, GUIDE BUREAU, STRAND BARRACKS, LIMERICK

Figure 6.1: Advertisement in the *Irish Times*, 26 July, 1928: 5

From May to September 1928, approximately 60,000 visitors, including national and international figures, viewed the development.[72] The *Irish Times* praised the ESB's guided tours:

> Every day brings its complement of people... to see the Shannon Power Works, now in a most interesting stage of development.
> The Electricity Supply Board does everything possible to make these visits entertaining, and places official guides at the disposal of visitors. To get a comprehensive idea of the great project and to learn something of the nature of the work, one cannot do better than follow in the footsteps of one of these guides....[73]

In the summer of 1929, 80,000 people visited the works.[74]

As electrification became a reality, Deputy Thomas O'Connell raised the necessity of propagandising electricity:

> education in the general uses of electricity will be necessary. I understand... other countries... set up model houses... so that people will have an opportunity of visiting, examining and testing the various conveniences and labour-saving devices which are brought about by the installation of electricity. I think... that

[71] *Ibid.*, 23 June, 1928: 13

[72] *Ibid.*, 27 September, 1928: 11

[73] *Irish Times*, 1 September, 1928: 1

[74] Manning and McDowell, 1984: 79

> should be done in this country, and I am glad power is given to the Board to engage in propaganda of that kind.
> It is... desirable that special provision should be made to bring the advantages of electricity to the notice of the rural community.... Even in the five hundred and upwards communities many people will require much education before they thoroughly appreciate and understand the uses to which electricity might be put.[75]

The ESB, a pioneering organisation in propaganda matters, had similar views. In 1927, it became the first Irish organisation to appoint a public relations manager. This, perhaps, arose from an official visit by the company's managing director to America[76] where public relations was replacing propaganda in commercial, political and civic nomenclature. E.A. (Ned) Lawlor was an *Irish Independent* political reporter who had been active in the War of Independence.[77] Under his stewardship, the ESB embarked on an intensive publicity campaign to promote the technological achievements on the Shannon, and then to build public support and educate the populace in the proper use of electricity. The board of the ESB differentiated between publicity, propaganda and education, displaying a sound strategic understanding of promotion techniques not always apparent in state institutions:

> A Public Relations Department... will be charged with the duty of looking after all these matters. This department will keep the Press fully informed of the activities of the Board, and will likewise engage on a broad campaign of publicity and electricity propaganda through newspaper advertisements, film advertisements, educational films, educational matter for the schools and colleges, lectures, etc.

The board also intended:

> to erect a chain of showrooms through the country, so that when electricity is available in the towns and villages a showroom will be within the reach of each town and village where the inhabitants can go to see for themselves the practical applications of electricity to small industries and to home life....
> As the Board is strongly of the opinion that the citizens should know more of the constructive work... they have accepted an offer from Messrs. Pathé Frères to take a film of the constructional work, which film will be shown... throughout the picture houses of the country.[78]

The Pathé films recorded a laboured Cosgrave winching into place the first electricity pylon, prettified with garlands of flowers.[79] A second film focussed on the mechanical

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[75] DÉ, vol. 18, 16 March, 1927, cols 1982-3

[76] *Irish Times*, 10 March, 1928: 10

[77] Carty, 1992: 10

[78] *Irish Times*, 10 March, 1928: 10

[79] Pathé, Film 670.22. Pathé dates the footage as 21 February, 1927, and though it may have predated Lawlor's campaign, the advanced stage of the work suggests this date is incorrect.

plant in operation as the scheme progressed.[80] A journal, *Siemens Progress on the Shannon*, detailing the engineering and technical aspect of the project ran from October, 1927 to December, 1929.[81] A nationwide series of lectures brought information on the ESB and electricity to the masses.[82] A lecture in Bray, given by J.I. Smith, advised how to achieve the best electrical lighting at home, and advocated advantages of electric light at work: 'Difficult and exacting work... necessitates they very best light, and that, in turn, means a better job, a more satisfied worker, and, generally speaking a pleasanter atmosphere in the workshop.'[83] Apart from these effective methods of promotion, the company had the good fortune that one of the state's foremost painters, Sean Keating, documented the Shannon works in a series of paintings from 1927, which he exhibited for sale in the Royal Hibernian Academy.[84]

As more towns and villages were included in the national electricity grid, attendant industries increased in importance. In 1935, the government announced plans to open a light-bulb manufacturing and sales enterprise, Solus Teoranta, with a public share offering to follow.[85] An unusually effusive *Irish Times* report most likely had its origins in official propaganda:

> this highly important key industry will give employment to over one hundred people within the first twelve months alone; and... with the exception of experts supplied for temporary periods, all employees will be nationals, and the company will be under the complete control of Irish Free State nationals.[86]

The article publicised the share offering, and that Solus bulbs would cost no more than bulbs in Britain. As the Irish workers were trained by the plants' German advisors, Messrs Gladitz, production speed and quality developed so that by November 1935, the company could exhibit its wares: 'The Permanent Exhibition of Irish Industries at 3 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, has commenced a series of window displays of new Irish industries with a very remarkable exhibit of a modernistic type by Soluis Teoranta.... A full representation of all types of electric bulbs is included in the exhibit.'[87]

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[80] *Ibid.*, Film 766.24

[81] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/513

[82] *Irish Times*, 1 December, 1928: 20

[83] *Ibid.*, 8 December, 1928: 5

[84] Bielenberg, 2002: 127

[85] *Irish Times*, 25 February, 1935: 12

[86] *Ibid.*, 13 March, 1935: 3

[87] *Ibid.*, 14 November, 1935: 8

In December 1935, Lemass formally opened the factory, his ministerial presence further publicising the venture.[88] The *Irish Times* published a photograph of the factory, showing a neat, industrious and modern environment.[89] At luncheon the same day, Lemass praised the employees' technical skills and pledged support for the company's future developments, including the manufacture of automobile light bulbs and bakelite. But the most noteworthy propaganda, supporting both the enterprise and government policy, came from the Chairman of the ESB, R.F. Browne, and J.J. Walsh, the former Cumann na nGaedheal minister appointed vice-chairman of the company. Browne observed that 'Ireland had hitherto been mainly engaged in distributive occupations, and had accepted the distribution of articles manufactured all over the world. By their initiative and enterprise the company had broken through that mentality.' Walsh was broadly in agreement, noting that the day presaged 'an economic revolution as great as Arthur Griffith had ever anticipated. The new factory was a head-line for a self-contained Ireland.'[90] Cause for industrial and economic celebration the day undoubtedly was, however, the greater part of the festivities clearly took their inspiration from current government policy and ideology.

Hydropower was not the only energy source available. In 1933, Tom Derrig, acting Minister for Industry and Commerce, informed the Dáil: 'The Government has been considering the possibility of developing our bogs on a large scale, thus giving a considerable amount of employment to people in the poorer areas of the country who are not reached... by the setting up of other industries, the building of factories and so on.'[91] The scheme was to follow modestly successful publicity by Industry and Commerce encouraging peat production[92] and Derrig had a grand, if costly, vision for more publicity 'which may possibly run into something like £10,000, for advertisement, publicity and organisation.'[93] There were problems promoting turf as a fuel, especially its qualities relative to coal and unsuitablilty for use in coal burning grates, mainly found in

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[88] *Ibid.*, 20 December, 1935: 5

[89] *Ibid.*: 5

[90] *Ibid.*: 5

[91] DÉ, vol. 48, 14 June, 1933, col. 578

[92] *Ibid.*, col. 579

[93] *Ibid.*, col. 581

urban areas. Deputy Henry Dockrell pragmatically suggested that an education campaign regarding suitable grates and ranges would be valuable.[94]

In 1934, Lemass, back after his hiatus, announced in the Dáil that a central marketing agency, the Turf Development Board, with responsibility for all turf publicity would be established, at a cost of £1,600 to his department.[95] Later that year, Robert Barton, in a 2RN broadcast, alluded to 'four thousand millions tons of turf awaiting the call of the nation to turn it to a useful purpose'.[96] Undoubtedly the coal shortage occasioned by the Economic War contributed to increased interest in bogs, but Barton presented nationalistic propaganda in its favour, extolling its contribution to national life, and managing a sly dig at Britain:

> Unlike coal mining, turf-cutting was an occupation... fitted for human beings, and by utilising turf instead of coal the public were not only assisting... to keep men of strength and courage in the country and employed in a manner... beneficial to them, but they were also promoting an industry ... free from strikes, free from the heart-rending tragedies of the mines, and free from the degrading dirt and the slum life of a mining town.[97]

Barton's views brought unusually strong *Irish Times* support for de Valera. The newspaper wrote:

> The housewife who buys turf not only reclaims a part of the land of Ireland from barrenness and adds to the country's wealth, but helps to reduce the figures of unemployment, and to keep men on the land who would otherwise drift into cities and swell the slum population. If all President de Valera's schemes for the development of national industry were as sound and economic as the turf scheme, few critical voices would be raised.[98]

Proving that the official propaganda was having a desired effect, the newspaper returned to this theme some months later:

> Many of the industrial schemes which the *Fianna Fáil* Government has sponsored have been very much open to criticism, but its attitude towards turf seems to have been quite sound. Like many other recent plans, the first principal aim of turf development is to give more employment, and its second is to strengthen the *Fianna Fáil* policy of self-sufficiency by producing something at home which will take the place of something which has been imported from Great Britain or abroad. Unlike them, however, it does not try to breed a new industry by drastic and artificial means, but to foster one whose possibilities are latent here already.[99]

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[94] *Ibid.*, col. 585

[95] *Ibid.*, vol. 54, 24 May, 1934, col. 1683

[96] *Irish Times*, 5 October, 1934: 4

[97] *Ibid.*

[98] *Irish Times*, 6 October, 1934: 8

[99] *Ibid.*, 24 July, 1935: 6. Emphasis in the original.

Propaganda for prosperity rather than turf's intrinsic calorific benefits became a repeated TDB refrain. Broadcasting on 2RN, Henry Kennedy, a TDB director claimed 'using turf in your homes and commercial offices... will bring work and comfort to the population of our Irish bog-land districts'.[100] He adverted to success in producing large quantities of turf since March and suggested: 'It remained now for the Irish public to play its important part in making the present development campaign a success.'[101] This consistent manner of propagandising turf paid dividends. The *Irish Times* reported:

> Never in the history of the country has so much turf been used as during last year. While there has been an increased consumption in the urban areas following the intensive publicity campaign organised by the Turf Development Board, the amount of fuel used in rural parts was greater than anything that had been anticipated.

The newspaper reported that while the Turf Development Board intended that 'the advertising campaign which was carried on last year, which produced excellent results, will be continued this year.'[102] The advertisements played on turf's historical heritage as a native fuel. One depicted an Irish elk in a rugged terrain. The advertisement described the process by which bogs were formed, and including a call to action:

> this treasure is ours to share to-day. Why should we reject this wondrous wealth that nature has stored up for us and laid to our hand? It's in our own interests to burn Turf. It's in the interests of Ireland and our fellow country-men, too.
> Burn Turf and give employment. Do not waste this great national heritage - turn it into wealth![103]

Mulcahy found little pleasing in the advertisement and criticised Lemass during a Dáil debate:

> I do not know how much money went in telling us through the medium of the Press:
> "Where the Irish elk roamed. Countless suns have crossed the sky since the giant elk roamed Ireland. Time has shed a mellow light around these ancient days.... In those far-off days a wondrous wealth was being born, slowly, surely, steadily, the wealth that is the birthright of Irishmen to-day - turf."
> I am sure a considerable sum was spent on that sort of thing.[104]

Lemass countered, not unreasonably:

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[100] *Ibid.*, 12 October, 1934: 5

[101] *Ibid.*.

[102] *Ibid.*, 3 January, 1935: 4

[103] *Ibid.*, 20 October, 1934: 5

[104] DÉ, vol. 58, 23 July, 1935, col. 1209

The advertising of the turf is essential to the campaign. There would be little possibility... of securing an increased sale of turf without advertising its qualities and... places and premises at which it was available. I agree that we have now reached the stage when we will not be able to rely entirely upon the voluntary demand for turf in order to secure a sale for the quantities of turf produced, and that a certain element of compulsion will have to be introduced in some form or other. But until that stage of compulsion is reached we have no means of securing a sale for turf except by advertising....[105]

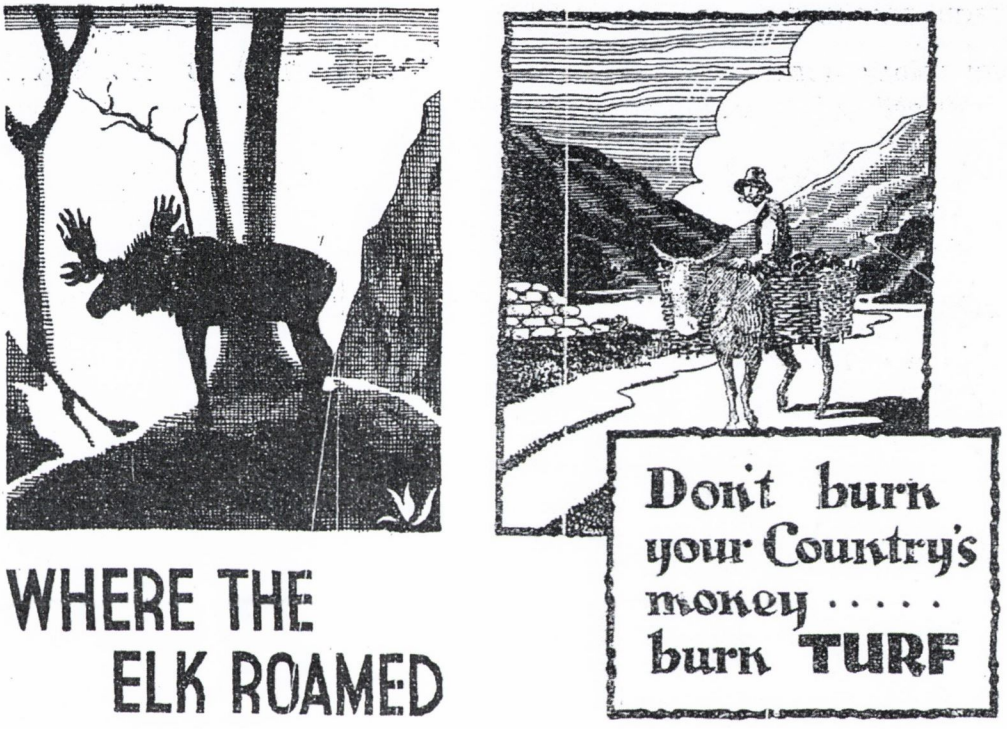

Figure 6.2: Illustrations extracted from Turf Development Board advertisments. Left, *Irish Times* 20 October, 1934: 5; and right, *Irish Times*, 2 February, 1935: 4.

The appeal to wealth creation was continued in another advertisement. The copy praising turf as a clean, healthy fuel concluded 'Burn Turf, it gives employment, and every penny you spend on it is a penny saved to the nation, relieving taxation and conserving the resources of your country.'[106] However, behind propaganda for economic prosperity lay more invidious political machination. Mulcahy accusingly asked Lemass whether he proposed 'to introduce compulsion to make people adjacent to the bogs burn turf, and to prevent them getting other kinds of fuel?' Lemass' response confirmed compulsion lay behind propaganda: 'That is so. Legislative proposals to that end will be introduced.'[107]

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[105] *Ibid.*, col. 1218

[106] *Irish Times*, 2 February, 1935: 4

[107] DÉ, vol. 58, 23 July, 1935, col.1228

The most novel peat propaganda made turf-cutting a test of skill akin to a sporting contest or artistic endeavour. The TDB organised its first annual turf-cutting championships in 1934, and, welcoming de Valera to the 1935 event, the president of the organising committee, Major de Courcy Wheeler, acknowledged that the championships came about at de Valera's request. The *Irish Times* described the carnival atmosphere, and the idealised self-sufficient western Irishmen 'striking... in their pale grey homespuns and white banneens and as they assiduously swung their sleans they chattered in the Irish language.'[108] It also paraphrased de Courcy Wheeler's propagandistic address:

> The object of the competition was to bring Irish turf-cutters into touch with the householder in a novel way. Few realised what an amount of labour and time had to be expended in producing the raw material from the bog. If other industries organised similar competitions in their own particular lines, it would enable the public to appreciate and value the products of the national factories.[109]

Despite positioning peat as a national industry, employment was a major preponderance of the competition. De Courcy Wheeler called for the unemployed to be given banks of turf so that they might enter the industry, and cautioned against mechanisation as the:

> industry provided for manual labour, and the mechanisation of the bogs would change that if it was the intention of the State to introduce machinery. Mechanisation of the bogs had not proved an economic success in any country except on paper. Mechanisation displaced many more hands than it could replace, and eventually the craftsmanship of that, as many other industries, would be lost permanently.[110]

By year end, a review of the effectiveness of turf propaganda was possible. Deputy McMenamin tabled a parliamentary question asking whether, in view of the expenses incurred in advertising turf, the government's Bureau of Information proposed to correct press statements that Dublin residents had determined to continue to use coal, as the year's turf supply had been delivered wet. Lemass claimed that only one letter had been written to the press on the matter, and it was of little consequence. McMenamin pressed on and asked how much had been spent publicising the turf scheme from 1932. Lemass replied: 'The expenditure on advertising in connection with the turf development scheme was: 1932-33, nil; 1933-34, £1,611 18s. 9d.; 1934-35, £2,306 3s. 6d.; 1935-36 (estimated), £1,500.'[111] The propagandising of turfcutting was highly romanticised, fitting with Fianna Fáil industrial propaganda, which sought to aggrandise the almost spiritual

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[108] *Irish Times*, 6 May, 1935: 7

[109] *Ibid.*

[110] *Ibid.*

[111] DÉ, vol. 59, 13 November, 1935, cols 716-8

connection between the means of wealth creation and the citizen who exploited it. It was propaganda that concealed the economic travails of the citizen beneath a veneer of national pride.

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The Cork Exhibition of 1932 was planned as a huge undertaking, and the organisers predicted one and a quarter million visitors. Cosgrave's message to the exhibition, printed in its brochure, anticipated a grand event publicising Irish products:

> The Cork Exhibition will be the first endeavour on a National scale since the establishment of the Saorstát Éireann, to demonstrate their value and variety, both to our own people and to those with whom we hope to extend our trade. I expect with confidence that the Exhibition will not only develop an increased consciousness of our industrial and agricultural possibilities, but serve to open up new and remunerative markets for many of our products.[112]

Lands and Fisheries suggested constructing a model Gaeltacht village of four shops, 12 houses, a hall and a small round tower at an estimated cost of £12,000-£15,000, which, it felt, could be recouped through admission fees and selling refreshments.[113] Finance recommended reducing the cost to £10,000, omitting unnecessary buildings, and refreshments.[114] However, Finance remained sceptical, and an internal memorandum, while recommending displays of native produce, criticised the model village, as an affront to the dignity of the Gaeltachtaí. The note's author commented pithily 'This way to the aborigines – sixpence' of exhibitions that showed natives in their milieu. The memorandum concluded with nationalistic fervour:

> Agriculture and Industry and Commerce may have views as to the expediency of keeping Gaeltacht industries in a watertight compartment away from general Saorstát industries – the more so since the Exhibition is international and not National. After all there is only one boundary in Ireland and it is not in the West.[115]

The fair failed to live up to the expectations of its organisers, who reported a loss but attempted to put a brave face on their wildly optimistic estimate of visitors: 'an

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[112] NAI, D/Fin, S027/0026/30: undated.

[113] *Ibid.*: 2 December, 1930.

[114] *Ibid.*: 10 December, 1930.

[115] *Ibid.*

attendance of approximately 360,000 people is bound to be of real advertising value for the Departments concerned and also exhibitors who participated.'[116]

The British market was most important for Free State export, especially agricultural. The Statistical Abstracts, 1936 showed how invaluable the market was to exporters, and for the balance of payments:

Imports (% of total for Free State)							
	1929	**1930**	**1931**	**1932**	**1933**	**1934**	**1935**
Britain	68.1	69.9	70.8	67.8	64.1	61.6	67.7
Northern Ireland	10	10.2	10	8.8	5.8	5.16	4.7
Total for UK	78.1	80.1	80.8	76.6	69.9	66.7	72.4
Exports and re-exports (% of total for Free State)							
Britain	81.3	80.6	85.7	84.7	82.2	80.6	81.5
Northern Ireland	10.9	10.6	10.6	11.5	11.7	12.7	10.2
Total for UK	92.2	91.2	96.3	96.2	93.9	93.3	91.7

Table 6.1: Imports, exports and re-exports to Britain and Northern Ireland, 1929-35.[117]

While exports remained constant, as a percentage of the United Kingdom's total imports, they actually fell between 1924 and 1935.[118] In the same period, other commonwealth states substantially increased exports to Britain. The Economic War may be partly responsible as Commonwealth competitors took advantage of the state's trading difficulties:

	1924	**1935**
Ireland	4	2.47
Australia	4.62	7.17
Canada	5.16	7.4
India	6.17	8.31
New Zealand	3.68	5.04
Union of South Africa	1.41	1.81
Other Commonwealth	5.18	8.13

Table 6.2: Commonwealth exports as a percentage of total imports in the United Kingdom.[119]

[116] *Ibid.*, S200/0012/31: 7 October, 1932.

[117] NAI, D/T, S6209B: Statistical Abstracts, 1936.

[118] NAI, D/T, S9420: 4 December, 1936

[119] *Ibid.*: 4 December, 1936

With most of the state's exports going to Britain anyway, nationalistic ideology precluded the necessity of promoting produce there. The High Commissioner, McNeill, unsuccessfully cajoled the Executive Council to participate in the 1924 British Empire Exhibition: 'much good would accrue from advertising Irish products. The preparation of Show Exhibits would also stimulate both industrial energy and efficiency. The name of the Exhibition does not attract, but abstentionism seems to be neither good politics nor good business.'[120] At £30,000 for a pavilion measuring 15,000 to 20,000 square feet, McNeill could not sway a niggardly government into acquiescence. However, he persevered and renewed his appeal almost a year later, on foot of an offer of a smaller site, about a quarter in size, for £8,000. Apart from American visitors who 'would buy many thousands of pounds worth of the best Irish work' he told Blythe: 'the cost would be reproductive. It would be a first class advertisement, and though commercial motives usually override sentiment the Free State abstention will excite some prejudice which will operate economically.'[121] He also communicated with External Affairs, stressing the problems of abstaining:

> All the countries, dominions and colonies of the British Commonwealth of Nations, except the Irish Free State, Gambia and Borneo are exhibiting... The absence of two small colonies with a total population less than that of Dublin and suburbs will not be noticed. The absence of the Irish Free State is noticeable, especially as the total value of our trade with Great Britain is so great.... Non-participation may, in future, affect the attitude of the administration and of British traders and consumers.[122]

The cabinet maintained its decision not to participate because the ministers felt that an exhibition during the Tailteann Games would be more beneficial.[123] London continued to press for participation; Eliasoff indicated that the organisers would provide space for just £1,000 when the City of London ended its exhibition in mid-May:

> it should be within the competence of the combined Ministries of Agriculture and Industry and Commerce to organise a reputable and valuable exhibit of Irish produce and manufactures, if Government decides to accept this offer.... There is much need for effectively advertising good Irish produce here, and if no effort is made to use this means of advertisement there will not only be loss by default but loss by antagonism. Our political enemies and our trade competitors will not miss the opportunity of damaging our trade in its best market.

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[120] *Ibid.*: 29 January, 1923

[121] *Ibid.*: 7 December, 1923

[122] *Ibid.*: 7 December, 1923

[123] *Ibid.*: 21 December, 1923

He suggested that non-participation would engender disapproval closer to home than the government had considered: 'It would seem from the Dublin press that the loss of this advertisement opportunity is deplored by persons interested in our trade development. Perhaps the Industrial Development Association might be consulted as to the possibility of exhibiting under the new conditions.'[124] Not even the danger of alienating Irish exporters and industrialists worked: the opportunity was spurned when External Affairs informed London that both Agriculture and Industry and Commerce considered the proposal 'impracticable'.[125]

In fairness, the London delegation was distant from the daily administration of the state, and expectations that the state could initiate propaganda to boost trade while in the throes of a civil war were conscientious, if unrealistic. Within a few years, the necessity of propagandising exports saw consideration given to participating in the 1926 Grocer's Exhibition in Britain. When Agriculture learned the allocated stand had a frontage of seven feet, it decided against exhibiting, and recommended an information display instead. The department offered leaflets and suggested that Industry and Commerce and the Irish Tourist Association might provide literature.[126] The exhibition was ill-starred: it later transpired that no display stand was available, although distribution of leaflets was possible.[127] The state exhibited more successfully at the British Industries Fair in London between February and March, 1927. Organised by the Empire Marketing Board, space was allocated free of charge and Agriculture sought sanction for a modest £100 in expenses as 'they would be justified in arranging an exhibit, and, accordingly, steps are being taken to include thereat a representative exhibit of Irish butter, cream, eggs and poultry.'[128] This was a conveniently timed exhibition, as it overlapped with the Ideal Homes Exhibition, also in London. Although the state missed the opening days of the latter, the availability of staff and display produce allowed the state to transfer the exhibit to its new venue, and extend the period of propaganda.[129] It proved to be a busy year for trade propaganda, as the state exhibited at another Empire Marketing Board fair in July. Industry and Commerce sought sanction from Finance to expend £100 for participation,

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[124] *Ibid.*: 19 January, 1924

[125] *Ibid.*: 1 February, 1924

[126] NAI, D/FA, GR393: 19 August, 1926

[127] *Ibid.*: 24 August, 1926

[128] NAI, D/Fin, S090/0004/27: 2 February, 1927

[129] *Ibid.*: 12 March, 1927

observing that 'the project is likely to give a useful stimulus to trade in the agricultural products of Saorstát Éireann and they, accordingly, propose to stage a representative exhibit of butter, eggs and bacon at this exhibition.'[130] The state continued to exhibit at the British Industries Fair, with Lands and Fisheries undertaking propaganda in 1929, and at Empire Marketing Board fairs in Plymouth and Newcastle.

Also in 1929, the London Commissioner contacted External Affairs with an innovative propaganda opportunity:

> Sir Alfred Reid, the Chairman of the British and Irish Steam Ship Company, has kindly offered the Company's steam yacht 'Killarney' entirely free of cost, for the purpose of a travelling showboat to push the sale of Saorstát goods. I... can see my way to make a very attractive exhibition which would be on show at... Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Swansea, Newport and Cardiff. The whole cost of alterations to provide suitable display arrangements would be borne by the company. The cost of navigation, personnel, harbour dues &c, will also be borne by the company. I propose at each port to invite leading representatives of the wholesale trade, together with the leading retail buyers, and Sir Alfred Reid has generously offered to entertain these gentlemen with refreshments... during the whole of the time the steam yacht is used for exhibition purposes. The publicity value of this rather unique scheme is really very considerable, and it is understood from Sir Alfred that President Cosgrave has warmly supported the idea. The Minister for Agriculture has also expressed his satisfaction at the generous offer....[131]

The proposal was accepted and the Commissioner notified Fisheries that the schedule would start in Dublin on April 27th, proceeding to Cork, Cardiff and Glasgow, finishing in Liverpool around May 8th.[132]

By the 1930s, there was a subtle change in the type of product being promoted. The establishment of the Gaeltacht Depot promoted crafted tweed, woollen and lace goods that could compete internationally. The British Industries Fair continued to be a favourite for promoting Irish goods, and Lands and Fisheries exhibited at the 1931 fair. Gaeltacht goods were exhibited at the British Industries Fair, 1933 and at the South London Exhibition in Crystal Palace in 1934. Finance's willingness to sanction expenditure may have stemmed from Lands and Fisheries record-keeping, and ability to provided evidence of exhibitions' effectiveness. In 1931, the department asked for sanction to spend 35 guineas at London's Christmas Shopping Fair, in Piccadilly Circus.

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[130] NAI, D/Fin, S090/0023/27: 12 July, 1927

[131] NAI, D/FA, GR393: 11 February, 1929.

[132] *Ibid.*: 27 March, 1929

The request noted that shoppers would be seeking seasonal gifts 'and our knitted products and embroidery are very suitable for this purpose.' Finance was surprisingly astute in granting sanction: 'I do not think we would be justified in refusing sanction.... The Fair has a central location and the display... appears a sound and even necessary method of advertising the Gaeltacht goods.'[133] However, when Finance later had to sanction an extra £22 11*s.* 7*d.*, it resolved to request in six months time that Lands and Fisheries account for trade in Gaeltacht goods to Britain from 1931-2 to the first half of 1932-3.[134] The figures were modest, but showed improvement. In 1931-2, sales of tweeds realised £103 19*s.* 0*d.* and knitwear £16 8*s.* 2*d.* In the half year to 30 September, 1932 the figures were £322 19*s.* 0*d.* and £1,193 17 *s.* 0 *d.* respectively.[135]

A tangible presence was not the sole method of promoting exports. The less labour-intensive methods of pamphleteering and producing special editions of publications were cheaper and gave easier access to important audiences. In 1925, Industry and Commerce sought sanction to publish 500 copies of a speech given by R.A. Whyte, the state's Chief Trade Officer in Great Britain, dealing with the state's trade with Britain:

> In view of the importance of Great Britain as a market for Saorstát products and the necessity for maintaining that market against well-organised competition from other countries, the Minister of External Affairs considers that it is essential to keep the products of the Saorstát well known in the British markets and I am accordingly to ask you to move the Minister for Finance to authorise an expenditure not exceeding £7 on the printing of 500 copies. The distribution will be carried out by the Saorstát trade inspectors in Great Britain and this will ensure distribution in the most effective quarters.[136]

Finance, approving the proposal as 'quite good propaganda and more to the point than a good deal of publicity matter that has come before us from time to time',[137] may have been relieved to see propaganda that was readymade and directed at opinion formers. The level of civil servant approving propaganda expenditure would have been more accustomed to dealing with politicians and industrial executives than understanding propaganda and marketing.

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[133] NAI, D/Fin, S029/0011/31: 23 November, 1931

[134] *Ibid.*: 30 April, 1932

[135] *Ibid.*: 9 November, 1932

[136] *Ibid.*, S046/0018/25: 13 March, 1925. Whyte's address was delivered on 29 January, 1925.

[137] *Ibid.*: 30 March, 1925

Not all publications had such a simple genesis. Kiernan informed External Affairs in 1926 that the London Chamber of Commerce had invited the state to advertise in two special Free State supplements to its journal at £18 per page, and contribute an article on a trade-related topic.[138] Lands and Agriculture prepared an article; Industry and Commerce were to add more information. When Dublin Chamber of Commerce decided to submit an article, Gordon Campbell of Industry and Commerce notified External Affairs that adding to Lands and Agriculture's propaganda was unnecessary:

> in view of the fact that the industrial position could not be adequately treated within the limits of space now left... by the Department of Lands and Agriculture, the Minister feels that he could not add an effective addendum to the article... and he is confident that the industrial position will be satisfactorily dealt with in the proposed article of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce.[139]

Dublin Chamber of Commerce may have shared common ground with the state, but foregoing an opportunity to address business and opinion formers in Britain neglected the state's interests. That charge could not be made in relation to a *Financial News* supplement in 1931, to which McGilligan, as Minister for industry and Commerce, submitted an article on developing new industry in the state. Other contributors included cabinet colleague Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture, Joseph Brennan, chairman of the Currency Commission, R.F. Browne, chairman of the ESB and J.P. O'Brien of the Irish Tourist Association. Cosgrave contributed a foreword:

> Balanced budgets, due regard to economy in private as well as in public life, relatively light taxation, and constructive legislation, have all played their part in enabling our new State, Saorstát Éireann to weather the economic storm and stress into which it was launched just a decade ago.
>
> There are, I trust, brighter days ahead, and supplements such as this, by the supply of valuable commercial information, cannot fail to stimulate international and inter-Imperial trade, and to speed up production and demand, those essential attributes of prosperity.[140]

The publication pleased the state: 1,000 copies, costing £5, were ordered for distribution to legations.[141]

European markets were comparatively unimportant, with neither the volume of exports the British market absorbed, nor a large expatriate population. Europe was also more

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[138] NAI, D/FA, GR659-4: 29, September, 1926

[139] *Ibid.*: 21 October, 1926

[140] *Financial News* Supplement on Saorstát Éireann: 16 March, 1931 (See NAI, D/FA GR1596)

[141] NAI, D/FA, GR1596: 31 March, 1931

advanced, and agricultural produce, particularly Denmark's, was often of higher quality. Nor was Europe Anglophone. Legations in Paris, Berlin and Rome yielded only slight results, despite early efforts. O'Kelly recalled in correspondence with External Affairs that he had provided entertainment for trade to:

> business men, potential importers of Irish produce or manufacturers whom I have been trying to induce to deal direct with Irish firms instead of through London agents.... Several... are journalists, one of whom eventually got into the 'Echo de la Bourse' a long article dealing with Irish economics.... 'Echo de la Bourse' is the leading financial newspaper in Belgium and had hitherto been rather hostile... you will appreciate the value of this indirect method of approach.[142]

By 1924, haphazard trade promotion had formalised, and External Affairs sought sanction for 8,000 French francs per annum for O'Kelly who 'in his relations with French Government Officials, Journalists, Publicists and Merchants finds it necessary to be in a position to offer some small entertainment'.[143] Finance grudgingly sanctioned 5,000 francs.[144]

By the end of the 1920s, the representatives, with business contacts cultivated, were aware of their potential as propagandists. O'Kelly suggested establishing an Irish depot for goods in Paris, but correspondence from E.J. Riordan in Industry and Commerce detailed unproductive talks with four Irish firms. Atkinson and Co, with a representative in Paris, were interested. John Power and Sons, and John Jameson and Sons, though interested, were unsure of the idea. Jacob and Co saw nothing to be gained. The feedback suggested to Industry and Commerce that unless O'Kelly could entice firms to support his idea, the proposal was unlikely to warrant action.[145]

Departmental files suggest that Europe's importance declined in the 1930s as the state turned to America. This may have been because of fewer language barriers, or the presence of an expatriate community, but it was peculiar given America's implacable protectionism. Impetus for trade could have been stimulated by more aggressive business practices in America, with marketing and publicity firms touting for state

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[142] NAI, D/Fin, Fin 1/3514: 22 July, 1923

[143] *Ibid.*: 8 July, 1924

[144] *Ibid.*: 16 September, 1924

[145] NAI, D/FA, GR1215: 30 September, 1929

business. In 1924, Henry F. Woods of F. Eugene Ackerman, a New York publicity firm, approached Smiddy with a proposal to promote the state in America:

> The best way to bear home to the American people that the Free State is functioning in an ordered and efficient way, that political, social and trade conditions there have been stabilized, and that Ireland has now assumed her rightful place of sovereign nationhood is to consistently furnish to the press of this country authoritative news showing the business, fiscal and cultural progress of the country and its plans for development in these directions. It is in this way that trade relations between the Free State and the United States may best be promoted.[146]

Woods' advice seems to have been disregarded, and in 1931 Percival White, principal of an eponymous marketing research company, contacted Industry and Commerce to arrange a meeting explaining 'how we could assist Irish producers and distributors who are eager to derive profits from the great market in the United States.'[147] Macaulay, contacted regarding the correspondence, produced a short, generally positive memorandum having met M.E. Luckstone of White's company, which:

> appears to be a substantial one. It makes surveys for any given industry to determine the market for the products, the possibility of expansion, or the reasons for decline in consumption....
> To take for example... Irish lace. Mr White's organization would find out from the importers and merchandisers (a) the volume of present demand; (b) the reasons for the decline in sales; (c) whether any substitutes are being sold and why; (d) the possibility of increasing our market share.
> The services of such an organization would obviously be required to cover a field wide enough to make this information of any value. From the data so obtained the organization makes recommendations indicating the machinery necessary for better merchandising of these goods.
> To make this survey really valuable, there would have to be some continuity of Mr White's services; in other words, he would have to keep his organization following up our Lace market after such recommendations as he made had been put into effect.
> Mr. White could make a preliminary trade survey of the market here for all our exports to the United States. The difficulty, of course, is the question of his remuneration. I consider that this matter is worth serious consideration. The Gaeltacht industries would, I think, be worth investigation as Government funds may be available as regards these.[148]

Macaulay had hit on the vexed question of resources, and the costs of market research before exporting and propaganda could begin ensured no action was taken. A letter from Industry and Commerce to External Affairs curtly noted his report.[149]

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[146] *Ibid.*, GR246: undated. Smiddy sent a copy of the letter to External Affairs on 30 September, 1924.

[147] *Ibid.*, 15/21: 8 April, 1931

[148] *Ibid.*: 2 June, 1931

[149] *Ibid.*: 18 June, 1931

Personal links were exploited for propaganda, and Cosgrave's visit to America, as well as de Valera's fundraising excursions for the republic and the *Irish Press* must have given insights into business propaganda. The overseas representatives assiduously cultivated personal ties with Irish-American and other interests to publicise the state. Private visits by Free State businessmen also promised some potential. Limerick businessman Stephen O'Mara, appointed by the Executive Council to undertake an official mission to America investigating extending consular services and trade matters,[150] attempted to establish trade links with Irish-American lawyer Matthew J. Troy, who had an idea of establishing the Irish Counties Association in New York, an umbrella for 32 county organisations, with a women's auxiliary. Troy had met the Free State delegation in New York, and been well received.[151] O'Mara, too, had an interview and the legation recorded the meeting as concerning 'the desirability of publicity from a point of view of trade, tourists, and political propaganda.'[152]

The problem with the personal touch was that it rarely yielded results, falling on grounds of cost, interest, or the over-enthusiastic ambitions of well-intentioned, but ineffective promoters. Of greater interest were large scale exhibitions, of the kind that had borne fruit in Britain. Distance and cost prohibited regular involvement, but participation in the Chicago World's Fair stirred unusually active zeal. Macaulay set the tone for the state's participation, arguing against building thatched cottages at the fair: 'It is felt by the best class of Irish-Americans that exploitation of this kind of sentimentality has been overdone'. Among those whom he consulted for advice was 'Mr Harry C. Phibbs, a Dublin man who has achieved great success as Publicity Counsellor in Chicago.' Professional counsel spurred Macaulay to recommend participation and, acting with commendable speed while awaiting approval, reserve space in the Travel and Transport building, believing it more cost-effective than building a pavilion. Despite being positively disposed towards cultural and tourist propaganda, he remained sanguine about trade prospects:

> It is difficult to estimate what probable trade advantages would arise from our participation in this Exhibition. It would be very foolish to expect anything but the slightest increase in our sales of manufactured goods here.... Publicity of any

[150] NAI, D/T, S6250: 27 April, 1932

[151] NAI, D/FA, 5/29: 15 June, 1932

[152] *Ibid.*: 16 June, 1932

> kind cannot be translated in terms of an immediate return; I think we should derive some little advantage commercially, and I am sure that we should benefit considerably by increasing our tourist traffic. If, however, this matter is well organised and local susceptibilities are carefully handled, the large amount of publicity which should follow our participation would be well worth the expenditure of £5,000.[153]

Participation was undermined by an interdepartmental committee that cautioned against participation on the grounds of trade alone as exports to America had fallen, primarily due to protectionist tariffs. The committee suggested that tourism and Gaeltacht goods might benefit from a £5,000 display. The report noted Macaulay's interviews with Irish-Americans who had recommended 'a small, compact well-organised and artistic display which would be likely to give the best return for the expenditure.' The ITA participated willingly, while Lands and Fisheries expressed an interest and Industry and Commerce secured promises from unnamed manufacturers to participate if a national exhibit was organised.[154] Despite the committee's misgivings, sanction was given.[155]

However, Finance took umbrage with a brochure for tweeds for the exhibition (and the British Industries Fair) as Lands and Fisheries started the project without seeking sanction. The latter indicated it could scarcely seek sanction for a project without first costing it and responded to Finance's insistence that it was a novel proposal (requiring special sanction), and query whether the Stationery Office had been consulted:

> literature of this kind at Exhibitions is a normal method of advertising and brochures of the type in question are commonly distributed through the post by manufacturers.
> Such literature is part of the ordinary advertising of a manufacturing concern, but it was thought right to acquaint your Department of the matter.[156]

The Stationery Office was not contacted as its expertise lay in printing, not design. This dissatisfied Finance and, in June, it threatened to withhold translation of the brochure into French unless Lands and Fisheries explained its conduct.[157] Lands and Fisheries fought back:

> The Minister feels... your minute must have been written under a misconception of what is involved.... The preparation of the drawings and lay out involves the

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[153] NAI, D/Fin, S101/0016/32: 5 December, 1932

[154] NAI, D/T, S2676: 23 December, 1932. The committee comprised representatives from Finance, External Affairs, Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries, and Industry and Commerce.

[155] *Ibid.*: 30 December, 1932.

[156] NAI, D/Fin, S0046/0006/33: 6 February, 1933

[157] *Ibid.*: 14 June, 1933

> submission of suitable ideas of artistic merit and advertising value and... several suggestions and drawings were submitted and rejected before the brochure in its final form was accepted. These are tasks which require the services of highly skilled advertising executives and copy-writers and the Minister is not aware that the Stationery Office has any such experts at its disposal.[158]

Nonetheless, Finance issued an ultimatum that unless Lands and Fisheries accepted that prior sanction should have been sought and the Stationery Office contacted, sanction for the original brochure would be withheld.[159] Lands and Fisheries capitulated in September, but had to wait until October 19 for sanction to be given, along with the delayed sanction for publication of 500 copies in French.[160]

The state's trade participation in the exhibition was muted; instead cultural propaganda assumed greater importance. The Department of Education was solicited to support the exhibition, and consulted with the National Museum's Adolf Mahr for advice: he devised an exhibition focussing on recent archaeological work in the state. This incorporated museum exhibits, including 'new postcards recently issued by the Museum with propaganda prospectuses'; exhibits from sources other than the museum; and material from Irish Manuscripts Commission and Irish Folk Lore Institute.[161] Further enhancing cultural credentials, the Royal Hibernian Academy exhibited 68 paintings by living Irish artists.[162] Propagandising culture and bloodstock exports, the Army show-jumping team travelled to Chicago.[163] Responsibility for organising the State's involvement during the fair fell on the trade consul to Chicago, Daniel McGrath, who took his propaganda role too flippantly for Finance's liking. McGrath sought reimbursement for a $40 membership fee of The Tavern Club, incurred because 'As publicity I deemed it advisable to join the Tavern Club, which is much frequented by Press men and there I made contact that led to some excellent notices in local and eastern newspapers of our exhibit.'[164] Finance preferred its naive belief that 'One would imagine that special publicity of this sort was scarcely necessary in a centre like Chicago with a highly

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[158] *Ibid.*: 15 June, 1933

[159] *Ibid.*: 16 August, 1933

[160] *Ibid.*: 19 October, 1933

[161] *Ibid.*, S101/0016/32: undated. A copy of the report was sent by Industry and Commerce to Finance on 28 March 1933.

[162] *Ibid.*: 23 May, 1935

[163] *Ibid.*: 8 February, 1935

[164] *Ibid.*: 8 February, 1935

developed publicity sense, and that anything of real interest in the Irish exhibit would receive all the publicity which it deserved.'[165] That Chicago had a highly-developed publicity business indicates that competition for press coverage made engaging with journalists essential, not simply trusting in the exhibit's inherent news value. Nonetheless, the state's involvement must have yielded some benefits as a decision to exhibit in the 1939 World Fair Exhibition in New York was taken in 1937, when de Valera brought the matter before the Executive Council.[166]

VI

The state made great commercial advances in industry and commerce in fifteen years. The Shannon Scheme and semi-states utilising modern technology point to that, as do improvements in the quality of agricultural produce, and the creation of a highly-marketable Gaeltacht Depot brand. Yet, the state remained as economically imperilled in 1937 as in 1922. The differences of the two parties of government ensured there was no continuity in the style of propaganda. Where Cumann na nGaedheal propagandised the state's emergence as a modern, free trade economy, Fianna Fáil, with its focus on small domestic producers and protected national industries, often under the monopoly of a semi-state company, undid much of the propaganda message of the previous decade. Yet politicians of all hues realised the industries in which the state had, or with proper investment and encouragement could have, a competitive advantage, and propagandised the state's industrial and agricultural output with reasonable gusto.

However, that zeal was let down by mismanagement by both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil. There was no understanding of any strategic benefit deriving from an orchestrated propaganda campaign for any industry. Agricultural improvement campaigns were treated as projects rather than elements of an overall strategy. The same is true of participation in trade fairs and exhibitions: too often, sanction for expenditure was sought within weeks of a fair commencing, suggesting that they belatedly came to the state's attention. It was not beyond the capabilities of civil servants and legations to create annual lists of fairs and exhibitions, and to select those most likely to yield a

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[165] *Ibid.*: 14 May, 1935. It took Finance until 16 October, 1936 to agree to reimburse McGrath half the amount requested. He had, Finance said, benefitted personally from the membership.

[166] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 25064: 31 August, 1937

propaganda dividend. Yet this simple planning was never done. The implication is that the state's involvement was hastily organised, limited in scope, and mismanaged. Similarities in the types of display that the state used suggest little creative thought in assessing how best to present the state and produce. Of course, Finance bears no little responsibility for these shortcomings, as it frequently demonstrated it had no understanding of propaganda and its potential for generating a return on a modest investment.

The overwhelming conclusion of the state's propagandising of its commercial output is that opportunities were foregone. The creation of the Dairy Disposal Board, CSE and ACC were laudatory achievements, yet were also an admission that the state's efforts to propagandise itself abroad had either failed to attract the large scale investment that agriculture required for development, or chauvinistically preferred the unsullied capital of the Celt to foreign investment. Doctrinaire protectionism was at the heart of Fianna Fáil propaganda, rather than publicising the state's potential for economic development. A concentration on Britain was proven disastrous once the Economic War commenced. Despite efforts of the overseas representatives, export propaganda focussed almost exclusively on Britain, with Anglophone North America and Europe generally overlooked. At a time when Britain was pinning its trade hopes on the Empire Marketing Board, and commercial public relations was experiencing a boom in America, the state lacked the guile to recognise genuine propaganda opportunities, and failed to adequately finance and take full advantage of those it attempted.

Chapter 7
Tourism Propaganda

I

Tourism became a well-established industry in Ireland in the nineteenth century. While the Grand Tour, the essential experience of the eighteenth century gentleman, bypassed Ireland, Arthur Young's tour nonetheless precipitated a coterie of later traveller writers whose accounts depict an island gradually opening up to tourists.[1] Hooper's excellent anthology of travel writing on Ireland includes fascinating snippets from a variety of authors, while contemporary accounts by, for example, Dixon McDougall, Hurlbert, and Becker provide considered observations.[2] Such writers offered distinctive, sometimes jaundiced, views of travel in Ireland, its attractions and natives. Proselytisers declaimed the malign influence of Catholicism; polemicists offered politically motivated expositions; journalists sought to uncover truthful narratives encompassing themes as diverse as economics and urban and rural picturesque poverty; novelists romanticised; and pleasure-seekers - dubbed 'trying specimens of humanity' by Dixon McDougal[3] - took the waters in unspoiled coastal towns, like Bray and Kilkee, recently connected to a nationwide rail network. By the early twentieth century, home-based writers including Bigger and Lloyd Praeger, coincidental with the revival of cultural nationalism, were beginning to document antiquities and heritage, thereby idealising a culturally distinct Celtic idyll.[4]

By the turn of the century, railways were the primary method of mass transport. Before this, poor infrastructure had hindered the development of tourism. Though canals had been a means of divertissement and trade, poor facilities onboard and the slowness of journeys led to their demise. Attempts to build hotels at their terminals failed owing to high maintenance costs.[5] Foster notes that eighteenth-century travellers disputed the quality of 'a wave of roadbuilding by turnpike trusts' [6] though by 1815 Bianconi had commenced a coach service connecting with inns, blending accommodation with speedy

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[1] Young, 1897

[2] Hooper, 2001, Dixon-McDougall, 1882, Hurlbert, 1888 and Becker, 1881

[3] McDougall, *op. cit.*: 152

[4] Bigger, 1914 and O'Mahoney and Praeger, 1903

[5] Furlong, 2002: 2

[6] Foster, 1988: 204

travel. Keen to exploit commercial opportunities, and aware that domestic tourists were unlikely to yield great profits, the railways opened a Charing Cross bureau in 1896. To provide a superior service, railways built and operated terminus hotels, boosting towns like Kenmare, Bundoran and Warrenpoint. In 1903, O'Mahony and Praeger published their guide to the Great Southern and Western Railways. Motor cars became fashionable in the early twentieth century, and the Irish Automobile Club and Automobile Association were established in 1901 and 1905 respectively. By 1914, there were 19,554 vehicles in Ireland,[7] although road-building was a task that bedevilled Free State governments.

The marriage of state will and private investment became a recurring theme in Free State tourism. Infrastructure provides a good example: while relief schemes facilitated road-building projects and legislation provided for railways, the modes of transport were operated by private companies, a trend that continued until the 1930s and the establishment of Aer Lingus and Aer Rianta. Governments facilitated tourism through legislation, not subvention. The Health Resorts and Watering Places (Ireland) Act, 1909 and the Tourism Development Act, 1931 made local authorities responsible for tourism promotion through their rate, directly in the former, and through the Irish Tourist Association in the latter. Both acts signified that tourism promotion was no concern of the state, relegating it to local affairs, where eminent businessmen could fund it. This becomes clearer with an examination of the role of the state itself.

II

Tourism before the Free State was business-led: little changed thereafter. The tourism policies of successive administrations were a consequence of their economic policies. Cumann na nGaedheal sought to utilise entrepreneurial rather than state capital, creating the regulatory and physical infrastructure within which private interests developed the tourism industry from which the state gained in employment and taxation. In opposition, Fianna Fáil scorned tourism. In government, isolationist policy focussed on manufacturing industries and exports. Often tourism was an after-thought in other areas, raised by politicians who were inclined to see it as an insignificant detail.

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[7] Furlong, *op. cit.*: 15

The state overlooked tourism promotion because no department exercised direct authority for it. The remit of Industry and Commerce incorporated tourism, but it devolved responsibility to the ITA, which, though performing essential duties, became a fig-leaf masking departmental prevarication and disinterest. External Affairs had a network of overseas representatives, but the civil service's rigid lines of communication required representatives to submit tourism-related material to External Affairs, which passed it to Industry and Commerce, which, finally, contacted the ITA. Furthermore, the departments of the President, Finance, Local Government and Public Health, Education, Fisheries, and Lands had occasional involvement in tourism, making an unwieldy bureaucracy inevitable.

As Ministers of Industry and Commerce, neither McGilligan nor Lemass was a dynamic instigator of tourism promotion. McGilligan's ministry was marked by initial enthusiasm, followed by indifference, while Lemass' term started with indifference and evolved to a post-Free State enthusiasm. State interest in tourism was stimulated by Sean Lester's report of a 1924 Irish Tourist Organisation meeting which called for a national tourism promotion body,[8] established by Industry and Commerce, and incorporated in 1926 as the Irish Tourist Association. McGilligan, though responsible for two acts enabling the ITA to be funded by local authority rates (conveniently providing public funds at no expense to the state) nonetheless had a waning interest in tourism. In 1928, the Cunard Line requested through External Affairs that Cosgrave issue an invitation to visit the Free State. When External Affairs recommended that Cosgrave contact Industry and Commerce for their opinion the response was unanticipated: 'I am desired by the Minister for Industry and Commerce to inform you that it is a mistake to think that the responsibility in Tourist Development matters rests with this Department.'[9] Walshe responded:

> about four or five years ago the Minister for Industry and Commerce received deputations as a result of which the present Irish Tourist Association was born. Since then the Department of External Affairs has clearly understood, and has acted upon the assumption, that the Department of Industry and Commerce undertook all governmental responsibilities in connection with tourist matters.[10]

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[8] NAI, D/T, S5472A: 18 January, 1924

[9] *Ibid.*: 21 December, 1928

[10] NAI, D/FA, GR459-14: 8 February, 1929

A minister accustomed to tightly controlling his department, Lemass paid little attention to tourism, once snapping in the Dáil that the 'Minister for Industry and Commerce has nothing to do with providing scenic attractions for tourists.'[11] However, by 1936 Lemass had instituted employees' holiday legislation to encourage Irish people to holiday at home. In 1937, his secretary, John Leyden, supporting an ITA request for increased local authority funding, advised Local Government that 'My Minister attaches great importance to the tourist traffic and it is thought very much more than is at present being done could usefully be done in the direction of propaganda and publicity of one kind or another.'[12] Arguably Lemass' interest was a reaction to the state's balance of payments: imports included earnings from foreign visitors; the more visitors, the greater the imbalance in the state's accounts. Thus while foreign visitors were neither encouraged nor discouraged, domestic tourism was a virtuous duty.

There was much antipathy towards tourism. Todd Andrews, an erstwhile ITA employee, described tourism as 'a shoddy business… more associated with national mendacity than with legitimate industry.'[13] An embittered Liam O'Flaherty wrote 'A Tourist's Guide to Ireland' in 1929. It was a damning satire on Irish tourism that highlighted stereotypes of avarice and greed, and unscrupulous characters preying on tourists. Given the negative perspective of nineteenth-century tourists – no matter how kindly expressed their depictions of poverty, degradation and injustices – self-conscious inferiority fostered antipathy towards damnatory praise, especially emanating from Britons and Americans, to whom the state looked for support and succour. For a country intent on portraying itself as modern, industrial and Catholic, retaining Celtic imagery and relics, with their frisson of polytheism, was dishonestly pandering to stereotypes.

Worse, politicians regarded tourism with hostility, nationalistic myopia or flights of fancy, suggesting they under-estimated its worth. Seamus Bourke, in a Dáil debate on preserving national monuments, disparagingly referred to tourists' depredations: 'souvenir hunting tourists have played havoc with some of our most valuable archaeological remains. In fact the souvenir hunting vandal has left a trail of destruction

[11] DÉ, vol. 61, 30 April, 1936, col. 1959

[12] NAI, D/IC, 25114, 3 February, 1937

[13] Furlong, *op. cit.*: 67

behind him almost as wide as that of the iconoclast army or the pillaging mob.[14] Osmond Esmonde took a flight of fancy during a game preservation debate: 'It has been suggested... a new sport might be developed... where there are light aeroplanes available, and that is the shooting of wild geese from the air.... It strikes me that in the future a very substantial income might be derived by the State from the development of an aerial wild goose chase.'[15]

Economic snobbery regarded tourism jobs as less desirable than industrial jobs. Aiken called them 'the worst form of employment'.[16] In opposition, Fianna Fáil, despite advocating state control over areas of economic interest, paid scant regard to tourism, occasionally denigrating the state. Derrig lamented: 'no matter how we perfect our roads or our hotels we cannot perfect our climate... which will prevent the richer class of Americans and other foreigners from coming here. They are not going to come here if they can go to the South of France.'[17] His *béal bocht* contribution roused a caustic response from Michael Tierney:

> The Fianna Fáil method of advertising our national wares reminds me of the beggars that one sees seated at the gates of oriental cities showing their sores to passers-by and looking for alms.... We cannot get anywhere in industry, or in anything else, if a large proportion of our people spend all their time announcing to the world what miserable, unfortunate, God-forsaken wretches we are, and how rotten everything in our country is, including the weather.[18]

The spat highlights cultural differences between the two parties. Fianna Fáil's view was borne out of shame at the poor state of the country. Only by solving economic and infrastructural woes could tourists be invited without also inviting their scorn. In contrast, Cumann na nGaedheal preferred to attract tourists, using their money to develop the state.

Other politicians presented tourism in a more flattering light, recognising its economic value. John Good cited Judge Daniel Coholan to advocate pro-tourism policy:

> Writing on... tourist traffic in Ireland, he [Coholan] stated that... it contained a gold mine for the Free State, and... that it should be one of our first objects... to

[14] DÉ, vol. 32, 24 October, 1929, col. 244

[15] *Ibid.*, 14 November, 1929, col. 1384

[16] *Ibid.*, vol. 33, 12 February, 1930, col. 75

[17] *Ibid.*, col. 64

[18] *Ibid.*, col. 67

> recognise the importance of encouraging tourist traffic and to do all we could to develop that traffic....
> ...monies left by tourists... percolate through to many of the poorer inhabitants of the cabins that are to be found on the south coast and in the western parts.... They, as well as a great many others... have missed the tourists. [19]

Three days later, Mulcahy defended himself against William Davin's chastisement for smiling during his contribution: 'I smiled at this insistence on tourist traffic, tourist traffic, tourist traffic, as if none of us would have to work if we had a sufficient amount of tourist traffic.' Davin responded by adverting to the pre-war estimate of tourism's annual value to the economy, £6,000,000, and suggested that money 'spent by tourists would be spent on food and other things which are produced by the farmers and distributed by other people, and consequently it would provide employment.'[20] Davin's Labour-informed view of economics echoed nineteenth-century travel writers who had noted tourism's importance to impoverished regions, while Mulcahy's was illustrative of the government's laissez-faire attitude.

Some months earlier, requesting state funding for Dun Laoghaire pier, Davin had cited the same value of tourism:

> Deputies can realise what the loss of that traffic would mean to the people of the Free State. Hotel keepers and others who had direct association with the tourists have suffered to a considerable extent during the four or five years of trouble in this country. As the State controls this Harbour and is responsible for its upkeep the State should see that it uses its powers in the development of that tourist traffic.[21]

Cosgrave agreed, but claimed financial prudence militated against development. His thinking was over-cautious: though the state's coffers were bare, here was a viable industry whose raw materials of scenery and tranquillity required no development, and whose hotels, restaurants, and amenities were perfectly positioned to exploit the private capital encouraged by his governments' industrial policies. Partly, what tourism was missing was state investment in infrastructure. Certainly, the revenue cited by Davin dwarfed Patrick Shaw's reference in 1930 to 'three millions spent by people attracted into

[19] *Ibid.*, vol. 9, 9 December, 1924, col. 2240

[20] *Ibid.*, 12 December, 1924, col. 2583

[21] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 24 July, 1924, col. 2084

this country' in 1929,[22] and Lemass' 1936 Dáil announcement that American tourists had spent approximately £400,000 in both 1933 and 1934.[23]

Politicians had an imperfect understanding of tourism promotion, regarding infrastructural developments as the best method of promoting the state: good transportation facilities would attract visitors. When the ITA requested that the government spend more on tourism propaganda, Cosgrave adverted to increased expenditure on road-building schemes, while local authorities were offered increased road-building funds if they increased their contributions to the organisation. Officialdom viewed road and rail from the perspective of commerce and communications, not tourism, although Cumann na nGaedheal supported the GSR, whose propaganda was geared towards attracting visitors. Private ownership of railways obviated the need for state investment. When providing bus services became necessary, it was to the railways' private capital that Cumann na nGaedheal turned.[24] Moreover, Lemass proposed an amendment to the Railways Bill, 1933 permitting the GSR to operate aviation services.[25]

Motor tourism, in contrast, fared poorly. American consul Loy W. Henderson wrote:

> Cars were rare in Dublin.... Driving through cobblestoned streets crowded with horsedrawn springless vehicles was not particularly agreeable, and the roads outside the city were poor and unsafe. There was a prejudice in Dublin against automobiles. Taxicabs in particular were looked upon as the enemy of the horse, and it was generally considered that what was bad for the horse was bad for Ireland. The municipal laws were unfavourable to taxicabs. A taxi-driver, for instance, could not ply the streets for hire, and the drivers of the side–cars did what they could to assure the enforcement of this law.[26]

Cars generated revenue, although the road-building required to make motor travel comfortable eroded it. Blythe's insistence that cars were luxury items impeded the deployment of a privately-owned transport fleet: McKenna duties made cars expensive,[27] while tariffs on tourist's cars was a contentious issue until Sean McEntee announced

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[22] *Ibid.*, vol. 33, 12 February, 1930, col. 60

[23] *Ibid.*, vol. 61, 30 April, 1936, col. 1944

[24] No. 17 of 1927, Railways (Road Motor Services) Act, 1927: §2

[25] *Ibid.*, vol. 46, 6 April, 1933, col. 2566

[26] HIS, Henderson, unpubl. memoir: 214

[27] DÉ, vol. 11, 22 April, 1925, cols 53-4. The McKenna Duties were a British Great War tariff on luxury imported goods, including motor vehicles. Removed between August 1924 and June 1925 (but reinstated until 1956) Blythe argued that abolition represented an annual loss of £370,000 to the state.

measures to facilitate motoring tourists in 1935[28] and, in 1937, that the state was party to negotiations on an international motoring convention.[29]

Though it was an effort to make motor tourism more viable, Blythe's 1930 proposal to grant the Phoenix Park Motor Races £3,000 drew criticism.[30] Archie Cassidy asked why a loan, such as the Tailteann Games had received, was not offered. Derrig's nationalist perspective, advocated 'developing functions like the Tailteann Games and the Horse Show, which have some connection with the country instead of things quite foreign to it like motor races.'[31] Lemass claimed the races encouraged the importation of cars and fuel, upsetting the balance of payments. Obscurely, O'Kelly criticised the government for denying Dublin's poor the enjoyment of the park during the races. Aiken maintained the party line: 'the object of the Government should be to provide for the comforts of their own people and not for the comforts of tourists.... If we do that then it will be all right for the tourists to come along.[32] Blythe's rebuttal indicates awareness of the economic benefits of tourism, as the races would promote motor tourism:

> The country has certain attractions for motorists. It has roads that are not so crowded. If that factor were fully availed of we could make a great deal of money and give a great deal of employment. Some Deputy... said that we should think of the people before the tourists. We are not trying to attract tourists here for the benefit of the tourists; we are trying to attract them for the benefit of the people....[33]

The state prized motoring visitors because they distributed income around the state, adding garages and mechanics to the list of tourism beneficiaries. But the state risked losing motorists through bad roads, inadequate port facilities and inflexible customs policies. Fr Thomas O'Dea, secretary of the Irish American Tourist Organisation, wrote: 'A bunch of American tourists motored to Cork from Queenstown and that was enough. Roads rotten. They shipped their car to England that night by a boat leaving Cork.'[34] Deputy John Good queried the effects of bad roads and customs-enforced delays on spare parts:

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[28] *Ibid.*, vol. 57, 18 June, 1935, cols 400-1

[29] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 25707: 31 March, 1937 - 2 December, 1938

[30] DÉ, vol. 33, 12 February, 1930, col. 43

[31] *Ibid.*, col. 64

[32] *Ibid.*, col. 70-1

[33] *Ibid.*, col. 74-5

[34] NAI, D/FA, GR459-2: 16 January, 1925

> motorists... in the habit of running on roads in England and Scotland, if they try... the same practice on our roads, will find that the cars will not withstand such work.... If a motor tourist... has a break-down and wants a part he will wire across to England for it. He gets a wire back saying the part... will take another two or three weeks to get it through the Customs.... He will clear out of the country... with a very bad impression.[35]

Ill-conceived importation duties, which taxed Northern hackney drivers every time they entered the state, forced tourism-dependent Bundoran UDC to seek legislative change to the Motor Cars (Temporary Importation) Regulations, 1926.[36]

Extra funding for roads was one way of promoting tourism. In 1936 James Dillon requested that Lemass finance road improvements where rail services had deteriorated: 'these roads, while having a very great value... for transport purposes, would also... attract tourists... and provide tourist facilities which do not at present operate, and they would become a material source of national revenue.'[37] The ITA proposed a scheme to link local authority tourism funding to road improvements: the greater an authority's tourism contribution, the greater the government grant it would receive. Unwilling to acquiesce entirely, Industry and Commerce, with Local Government and Public Health, proposed a compromise fund of £25,000 'to allocate to county councils for the improvement of tourist roads... calculated without any reference to the amount contributed for tourist advertising provided the councils concerned struck a certain uniform rate (or the maximum rate allowable) for that purpose.'[38]

Another aspect of infrastructural development for tourism was air travel, though it was not seen as a tourist matter: expensive, and not tried and trusted, Dáil references to it frequently came in communications debates.[39] The possibilities of air travel excited deputies, though constituency interests abounded, with scarcely a corner of the country not proposed as a site for the aerodrome and air service the state had not the financial means to develop.[40] In 1928, a committee on aviation reported to McGilligan that air travel required public finance, a disappointing outcome for a free trade administration,

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[35] DÉ, vol. 11, 22 April, 1925, cols 73-4

[36] *Ibid.*, vol. 19, 24 March, 1927, col. 203

[37] *Ibid.*, vol. 61, 30 April, 1936, col. 1961

[38] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 25114: 21 October, 1936

[39] For examples see DÉ, vol. 23, 30 May, 1928, col. 2158 and vol. 27, 21 November, 1928, col. 464

[40] For examples see DÉ, vol. 23, 30 May, 1928, col. 2158; vol. 56, 8 May, 1935, col. 526; vol. 57, 25 June, 1935, col. 738; and vol. 59, 27 November, 1935, cols 1371-2.

with a poor record in funding transport. In 1930, Finance vetoed McGilligan's proposal to spend £20,000 of the Air Corps budget on developing civil aviation. [41] Ironically, when private capital became available, the protectionist Lemass was in office. His reluctance to allow foreign airlines operate within Ireland delayed air services. In February 1935, Osmond Esmonde queried where was the service promised for 1934;[42] in November, Peadar Doyle asked whether Lemass would permit 'private or public companies worked in conjunction with existing services in Great Britain' to operate the service.[43] In response, Lemass granted a temporary licence to Olley Air Services as a precursor to a nationalised Aer Lingus and Aer Rianta.[44]

Infrastructure aside, politicians had special regard for sporting tourists. In a Dáil query, Michael Heffernan asked Kevin O'Higgins if he would preserve foxes from over-hunting as 'a great amount of money is brought into this country by people who indulge in fox-hunting'.[45] A game preservation bill was eventually produced. At its second reading, William Kent suggested a government grant to restock game:

> what an advertisement it would be for the Tourist Development Association. Sportsmen would be so anxious to come into the country that they would be tripping over each other.... My point is that if we preserve fish and game in this country ... the golden harvest which we will reap from the fin and feather will be very considerable. [46]

Thomas O'Higgins supported the bill, noting that wild geese had attracted hunters to Wexford, where 'accommodation has to be booked in advance in these places during the shooting season.'[47] Fianna Fáil's Martin Corry dissented: thundering that the stocks of private hunting preserves were for English visitors, at the expense of Irish people ('the mere commoner who owns a gun'), he displayed his party's antipathy towards foreign visitors. [48]

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[41] Furlong, *op. cit.*: 179.

[42] DÉ, vol. 54, 20 February, 1935, col. 2066

[43] *Ibid.*, vol. 59, 7 November, 1935, col. 598

[44] *Ibid.*, 27 November, 1935, cols 1481-3

[45] *Ibid.*, vol. 17, 7 December, 1926, cols 453-5

[46] *Ibid.*, vol. 29, 16 May, 1929, col. 2116

[47] *Ibid.*, vol. 32, 14 November, 1929, col. 1386

[48] *Ibid.*, col. 1404

The state actively pursued sporting tourists, and its overseas representatives assisted ITA campaigns. From New York, Lindsay Crawford contacted External Affairs on behalf of a sporting party organised by Ferris Greensleet of Houghton Mifflin, publishers of European guidebooks. Crawford requested that External Affairs 'appreciate the importance of this visit from a publicity point of view and the desirability of affording these visitors in fullest possible measure realization of the anticipations aroused by the *Angler's Guide to the Irish Free State*.' Industry and Commerce promised to expedite their customs duties on sporting equipment, while Lester notified the ITA, and indicated that the Minister would endeavour to meet Greensleet, who had read the guide.[49] The *Anglers Guide* also enticed Barrelet de Ricou, manager of Lloyd's Bank in Paris, to visit the state in 1928. He was sufficiently impressed by his excursion to publish an article that Gerald O'Kelly suggested be republished in *Irish Travel*.[50]

Representations made in 1930 on behalf of John Rice, a New York-based Armagh native and horse dealer who proposed bringing hunting tourists to Ireland, show his awareness of the value of sporting tourism, and the type of tourist Rice would attract:

> It would entail employment... it would increase the demand for forage, etc., these people would require hotel accommodation... some of them would buy or rent houses the next season. Furthermore, an increase in the better class of tourist traffic might follow.... I am making every effort to attract a more prosperous type of tourist, especially the sporting rich who would be of real value.[51]

External Affairs contacted the ITA, who were already printing hunting propaganda for Rice. They averred that 'we whole-heartedly agree with... the value of such traffic and we should be only too glad to avail of any further suggestion which he is good enough to make' and offered copies of publicity photographs of Rice and the Ward Union Hunt to the legation.[52]

The representatives also used their influence to criticise poor promotion, and to correct negative depictions of the state. MacWhite criticised the ITA's *Sporting Ireland* in 1929: 'It is doubtful if there exists another national association... that proclaims its own country is

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[49] NAI, D/FA, GR459-12: 26 January - 7 March, 1927. The party also included English poet and dramatist, John Drinkwater.

[50] *Ibid.*, GR459-12a: 22 October, 1928. The original article, not extant in the file, appeared in the 'Journal du Casting Club de France.'

[51] *Ibid.*, GR459-25: 10 November, 1930

[52] *Ibid.*: 22 November, 1930

inferior, in the form of sport that it advertises, to that of its neighbour. On page 19, it says that hunting is better done in England; On page 23, that the Saorstát government has been lax in protection of game.'[53] In October 1931, F.W.E. Wagner of *The Shooting Times*, an enthusiastic promoter of hunting in Ireland, took exception at being instructed to apply in Dublin for a licence to bring his guns to Ireland. When his request that a license be issued in London was rejected, he printed an editorial on Ireland's lawlessness, recommending that shooting enthusiasts avoid visiting. Mollified by the commissioner, Wagner agreed to revert to a supportive position.[54]

The Tailteann Games appealed not only to the solitary sporting tourist, but were a spectacle with broad international appeal. They also, Davin recognised, generated revenue: 'the huge number of tourists who are likely to patronise the games... are bound to spend a considerable sum of money... [that] will find its way back to the farmers and to every section of the community that provides food for these visitors.[55] J.J. Walsh expounded the desirability of repatriating emigrants and their money: 'It is of some importance to have foreigners coming here and spending money.... At the same time... there are many Irish-Americans who, having made money, desire to return to the old land, settle down here, buy property, and help this country.'[56] Visitors represented short-term financial gain, but required more investment in services than expatriates, whose permanent return brought new capital. But the Games had a parlous existence. Being hosted one month before the Eucharistic Congress, coupled with de Valera's unease at linking Catholic Ireland with polytheistic Celtic lore, spelled their demise after 1932.

The Eucharistic Congress was an opportunity for the state to engage in pomp and ceremony, and to unite the majority of citizens, however briefly, under Catholicism and a veneration of St Patrick. Like the Tailteann Games it was a spectacle, providing international publicity to a broad audience. It also recalled the notion of Catholic virtue, evident in early travel writing on Ireland. Dating from Penal times, Catholics maintained the tradition of hosting masses in homes, offering hospitality to officiating clerics and neighbours. The state was no different, and concerned itself with preparations for

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[53] *Ibid.*, GR459-18: 11 September, 1929. Emphasis in the original.

[54] *Ibid.*, 34/149, 24 October 1932 – 18 April, 1932.

[55] DÉ, vol. 7, 5 June, 1924, col. 2015

[56] *Ibid.*, col. 2018

receiving guests, and promoting itself to a wider audience. Deputies expressed concern at the lack of public transport, and the policing of liners required to supplement Dublin's hotel accommodation. Dáil debates regarded those who would attend as pilgrims, suggesting that the exchequer's gain was secondary to religious celebration. Nonetheless, the government was sufficiently alert to the propaganda coup the Congress offered to approve Posts and Telegraphs' proposals to publicise the event in non-sectarian and neutral tones: a commemorative stamp, broadcast talks about the Congress, and a cancelling machine to impress 'Visit Ireland. International Eucharistic Congress. June 1932' on mail.[57]

The Congress was a mixed blessing for tourism. In 1930, the ITA, concerned that tourists expected in 1931 would postpone visiting until 1932, sought advice from the Berlin and Paris representations.[58] The Berlin legation contacted German tourism interests to ascertain their requirements and, while awaiting responses, suggested that propaganda highlight Ireland's friendliness towards Germany, and Ireland's scenic differences. The legation accentuated the importance of the source of propaganda:

> The best publicity is that which is given in books and newspaper articles written by Germans who have visited Ireland. The type of person who is likely to make the journey to Ireland will probably be attracted more by such writings than by posters, circulars and press advertisements issued by agencies. When writers of this kind are visiting Ireland it should be well worth while for the Tourist Association to do something to make their stay as interesting and agreable [sic] as possible. Wireless talks fall into the same class of publicity and are given by the same type of person.[59]

German tourism companies offered mixed responses. The North German Lloyd Company anticipated problems:

> It would appear that, because of too limited general propaganda, Ireland is not generally known to the travelling public or not sufficiently attractive; in particular we regret to say that we have heard complaints from such travellers as have visited Ireland that the cost of staying in Ireland is inordinately high.[60]

The Hamburg America Line recommended developing package holidays, while the Weltreisebüro Union, interested in bringing tourists to Ireland, suggested placing a

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[57] NAI, D/T, S6005/4: 8 July, 1930

[58] NAI, D/FA, GR459-24: undated, c. 6 August, 1930 (the date of the ITA Board meeting which authorised the request) to 16 September, 1930, when Industry and Commerce sent the request to the representatives.

[59] *Ibid.*, 30 September, 1930

[60] *Ibid.*, 10 October, 1930

promotional article in its quarterly publication, and encouraged the ITA to organise tours for German tourist clerks.[61] The legation's efforts resonated with the ITA who decided to produce planned tourism itineraries and promotional material in German, making better use of the GSR's German-language posters. In contrast O'Kelly was unhelpful. Six weeks after the request, he observed that attracting French people was more important than attracting Irish people living in France, and recommended that promotional material be published in French.[62] O'Kelly's perfunctory advice came only months after he had made suggestions to the ITA that had not been acted upon, and it is conceivable that pique lay behind his indifference.[63]

In the practice of tourism propaganda, External Affairs rendered service to the state, though it had no responsibility to do so. Instead, it gained an accidental role. With experience of propaganda in diverse areas, and with a network of representatives overseas, it enjoyed a prominent international position. Its representatives, who provided a public face for the state, saw how tourism fared in other countries, and advised how it might be skilfully and economically promoted. Additionally, as the only point of contact within their host countries for the state, they disseminated information to prospective tourists, and countered negative perceptions of Ireland as a tourist destination. Before the ITA opened overseas bureaux, the representatives were the only authorised point of contact for prospective visitors and organisations seeking to profit from the state's tourism potential. Their propaganda provided eminent visitors with information and contacts for their travels. Smiddy, keen to entice wealthy, influential Americans requested in 1926 that External Affairs send him copies of propaganda films dealing with Irish industrial, agricultural and social life that could be loaned to Irish organisations, universities and museums. His request was precipitate: Lester had indicated that sanction had been granted for films, but tourism films remained unavailable until the ITA created a film unit in 1936. Industry and Commerce explained:

> Although the Executive Council have approved in principle of the production of a Film relating to Saorstát activities and attractions, no sanction for expenditure on this project has been yet obtained. It is unlikely that, under the most favourable circumstances that a Film will be available for several months to come.[64]

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[61] *Ibid.*.

[62] *Ibid.*, 25 November, 1930

[63] *Ibid.*, GR459-9b: 1 August, 1930

[64] *Ibid.*, GR459-28: 19 January, 1927

Attracting wealthy tourists to the state was no easy task, given that negative publicity, not all unwarranted, was abundant. Complaints about unclean hotels, overpricing and poor service were common, and one German traveller, Lisbeth Dill, complained of her torrid stay.[65] Customs officers angered many travellers, with their inflexible attitude towards taxing even personal effects. In one instance, five guineas duty was levied on a Free State citizen's clothing sent by rail from Belfast to Bundoran while he travelled by car. Deputy James Myles, who raised the matter, warned that 'news spreads like wildfire about the trouble they [tourists] have in getting into the Saorstát.' [66] The conduct of customs officials also generated complaints. An outraged Thomas Johnson read into the Dáil record an *Irish Independent* report on a trial for theft at Dun Laoghaire port which claimed the port had become notorious for thefts from passengers. He noted the article 'will do great harm to the country because... that statement will be repeated in the English and American Press, and unless it is repudiated... by a Minister of the Government and given the same publicity... the country in general is going to suffer a bad reputation, entirely undeserved.'[67] While this was an extreme example of bad publicity, most complaints centred on incompetence, delays and under-staffing. Fr Thomas O'Dea wrote of dilatory and over zealous officials in Cobh:

> Customs officials who try to make out you are a criminal; there is a one Mr Larkin there – Judge, Jury and Jailer all combined. He thinks it is his business to prevent people spending their money in Ireland.... A friend of mine went to Europe last year and it just took 11 minutes for two customs officials to examine 973 tourists in Calais. Mr Larken has a helper and yet it takes them three hours to examine 407. My God.[68]

Cobh was particularly problematic: complaints about poor landing and transportation facilities were common. A report sent to Cosgrave noted that a party of US Bishops arriving there in 1928 were unable to obtain a hire car, or hotel, and were forced to accept an offer of transportation from another passenger who had a car, but who himself was inconvenienced by his offer.[69]

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[65] *Ibid.*, GR459-23: 4 July, 1930

[66] DÉ, vol. 12, 18 June, 1925, col. 1181

[67] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 3 July, 1924, cols 453-5

[68] NAI, D/FA, GR459-2: 16 January, 1925. For a Dáil debate on staffing levels at Dun Laoghaire harbour, see DÉ, vol. 8, 23 July, 1924, col. 1951.

[69] NAI, D/T, S5472A: 22 February, 1929

It is plausible that the tourism industry was the architect of its own misfortune: the ITA continually sought improvements on high prices and poor service. However, not all involved in tourism were ITA members: on one occasion, MacWhite sought to rein in misleading impressions given to American visitors. External Affairs, acting on his recommendations, contacted Industry and Commerce, pointing out the:

> incorrect impressions which American visitors to this country are getting from bus conductors, tram men, car drivers, etc (who purport to be guides). Some of these guides… are telling American tourists how happy the country would be if only the English were back again. In order to counteract this undesirable propaganda it might be suggested to the Irish Tourist Association that they should establish a system of licences for Tourist Guides and that these guides should, as far as possible, have a national outlook, with a knowledge of places of historical and archaeological interest.[70]

J.P. O'Brien's reply, as waspish as good relations permitted, noted the universality of unofficial guides, before concluding: 'While the Minister Plenipotentiary may be rightly annoyed on hearing cases of this kind it should be obvious that their occurrence cannot be avoided, and it should be equally obvious that no Association can hope to control the opinions of hackney-car drivers.'[71]

Even ill-founded negative publicity was damaging. New York publisher J.W. Glenister informed External Affairs of his experiences with New York travel agencies. He was told 'occasionally stray bullets came from housetops. Another said that transportation facilities were terrible, trains were delayed for hours and some days the trains did not run at all.' Yet another claimed the Shelbourne hotel rarely changed its linen.[72] *The New York Times* quoted an American merchant, William Bedford: 'the land is not as cultivated as it was years ago, and there are not enough crops to support the inhabitants for thirty days…. The young men won't till the land and the priests told me they have lost control over them since the Free State has been established.'[73]

On the same page, famine rumours were lent credence by an Associated Press story reporting the death of two Clonmel children from malnutrition. The report was

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[70] NAI, D/FA, GR459-19: 1 November, 1929

[71] *Ibid.*, 20 January, 1930

[72] *Ibid.*, GR459-2: 4 May, 1925

[73] *Ibid.*, GR459-4: 25 August, 1925. Glenister sent the letter, which had appeared in the newspaper on 10 August, to Lester from the Hotel Imperial in Cork. The report favoured Ulster and Britain: Bedford highlighted how Ulster's prosperity came from its working masses, before the report terminated with an assessment of American exports to Britain.

mischievous: the headline 'Situation Improves in Irish Famine Area' sensationalised the article, which actually chronicled unemployment and poverty in provincial towns, and admitted that there was no evidence at time of publication that starvation was the cause of death.[74] The international impact of bad publicity compelled the ITA to request that McGilligan conduct an interview with the American press.[75] Days earlier, Industry and Commerce had made the same request to External Affairs, where Lester noted that, subsequently, an interview had been conducted on his recommendation.[76]

Despite these problems, the state was fortunate in receiving support from prominent personages, and made a concerted effort to look after such luminaries. Glenister observed that a 1925 film shot in Ireland 'will do more to offset the anti Free State propaganda that has been put about over the press in this country [USA] during the past year.' He further informed Lester that the film's leading man, Thomas Meighan, was planning a series of newspaper articles on his time in Ireland.[77] The film, 'Irish Luck', was unremarkable, but its scenic locations and Meighan's endorsement were invaluable: one of Hollywood's highest-paid actors (reputedly earning $5,000 weekly[78]) his influence on American opinion was considerable. A year later another American actor, Will Rogers, wrote:

> I have been in twenty countries and the only one where American tourists are welcomed wholeheartedly by everybody is in Ireland. And the funny part about it is, there is more to see there than in all the others put together. They don't owe us and they don't hate us. The lakes of Killarney is where Switzerland got their idea of lakes. Americans, go where you are welcome! Ireland is a friend to everybody, even England.[79]

Third-party endorsements removed the appearance of propaganda, but were facilitated by the government and civil service: Smiddy provided Glenister with an introduction to Lester, and Rogers, while filming in Ireland, met Cosgrave. Smiddy was keen to persuade the GSR and ITA to provide a Cunard line photographer with free travel and accommodation 'so as to counteract the bad impression that most people have here of

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[74] *Ibid.*.

[75] *Ibid.*, GR459-2: 22 May, 1925

[76] *Ibid.*: 11 June, 1925. The correspondence from Industry and Commerce was dated 18 May, 1925.

[77] *Ibid.*, GR459-4: 14 October, 1925

[78] *New York Times*, 9 July, 1936

[79] NAI, D/FA, GR459-32: 4 August, 1926. The quotation is from an unidentified newspaper clipping of 1 August that Crawford sent to External Affairs as it 'may be found worthy of reproduction in the Irish Press.' It appeared under the headline: 'Will Rogers Says Only Ireland Welcomes American Tourists.' Rogers starred in two 1927 films shot in Ireland by Carl Stearns Clancy'

Ireland, regarding it still as a poor country, and as it existed in the middle of the last century.'[80]

The representatives, mindful of their trade roles, were alert to the possibility that tourists might become investors. The Cunard line twice issued special editions of its brochure on the Free State. On the second occasion, Smiddy agreed to write the introduction and requested photographs of Ardnacrusha, new factories, including the Ford plant in Cork, and Dublin traffic. But External Affairs did not allow commercial interests to blight diplomatic duties. Alert to economical propaganda methods, the GSR's P.J. Floyd asked the Department of Transport and the Marine in 1928 whether the representatives could distribute the company's literature, and 'obtain the entrance of this Company's Tourist Literature to foreign countries, America principally, without payment of duty charges or assessment of such on more favourable terms.'[81] Industry and Commerce, to whom the request was forwarded, favoured the proposal, but External Affairs differed. While wishing to avoid distribution costs being borne by the state, and having propaganda masquerading as diplomatic communications 'there would be no objection to the Rys [sic: railways] providing the Foreign Reps through Industry and Commerce with a limited quantity of literature for distribution as in their discretion the Foreign Reps thought fit.'[82]

While it took the department until January 1929 to communicate this to Industry and Commerce, the representatives were more active. Communication from Industry and Commerce one year later, quoting the ITA, indicated how the representatives' lobbying had assisted tourism promotion: 'With the co-operation of the Irish Free State Legation at Washington and the recently appointed Consul at New York, I have succeeded in arranging that future despatches of our literature will enter U.S.A. Duty Free, a privilege which is not enjoyed by most other European countries.'[83] At the same time, the Berlin legation notified the GSR of the dates of the Leipzig Fair and promised assistance; the GSR forwarded posters and propaganda material.[84] Four months later, O'Kelly, having

[80] *Ibid.*, GR459-28: 2 December, 1926

[81] *Ibid.*, GR459-5c: 18 September, 1928

[82] *Ibid.*, 27 September, 1928

[83] *Ibid.*, 6 January, 1930

[84] *Ibid.*, GR459-5d: 3 January, 1930

received a GSR travel brochure in French, requested 300 more copies for distribution.[85] In July, he requested 200 more to distribute to members of the French Inter-Parliamentary Union whom he thought might be persuaded to visit the state.[86] The representatives continued to monitor tourist propaganda, with Berlin suggesting in 1930 that that the ITA and the GSR directly supply Thomas Cook's there with material, as that office was receiving 'on average one inquiry per day in relation to Ireland' but had run out of materials, which came via their London office.[87]

Other state departments were also involved in tourism propaganda, in the broadest sense. American propagandists, especially Lippman and Bernays, regarded propaganda as social engineering, and the necessary imposition of political will on a populace unable to think independently. While there is little evidence that such practice was prevalent in tourism propaganda, a 1935 Department of Lands initiative, to which Industry and Commerce contributed, suggests that it was not entirely unknown. Chaired by Seán Ua Móráin, (Lands Commission, Gaeltacht Services) the interdepartmental committee included representatives from Finance, Education, Local Government and Public Health, and the OPW. George Bourke 'in charge of the Tourist Development work in this Department' represented Industry and Commerce.[88]

The proposal sought to increase tourism in Gaeltachtaí by creating model villages. Several villages were considered for inclusion in the scheme. Finance estimated that revenue from tourism to Gaeltacht language colleges was over £23,000 in 1933.[89] The committee found that 3,144 teachers and others pursued courses in Gaeltachtaí colleges in 1933, and 3,633 in 1934. In both years 150 more teachers holidayed in Gaeltachtaí without pursuing a course. The average number of children who spent a month in Gaeltachtaí under the auspices of *Coiste na bPáisti* in those years was estimated at 150. Rates for board and lodging for adults were estimated to range from £1 10*s.* 0*d.* to £2 0*s.* 0*d.* per week and for children £1 0*s.* 0*d.* per week.[90] The figures suggest that Gaeltacht

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[85] *Ibid.*: 10 April, 1930

[86] *Ibid.*, GR459-5c: 1 July, 1930

[87] *Ibid.*, GR 459-23: 4 July, 1930

[88] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 24212: 30 July, 1935

[89] NAI, D/T, S7839A: 20 November, 1934. The report was not circulated to the Executive Council until 29 May, 1935.

[90] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 24212: 15 November, 1935

tourism was under-developed, although the absence of figures for non-Irish speaking visitors renders greater precision more difficult.

Ua Móráin, perhaps aware of Industry and Commerce's ambivalence towards tourism, made an economic appeal for its involvement:

> Holiday traffic represents one of the most important potential factors of the economic situation of the Gaeltacht which has not up to the present been developed to any great extent. Should its development... reach realisation much employment would follow from the transport and attendance on visitors, the provision of food; with its auxiliary requirements of vegetables, fish, etc. Development to any great extent would also involve building, road-making, the encouragement of amusements and natural outdoor sports such as shooting, fishing, etc., all bringing in their train much needed employment....[91]

Interestingly, this proposal followed a Finance report circulated to the Executive Council in May 1935 that refuted an earlier Lands proposal for creating self-catering holiday homes in Gaeltachtaí. Although Finance accepted that 'the extension of holiday traffic must be regarded as the largest source of potential wealth for these areas' the perceived wisdom that the department relied on in its refutation was that revenues from language tourism went directly to local people through accommodation and catering, and the new initiative could lead to resentment if those monies were diverted to other beneficiaries.[92] However, Sean McEntee, the report's signatory, became eager in the possibilities that social engineering afforded:

> I would recommend as an experiment that two or three villages of the backward type... should be selected, all the houses raised to the ground and rebuilt... - the whole village being properly laid out, with a small square, trees and other amenities... and the houses on reconstruction to contain special additional living accommodation for visitors and to have water and electricity.... A small social hall should also be provided and... the more enterprising inhabitants may wish to start a small general shop to cater for the visitors. The surrounding... roads should also be reconstructed and bathing and boating facilities provided.... The experiment should not end, however, with the erection of the... village: An overhaul of the internal organisation is also necessary; the standard of cooking... needs to be raised and the necessity for the cultivation of a wide variety of vegetables brought to the people's notice. Every effort should be made to make the reconstructed area self-supporting in the matter of food, or at worst dependent only on the surrounding district, so that the greatest possible profit might be derived from the sojourn of the visitors.[93]

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[91] *Ibid.*, 26 July, 1935

[92] NAI, D/T, S7839A: 20 November, 1934

[93] *Ibid.*.

Publicity to attract students 'might... be done through the usual channels, press, poster and cinema, with the assistance of the Irish Tourist Association.... I would suggest... that a booklet should be prepared and published giving up-to-date and accurate particulars concerning the areas.' The report also recognises the usefulness of package tours organised by independent bodies, using rail and bus links to disperse visitors throughout Gaeltachtaí.[94]

Did Finance's response initiate a revised Lands proposal? The similarities between its second proposal and McEntee's self-sufficient idyll are striking. An undated Gaeltacht Services report appended to the committee's March 1937 minutes assessing the suitability of two villages to host the scheme shows how far into social engineering it was progressing. The parish priest, asked to assess parishioners, acknowledged the scheme's merit provided the villagers were not too backward to operate it, and was assured that families would have to demonstrate their suitability to host guests; the report includes a list of suitable families.[95] By May, the Committee indicated the scheme would require state funding of £27,000. Of this, £1,000 could be recouped from local authorities, and £5,000 from a one-third contribution from each participating homeowner. The costs included 20 houses, a hall and infrastructure. Another £1,000 was added for street lighting and a bathing place, requiring net state funding of £22,000.[96]

Though supportive of Lands' second scheme, Industry and Commerce shied away from tourism propaganda. Committee minutes record that:

> Mr Bourke thought that advertising would scarcely be necessary after the first year as the visitors would give sufficient publicity to the areas in question. Mr O'Maoileannaigh pointed out that the number of tourists would depend on the work of the Committee. In reply to the Chairman, Mr Bourke said that the Irish Tourist Association would have funds available for advertising, provided rates were being paid for the area in question. He thought the Railway and 'Bus authorities would also co-operate in the matter.[97]

Later acknowledging that people would not participate in the scheme without a guarantee of increased numbers of tourists, Bourke said the ITA would co-operate, but would not distinguish between Irish-speaking and other tourists, and that they would advertise the

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[94] *Ibid.*.

[95] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 24212: 5 March, 1937

[96] *Ibid.*: 7 May, 1937

[97] *Ibid.*: 2 January, 1936

areas and press for reduced rail fares, but suggested that local committees should also seek lower fares.[98]

This reluctance, and handwritten memos on Industry and Commerce files, attest its lukewarm response to the scheme. One memo was an instruction to Bourke to raise the issue of contacting the ITA for its input. In fact, it was Leydon himself who suggested that ITA be consulted.[99] The final committee meeting recorded:

> Mr Bourke stated that he had been asked officially to obtain the views of the Committee, and in particular of the representative of the Minister for Finance as to the advisability of submitting details of the proposed scheme to the Irish Tourist Association for observations. It was agreed that it would be undesirable to discuss the matter with the Association unless and until the Minister for Finance gives a definite indication that a scheme on the lines recommended will be adopted. It was likely that in any event the Irish Tourist Association would be consulted before a scheme would be put into operation.[100]

Leydon had the final word on the committee's report, writing to Finance in July 1937: 'this Department has no observations to offer other than to suggest that the Irish Tourist Association might be consulted before any scheme of the nature referred to is put into operation.'[101] But the scheme was never pursued, and a note by Bourke states 'no fr [sic: further] action is necessary ... as the whole question of development of tourist traffic will be dealt with under the new Tourist Traffic Development Bill.' [102] That bill, enacted in 1939, was, arguably, the true starting point of Lemass' interest in, and state commitment to, tourism promotion.

III

Alongside state efforts to promote tourism, local tourism committees re-emerged. Their efforts quickly led to calls for a national organisation. The Irish Tourist Organisation meeting Lester attended called for such a body to be autonomous, independent of state funding 'except such as could be afforded by the Publicity Department in the course of its ordinary work' and capable of co-operating with Ulster tourist organisations.[103] It was

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[98] *Ibid.*: 6 May, 1936

[99] *Ibid.*: 23 June, 1937

[100] *Ibid.*: July, 1937

[101] *Ibid.*: 21 July, 1937

[102] *Ibid.*: 29 July, 1938

[103] NAI, D/FA, S5472A: 18 January, 1924

a foretaste of the entrepreneurial pragmatism that distinguished private interests from heavily-bureaucratized state efforts. Nonetheless, it was the state, though lagging behind other European countries in state-sponsored tourism, that created the Irish Tourist Association. Walsh notes contemporary state requirements for successful tourism promotion:

> legislation bearing on tourist traffic and its organisation; the creation of a state department for the control and promotion of tourist traffic; the co-ordination of tourist promotion under the state; the voluntary subscription of funds towards the common object; and the centralisation of tourist promotion in the hands of the state.[104]

While partially meeting these, the state's unwillingness to commit to tourism promotion kept the ITA at arms length from government.

The ITA's Memorandum of Association reveals ambitious objectives for tourist promotion, though it was mindful of the 1909 legislation limiting its expenditure to advertising and publicity:

> To foster and develop Tourist Traffic in and to attract visitors to Ireland and to safeguard the interests, and to promote the comfort and pleasure of tourists therein, and to make known the advantages and amenities of the various districts as health resorts or watering places by advertisement or by other forms of publicity.[105]

While the association embraced tourism promotion, publishing guidebooks and other literature, it extended its remit:

> To strive for and secure minimum tariffs on the part of railway and shipping companies, hotels, and boarding houses, motor owners and car drivers… and to facilitate travelling, and to provide or promote the provisions of through tourists' tickets, circular tickets, reserved places, hotel and lodging accommodation, guides, safe deposits, baggage transport and other conveniences.[106]

There is no obvious mention in the Memorandum of a system of accommodation inspection that was to become central to the ITA's operations, unless 'to promote the comfort and pleasure of tourists' may be understood to incorporate this.

While Cumann na nGaedheal tourism propaganda largely encompassed economic development, and Fianna Fáil propaganda attempts to boost national pride, ITA propaganda focussed on improving the product. Politicians and civil servants used

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[104] Walsh, 1998: 68

[105] Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Irish Tourist Association, 6 July, 1925: 5

[106] *Ibid.*.

improving standards in accommodation as a means of denying the need for propaganda expenditure. Concerned with saving public monies, J.J. McElligott, Secretary of the Department of Finance, disingenuously claimed that if the ITA increased the quality of the state's hotels, the shipping companies would bring tourists.[107] But improving standards was the cornerstone of the ITA's message. Reporting on the 1924 meeting, Lester wrote that the Munster Tourism Development Association had 'recently explained to me that their object was to make hotelkeepers and others realise that good service and good value constituted the only foundation on which they could attract visitors in increasing numbers.'[108] In 1930 the ITA pressed McGilligan and Blythe for a state system of hotel grading and inspection. McGilligan rejected the request on administrative grounds, observing that no country operated such a system.[109] Nonetheless, by 1937, the ITA was able to host the first national hotels conference for several years. Reporting on the event, *Irish Travel* trumpeted improvements over the previous decade: 65 new hotels; 350 hotels with structural improvements; 125 newly-installed hot and cold running water in their 4,250 bedrooms (only 200 bedrooms had this in 1925); 78 hotels with new bedrooms; and 145 hotels with new bedrooms and toilets.[110]

Though the ITA operated outside government, it had political influence: its first chairman, James Moran, was a Cosgrave Seanad nominee; its vice presidents included J.C. Foley, a Cosgrave nominee to the board of the ESB, and Martin MacDonagh, a future Cumann na nGaedheal TD. Its board comprised Oireachtas and local authority members. Crucially McGilligan supported it in its early years: his 1925 and 1931 legislation amended the 1909 act.[111] Lemass, slower to embrace tourism, assured the association of support at its 1932 AGM, because its publicity was boosting national propaganda. However, J.P. O'Brien was the ITA's secretary, and dynamo. Appointed by Foley, who encouraged him to learn how other countries promoted tourism, O'Brien

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[107] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 17721: 31 March, 1930

[108] NAI, D/T, S5472A: 18 August, 1924

[109] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 17721: 31 March, 1930

[110] Walsh, *op. cit.*: 109

[111] No. 5/1925, Local Government Act, 1925, §67. Although by 1927 34 councils had voted £10,000 to the ITA for that year (Walsh, *op. cit.*: 67), a loophole in the legislation permitting them to decide whether or not to strike a rate, and to retain such income from the ITA, necessitated further amendments with the Tourist Traffic (Development) Bill, 1931. The Act also provided for expenditure by the ITA on methods of tourism development other than the narrowly defined advertising and promotion of earlier legislation.

believed in state-supported tourism, and brought organisational, propaganda and lobbying skills to the ITA. He built financial support for the ITA, soliciting monies from tourism enterprises and local authorities, creating a network of influential, wealthy supporters that was useful in lobbying for governmental support.

Influencing government was an explicitly-stated function, expressed in the ITA's Memorandum:

> To apply for, promote and obtain any Act of Parliament, Provisional Order or Licence of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce or other Authority for enabling the Association to carry any of its objects into effect... and to oppose any proceedings which may seem calculated, directly or indirectly, to prejudicially affect or interfere with the carrying out by the Association of any of its objects.[112]

Without deeming itself as lobby organisation, the ITA was expert at this very particular propaganda skill. In its first year it declined to seek more state aid than was its due, as 'Government aid does not always encourage individual enterprise.'[113] Once established, the realities of under-funding and O'Brien's credo of state-funded tourism engendered lobbying for state aid. Its directors' political affinities and its relationship with Industry and Commerce bestowed advantages when seeking governmental support. When its lobbying did not require the state to provide funds, the ITA was successful: it achieved the support of the state's overseas representatives in tourism promotion, while pressure on the Association of Municipal Authorities and General Council of County Councils resulted in improved local authority support. However, when O'Brien approached Mulcahy (then Minister for Local Government and Public Health) seeking funds for hotel improvements and credit facilities akin to the Agricultural Credit Corporation, Mulcahy demurred, allowing H.P. Boland of Finance to deny the request:

> Tourist traffic as a subject of Government financial aid is entirely a new proposition and a proposal that breaks new ground inevitably raises the question whether we are to find money for everything and whether this is the best time to fund it. Arguments based on the smallness of the grant are too familiar. Once the principle is admitted there would be no difficulty in making a very good case for increasing it....[114]

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[112] ITA Memorandum and Articles: 6.

[113] Irish Travel, vol. i, no. 1, September, 1925: 4

[114] NAI, D/Fin, F/6/1/27: undated, April, 1928, but pursuant to a departmental memo dated 21 April, 1928. That memo indicated that state commitment to tourism was 'formidable' through unifying the railways, developing roads, tourism legislation, establishing the Shannon Scheme, fostering Tailteann games and Free State Olympic teams, providing catering training in technical schools, providing credit facilities through the Trade Loan Guarantee Acts, and the supportive attitudes of individual ministers towards tourism. Notably, the actions adverted to did not encompass promotion of tourism itself.

A renewed plea to Cosgrave fared no better: in his view by merging railways and creating bus routes the government had done its duty.[115] Perhaps pursuant to limited successes, the ITA established an internal committee of ten TDs and one Senator whose efforts realised £29,000 in state funding for roads.[116]

The association conducted conventional publicity campaigns, too. Its 1936 Annual Report stated:

> Newspaper advertising and the supply of tourist literature were naturally our main forms of expenditure. Editorial publicity, photographs, radio talks, lectures, exhibitions, competitions, etc were availed of.... Improved mailing lists and the general expansion of our organisation work in other countries have tended to render more effective the results of such work, so that... our publications and the output of our Publicity and Photographic Departments are being dispatched regularly to... transport companies, tourist agents, diplomatic and consular services, clubs, public libraries, hotels, trans-Atlantic liners and numerous other media....[117]

The major portion of ITA expenditure went on publicity. In 1936, O'Brien estimated that total tourism propaganda expenditure in the state amounted to £20,000. That August, he outlined to the Industry and Commerce how the ITA alone would expend that figure, should the department facilitate an increase in local authority funding, and in November provided a more precise budget: the figures included £7,000 on newspaper advertising, £4,000 on publications and guidebooks, £2,000 on films and photography, while the remainder was earmarked for hotel inspections, and editorial publicity. In December, O'Brien produced a £50,000 budget (still £10,000 short of the maximum local authorities could furnish), multiplying the previous budget's expenditure proportionally.[118]

The ITA was adept at embracing new media. ITA staff had filmmaking experience, unlike state departments, where J.J. Walsh, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, and former director of the Film Company of Ireland, was an exception.[119] ITA assistant secretary, David Barry was an amateur filmmaker, while its director, J.N.G. Davidson, writer and

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[115] Furlong, *op. cit.*: 84

[116] *Ibid.*: 85

[117] Annual Report of ITA: 29 April, 1936: 4

[118] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 25114: 2 August, 1936, 19 November, 1936 and 7 December, 1936

[119] Rockett *et al*, *op. cit.*, 1988: 43

director of the 1930 film 'By Accident', [120] had attended the making of 'Man of Aran' with the Empire Marketing Board.[121] The association took a broad approach to propaganda filmmaking: 'The filming will not be confined to 'tourist' material. Every phase of Irish Life and Industry will be captured briefly but in an interesting fashion, to make a comprehensive image of Ireland, old and new, practical, artistic and cultural.'[122] The distinction between propaganda and generally touristic films is important. If it were to promote a modern tourist industry, the ITA could not promulgate stereotypes reinforcing notions of a backward peasantry and a country of industrial indolence, however picturesque. Noteworthy, too, is the clever dissemination of the films: not always ideal for cinema audiences, the ITA arranged screenings on ocean liners, and used them as an accompaniment to publicity talks.

Radio offered mixed success as the limited range of 2RN, the national broadcaster, largely reached domestic rather than overseas tourists, though it was received in Britain and Northern Ireland.[123] 2RN broadcast 'Irish Travel Topics' giving the ITA a useful forum[124] though print media reached a wider audience. Aimed at tourists and the industry, the ITA published the monthly *Irish Travel* which advocated business principles, vigorous promotion and soliciting of government support. It blended a realistic tone with professional propaganda, defending Irish tourism against accusations of poor service and standards, without being blind to its shortcomings.[125] Publications specific to counties and leisure pursuits followed, as the association provided up-to-date information. The ITA provided a surrogate state tourist information service, and controlled the medium through which it disseminated its message. Attention to accurately reporting shortcomings in tourism meant that in attracting tourists it relied on balance and perceptible honesty – a favourable position in the practice of propaganda.

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[120] *Ibid.*: 45

[121] Walsh, *op. cit.*: 39

[122] Irish Travel, vol. xi, no. 10, July 1936: 205. Barry, by this time Publicity Supervisor for the ITA, had published a two-part article on film-making in Ireland as early as 1925. (Irish Travel, vol. i, no 1 October, 1925: 45-6 and vol.1, no. 2, November, 1925: 76-80.

[123] Pine, *op. cit.*: 147

[124] Furlong, *op. cit.*: 90

[125] For two examples see Irish Travel, vol. i, no. 1, October 1925: 34 and 38, and vol. i, no. 2, November, 1925: 49.

The ITA perceived that the border, a physical, psychological fault-line, did not trouble visitors, for whom Ireland was one destination. *Irish Travel* endorsed a tour guide to Ulster that stated:

> We trust that those who visit the North will also visit the South... that those who visit the South will travel to the North. There are four provinces of Ireland... and Ulstermen will be satisfied if the stranger to Ireland remembers... that there is no boundary to beauty. We are divided... into two governments, yet there remains only one Ireland.[126]

Later, *Irish Travel* reported that Craigavon had expressed satisfaction that 'Ulster was glad to pass on her tourists to the Free State, and he was equally sure that the Free State was equally glad to pass hers to the Six Counties.'[127] Zuelow writes that cross-border tourism facilitated political co-operation, albeit privately or through civil servants.[128] That co-operation flowed from the relationship between the ITA and the Ulster Tourist Development Association, from whose propaganda the ITA was willing to learn.[129] When tourism was driven by commercial interests it was inclusive and pragmatic, and less prone to nationalistic posturing than was the government: Fisheries recommended that the 'Angler's Guide to Ireland' should include detailed references to Northern Ireland but the cabinet decided that 'only a brief reference to fishings in Northern Ireland should be included in the volume and that the title should be amended accordingly.'[130] This contrasts with the ITA's Memorandum which subtly refers to its intention to attract visitors to Ireland, while maintaining information bureaux 'throughout Saorstát Eireann, and also abroad.'[131]

However, the contrasts between Northern Ireland and the state highlighted by travel writers continued to bedevil tourism promotion. Lester wrote a memo quoting a newspaper article that was most unfavourable to Dublin, and less so to Belfast:

> KINGSTOWN TO DUBLIN. This is a chapter of misery. The Kingstown station (now called Dunlaoghaire) is mouldy with age. Your heart sinks as you read the advertisements of money-lenders. The train is old and dirty. You are afraid to sit on the mouldy cushions. The contrast between the London-Holyhead train and this ancient dustbin is painful.

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[126] Irish Travel, vol. ii, no. 8, April, 1927: 166

[127] Irish Travel, vol. v, no. 9, May, 1930: 210

[128] Zuelow, 2006: 17

[129] *Ibid.*: 18

[130] NAI, D/T, S3538: 15 January, 1924

[131] ITA Memorandum and Articles: 5

> As it is Sunday there is no train to Belfast till ten. A four hours' wait! The refreshment room is closed. You seek refuge in a hotel. The hotel is grimy and the waiter is greasy. The aspect of Dublin is not cheering. The view from the steps of Amiens Street station is melancholy.
> DUBLIN TO BELFAST. You discover that there are two Amiens Street stations. The Dublin one is dilapidated. The Belfast one is fresh and bright. The train is new. The carriages are clean. The windows are not opaque. Their straps do not come off in your hand. The cushions are clean. Even the floor is swept. In two minutes you step out of the eighteenth century into the twentieth century – out of dirt and slovenliness into cleanliness and efficiency. Why on earth should the train from Kingstown to Dublin be intolerably antiquated whilst the train from Dublin to Belfast is dazzlingly modern? Why should Dublin terrify every visitor as soon as he steps ashore? Why does she neglect her front door? First impressions count.
> Belfast is not flawless. Its hotels are unworthy of it, although they use their vacuum cleaners and although they make the best of their defects. Yet I wonder why Belfast does not modernise its hotels. A great city ought to make its visitors comfortable. Dublin has burned its hotels. Belfast ought to do likewise. Both cities ought to build at least one modern hotel for tourists who desire to see the unparalleled loveliness of Irish mountains, glens and lakes. Is there anything on earth lovelier than the Wicklow Hills or the Mourne Mountains?[132]

The state's attitude towards the ITA varied. Although Industry and Commerce occasionally viewed it as a convenient dumping-ground for tourism matters, the association was valued - provided it did not seek more finance or influence than the state could willingly provide. McGilligan's legislative support ensured funding was committed from local authority rates, but denied direct state subvention. Indeed, his Memorandum to the Executive Council noted that the ITA previously had been turned down for a compulsory rate or state funding, and expressed his opinion 'that every effort should be made to encourage local authorities to centralize tourist expenditure by contributing to such an organisation.'[133] Lemass turned to domestic tourism only once the 1930s depression affected the state's balance of payments. Lemass, with Leydon, exercised greater personal control over his department than McGilligan, acknowledging the ITA's usefulness, but keeping it outside machinations of government, as the inter-departmental committee on Gaeltacht tourism showed.[134] In manoeuvring towards the 1931 Act, McElligott felt that the ITA's main work was hotel inspection, and overseas promotion was unnecessary. He minuted his scepticism of the association's 'widespread and even reckless distribution of advertising literature', concluding 'I have no desire to appear

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[132] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/379: 26 May, 1924. Lester was quoting from a *Daily Express* article of two days earlier written by the *Sunday Express* editor, James Douglas. Emphasis in the original.

[133] NAI, D/T, S5482: 1 May, 1930

[134] NAI, D/IC, TIC Series, 24212: 16 October, 1935 – 2 July, 1937

prejudiced but I confess I should like further evidence of the value of the work they have done and of the revenue they claim to have brought to the country.'[135]

IV

Clearly mixed views on tourism promotion were held in the Free State, but what of Northern Ireland, whose tourist interests seemed to work with reasonable co-operation with the ITA? Sporting tourism was important in Northern Ireland, with motor racing particularly popular. Barely was the state in existence than Dawson Bates presented a bill to facilitate motor racing:

> as a Government we should do everything possible to help to develop tourist traffic in the Six Counties, and not only will races of this kind help the tourist traffic generally, but, by doing so, will help hotel keepers, farmers, and others, and will generally bring money into the country. It is estimated that something like £200,000 was spent annually in the Isle of Man in connection with the races held there.[136]

Motor racing continued to develop throughout the 1920s, and the ability of the province to host more high-profile events increased. The Tourist Trophy Race was a highlight of the racing calendar, and the northern government lobbied hard to win it for the province. Bates told the Stormont Parliament that it was 'common knowledge that the Government were mainly instrumental in inducing the Royal Automobile Club to hold the Tourist Trophy Race in Ulster, influenced by the consideration that it would prove of benefit to Northern Ireland.'[137] However, he added that continuing support for the race was dependent on local authorities as the government was 'not prepared to impose on the people of Ulster the obligation of having a race if they do not wish it.' A year later, Minford asked what official assistance would be given to councils if the race were again held, explaining: 'I consider the race was of great importance; I do not mean as a sporting event, but from the fact that it advertises Ulster and brings people here who spend money.'[138] Motor races were filmed by Pathé, promoting the province to international audiences, though the concentration on the thrills of speed resulted in occasionally unglamorous footage including a street scene where houses were sandbagged for

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[135] *Ibid.*, 17721: 31 March, 1930

[136] SP, vol. 2, 29 May 1922, col. 708

[137] *Ibid.*, vol. 19, 18 March 1937, col. 601

[138] SP, vol. 20, 16 December, 1937, col. 255

protection[139] and the wreckage of a car whose driver had lost control and ploughed into spectators, killing six and injuring ten.[140] Motorcycle racing was also popular, and an opportunity to depict scenic Ulster alongside throngs of ardent supporters.[141]

Interestingly, motor sports aside, a perusal of Stormont legislation reveals not a single act directly intended to facilitate tourism. This is peculiar, given that Northern Ireland had a particularly active tourist body, the Ulster Tourist Development Association, founded in March, 1923. Among its propaganda work was inviting a party of English, Scottish and Free State journalists to Ulster as the association's guests in 1925.[142] A similar trip took place in 1927.[143] During both trips, emphasis was laid on the scenic attractions of Northern Ireland. The UTDA also engaged in film propaganda, and lent its support to travelogues and documentaries, including 'The Voice of Ireland' and 'Ireland's Rough-Hewn Destiny.' The success of the former encouraged the organisation to establish a Film Publicity Committee.[144] Unlike Free State tourism promoters, the UDTA was frank in its attempts to attract Scottish and Northern English tourists to the province, perhaps because historical patterns of emigration had created strong bonds with Ulster. By 1936, it was estimated that as 'Years of steady effort has put Ulster on the map as a holiday centre for the huge population of the North of England and Southern Scotland' that up to half a million visitors from there would visit Ulster.[145] That is not to suggest that the UDTA ignored continental Europe or America, where large numbers of Northern Irish had also emigrated; in 1928, for instance, the association had sent promotional material to Boston for an exhibition, while it had also committed to participating in fairs in Leipzig and Paris, and the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, and publishing a supplement in a New York newspaper.[146]

Like the Free State, Ulster suffered from an under-developed tourist industry. The Dublin-Belfast train journey to which Lester drew attention was indicative of a

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[139] Pathé, Film 791.39

[140] Pathé, Film 893.14

[141] Pathé, Film 733.16

[142] *Irish Times*, 11 May, 1925: 7

[143] *Ibid.*, 16 May, 1927: 8

[144] Hill, *op. cit.*: 7-9

[145] *Irish Times*, 21 March, 1936: 4

[146] *Ibid.*, 13 January, 1928: 11

transportation problem, as was a Stormont debate over transport facilities at Larne for disembarking ferry passengers. Bates explained that a year before 'After half the season had expired, on finding that there was no demand for the buses and that the tourists were not using them, the Board discontinued the provision of buses for this purpose and no complaint whatever was received last season.'[147] However, improving transportation was not enough for a tourist industry to flourish and the UDTA's first chairman, Robert Baillie, was at pains to improve the quality of hotels and restaurants.[148] For this, a constant endeavour aimed at 'educating their people at home, not only as to the necessity for hearty co-operation with the Association in bringing visitors to the province, but also as the need for providing adequately for their comfort and entertainment when they arrived.'[149]

Baillie stressed that the UDTA was 'non-political and non-sectarian'; it sought to benefit the province as a whole.'[150] This was a constant theme in his pronouncements on tourism, and in 1928 he adverted to strong successes within a few years: 'The development of the tourist traffic in Ulster was calculated to benefit all sections of the community and all parts of the province.'[151] However, it seems that this was not merely empty rhetoric as his broad view also spilled across the border. The island was sufficiently small for all parts to be of interest to tourists, and that meant cross-border co-operation was necessary. A delegation of UDTA representatives attended an ITA conference.[152] A delegation from the ITA attended a UDTA luncheon the following year, when Craig paid warm compliments to them, and held out the prospect of closer co-operation on tourism matters: 'Yes, all Ireland prosperous, means the South prosperous and Ulster prosperous. Let there be no doubt about that. We are gathered here today round an absolutely non-political table, heartily joining with our Southern fellow-countrymen in doing a little, at all events, to help the country of our birth.'[153] When the Free State hosted the Eucharistic Congress in 1932, the UDTA received £1,500 from the Northern Irish government and £750 from Belfast City Council to help

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147 SP, vol. 19, 10 June, 1937, col. 1574

148 *Irish Times*, 7 January, 1930: 8

149 *Ibid.*, 20 April, 1928: 7

150 *Ibid.*, 2 December, 1924: 6

151 *Ibid.*, 20 April, 1928: 7

152 *Ibid.*, 20 April, 1928: 7

153 *Ibid.*, 19 April, 1929: 7

it persuade tourists visiting Dublin to spend part of their holiday in the North.[154] A spirit of co-operation seems to have endured to the end of the Free State, despite occasional rifts. James Boyd, Baillie's successor in the UDTA, sought to correct recent wrong impressions that had the potential to 'disturb the happy relations that existed between his association and the Irish Tourist Association.'[155]

V

Tourism pre-dated the Free State, and showed signs of growing to become a mature industry under pre-Great War British governance. The 1909 Health Resorts and Watering Holes Act provided for large scale, local funding of tourism; infrastructural advances in ports, roads and railways were all well under way; and there is evidence that Ireland was becoming a popular location for visitors seeking picturesque scenery, tranquillity, health resorts and Celtic heritage. The Great War, followed swiftly by revolution and civil war, certainly damaged the tourism industry so that, by the time the Free State was created, tourism's importance and revenues had declined by half to pre-1914 levels. Granted, much of the essential infrastructure of transportation networks and accommodation was in need of investment, but it is puzzling why this industry, which had been so profitable, and which required less investment than creating an industrial economy where none existed before, was not developed by successive governments.

Was the state negligent in its promotion of tourism? Certainly, it left the industry bereft of governmental leadership at a time when other European states were professionalizing their tourism industries with state support and subvention, particularly Germany, France and Italy. Perhaps for an emerging state, of greater significance than bringing in visitors was bringing the state itself to the international community of nations, and tourism, from the evidence of many travel writers, did evoke a sense of prying foreigners recording the state's weaknesses and failings. It was more difficult to create an image of a modern, industrial state if visitors to that state could see for themselves how false were the protestations of progress.

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[154] *Ibid.*, 5 April, 1932: 4

[155] *Ibid.*, 6 November, 1937: 13

There was also a degree of amateurishness in the state's propaganda methods. There was an over-reliance on the overseas representatives, who, though willing to attempt propaganda, were more effective as channels through which the ITA could reach prospective visitors. More significantly, the reluctance of Industry and Commerce to engage in propaganda reduced tourism from state-level policy to private sector interest. What emerges from a study of governmental propaganda of tourism is its inability to perceive it as an industry: the state did not understand tourism. Consequently, state propaganda was ill-conceived, bureaucratic and confused. The state was negligent in not distinguishing between the responsibility for directing tourism propaganda for the benefit of the state and citizenry, which it allowed repose within the reluctant Industry and Commerce, and the implementation of tourism propaganda, which it left to the ITA in a poorly-defined parastatal relationship.

Excuses may be made in mitigation: the private sector had most to gain from an increase in tourism; infrastructure required investment beyond the means of the state; but it remains that the state did not do enough to propagandise an industry that could have led to job creation, increased national wealth, and international prestige. It may be fairly charged against the state that it was too eager to pass its responsibility in tourism propaganda to the ITA, providing minimal financial and political support, and in so doing retarded the development of tourism in the state until after the Second World War – more than two decades after the foundation of the state.

Chapter 8

'A transient ornament of statehood'[1] – propaganda, external affairs and diplomacy

I

The intricacies of the Anglo-Irish treaty meant that titles bestowed on overseas representatives were limited to commercial and consular activities, and conceived of no official expansion of responsibilities into ambassadorial roles. Titular constraints notwithstanding, the various high commissioners, consuls, trade consuls, and, ultimately, ministers plenipotentiary and envoys extraordinary executed the state's diplomatic function, gaining international recognition and approval for the new state in legations, the Commonwealth and the League of Nations. However, despite having successfully opened legations in Washington, London, Paris, Germany, the Holy See and Madrid by 1937, it was relations with Britain that dominated the state's diplomatic propaganda.

Combining diplomacy and propaganda was necessary if damaging pro-British and anti-Irish propaganda were to be countered. This chapter suggests that the state's diplomatic propaganda was focussed more on counter-propaganda against real or perceived British threats than on boosting the state's international presence. It examines views from legations that indicate that representatives saw their function as not merely promoting the state, but identifying it as not British. It will be argued that this was a limiting use of diplomacy that prevented the state from fully realising the benefits of membership of the international community. Three points of conflict with Britain are examined in the context of Anglo-Irish relations and diplomatic propaganda: the state's diplomacy in the Commonwealth, the boundary issue, and the 1930s economic war with Britain.

However, the importance of diplomacy was not always appreciated domestically, where external affairs was often deemed an indulgence for a small, new state with a myriad of internal problems. This insular perspective held sway even among political representatives and civil servants, who scorned diplomacy from a sense of parochial nationalism, or fiscal rectitude. With such attitudes evident in officialdom, a degree of scepticism among citizens was easily engendered. A struggle to establish the legitimacy

[1] NAI, D/T, S5337A: December, 1926

of external affairs and diplomacy ensued, with FitzGerald, McGilligan, and Walshe leading the charge. In defending the department, conducting foreign diplomacy at home was important in publicising the benefits of external relations. This chapter identifies hostile views to External Affairs and diplomacy, and examines how the visits and appointments of foreign diplomats were used as propaganda at home.

Treatment of the state's diplomatic relations has been thorough and vigorously inquiring. However, from the earliest studies the thrust of research has been largely on how the state used diplomacy to wend its cautious way in international affairs. Particular attention has been given to the state's reluctant membership of, yet conversely whole-hearted commitment to, the Commonwealth – this at least so far as Cumann na nGaedheal was concerned. Mansergh, writing with admirable historical dispassion when the state's first forays into diplomacy were recent enough to be considered current affairs, credited the state between 1926 and 1930 with excellent diplomatic skills:

> Her representatives were in the forefront of every move to secure equality not only of status, but also of function. She strengthened greatly the fissiparous tendencies within the Commonwealth though it is probable that... served... to hasten a development which Canadian and South African opinion would in any event have demanded.[2]

Harkness similarly gives the Free State recognition for being the driving force behind the transition from empire to Commonwealth of Nations, heavily emphasising the aspect of nationhood that the latter agglomeration of countries could encapsulate. The post-Cosgrave era, however, a sixteen-year period of Fianna Fáil government is viewed differently. Initially no less essential to Commonwealth affairs, under de Valera: 'Ireland now stood upon its dignity, self-righteous upon a platform of fundamental national right.' [3] Harkness astutely ascribes a sense of the possible to Cumann na nGaedheal commitment to the Commonwealth – that within its diplomatic confines lay the vehicle for expression of true nationhood. For Fianna Fáil, a dismembered state was a dismembered nation, and, blaming Britain, it withdrew in insular protest to lick the festering wound of partition.[4]

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[2] Mansergh, 1948: 5

[3] Harkness, 1969: 251

[4] *Ibid.*: 251

O'Brien, with delicious acerbity, wrote that Irish nationalists saw the Imperial Conferences as the last throes of Imperial domination, but 'now that they were partially independent, they would not let that upset them.' Indeed, delegates had mellowed sufficiently by 1930 to accept British hospitality for the first time.[5] However, feelings of progress dissipated with the arrival of Fianna Fáil delegates, and 'the apparently furtive shuffling of Lemass.'[6] O'Brien rightly pointed to the long reach of the absent de Valera, seeking complete control over his delegates' negotiations without being present, and reached the conclusion that they may have wished for his presence, if only to see whether his iron will would bend amidst the socialising attached to political diplomacy.[7] O'Brien's picture of Anglo-Irish relations was one where officialdom occasionally impeded, but officials usually proceeded. This is especially true of his analysis of the relations between the state and the Dominions Office in the 1930s. The Dominions Office, with its singular lack of a defined role, swayed between loyalty to Britain and fair treatment of its dominion charges.[8] It was to be a useful office for advancing diplomatic relations between the states.

In more recent years, historians such as Keogh, Kennedy and O'Halpin in particular, have sought to further contextualise the state's relations with Britain and the Commonwealth. They have, however, followed much the same narrative as their predecessors in assessing those relations through the prism of politics and politicking, to which diplomacy is an important adjunct. This chapter seeks to alter the perspective by examining diplomacy through the practice and application of propaganda. It looks at diplomatic efforts not for their intrinsic political value, but for the propaganda that could be created from them. It suggests that the propaganda attached to diplomatic endeavours and events was as important to the state as diplomacy itself. It views the actions of Free State politicians and officials as not merely the efforts to achieve greater political freedom within the Commonwealth, and recognition from other states, but as the sustained propaganda efforts to create a credible international narrative that facilitated advances in diplomatic relations.

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[5] O'Brien, 2005: 57

[6] *Ibid.*: 61

[7] *Ibid.*: 63

[8] *Ibid.*: 70

II

The opinion of FitzGerald's and McGilligan's parliamentary colleagues posed a threat to External Affairs. As early as 1922, the state's foreign minister, George Gavan Duffy, preparatory to resigning office, dashed off a missive to Cosgrave deploring officialdom's disregard for foreign relations: 'In view of the fact that your Excellency at a recent Cabinet meeting expressed the view that our Foreign Affairs, other than commercial, would be a matter of no importance I have the honour to commend this memorandum to your perusal in the hope that it may induce a modified view.'[9] The memorandum set down his views on the causes of the limitations of the state's foreign policy. These stemmed from the anomalous position of the department, kept in operation in case of British duplicity in the immediate aftermath of the Treaty talks, but without having been part of the Provisional Government, and with the new Dáil still unrecognised abroad.[10] Among the problems facing the diplomatic service, he identified the poor quality of diplomats, many of whom did not speak the language of the country in which they were posted.[11] Prospects for recruiting suitable diplomats were unpromising, and, with ill-concealed disdain, he derided candidates' lack of nationalist credentials:

> For important positions, the most suitable candidates... are those... in the Anglo-Irish tradition and who have taken no part in the National struggle, people who have spent a good many years away from home, often in the British Diplomatic Service, and who have friends and acquaintances highly placed in foreign countries; but these people will generally be found to be wholly unsuitable... divorced from Irish ideas, and so impregnated with English prejudices... that their whole outlook... is the outlook of Downing Street. Consequently... they will generally be found suitable only for minor appointments under strict supervision.[12]

In Dáil Éireann, he deplored the limited view held of foreign relations: 'I remember a few months ago talking to a gentleman, who is now a very distinguished person in the State, about our future conduct of foreign affairs under the Treaty. He said to me: 'Foreign affairs! Why, once the Treaty is through, all the foreign affairs we will want will

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[9] NAI, D/T, S1393: 20 June, 1922

[10] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/395: undated. A covering letter with the memorandum is dated 20 June, 1922.

[11] *Ibid.*.

[12] *Ibid.*. Gavan Duffy was unfairly dismissive of the possibility that Britain might supply good diplomats. James McNeill, formerly in the Indian administration, and Charles Bewley, at least in his early career, were two exceptions to this view.

be trade.'[13] Darrel Figgis, advocating abolishing the department, confirmed this view. The department:

> could be dispensed with.... It is... much less a Department of External Affairs than a Department of Publicity.... There is... no place for this Ministry... because the hard logic of circumstances eliminates this Ministry from any responsibility in the Dáil.... A fortnight ago a Deputy rose here asking for certain information dealing with the affairs of this country with the affairs of a great and friendly neighbour.... Who rose to answer that question? The only person competent... the President of the Executive Council. The Minister for External Affairs must necessarily be the President....[14]

In advocating that the ministry be held by the President, Figgis was echoing a recommendation Gavan Duffy made two years previously. Cooper thought the position could be an adjunct of the president's role, with routine work executed by a deputy: 'I should like to see... a President who would be responsible for External Affairs, and who would have a Secretary to deal with External Affairs.'[15] William Redmond concurred: 'I refer to is what is styled 'The Department of External Affairs.' Really, I think everyone must admit that we have heard very little of or from the Department.... I entirely agree... that all inter-State matters should be dealt with... by the President.'[16] Denis Gorey contributed intemperate remarks:

> I do not see why we want a Minister for External or Foreign Affairs. We are concerned with no foreign affairs. We have no colonies and have no interests to clash with any other nation. I think it is ridiculous to be playing with theatricals like this. This... ought to be scrapped and let the Executive Council deal with any foreign matters that have to be dealt with. To my mind, and to the mind of the average man in the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or External Affairs... will be known as a Ministry for finding a job for somebody.[17]

Ironically it was de Valera, mindful of the importance of international propaganda, who merged the ministry and presidency. In its early years the department was fortunate that, despite detractors, it had supporters, including Gavan Duffy, his short tenure as minister notwithstanding. In his memorandum, he lauded British diplomatic propaganda 'of sending out... persons of distinction in science, art, literature... to give lectures and to improve the contact with influential groups.' Mimicking this would 'recover our prestige

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[13] DÉ, vol. 3, 25 June, 1923, col. 2388

[14] *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 16 November, 1923, cols 931-2

[15] *Ibid.*, col. 946

[16] *Ibid.*, col. 951

[17] *Ibid.*, col. 940. Keogh, with remarkable economy of words, bestowed upon him the title of 'a true backwoodsman.' (Keogh, 1988: 18)

by active propaganda and publicity.'[18] Concurrently he recommended notifying friendly countries of the state's emergence:

> A number of Foreign Powers will certainly want to send their Agents and Consuls to Dublin without delay, but they are naturally waiting for notification from us before so doing. The French Government has already intimated privately that it will send here an 'Attaché Commercial,' whose real functions will be diplomatic and political, though ostensibly he will be concerned with trade.[19]

He deplored the 'ignorance of Foreign Affairs in this country and the apathy concerning them' and advocated a specialist non-partisan parliamentary committee to aid ministers with neither time nor knowledge to take advantage of external relations. His recommendations highlight concerns about anti-Irish propaganda, and persuading Britain that the state 'refuses to accept as permanent a place within the British Empire.' To this end, he recommended creating the position of Secretary for Publicity who 'would be liaison officer between the Information or Publicity Department of the Government and the Department of Foreign Affairs.' [20] In the Dáil, he highlighted comity, defence and trade as fundamental reasons for external affairs: 'We are a world race. And we are entitled to let the world know that we consider ourselves a world race.... We require to make friends with foreign people, and to make ourselves known abroad, and to forge links of friendship that will last for our own protection and for our commercial interests.'[21] His views seem congruent with FitzGerald's. An undated note in FitzGerald's papers suggests 'To establish and maintain with the chief countries of Europe and America such friendly relations as will lead to the universal recognition of Ireland as a distinct, sovereign state of the Commonwealth' as a reason for external relations.[22]

Unfortunately, many of Gavan Duffy's suggestions were implemented either slowly or not at all, and it was left to others to support the beleaguered department. Deputy Sean Milroy, referring to the spate of parliamentary criticism, recommending that responsibility for trade consuls be transferred to Industry and Commerce, lent qualified support:

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[18] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/395: June 1922

[19] *Ibid.*.

[20] *Ibid.*.

[21] DÉ, vol. 3, 25 June, 1923, col. 2389

[22] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/396: undated

> I have no intention whatever of sharing in the expression of opinion that that Ministry should be scrapped. I think it is a very important Ministry and one that will be of great advantage to this State in international intercourse, and in raising the prestige of the Free State in world affairs, that is, provided it fully and effectively discharges its functions.[23]

Figgis' view on the department appears to have softened over time: 'I think any expenditure incurred for the establishment of political relations of an independent or semi-independent sort with other nations is expenditure very well incurred indeed.'[24]

Deputy William Hewat preferred gradual developments to incautious urgency:

> Deputy Johnson has raised the question of extending the Consular system.... Personally I think that would be very desirable, but it is a question of gradual growth rather than... large expenditure.... It must be recognised... there has been a close and intimate connection... with our sister country, and that this departure which has been made under the auspices of the Ministry of External Affairs, is one that... must be fostered....
> We are rather inclined... to run before we have learned to walk. That is rather a dangerous frame of mind in which to approach important questions such as... the operations of the Ministry of External Affairs.[25]

He added: 'if the Minister and the Ministry can help to get us out of our insular ideas and broaden the outlook of the country as regards foreign relations, they will be doing a good work... will benefit the future of the country.'[26]

However, the department drifted into an administrative torpor until an exasperated Walshe devised plans to increase the number of consulates. The document, an example of internal propaganda directed at securing cabinet support, gives a flavour of the value he attached to diplomacy, and was succinct in its treatment of Anglo-Irish relations within the international community. He advocated creating three consulates in America, Germany and either France or Belgium: 'instead of having three unrecognised establishments abroad with ill-defined functions and providing a source of irritation in our relations with the British Representatives abroad, we shall have three Consulates fully recognised.'[27] Consulates increased the perception of independence and sovereignty that the department promoted internationally, and further distanced it from Britain, whose consulates would no longer be required to provide consular functions. The position of

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[23] DÉ, vol. 5, 21 November, 1923, col. 1013

[24] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 9 July, 1924, col. 811

[25] *Ibid.*, col. 825

[26] *Ibid.*, col. 827

[27] NAI, D/T, 5337A: December, 1926

representative to the League of Nations also had particular significance in an Anglo-Irish context:

> The League Representative more than any other of our representatives abroad has an opportunity of getting the active good-will of all countries including Great Britain for the Saorstát, and of studying their methods of diplomacy. He has to defeat these methods with friendly correctness when they tend to manifest themselves in conclusions derogatory to the status of the Dominions.[28]

The state's status at the League, where it was often viewed as Britain's vassal, required subtle propaganda to portray the state as independent of Britain, yet without overplaying the old enmity that was slowly dissipating. That the state frequently voted against British interests at the League, and indeed, registered the Treaty with it, was adequate proof of independence that trod a fine line between assertiveness and antagonism.

Three (undated) documents, probably intended to be viewed together, convey a spirited defence of the department, and an assertive policy toward Britain. 'What the Irish Foreign Office Earns' proffered a business argument that in the current year almost £29,000 would accrue from issuing passports and visas to Americans that would otherwise benefit Britain's treasury. It also presented a polemic argument: 'The party which advocates the suppression of the External Affairs Department can only be supported by those who believe in policy of isolation and decay. A nation can no more exist without external relations than an individual can live independently of his fellow man.'[29] 'The Status of the Saorstát Summarised' outlined the state's status under Versailles, the Treaty, diplomatic representation and the crown, summarised by a side-heading as 'THE CROWN IS THE MAJORITY WILL' confirming that the British monarch was obliged to accept the counsel and decisions of the state's democratic majority. The document maintained that 'Conciliation and co-operation are the surest means of strengthening our position within and without the Commonwealth. That is the road to national prestige and prosperity and it can only be followed by a government of Irish-men whose policy is based on the Constitution.'[30] The Department of External Affairs noted that 'Every organised state in the World has a Department of External Affairs' to 'cultivate and instruct the public opinion of the World so that the

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[28] *Ibid.*.

[29] NAI, D/FA, Early Series, Early 1, Box 6/38: undated. Referring to the appointment of Frederick Sterling as the US envoy to the state, it can date no earlier than July, 1927.

[30] *Ibid.*. Emphasis in the original.

independence of the State may be safeguarded in times of international crisis.' Apart from establishing a mission in Britain, the department:

> keeps in close touch with all the States of the Commonwealth, and it effectively helped at the Imperial Conference to put the relations of those states with each other and with non-Commonwealth states on a more satisfactory basis. That relationship is one of complete equality, and the Government of the most powerful state in the World has formally recognised our status of perfect equality by appointing a Minister Plenipotentiary to Dublin.[31]

These documents point to a workmanlike approach to diplomatic propaganda in Anglo-Irish relations, but Walshe was alert to counteracting the 'methods of chicanery and bluff' by which Britain would attempt to dilute commitments given at the 1926 Imperial Conference. He promised that 'Every despatch... has to be subjected to the most rigorous examination so that no sentence may be allowed to pass which contains any implication contrary to accepted principles.'[32] While Walshe was communicating the best possible propaganda for his department, Cumann na nGaedheal diplomacy with Britain was assertive and constructive, using propaganda to publicise the state's independent pursuit of sovereign rights. Much of what Walshe sought was granted or evolved under McGilligan, although de Valera's foreign propaganda became more aggressive towards Britain, and Walshe found himself serving a consummate politician whose grip on the portfolio and the presidency imbued his pronouncements on foreign relations with the authority that Gavan Duffy had advocated a decade earlier. In the intervening years, however, External Affairs embarked on a programme of domestic propaganda designed to show the importance of diplomacy to the state.

The problem in promoting the state's diplomatic effort at home was remoteness from the citizenry it benefitted. The work of overseas representatives, of interest to national newspapers, conscientiously keeping a record of the state's newsworthiness, rarely intruded on diurnal concerns of the citizenry. Bringing diplomacy home permitted the state to promote itself, demonstrating the esteem in which it was held internationally. The appointments of diplomats to the state were significant occasions, calculated to boost a domestic feeling of international comity. This is particularly true of appointments from Britain, America, whence the diaspora had offered financial aid, succour and access to politicians and officials, and European countries. The

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[31] *Ibid.*.

[32] NAI, D/T, 5337A: December, 1926

appointment of James McNeill as Governor-General on the death of T. M. Healy indicated the importance of his experiences in previous postings in the Indian civil service and as High Commissioner in London. British Pathé filmed the official ceremonies of his appointment, including a motor cavalcade with cavalry escort, the laying of a wreath, and posing for press photographs with his wife.[33]

Media attention to the appointments was high, with extensive reporting of the arrival and subsequent career of diplomats in the state. When Frederick Sterling was appointed the first American Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the state in July 1927, the *Irish Independent* anticipated that 'Much pomp and ceremonial will be attached to the arrival in Dublin' of the minister.'[34] The newspaper later reported that thousands of well-wishers turned out to greet him at Dun Laoghaire, and noted the 'imposing official reception given to the Minister' by an official greeting party, a military guard of honour and music from the No. 1 Army Band.[35] Distinguished American visitors reinforced not just political but familial and social ties between the two countries. The diplomatic highlight of the visit of US Secretary of State, Frank Kellogg, was the bestowal of the freedom of Dublin upon him. Smiddy synopsised the importance of the visit: 'It is very gratifying that the Secretary of State is making this visit to the Irish Free State, as it will be a link in the chain of events of this year which have so much conduced to make people realize in this country the sovereignty of the Irish Free State.'[36] The *Irish Independent* looked forward to his arrival on board the USS Detroit, and detailed the imminent proceedings: a military guard of honour, speeches from local government politicians, and a motor cavalcade to the Mansion House on Dawson St, where the ceremony would take place.[37] British Pathé recorded his arrival: 'Ireland welcomes Mr Kellogg. Peace Pact promoter pays state visit to Free State'.[38] External Affairs files contain two newspaper clippings showing the ceremony: an impressive array of buntings, a military guard of honour and a large crowd suggest that the state invested heavily in

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[33] Pathé, Film 716.04

[34] *Irish Independent*, 21 July, 1927: 6

[35] *Ibid.*, 26 July, 1927: 7

[36] NAI, D/FA, GR790-3: 29 August, 1928

[37] *Irish Independent*, 27 August, 1928: 6

[38] Pathé, Film 742.06

ensuring that the success of the event would yield positive publicity for its diplomatic efforts.[39]

The arrivals of European diplomats in the 1930s, while not as socially or politically important as their British and American counterparts, were nonetheless events that the state was keen to publicise. Germany raised its Consul in Dublin since 1923, von Dehn, to *Chargé d'Affaires* in January, 1930,[40] and then to Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary in August.[41] Although he had been in the state for seven years, the significance of his new rank ensured that the state would heavily promote German-Irish ties at home. Met at his residence by Walshe, he received a cavalry escort to Phoenix Park:

> The procession... created considerable interest. Flags flew from public buildings and miniature Free State and German flags fluttered from the radiator of the Minister's car.
> His drive to the Lodge from the Phoenix Park gate was lined with infantry, and as the car entered they presented arms. At the Lodge the Minister ... was welcomed by Mr. McGilligan... who accompanied him to the Governor-General to whom he presented his credentials. Immediately afterwards a salute of 15 guns was fired in the Park.[42]

Similar pomp was accorded to Charles Alphand, the first French Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the state. Pathé footage, 'With full State Honours. Mr Charles Alphand France's first envoy to the Irish Free State, presents his credentials to the Governor-General' depicts a mounted escort and McNeill and Alphand posing at the Viceregal lodge.[43] The *Irish Independent* printed a photograph of Walshe greeting Alphand at Dun Laoghaire[44] and an account of the events.[45] However, a significant change in protocol that spoke of the changing nature of Anglo-Irish relations was evident when the Spanish consulate was upgraded to a legation. Placido Alvarez Buylla presented his

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[39] NAI, D/FA, GR790-3. The clippings are from the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*, both dated 16 September, 1928.

[40] *Irish Independent*, 3 January,1930: 6

[41] *Ibid.*, 13 August, 1930: 6

[42] *Ibid.*, 3 September, 1930: 5

[43] Pathé, Film 721.07

[44] *Irish Independent*, 29 July,1930: 7

[45] *Ibid.*, 29 July,1930: 7

credentials as *Chargé d'Affaires* to de Valera as President rather than to the Governor-General.[46]

As a semi-autonomous region within the United Kingdom, without the status of a dominion, Northern Ireland had no formal diplomatic function at official level, and no means of competing with the Free State on the world stage. However, for unionists, that world stage arguably meant the Empire, and here they were able to put on a domestic show for Ulster's loyal citizens that showed other members of the Empire how to demonstrate fealty to the Crown. Royal visits to Ulster were seized on by unionists as proof that the province was integral to the United Kingdom. Memories of former rebelliousness to force a display of monarchical love were conveniently shunted to the sidings to create a unionist narrative that, again, disregarded nationalists. At Stormont, Pollock confirmed an impending royal visit to approving members:

> the House will be gratified to learn that their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York have graciously promised to pay an official visit to Northern Ireland in July next. (Hon. Members: Hear, hear.) I need hardly say with what pleasure we welcome this announcement, and I am confident that their Royal Highnesses will receive a welcome worthy of the traditional loyalty for which the people of Ulster are noted. (Hon. Members: Hear, hear.)[47]

The visit, so early in the new state's history was a resounding propaganda success for Unionism. Pathé recorded the royal couple's visit: 'A RIGHT ROYAL WELCOME. Duke of York and his charming Duchess 'capture all hearts' in loyal Ulster during State Visit.'[48] Symbolism seeped through the visit: troops were inspected, a wreath was laid at a war memorial, an outdoor religious ceremony was attended, a large Union Jack was draped over a balcony on which the couple stood. In 1928, Princess Mary visited Belfast dockyards to cheers from the largely Protestant workforce: 'Ulster's Loyal Welcome - Princess Mary - Viscountess Lascelles receives warm welcome from thousands of City & Shipyard workers.'[49] The pinnacle, however, was a visit from the monarch. George VI and Elizabeth visited the province in 1937, and rode in an open car through Belfast streets lined with cheering crowds and bedecked with bunting.[50] Unlike in the Free State where visiting dignitaries and ambassadors showed the state's growing assurance in

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[46] *Ibid.*, 4 April, 1935: 8

[47] SP, vol. 4, 8 April, 1924, col. 567

[48] Pathé, Film 348.19. Emphasis in the original.

[49] Pathé, Film 746.22

[50] Pathé, Film 929.08

international affairs, in Ulster the Crown was the main symbol that created an international narrative for the province.

III

Early diplomacy saw a haphazard development of variously titled representatives, some positioned where influence was necessary, others where willingness to accept a title in lieu of salary sufficed for employment. The first Dáil despatched emissaries to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, seeking support from expatriates, rather than politicians. John Chartres served in Berlin, Gerald O'Loughlin in Denmark, and informal representatives operated in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. By April 1922, MacWhite was in Geneva, Grattan Esmond in Madrid, Count P.J. O'Byrne in Rome, Smiddy was in Washington and Chartres had temporarily relocated to Paris.[51] In Chile and Argentina, Frank Egan and Eamon Bulfin served as trade consuls without official recognition.[52] One of the most distant appointments was in Shanghai, where William Craig-Martin, an expatriate businessman and friend of FitzGerald[53] requested an appointment as an unsalaried Trade Commissioner. [54] He was appointed Honorary Consul two years later when McGilligan and Gordon Campbell, endorsing him as a government supporter 'during the Black-and-Tan régime', noted the appointment would 'cost nothing and... provide a centre – distinct from the English Consulate – round which the Irish may group themselves.'[55] That desire to differentiate the state from Britain was a central tenet of Free State diplomatic propaganda.

This was especially true of membership of the League of Nations. The state's participation was wholehearted, including being elected to the General Council in 1930 and providing its last Secretary General, Lester, but membership began as a means of proving the state's independence, as Gavan Duffy explained:

> The bigger our world-position becomes, the more increasingly difficult it will be for England to attempt any undue interference with us; for this reason... money

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[51] Keogh, 1988: 10-13

[52] Kennedy, 2000: 44

[53] NAI, D/T, S4256: 28 January, 1925. A letter to FitzGerald was signed informally "Give our best regards to your wife and the kiddies" suggesting a close affinity. (UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/420: 12 March, 1923)

[54] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/420: 27 September, 1922

[55] NAI, D/T, S4256: 28 January, 1925

> and trouble spent by the Irish government upon foreign development will be amply repaid. There is no other sphere in which we have equal opportunities for making ourselves seriously felt by England....[56]

The League's headquarters were an international centre for diplomacy, where the state should make its presence felt:

> GENEVA ought to be our best centre in Europe, for the League of Nations has... representatives from all over the world, and no other city furnishes... the same opportunities for making contact and creating friendly relations. Geneva is... the real centre of convergence of international democratic effort, overt and concealed.[57]

He believed the League would benefit from the state's presence: 'we have a reputation for frankness and fearlessness... and it has often been said that Ireland in the League of Nations will be invaluable, because she may... say plainly the things that everyone is thinking and that other Powers are too cowardly... to say.'[58]

British propaganda was felt at the League. McNeill reported in September 1923:

> The 'Times' racket about us has not caught on here. At a Commission the other day, a Japanese delegate spoke incidentally of the status of the members of the Commonwealth as less than that of other states. The Marquis [Sweeney] corrected him & Sir Hubert Smith corroborated. Graham, the Canadian delegate... spoke to me today in high commendation of the Marquis's intervention.[59]

Registering the Treaty as an international document rather than a Commonwealth one greatly concerned Britain, and the elevation of the state was excellent propaganda for Cumann na nGaedheal. League membership transformed the relationship between Britain and the state. Johnson said:

> I want to make the people conscious of the fact that we are a constituent part of that League of Nations, a State independent of other States, and... acceptance of this State into that League involves a great constitutional change not only for us but for Great Britain, and not only for Great Britain but for those other States in relation to Great Britain and in relation to Ireland.[60]

In European legations, the representatives did their best to make the state distinctive. Cornelius Duane wrote from Berlin that even intelligent Germans had peculiar ideas about the state, and propaganda was needed to show that Irish people were not

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[56] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/395: June, 1922

[57] *Ibid.*. Emphasis in the original.

[58] *Ibid.*.

[59] NAI, D/T: 20 September, 1923

[60] DÉ, vol. 14, 5 February, 1926, col. 570

Anglophones of differing nationality.[61] He resented Germans' immediate classification of Irish people as English, and pointed out that similarities in the legal system, currency and language gave the impression that the state was 'nothing more than a province of Great Britain' while it was difficult to explain 'even to an intelligent German the significant story on the passport "British subject by birth".'[62] In Brussels, O'Kelly found himself personally vexed by definitions of nationality and status. A conscientious if unremarkable diplomat, he reported in 1924 that 'I have no official status whatsoever, and consequently am completely ignored as representative of the Saorstát.' Despite wide-ranging personal connections and attendance as the Irish delegate to international events in Belgium he complained that he would continue to be ignored until he received proper accreditation, thereby removing the impression that Britain's legation represented the state, a misconception that 'does us most injury.'[63] Lacking status, he was forced to apply through the British ambassador for an invitation to the annual court ball – with 6,000 guests, hardly an exclusive affair. To add insult to injury, the ambassador, Sir George Graham, informing him that he would first have to obtain 'a certificate of having been presented to court in London' sympathetically suggested presentation before the Governor-General would suffice.[64]

O'Kelly was an old-fashioned diplomat of the aristocratic type preferred in other European countries, which may explain why he placed a high value on his membership of golf, yachting, aero and private clubs, including the *Cercle Gaulois* whose luncheons were attended by members of the diplomatic corps.[65] Assiduous in promoting trade links, writing press material and engaging in diplomatic propaganda, his resources were nonetheless too limited to entirely overcome British propaganda. A 1929 letter to External Affairs highlighted the need for media monitoring and diplomatic efforts: 'It is interesting to note how British anti-Irish propaganda is disseminated throughout Europe, particularly when it is combined with anti-catholic [sic] propaganda.'[66]

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[61] NAI, D/FA, Early Series 1, Box 10/72: 15 September, 1923

[62] *Ibid.*, Box 34/240(4): 19 October, 1923

[63] NAI, D/Foreign Affairs, GR251: 9 November, 1924

[64] *Ibid.*.

[65] *Ibid.*.

[66] NAI, D/FA, Embassy Files, Brussels 48: 23 December, 1929

In 1931, O'Kelly transferred to the new Paris legation, where he was joined by F.H. Boland, one of the first of a new generation of professional diplomats trained in the service. Countering British propaganda meant that O'Kelly spent much time personally rebutting newspaper editors. He soon identified the problem of the French press receiving material on the state from British sources, and asked Walshe whether some part-time correspondents in Ireland could write reports for the Francophone press to 'counteract the influence of London on the continental public in matters dealing with Ireland.'[67] Walshe agreed, but observed that 'Even "La Croix" is content to give Irish Catholic news as it has filtered through English Protestant channels.'[68] He acknowledged a dearth of writers in Ireland sufficiently fluent in French, but surmised that the French press would have translators. As that was an unsatisfactory solution, he advised O'Kelly to provide a monthly press review for Dublin.

Much of that work fell to Boland, who analysed the qualities and influence of French journalists and their newspapers in succinct prose. During the Blueshirt crisis, Boland astutely noticed that two journalists (one French, the other Belgian) simultaneously arrived at the conclusion that the Free State teetered on the brink of civil war. He attributed it to 'a communiqué released by the Press Attaché at the British Embassy here.' Furthermore, he recognised that 'what hurts us most is a degree of ignorance which allows the foreign editors to accept as gospel everything... of Irish news that comes... from London.'[69] He suggested that it would help French journalists to become 'recognised as authoritative writers on Irish affairs here' if Irish newspapers published their work, circumventing the damaging reliance on Anglocentric news agencies.[70]

The state enjoyed a religious advantage over Britain in the Vatican. In 1930, Bewley surmised that Ireland's presence threatened British interests, and was a reason it had not broken off ties: 'there may be something in a theory held by some of the diplomatic corps, one of whom said to me: "England might have broken off relationships if it were not for the fact that Ireland is represented here; because... the Dominions might desire to

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[67] *Ibid.*: 26 October, 1931

[68] *Ibid.*: 6 November, 1931

[69] NAI, D/FA, 5/88A: 18 August, 1933

[70] *Ibid.*: 2 September, 1933

be represented by the Irish Minister.'"[71] Britain disliked the presence of Free State and South African ministers at the Vatican, Bewley claimed, [72] although this may have been a recent hostility as in 1929, proposing an exchange of envoys, McGilligan had noted British approval of the state's declaration of intent to formalise its diplomatic relations with the Vatican.[73] A self-interested Vatican appreciated the state's presence for its influence on English-speaking Catholics in Britain, America and the dominions. Unlike other hosts to Free State legations, who could scarcely differentiate between the state and Britain, Bewley advised Dublin of Vatican interests in keeping the state firmly associated with the Commonwealth, and on good terms with Britain. He deduced that the Secretary of State preferred that 'the more Catholic Dominions may exercise an increasing influence in... the Commonwealth, and... he would regret any overt hostility or even coolness of relations which would tend to diminish that influence.'[74] It appears that a degree of interdependency existed between the Vatican and the State, but the more nuanced diplomats of the Holy See managed to assume an unassailable position of authority.

America had a closer bond to the state because of the diaspora and the impact of Irish-America on American politics. Intense activity there from the revolutionary period had raised awareness of Ireland and offered a tantalising glimpse at the financial and political support diplomacy might realise. Yet, establishing diplomatic links was fraught with Commonwealth difficulties. Canada had established the right to open a legation in Washington, but had not acted on it.[75] The state resolved to open a legation, and Diarmuid O'Hegarty wrote to McNeill regarding an appointment to Washington. It would, he wrote, 'add to the national dignity and be a manifestation to our people here that our status is what we claim it to be and not what the irregulars pretend.' Moreover, it would undermine Irish republican propaganda and 'prevent the exploitation of the

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[71] NAI, D/FA, Embassy Series, Holy See B.12/32: 1 July, 1930

[72] *Ibid.*: 16 April, 1931

[73] NAI, D/T, S5857A: 18 April, 1929. The original letter, in French, reads: 'Le Gouvernement irlandais a prévenu de cette intention le Gouvernement de la Grande Bretagne, son copartenaire dans le Commonwealth britannique, et ce Gouvernement a exprimé sa vive satisfaction de ce que les relations d'amitié séculaire entre l'Irlande et le Saint-Siège aille recevoir la reconnaissance officielle qui leur est due.' (Author's translation)

[74] NAI, D/FA, Embassy Series, Holy See B.12/32: 3 March, 1931

[75] Keown, 2000: 26

national spirit of the Irish race there by political adventurers.'[76] Consultation with Britain, specifically the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, before opening a legation was a prerequisite established in communication from the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies.[77] An unsent reply, drafted for the Governor-General, adverted to the size of the Irish expatriate community in America, and efforts by a 'misguided section... keeping alive... a revolutionary movement' suppressed at home.' A Washington legation would negate this and benefit the Commonwealth.[78] The official cabinet response, perhaps avoiding diplomatic conflict, removed references to Washington, simply agreeing to consult before acting.[79] Eight months later, FitzGerald informed Dáil colleagues that an appointment had progressed from ambition to near-reality. It would be 'the first case of any State in the British Commonwealth, other than Great Britain, having a direct representative fully accredited.... It means that we, as a sovereign State, speak directly to other sovereign States through our own fully-accredited Plenipotentiary.'[80]

The establishment of overseas legations was a calculated act of diplomatic propaganda. The Treaty had created limited diplomatic opportunities for the state, constrained in the range of overseas appointment it could make. International publicity for the state was confined to trade and consular activities. However, while the state developed its diplomatic efforts in these areas, it did so while keeping a weather eye on British diplomatic propaganda that was injurious to the state. It is, perhaps, arguable that on occasion the legations were so bound by watchfulness that they were unable to execute their consular and trade functions as fully as the new state required. Certainly, their record in trade propaganda was mixed. Too often Free State diplomatic propaganda was focussed on counter-propaganda, creating the bogeyman of British diplomacy that existed only to thwart the infant state. By acting with reference to a perceived propaganda threat that was only sometimes manifested, it may be argued that the state, while ambitious in establishing legations, did so from a false premise and expended energy and resources that could have been used to better effect.

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[76] NAI, D/T, S1983A: 19 October, 1923

[77] *Ibid.*, S3444: 29 November, 1923

[78] *Ibid.*: 14 December, 1923

[79] *Ibid.*: 17 December, 1923. The official response was despatched on 21 December.

[80] DÉ, vol. 8, 9 July, 1924, col. 803

IV

Imperial Conferences

Essential to the state was carving its identity as an independent state within the Commonwealth, which, posing a threat to British interests, necessitated support from other dominions and the public. Under Cosgrave diplomatic propaganda coloured the state's contributions to Imperial Conferences, summit meetings of the dominions and Britain. Under de Valera, aggressive propaganda proliferated. While adopting an assertive stance on matters affecting the state's independence and prestige, and seeking support of other members, Cosgrave's governments were not hostile to Commonwealth interests or Britain. FitzGerald explained that all Irish diplomats would 'challenge or question a statement made by a British representative' and this propaganda would effect a gradual change in Britain's attitude towards the state.[81]

T. M. Healy adverted to the benefits of membership of the conference to the state's international prestige: 'It must bring to every citizen of the Free State a realisation of the value and dignity of his nationhood'.[82] That nationhood was further exemplified by the welcome extended by the other dominions when the state first participated in the conferences. For his part, Cosgrave promised co-operation 'with good faith and good-will' in keeping with the spirit of previous conferences, and assured delegates that 'We realise our responsibilities, and we are prepared to take over and shoulder the burdens which are common burdens.'[83] His words, polite as diplomacy dictated, were supported by the actions of the states' delegates who, for the remainder of the decade, earned a reputation as dogged negotiators with a firm grasp of detail, and an ability to engage in persuasive communication.

By the 1926 conference, the state's delegates were more experienced in diplomacy, and identified four key policies that required skilful diplomatic propaganda: the role of the Governor-General, extra-territorial equality of dominions, the right of the Free State government to advise the monarch on its affairs, and appeals from dominion supreme

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[81] *Ibid.*, vol. 14, 5 February, 1926, col. 561

[82] *Irish Times*, 4 October, 1923: 6

[83] *Ibid.*, 6 October, 1923: 2

courts to the Privy Council.[84] The state's conduct in 1923 and the intervening years gained it admirers, and it seems that the official approach of promoting itself as diplomatically competent was working:

> The relations... between the Free State and British Delegations could not be more cordial, and... the wheels of Dublin's intercourse with London have run with remarkable smoothness.
> In the opinion of the Free State Government this happy condition of affairs can be prolonged indefinitely, with enormous benefit to both countries....[85]

Domestically this garnered brickbats from Fianna Fáil, with de Valera particularly accusatory: 'The Free State Ministers were Imperialists in London. They would not be received there otherwise.'[86] Much of the state's propaganda was behind the scenes lobbying and press communication. Assiduous preparation of briefing documents ensured diplomatic propaganda success, as delegates 'were able to keep their arguments before the Committee and... direct its proceedings. They had memoranda for everything... and the Committee often was glad to seize on their... solutions... as a basis of a final settlement.'[87] The Conference report added 'a new dignity to the status of our country.'[88] Arguments presented by FitzGerald for co-equal status, and by O'Higgins to remove anachronisms relating to the Governor-General and Privy Council proved persuasive. The outcome was positive, and the *Irish Times* commented that 'he would be a churlish Irishman, indeed, who did not recognise the debt that the country and the Empire... owe to its delegates.'[89]

The 1930 Imperial Conference saw a curious attitude from McGilligan. On the one hand was genuine warmth between him and L.S. Amery, who invited McGilligan and his wife to lunch. After McGilligan begged leave to postpone until his wife arrived, Amery sent a cordial reply and a copy of a book he had just published on Commonwealth fiscal problems.[90] On the other hand was the combative instinct McGilligan displayed in public announcements. In a broadcast from the conference, he made clear that the state's involvement was borne of necessity rather than a desire to be associated with an

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[84] *Ibid.*, 7 October, 1926: 7

[85] *Ibid.*, 26 October, 1926: 7

[86] *Ibid.*, 1 November, 1926: 8

[87] *Ibid.*, 20 November, 1926: 7

[88] *Ibid.*.

[89] *Ibid.*.

[90] UCDA, McGilligan, P35d/16: 11 October, 1930

old enemy, who had prevented 'every effort made by the people of Ireland to build up a national and economic life of their own.' Christian forgiveness, he said, should not be confused with the 'human weakness which allows us to forget the facts and lessons of history.' The state's participation in the Commonwealth was only 'because she believed her national aspirations could be realised to the full within that group.' Though he finally spoke of the ties binding Commonwealth states, it was only after castigating Britons who would make the state subservient again, those who 'belong chiefly to the class which for centuries had lived on the slave earnings of Irish peasants working on lands... torn from their ancestors.' Those people, with a well-organised press, sought to foment dissatisfaction 'amongst the small ex-unionist population of the Irish Free State.'[91]

In a newspaper article, shortly after the conference, he publicised the state's opinion of the King's role in the Commonwealth:

> In order to understand what co-equality really means and how it can co-exist with a single King for six states we must realize that the continuance of the system is conditioned by the complete subordination of the King to the will of each one of the different peoples of the Commonwealth as made known to him by their respective Governments.[92]

Nonetheless, he acknowledged at the conference's end that ties between the state, the dominions and Britain were strong and cordial.[93] Back home, however, those ties were fuel for renewed Fianna Fáil attacks. Deputy Mullins deplored official entertainment of dignitaries during the Conference, which included:

> every enemy this country ever had in Britain; every anti-Irishman in London seemed to be there.... Surely it is sufficient to know that we are not a free nation without having the added insult that where an entertainment or reception is held by the Minister everybody who helped to make this country a slave nation, a partition nation, seemed to be there as the guest of the Free State. The whole policy of the Minister for External Affairs... is based upon the assumption that this country being free it is right and proper that those who opposed this freedom in the past should now be welcomed as its friends.[94]

That, precisely, was official policy, and one that Fianna Fáil, with its predictable anti-British conditioning, failed to recognise. Diplomacy without the lobbying and persuasive communication that propaganda provided would have resulted in the type of political failure that had dogged nationalism for decades. It was because Cumann na nGaedheal

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[91] UCDA, McGilligan, P35b/108: undated

[92] UCDA, McGilligan, P35b/110: December, 1930

[93] *Irish Times*, 15 November, 1930: 9

[94] DÉ, vol. 39, 1 July, 1931, col. 1232

played the diplomatic game with admirable adroitness that it was able to secure the freedom to manoeuvre for greater independence that Fianna Fáil unashamedly exploited as its own work within a few years.

In Ottawa, in 1932, it was Cumann na nGaedheal that lobbed derision from the sidelines as Fianna Fáil attended the conference. FitzGerald accused Fianna Fáil of megaphone diplomacy regarding withholding payment of the land annuities, repayments of loans given under various land acts to enable peasant purchase of farms, and never formally informing the British government of its intentions, resorting instead to megaphone diplomacy 'through the medium of speeches.' Moreover this placed the delegates 'in a rather anomalous and undignified position.' [95] Compared with the meticulous preparation of Cumman na nGaedheal, de Valera's approach seemed deliberately amateurish and provocative, creating positive publicity for Fianna Fáil at home, but at the expense of a decade of hard-won diplomatic recognition.

The annuities question did distract the Conference, and Cosgrave accused Fianna Fáil of having 'treated the country to the degrading spectacle of their own humiliation at Ottawa.'[96] Joseph Connolly wrote that the delegation returned home with nothing gained or conceded.[97] Considering that the gains the state sought related to the annuities and the parliamentary oath of allegiance, only an optimist could have hoped to vanquish British interests. Connolly's views on British diplomacy suggest a personal predisposition to envisage her diplomats as possessors of nefarious skills that seasoned observers might have thought quintessential:

> As one who had been reared on the traditional history of British astuteness, subtlety and clever diplomacy, I was watching closely to try and detect any evidence of these.... Perhaps it was due to my incompetence or that their adroitness or subtlety were so cunningly carried out that they escaped me, but my conclusion at the end of the month was that they did not exist.[98]

Returning empty-handed after publicly-proclaimed belligerence contrasted poorly with Cumann na nGaedheal successes. The *Irish Times* wrote that Fianna Fáil failed to

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[95] *Ibid.*, vol. 43, 4 August, 1932, col. 1622

[96] *Irish Times*, 12 November, 1932: 1

[97] Connolly, 1996: 296

[98] *Ibid.*: 304-5

persuade the press of its efforts, and blamed de Valera for curbing the delegates' authority:

> The failure... to secure for the people the benefits which were ready to their hand was not merely deplorable; it was criminal. Let us be just to the delegates. They were given an impossible task. Over the long-distance telephone sounded the crack of the whip and the words of the master calling them to heel.[99]

No official propaganda could hide worsening economic conditions, and a perception that de Valera had miscalculated in discarding diplomatic propaganda for economic warfare. By May 1934, Anglo-Irish relations had further plummeted, with de Valera observing: 'Apart from the dispute with Great Britain, our relations with all States are friendly.'[100] Propaganda dictated the aberrant party was Britain. Common sense, however, prevailed in the response to Ramsey McDonald's invitation to participate in celebrations for the king's jubilee. The original, unsent, rejection was brutally unsubtle:

> Ireland has been incorporated into the Commonwealth by force; her territory has been partitioned... and... we would be false to our duty as a national government, and lacking in frankness, if... we made it appear that we voluntarily accepted a position... contrary to the national aspiration of our people. [101]

Bellicose diplomacy could only worsen matters. The official declination, with a succinct précis of the state's propaganda, was more measured. Although the government and people rejoiced with Britons, they would be 'exposed to grave misunderstanding if... I or any representative of our Government were to go to London to participate in the proposed celebrations.' The official rejection made it clear that Fianna Fáil viewed the creation of a republic as essential to the 'well-being of our nation and permanent friendly relations with the people of Britain' and it seems a calculated attempt to further provoke.[102]

Correspondence with the Vatican suggests de Valera was not wedded to the idea of a republic. Indeed, his conception of a republic was not the model that had evolved over centuries; it was a politically expedient form of government that could be accommodated within the Commonwealth by Britain and unionists: 'The term republic for us connotes the idea of political independence rather than any particular economic or social

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[99] *Irish Times*, 16 November, 1932: 8

[100] UCDA, de Valera, P150/2284: 29 May, 1934. The quote is taken from an interview with journalist Joseph Chapire, who submitted his notes to de Valera for correction and approval, suggesting that de Valera exercised stringent control over press reportage.

[101] *Ibid.*, P150/2298: 16 May, 1934

[102] *Ibid.*.

system.'[103] Within three years, the new constitution created a republic under camouflage. Provocation typified Fianna Fáil relations with Britain, as a decision on not flying the tricolour at legations on the King's birthday exemplifies. If representatives felt circumstances dictated flying the flag, de Valera would personally decide on the matter.[104]

It was impossible for de Valera to attend the 1937 Imperial Conference - the need for consistency with his position and maintaining popular support over-rode any benefits Fianna Fáil might have enjoyed. The *Irish Times* puzzled 'we cannot see why he should continue to avoid contact with Great Britain and the other Dominions.'[105] De Valera excused his absence by portraying his policy on the land annuities as one of support for Irish people, to whom the money belonged[106] – a somewhat peculiar line of propaganda as Fianna Fáil continued to collect the monies anyway. His defiance only came after prolonged prevarication. The *Irish Times* noted his contradictory Dáil statements, and even deputies remained uncertain. The newspaper quoted an unnamed deputy: 'the Free State will be at the Conference, but not of it'[107] –impressive sophistry, even by Fianna Fáil standards. With a new constitution in the making, and the opportunity of sundering the state's link with the Commonwealth, Fianna Fáil relied less on diplomacy and more on easily-propagated populism.

The Boundary Commission

The terms of the Treaty laid the foundations for diplomatic tensions between the state, Britain and the portion of Ulster temporarily cut adrift. It necessitated a Free State propaganda offensive, primarily in Britain, under the North Eastern Boundary Bureau, the state's official propaganda vehicle. By October 1922, the Bureau had three sections, of which one was a publicity division. Kevin O'Shiel, the Bureau's director, sketched the division's importance in disseminating publicity to Irish, British and other press corps,

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[103] *Ibid.*, P150/2284: 29 May, 1934. De Valera's imprecise views were not new, and had been commented on by Hugh Law TD (Cumann na nGaedheal) in 1928: 'I think he has in his heart somewhere the image of a perfect Republic... which, it may be, exists in Heaven, but most certainly does not... exist upon earth. In so far as the reality of the Free State falls short of that ideal, Deputy de Valera... is bound to quarrel with it. If it should ever happen that he achieves his idea, his political purpose, he will be as far as ever from his ideal, because no Republic that can be set up... can have that absolute independence which haunts his dreams. It does not exist in this world." (DÉ, vol. 27, 21 November, 1928, col. 480)

[104] UCDA, de Valera, P150/2203: 17 May, 1934

[105] *Irish Times*, 16 March, 1937: 8

[106] DÉ, vol. 67, 19 May, 1937, cols 711-2

[107] *Irish Times*, 10 April, 1937: 8

and publishing material under its own auspices. O'Shiel recognised that propaganda would have its impact on the British government and its chair of the Boundary Commission rather than on unionists.[108] Lester took a similar view, but cautioned that international opinion would not concede the state's case until it was a settled, peaceful democracy. As matters stood, 'should it sit now a great measure of most unenviable publicity would be thrown on the state of affairs in the Saorstát.'[109]

With the civil war over, Lester advocated taking the publicity campaign to America, recognising the boundary issue was not solely an Irish problem He addressed a memorandum to FitzGerald, astutely pointing out that American opinion still weighed considerably with Britain, where Ulster unionists maintained very strong support. Pressure from America and the American press, he suggested, might deflect anti-Irish sentiment in Britain and be well received domestically. Somewhat peculiarly, given his experience in External Affairs, he suggested that a government minister should pay an unofficial visit to America, or take a holiday there, to drum up interest and support. [110] It may have had some merit as a suggestion, but it ignored official diplomatic channels and seems an ill-conceived attempt at securing diplomatic propaganda.

For McNeil, indirect propaganda to win British public support could exercise greater influence over British politicians than diplomacy. He recommended cultivating press support by building 'good business relations with newspapers dotted all over the country.'[111] Bureau reports compiled by Hugh McCartan, based in the London office of the High Commissioner from February 1924,[112] detailed its propaganda efforts. McCartan's August 1924 report noted that 8,453 copies of five pamphlets were distributed to members of the Houses of Lords and Common, women's organisations, British, colonial and American newspapers and periodicals, labour organisations, liberal clubs and, curiously, Unitarian and Baptist ministers.[113]

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[108] UCDA, McGilligan, P35b/132: undated, c. October, 1922

[109] UCDA, Lester, P203/9: undated

[110] UCDA, FitzGerald, P80/372: 10 June, 1924

[111] NAI, D/FA, GR592: 14 August, 1925

[112] UCDA, McGilligan, P35b/133: 26 February, 1926

[113] UCDA, FitzGerald, P': 8 August, 1924. The pamphlets distributed were: The Irish Boundary Problem – The Essential Facts'; 'The Treaty of Peace'; 'Some Points on the Irish Boundary Question'; 'Fair Play for Minorities'; and 'Reaction in North East Ulster'.

The pamphlets concentrated on the justness of the state's case, as the Treaty echoed the Treaty of Versailles in boundary resolution. More useful than dry legalese was an appeal to the British sense of fair play, persuading Britons that the state's case was based on more than the arguments peddled by pro-unionist press and politicians. Much was made of Northern demographics: pamphlets contained maps outlining the six counties' electoral areas by nationalist or anti-nationalist voters, adding visual evidence to the campaign. The pamphlet 'Fair Play for Minorities' claimed the appointment of Judge Leech by the Northern parliament to revise district electoral divisions on a population and valuation basis disenfranchised nationalist majorities. With thunderous biblical invective, it accused him of keeping nationalists, the Gibeonites of antiquity, subservient in favour of the 'lost tribes of Israel' - unionist and imperialist supporters.[114]

McCartan recommended that the Bureau be authorised to issue statements in its own name. He was in tune with British political events, and suggested taking advantage of a looming general election to canvass Labour and Liberal organisations for support.[115] McCartan wrote of his courting of the British press: the provincial press was willing to print his letters to the editor, but the *Times*, *Daily Mail*, and *Observer* refused. The Labour and Liberal publication departments offered him 'many valuable suggestions' [116] suggesting that, even if formal diplomatic channels were not open, political amity prevailed. The Bureau's final report paid tribute to McCartan's work during the general election, for producing a weekly bulletin comprising facts rather than emotive discourse, and, in particular, for the hundreds of letters to editors he wrote in a two-year period.[117]

The Bureau's propaganda implies that diplomacy was little used, that more public advertisement of the campaign was conducted. However, it may be said that the diplomatic efforts of both the state and Britain were aimed at not fanning the flames of renewed conflict, but treating each other as distinct entities, submitting to the findings of an agreed authority. When reports surfaced that Belfast opinion was that no commission

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[114] UCDA, Lester Mss, P203/10: undated

[115] UCDA, FitzGerald Mss, P80/922: 8 August, 1924.

[116] *Ibid.*, P80/923: 8 August, 1924

[117] UCDA, McGilligan, P35b/133: 26 February, 1926. How many letters he wrote is unknown, but he was evidently prolific as the *Irish Independent* reported (17 October, 1924: 6) that from his appointment to the London office, a period of about nine months: 'he wrote something like 200 letters in reply to allegations, 120 of which were published.'

would sit, O'Shiel pointed to common ground between the state and Britain: 'The Boundary Commission Clause still stands, and there is no intention on the part of the Government to waive it. The British Government is pledged in a similar manner.'[118] A delegation of MPs to Dublin was fully occupied meeting delegations, and pleased at the freedom accorded to it to do so.[119] Their official itinerary included a meeting at Government Buildings with Cosgrave, O'Higgins, the Chief Justice, Attorney General, and Bolton Butler (representing the Bureau) before lunch with the Governor-General. Such open communication between politicians of both countries suggests that where both were committed to the commission and its findings, overt diplomatic propaganda was unnecessary.

However the Bureau publicly criticised individual politicians like Lloyd George and Birkenhead, perceived as partitionists, saving the greater part of its counter-propaganda for Craig and unionists. The *Irish Independent* reported that the Bureau was seeking 'to counteract the propaganda of the Orange deputations, who are busily engaged in an effort to poison the electors against the Irish settlement.'[120] The *Weekly Bulletin* accused the Northern leadership of engaging in an economic plot to destabilise the state, an accusation the *Irish Independent* repeated:

> When the 'Morning Post' and 'Daily Mail' join forces with the Belfast Press, Lord Carson, Ian Macpherson, Mr. Lynn and Ronald McNeill to depreciate the credit of the Free State they are acting against the best interests of those they pretend to champion [i.e. southern unionists]. In doing so they prove conclusively the motivation behind their campaign is a purely political one.[121]

Northern propaganda regarding the border seemed utterly blind to reality. Perhaps it was this particular form of political blindness that made the border permanent; no degree of amity or reasonableness existed where a single blade of Ulster grass was concerned. Craig averred that as far as defending the north was concerned 'if ever the necessity arose the great city of Belfast and its loyal population were at the beck and call of Clogher, Augher, or any other of the outside parts of our dominions. That is all part of the Ulster spirit - we are one and undivided where the protection of our territory is concerned.'[122]

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[118] *Irish Independent*, 9 May, 1923: 7

[119] *Irish Times*: 23 September, 1924: 5

[120] *Irish Independent*, 6 November, 1922: 6

[121] *Ibid.*, 28 June, 1923: 8

[122] SP, vol. 3, 27 February, 1923, col. 24

Barely was Northern Ireland released from vicious internal strife to mere simmering resentment among nationalist and unionists when Craig declared 'The peace and good feeling that now animate the hearts of all men inside our borders are something to prize and to be proud of, and I can only express the hope that, not only in our own area, but throughout the whole of Ireland, peace and prosperity will continue indefinitely.'[123] It was a remarkable assessment that either equated 'all men' with unionists, or believed that nationalists had lost the spark of rebellion that still threatened to flare in the south. In either case, the border's permanence was promulgated by unionists even while discussions on it continued. Unionists, he told Stormont, were 'unchanged and unchangeable regarding the views we take in connection with the border question.'[124]

No propaganda was more effective than refusing to have anything to do with the Boundary Commission, a move that forced Westminster to legislate to appoint a representative for the North.[125] In Stormont Craig deflected personal credit for efforts to nullify the commission to the 'spade work of my colleagues and of our representatives in the Imperial Parliament.' It was they who were 'entitled to... the praise that is due to men who have stuck to their colours, who have clung, on to the old traditions.'[126] Kyle endeavoured to promulgate a Labour perspective: 'Housing, wages, unemployment insurance, national health insurance, old-age pensions, education, these are the important things to us.' There was, he said, 'common ground for agreement between North and South in, for example, the administration of railways... a common policy regarding agriculture, and... the position of the working people, should not be overlooked.' He attempted to deflect attention from the Border towards the very real poverty of the North: 'This matter of the Boundary, so far as I am concerned, is not a matter of very much importance in comparison with the things I have mentioned.'[127] Devlin pleaded for calm, and accused the Minister for Labour of making 'wild and inflammatory speeches.' It was preferable, he said that when 'speeches are made on public platforms to audiences easily aroused and amongst whom it is easy to create and foster bitter

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[123] SP, vol. 3, 16 October, 1923, col. 1485

[124] *Ibid.*, 1484

[125] Harkness, 1983: 38-9 and Hennessy, *op. cit.* 37-8

[126] SP, vol. 6, 9 December, cols 1855-6

[127] *Ibid.*, 7 September, 1925 cols 1115-6

passion, the fewer of these meetings that are held the better.'[128] When, eventually, the Commission report was leaked, unionist fury was fuel for propaganda that no British or Free State propaganda could match. Inter-governmental meetings in December 1925, too, failed to reach an agreement and the temporary border became permanent.[129]

Economic War

When Fianna Fáil fulfilled its promise to withhold the land annuities, it was a political move that, while popular domestically, had the potential to severely damage the state's reputation. Bewley advised from the Vatican that the state was seen as the aggressor in the tariff dispute, and counselled: 'if weight is laid on the opinion of the Holy See... it would be well to present to the Secretariat of State a statement of the Irish case. There is undoubtedly a tendency to think that the present crisis is the outcome, partly at least, of intransigence on the Irish side.'[130] He was satisfied that while there was no direct contact between Britain and the Vatican over the dispute, unofficial reports after the Eucharistic Congress, some unfavourable to the state, had filtered back to Rome. As the dispute escalated, the tenor of the state's propaganda became pronouncedly more damnatory of Britain. Bewley reported a successful meeting with Cardinal Pacelli, the Vatican Secretary of State, at which he persuaded Pacelli that Britain was responsible for the dispute. He told Pacelli that Britain started an unprovoked tariff war 'in the hope of provoking a reaction in Dublin' and, likened it to the blockade Britain had maintained over Germany after the Great War: Pacelli, he reported, had been in Germany 'throughout the English hunger-blockade.' Moreover, he accused Britain of bullying. Russia, which had broken undertakings with Britain, was forgiven, but the Free State was weak enough to be dealt with directly and harshly. At least in private audience, Pacelli accepted that, faced with the prospect of Dominions becoming independent, Britain adopted hard measures 'as a matter of prestige.'[131]

Two months later, Walshe communicated instructions regarding future meetings with Vatican diplomats: Bewley was to stress that de Valera sought complete Irish independence, and would eliminate all forms of British control to achieve this.

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[128] *Ibid.*, col. 1118

[129] NAI, D/T, S4720A: 3 December, 1925

[130] NAI, D/FA, Embassy Series, Holy See B.5/32-33: 16 July, 1932

[131] *Ibid.*: 9 November, 1932

Moreover, though a republic remained his goal de Valera 'has an open mind with regard to State regimes in general.' Economically, Bewley was to stress that de Valera wanted self-sufficiency, full employment and the eradication of poverty according to Christian principles and papal encyclicals.[132] The instructions highlighted official determination to break from Britain, but the indecision on the type of government suggests that the Vatican's preference would receive consideration. By emphasising Christian doctrine, de Valera disadvantaged Britain, implying that Ireland produced better Catholics. This was further suggested in a communiqué from Bewley, who countered anti-Irish propaganda in an article in the British publication, *The Tablet*, by informing Pacelli that among its proprietors was the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. He told Dublin he hoped to demonstrate the tone of English Catholic opinion on Irish affairs to justify appropriate counter-action. Moreover he felt that the 'accumulation of instances of provocation on the English side should... have a gradual effect on Vatican opinion.'[133] Bewley's propaganda implied that British Catholics inclined to nationalism over Catholicism and were less steadfast in religious observation than their Irish counterparts, whose continued veneration was assured.

By then, plans were developing for de Valera's state visit to the Vatican, which sought friendly Anglo-Irish relations for its own purposes. Bewley reported that 'Mons. Pizzardo... asked whether the negotiations with England were now going on: I said that the door was always open on the Irish side for negotiations.'[134] He wrote that Monsignor Ottaviani advised that the Vatican was unwilling to consider an Irish visit 'if the situation between Ireland and England were very strained at the time... or if it took place in the midst of the polemics between the... Governments'. Ottaviani feared the visit would appear political and prove problematic after Britain's failure to appoint a minister to the Vatican. Papal prescience may have guessed the symbolism de Valera imbued in the visit, and Bewley reassured the Vatican, while again peddling the propaganda of blame, that de Valera 'would be very reluctant that anyone should connect his journey to Rome with political propaganda. I pointed out... that while the President had always done

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[132] *Ibid.*: 12 January, 1933

[133] *Ibid.*: 4 March, 1933

[134] NAI, D/FA, Secretary's Office Files, Series S, 7: 2 March, 1933

everything to avoid unnecessary bitterness, he could not guarantee what the British Government might do in the immediate future.'[135]

The Vatican communications show that official propaganda became more anti-British as the economic war continued. In an early radio broadcast for North American audiences, de Valera explained that withholding the annuities was a response to British unwillingness to recognise the state's freedom, but referred to friendship to soften the dispute, blaming 'mischief makers' for misrepresenting state policy as antagonistic, when he sought 'the friendliest relations between Britain and Ireland' that would lead to 'mutual understanding and the readiness to be fair each to the other'.[136] A memorandum for the Washington legation outlined the state's arguments against the annuities. The government's position 'appears to have been misunderstood by a large section of the American press.' A word common to press reports, repudiation, was discomfiting: for the publicity savvy de Valera this was undesirable as it deprived the state of a moral argument and had connotations of welching. The memorandum stated that repudiation was to be considered 'incorrect and improper.'[137]

As the dispute grew in intensity, so did de Valera's propaganda. A broadcast in America castigated Britain for partition: 'Imposed by force, and maintained by subsidies, partition is the worst of all the many crimes committed by British statesmen against the Irish people during the last 750 years.'[138] Around the same time, Connolly was despatched to America on a propaganda mission. Repaying republican loans of the previous decade, which few subscribers had anticipated, gave the state counter-propaganda against British charges that it had defaulted on the annuities. Publicising state solvency, the repayments reinforced the propaganda that Britain had no right to the annuities.[139] Connolly later wondered: 'Had I succeeded in putting a spoke in the wheels of British propaganda...?'[140] Within a week of returning to Ireland, he was sent to the World Economic Conference in London, where he orchestrated a publicity stunt: his speech criticising Britain was ruled out of order in the assembly. Consequently, rather than being lost amidst the thrum of

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[135] *Ibid.*: 2 March 1933. (Separate document to above)

[136] UCDA, de Valera, P150/2209: 4 March, 1932

[137] *Ibid.*, P150/2213: 25 March, 1932

[138] *Ibid.*, P150/2253: 12 February, 1933

[139] Gaughan, 1996: 324

[140] *Ibid.*: 338

debate, it was circulated to an eager press.[141] Despite the vehemence of de Valera's propaganda, it was, ultimately, pressure from affected groups in both countries that forced the governments to negotiate a resolution, although O'Brien gives the Dominion's Office some credit for its swift action on a perceived softening of de Valera's stance.[142]

V

Within fifteen years of its foundation, the state had established legations in several European countries and America, been elected to the General Council of the League of Nations, and become a valued member of the Commonwealth and catalyst for greater sovereignty of the dominions. By persuading domestic audiences of the need for concerted diplomatic effort boosting prestige and international status, the state became less inward-looking. The state was fortunate that Walshe as departmental secretary fought doggedly for his department, whose three ministers, FitzGerald, McGilligan and de Valera, brought different qualities: from the scholarly esoteric through industry-focussed to hands-on, absolute control. The successes of the legations are harder to assess. As trade legations, they enjoyed some successes, but as Chapter 6 has shown, they did not significantly develop exports which remained almost entirely dependent on Britain. As legations, the confusing job titles and roles of the representatives made it difficult for them to breach the diplomatic barriers that bedevilled new states. Nevertheless, despite having only a small network of diplomats, stretched to the limits of their offices by under-resourcing, the state succeeded in establishing legations which became essential in promoting the state's interests abroad.

In promoting the state as independent of Britain, Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil may have hyped Britain's threat, the latter especially. Britain became a bogeyman, an ever-present threat to independence and sovereignty. While cutting the Treaty ties that bound both states was achieved, and greater independence than was granted in 1922 secured, the diplomacy that led to that was, perhaps, indicative of a lack of confidence in the state that had emerged. Rather than define the state as what it was, diplomatic propaganda defined it as what it was not: British, a willing member of the Commonwealth, and satisfied with the Treaty. Cumann na nGaedheal attempted a long-

[141] *Ibid.*: 346

[142] O'Brien, *op. cit.*: 73-4

term strategy of incremental change, commencing with membership of the League of Nations, and continuing through considered challenges to British authority in Imperial Conferences. This approach achieved much, and Anglo-Irish relations, while rarely evincing genuine warmth, were respectful and professional. Fianna Fáil diplomacy antagonised Britain, marginalising her in Irish affairs. For diplomacy to be effective, establishing common ground among equals is paramount. Fianna Fáil churlishness in its diplomacy suggests feigned indignation and arrogance: bluster masked the inadequate preparation for diplomacy that Fianna Fáil could not publicly voice.

Conclusion

Any dispassionate view of the Free State period would hold that propaganda was a common feature of official efforts to build the state. It would have to be acknowledged, too, that whatever the economic and social state of the country in 1937, politically it was a stable democracy, far removed from the violent uncertainty of the Civil War. Previous chapters have shown that the state enjoyed some propaganda successes in trade, tourism and diplomacy, while its instruments of defence and security were accepted by a Gaelic, Catholic, Celtic nation in whose image the state itself was cast. They have also shown that politicians were sufficiently conversant in the nuances of propaganda as a concept and as a practice. Politicians, with some state funding enabling their efforts, adapted to new forms of media, and became adept at promoting the state, themselves and their parties.

Propaganda played a role in helping to create the state twice over. Firstly, it gave Cumann na nGaedheal the authority derived from public approval to prosecute war in the state's own name as a member of the Empire against refractory republicans. Secondly, it facilitated Fianna Fáil efforts to rip up the Treaty and build a softly-whispered republic from the blueprint of dominion status. With the exception of Civil War propaganda which was as belligerent as any military force, propaganda throughout the period of the Free State was by and large free from violent tones. That is not to suggest that it was free from vitriol: occasional spats between the two main parties, particularly at election times, attest to that. However, official propaganda was conducted in a manner that focussed on persuasiveness, and maintaining control over both the message and the channel of communication. This was quite a refined approach compared with, for example, Great War atrocity propaganda, or the hate-filled propaganda of the Nazi party. Indeed, it was quite redolent of the propaganda of Tallents and Grierson in Britain, and the idea propounded by Ivy Lee that propaganda was a fair means of communication

This thesis set out with the intention of rescuing propaganda from infamy, and asserted that a form of propaganda benign in construct and intention was practised in the Free State. Was this the case? An examination of the propaganda of Cumann na nGaedheal suggests that it was. Removing party politics from the reckoning, the propaganda of

Cumann na nGaedheal ministers appears to have been grounded in a belief that they were acting in the best interests of the citizens. That those citizens might have been ignorant or unaware of the good intentions of ministers only added to the necessity of presenting them with persuasive information designed to win their support. While that information may have been representative of the desires of an elite identified by Garvin and Regan, it is true that ministerial decisions to stimulate the economy and increase trade and tourism were all taken with a view to increasing national wealth. Decisions to adopt national coinage, a flag and, however fudged the issue was under Cumann na nGaedheal, an anthem were intended to promote a sense of identity, and inculcate national pride. That Cumann na nGaedheal, which enjoyed good relations with and support from the Catholic church in prosecuting war against Irregulars and denouncing communism, should have had soured that relationship over the opening of the Holy See legation, and been pointedly snubbed during the Catholic Emancipation centennial celebrations, suggests that its propaganda was far from omnipotent.

Fianna Fáil engaged in a different type of propaganda and while it did stray into less wholesome territory in its creation of a cult of personality surrounding de Valera it was nonetheless effected with a view to promoting the party's policies as best for the citizens. Clearly, those policies were different to Cumann na nGaedheal's, but the general intent behind the messages and means of communication was largely similar. Thus, in office, Fianna Fáil propaganda encouraging wheat growing, turf-cutting and Gaeltacht industries, for example, used the same media channels as their governmental predecessors. While they differed fundamentally from previous governmental policies, nevertheless they sought to create prosperity and national pride. Of course, it may be levelled at de Valera that he was a more skilled user, perhaps even a manipulator, of the media for propaganda purposes. Certainly, his period as President saw a remarkable concentration of propaganda power under his own control: the government information bureau, 2RN, the *Irish Press* and, through the Ministry of Justice, censorial restrictions on film and published material gave his governments the resources to promulgate party and state policy to citizens. From 1932 onwards, official material on propaganda is very hard to locate, suggesting that record-keeping (either contemporaneously, or later by way of expunging files) was either deliberately lax or excessively secretive. That would be sufficient to cast Fianna Fáil propaganda in an unflattering light, yet, adjudging their

propaganda by McQuail's black or white delineation, it was virtually always the latter, which renders it somewhat less scheming and manipulative.

It should be noted that both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil rarely sought to interfere with the freedom of the press (Lester's efforts to deport one irksome journalist seems something of a personal aberration). Indeed, it could be said that Cumann na nGaedheal efforts to direct government advertising away from disloyal newspapers was the most overt interference of the period. Access to politicians was granted to press, radio and film journalists and while some control was exerted over the content of recorded interviews this was not unusual, and, indeed, actually quite prudent if misrepresentation of politicians was to be avoided. One of the central tenets of propaganda, as Lester indicated of the Bolsheviks, was absolute control over the press. As Europe edged closer to renewed conflict, and with totalitarian states executing increasingly severe controls on the free press, the Free State exercised power only indirectly through censorship laws, but never threatened the principle of independent commentary. Despite propaganda being essential to both parties while in government, it was in a competitive environment where the citizens could choose between official information and counterviews freely expressed. In that sense, the practice of official propaganda mirrored Ivy Lee's opinion that propaganda was merely the act of placing information whose source was identifiable before the public.

In terms of their style of propaganda, differences do emerge between Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil. The former had an exoteric view of propaganda: it was widely disseminated for the broadest possible audience at home and abroad. In contrast, Fianna Fáil had a rather more esoteric view, preaching to the committed party supporter and building popular support from the electorate as a whole, while, Britain excepted, it was generally less concerned with foreign public opinion than its predecessors. Cumann na nGaedheal looked outside the state to build trade and diplomatic links, using membership of the Commonwealth of Nations as the primary means of achieving incrementally more independence from Britain. Fianna Fáil were more insular, looking to home markets when the Economic War cut farmers off from Britain. With FitzGerald driving early Cumann na nGaedheal propaganda, and continuing to exert influence at cabinet when moved from External Affairs to Defence, it was based on the principles that had served nationalists well during the revolutionary period: attention to

detail and accuracy in content were seamlessly added to gentlemanly notions of statesmanship. This is particularly evident in their diplomatic propaganda. Fianna Fáil members were more accustomed to the rough and tumble of insurrectionary propaganda, and brought this into office with them. Their relations with Britain and other dominions were significantly more turbulent by design. Arguably, in propaganda terms Cumann na nGaedheal made a more successful transition from insurrection to government, but once in government lost sight of the requirement for its communications to remain combative where necessary; Fianna Fáil, whose handling of the economy and international relations was less assured than their predecessors, did not make the same mistake, and propaganda was used to create a strong domestic political powerbase. It may fairly be said that Cumann na nGaedheal formed capable governments sometimes let down by diffident propaganda, while Fianna Fáil were capable propagandists let down by diffident governing that almost suggested a national complex of insecurity.

These circumstances were not entirely the fault of either party. Finance exercised notoriously stringent control over public expenditure, creating an administration-led approach to public policy that only recognised costs incurred and not the benefits accruing. The Doremus campaign is a case in point: it was probable that the annual cost would have been recouped simply through the issuing of visas in America – additional spending by tourists would have contributed badly needed monies where it was most needed, in the hands of citizens. Finance exercised an unhealthy control over public policy. Its influence far exceeded its brief, and rendered other ministries subordinate to its controls. Propaganda, never understood by the department and rarely held in good odour, suffered particularly badly as funds were grudgingly made available. For Finance, the process not the end result was the ultimate goal of governing, as instances of obstruction over relatively petty points of principle indicate. Only de Valera managed to keep the department's book-keeping pedantry in check, driving policy from cabinet that it had no option but to fund.

It was, perhaps, a combination of Finance's thriftiness and inexperience of politicians and their senior civil servants that prevented propaganda from becoming an integral part of statecraft. The legacy of the revolutionary period, when the actions of insurrectionists were always newsworthy, meant that press coverage was virtually regarded as a right. Politicians had to unlearn the habits of rebellion, when their propaganda was focussed

against something, and instead learn a new approach, where propaganda was used to build awareness and acceptance of policies and actions. Much of the propaganda was reactive, responding to situations and circumstances in a hurried fashion that precluded the type of good planning that might have persuaded Finance to loosen the purse strings. Certainly, there seems to have been little regard for propaganda as a strategic function of government, and departments, even with budgets allocated for propaganda campaigns, rarely gave the impression of taking a long-term view. In consequence, much of the propaganda carried out was on a project basis, as the tendency to treat attendance at fairs and exhibitions as separate events rather than part of a single campaign demonstrates.

For all their differences, political, social and cultural, the Free State and Northern Ireland shared common ground in the practice of official propaganda. Neither jurisdiction fully grasped the potency of propaganda as a means of inculcating an undisturbed social order among a content citizenry – a central tenet of Lippman's doctrine. Perhaps the circumstances of their foundation, and the smouldering resentment of large numbers of citizens within the two jurisdictions who were socially or politically cast to the margins, militated against any truly benevolent form of social engineering. Instead, official propaganda became inflexible, dogmatically adhering to pre-defined political and financial constraints. Instead of creating nuanced propaganda that was acceptable to minorities, official propaganda seemed reluctant or incapable of deviating from its frequently ill-defined course. A good example is to be found in the moral prudishness that attached itself to film propaganda. What is clear here is that officialdom bowed to religious interference, and particularly fundamentalism in both Catholic and Protestant doctrine. In consequence, both governments instituted censorship controls that were broadly congruent in mission and purpose, and had the direct effect of instituting formal state control over the viewing habits of citizens. In consequence, cinema became a medium to be feared, rather than adopted for state propaganda.

In trade, too, both jurisdictions displayed common attributes of single-mindedness bordering on political obsession. For unionists, the linen industry was a symbol of Ulster wealth and potency, an industry that gave it international standing. No matter that by the early 1930s the industry had become less the pristine, starched fabric of a successful economy and society, and more a bedraggled handkerchief flapping in miserable capitulation, official funding for propaganda continued. The Free State had its equivalent

in the money thrown into propagating native cottage industries that were outmoded and inefficient, and suggestive less of a modern economy than Fianna Fáil economic dogma. Propaganda here can be viewed as the desperate short-sightedness borne of party political considerations that espoused the need to create positive news and artificial success around industries in order to persuade substantial numbers of voting citizens that the parties had their interests at heart.

One critical distinction between propaganda in the Free State and Ulster in relation to national identity is that in the former, official propaganda made half-hearted attempts to include those who were not Gaelic, Catholic and nationalists, or at worst neglected to have any regard for them. In the latter, official propaganda was used as a political weapon against those perceived to be a threat to northern unionism: nationalists, certainly, but also mainstream political parties like Labour. It may be posited that the composition of the principal parties in both jurisdictions may have had some influence on this: Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil had few members who owed their political prominence to careers in industry or commerce, and many whose national record endeared them to the vast majority of ordinary voters, with whom a degree of affinity was felt. Many unionists, however, were industrialists or landowners, far removed from the considerations of impoverished former shipyard workers, and a swollen underclass of Protestant and Catholic alike dependent on the state for subsistence. The siege mentality of unionist politicians, and the official propaganda it ultimately produced, suggests that they were out of touch with all but their own kind: Protestant, undoubtedly, but propertied and wealthy in equal consideration.

In the final analysis, only one concern really matters: did the propaganda of successive governments serve the Free State and its citizens well? On the debit side of the balance sheet lie bare facts: the economy slumped, emigration continued, early efforts to promote the Irish language and culture became increasingly ineffectual, and the insularism of the 1930s would take 30 years to surmount. Moreover a national culture was inculcated that unquestioningly lionised the revolutionary period and its principal actors, and it would take the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising to spark a reassessment of the state and its origins. To the credit of both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil, their propaganda efforts were intended to promote the best possible view – their view – of the nation and state, and negative depictions of adversaries were simply the collateral damage

of these actions. Though extremism was moderated, official propaganda never sought to remove the freedoms of rival political parties, and stable democracy emerged. The propaganda that made the army an extension of the nation was also particularly effective as fears of army disloyalty towards Fianna Fáil dissipated quickly when the party assumed office. Yet again, democracy prevailed. The stability of the state's political institutions; the acceptance of its citizens of its political status and parties; and the esteem in which it was held abroad are good measures of the success of propaganda. As an uneasy peace in Europe spawned totalitarianism, and began an inexorable slide toward conflagration, the constancy of the Free State stands in marked contrast. Thus, the balance sheet suggests that official propaganda in the Free State was beneficial for the state and its citizens.

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