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Irish Physical Force Republicanism in Britain, 1919–1923

Gerard Noonan

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Dublin, Trinity College

PhD History

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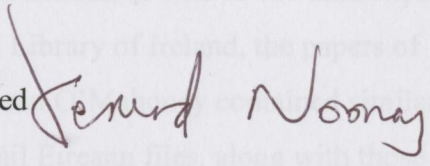
Signed 

Summary

This thesis studies the activities of Irish republicans – mainly the Irish Republican Army (IRA) – in Britain from the outbreak of the war of independence in 1919 to the end of the civil war in 1923.

It is based on my reading of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources employed can be divided into two main types: those dating from the period under study and the recollections of veterans in later life. At University College Dublin Archives, I consulted the collections of Eamon de Valera, Sighle Humphries, Terence MacSwiney, Richard Mulcahy, Ernie O'Malley and Maurice 'Moss' Twomey, all of which contain contemporaneous records detailing republican activities in Britain, as well as the transcripts of interviews with veterans decades later. At the National Library of Ireland, the papers of Piaras Béaslaí, Art O'Brien, Florence O'Donoghue and Sean O'Mahoney contained similar records. At the National Archives of Ireland, I perused Dáil Éireann files, along with those of the Provisional Government and the departments of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Justice, and the Taoiseach. I also examined the Bureau of Military History Witness Statements, memoirs of IRA activities composed in the 1940s and 1950s. Meanwhile, at the Military Archives of Ireland, I consulted the Michael Collins Papers and the Captured Documents Collection. At the National Archives in London, government records, police files, and court records provided an insight into the British response to the republican threat. Similar sources were consulted in Tyne & Wear Archives in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne and in the Scottish National Archives in Edinburgh. The private papers of politicians such as David Lloyd George and Andrew Bonar Law, in the Parliamentary Archives in the House of Lords, and of Walter Long, in the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, detail the British establishment's view of Irish republicanism. I also consulted a privately-held collection, that of Eamonn Mooney. A number of Irish and British newspapers were perused as well.

The secondary sources which I consulted consisted of historians' work on the Irish republican movement and the history of Irish nationalism generally. In particular, I have made use of the burgeoning secondary literature on the IRA in Ireland, such as Fergus Campbell's work on county Galway, Marie Coleman's on Longford, David Fitzpatrick's on Clare, Peter Hart's on Cork, and John O'Callaghan's on Limerick.

It is the argument of this thesis that republicans in Britain made a significant contribution to the war of independence and civil war. Through the procurement and smuggling to Ireland of munitions, republicans in Britain helped to arm the IRA in Ireland, thereby helping it to disrupt British rule in Ireland and later its attempt to strangle the nascent Free State. In addition, a campaign of terrorism in Britain brought home to British politicians and the wider populace the lengths to which republicans were prepared to go to achieve Irish freedom.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted in the research and writing of this thesis. I wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Eunan O'Halpin, for advice and constructive criticism. I am similarly indebted to my examiners, Professor David Fitzpatrick and Dr Emmet O'Connor. I am grateful to Dr Anne Dolan for counsel on the structure of the thesis. Eve Morrison generously shared her knowledge of the Bureau of Military History. Philip McConway kindly brought some sources to my attention. Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk graciously granted me access to the private papers of her father, Eamonn Mooney, and I would also like to thank Dr Máirtín Seán Ó Catháin for introducing me to Mrs Knowles-McGuirk. Thanks also to the staff in the Trinity College Dublin (TCD) History Department office and in the Graduate Studies Office. I very much appreciate the Dean of Graduate Studies' award of Dean's Grace.

TCD's Graduate Studies Committee (College Awards) granted me a three-year Postgraduate Research Studentship. From Limerick County Council, meanwhile, I received a three-year maintenance grant. From the TCD Trust and the TCD History Department's Grace Lawless Lee Fund, I also obtained grants to cover the expense of research trips to archives in Britain. Without these financial supports, I could not have undertaken doctorate study and I am very grateful to all the funding organisations for their generosity.

I am indebted to the staff at the following institutions for their helpful service: Durham County Record Office, the Gaelic Athletic Association Archives, the Military Archives of Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland, the National Archives in London, the National Archives of Scotland, the National Library of Ireland, the Parliamentary Archives in the House of Lords, Tyne & Wear Archives, TCD library, University College Dublin archive and library, and the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre.

I would also like to thank my friends, whose convivial company helped to preserve my sanity during my solitary scholarly pursuits.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, whose support has been indispensible.

List of Abbreviations

AOH	Ancient Order of Hibernians
BMHCD	Bureau of Military History Contemporaneous Document
BMHWS	Bureau of Military History Witness Statement
CAB	Cabinet file
CO	Colonial Office file
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPI	Communist Party of Ireland
C/S	Chief of Staff
DCRO	Durham County Record Office
DE	Dáil Éireann file
DORR	Defence of the Realm Regulations
D/P	Director of Purchases
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GHQ	General Headquarters
Hansard 5	Parliamentary debates, fifth series
HO	Home Office file
ICA	Irish Citizen Army
INACDF	Irish National Aid Central Defence Fund
INF	Irish National Foresters

I/O	Intelligence Officer
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
ISDL	Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain
MAI	Military Archives of Ireland
MEPO	(London) Metropolitan Police Office file
MP	Member of Parliament
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NLI	National Library of Ireland
O/C	Officer Commanding
PAHL	Parliamentary Archives, House of Lords
QMG	Quartermaster General
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
ROIA	Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (1920)
RROUK	'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom'
SPI	Socialist Party of Ireland
TD	Teachta Dála
TNA	The National Archives (London)
TWA	Tyne & Wear Archives
UCDA	University College Dublin Archives
WO	War Office file

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1

Introduction

This thesis studies the activities of Irish physical force republican organisations in Britain from the outbreak of the war of independence in 1919 to the conclusion of the civil war in 1923. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) is the main focus of study, though the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), the Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Éireann are also accorded attention. Other organisations associated with these physical force groups, such as the Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain (ISDL) and Sinn Féin, are given consideration as well.

The activities of republicans in Britain during the war of independence and civil war are bookended by the escape of Sinn Féin president Eamon de Valera and others from Manchester's Lincoln prison in February 1919 and the arrest and deportation to Ireland of 110 anti-treaty republicans in March 1923. In the interim, republicans were involved in gunrunning, organising IRA companies, and mounting terrorist attacks. Throughout, they were subject to the attentions of the British police.

Conspiratorial Irish republicanism in Britain was nurtured by the culture of Irish immigrants who settled in England, Scotland and Wales in the nineteenth century. Such immigration is usually associated with the Great Famine of 1845–51. The Irish were already a familiar sight in Britain prior to this, but the repeated destruction of the potato crop precipitated a dramatic increase in emigration to Britain, a trend which was sustained for a long period thereafter by the lack of economic opportunities in post-Famine Ireland. By 1861, the Irish-born population of Britain numbered 805,717, scattered mainly in urban areas of northern England and Scotland. Thereafter, except for a slight increase in the 1870s, it began to decline until it numbered just under 524,000, at the height of republican activity in Britain in 1921.[1] Including second- and third-generation Irish, the Irish Catholic population as a

[1] David Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people': the Irish in Britain, 1801–70' in W. E. Vaughan (ed), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the Union, i, 1801–70* (Oxford, 1989), pp 623-60, at p. 658; David Fitzpatrick, 'Irish emigration in the later nineteenth century' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii, no. 86 (1980), pp

whole in Britain probably exceeded two million. Many native Britons feared and loathed the Irish, distaining their Catholic religion and strange customs, along with their propensity for drunkenness, criminality, and poverty. A number of anti-Irish riots occurred in the period 1830s–1860s.[2] Most Irish in Britain did not experience such violence. If they did suffer discrimination, it was usually of a more subtle kind, such as difficulties in finding employment. As time progressed, the majority of Irish eventually assimilated into British society, a process encouraged by the Catholic Church and facilitated by the acquisition of skilled employment.[3] Still, many retained an interest in Ireland's plight and supported politicians such as Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell in their peaceful campaigns for the abolition of the Union of 1801 which welded Ireland to Britain. A small minority believed that only violence could achieve Irish independence, and it was this tradition that nurtured the IRA and IRB in Britain.

'Diaspora' nationalism played a significant role in the evolution of Irish nationalism. Adrian Mulligan has argued that the greater interconnectedness between the British Isles and the United States of America in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, in terms of travel, communications, and the media, saw the development of a 'transatlantic Irish nationalist world'. Fenianism, a movement dedicated to the freeing of Ireland from British rule, was a product of this new world. For immigrants in America, Irish nationalism was the vehicle which enabled them to cope with their new surroundings. However, that same nationalism remained concerned with Ireland's plight. The 'New Departure' and the 'Skirmishing Fund' are examples of this transatlantic nationalism in action. In the first, Irish-American Fenians in 1879 decided to lend their support to both land agitation in Ireland as well as the constitutional attempt by the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) to secure a measure of autonomy for Ireland within the British Empire. Mulligan contends that the New Departure was 'a crucial intervention in the transatlantic development of Irish nationalism', and one which 'could only have been made by those outside of Ireland'. It strengthened Irish nationalism by linking the physical force movement with both the constitutional movement and the widespread demand for changes in the terms of land tenure in Ireland. In the second, Irish immigrants in America donated the funds which allowed groups of Fenians to mount

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126-43, at p. 126; David Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain, 1871–1921' in W. E. Vaughan (ed), *A new history of Ireland, vi: Ireland under the union, ii, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 1996), pp 653-702, at p. 690

[2] Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people", pp 639-44

[3] Alan O'Day, 'Varieties of anti-Irish behaviour in Britain, 1846–1922' in Panikos Panayi (ed), *Racial violence in Britain, 1840–1950* (Leicester, 1993), pp 26-43, at pp 38-40; Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people", pp 656-7; Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain', pp 688-9

bombing (or 'skirmishing') campaigns in Britain in the 1880s.[4] Irish nationalism, then, was not limited to the inhabitants of Ireland itself. Rather, it was an international phenomenon, one which the republican movement would call upon during the revolutionary years of 1916–23.

The Irish Revolution 1916–23 occurred against a backdrop of international war and revolution. The First World War unleashed forces which sustained violence long after the armistice of November 1918. In Eastern Europe, with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian empires, nationalist and ethnic tensions exploded into fierce violence. In Africa and Asia too, nationalist movements challenged the British Empire. Added to this was the new threat of social revolution, emanating from the nascent Soviet Union, the world's first communist state. In his celebrated poem 'The Waste Land', first published in 1922, T. S. Eliot described the beleaguered post-war world, a world haunted by death and destruction, with 'hooded hordes swarming | Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth', and where 'the city over the mountains | Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violent air', with 'Falling towers' in the world's capitals presenting an 'Unreal' spectacle.[5]

The activities of Irish republicans in Britain in the nineteenth- and late twentieth-centuries have been the subject of significant scholarly attention. In contrast, very little has been written on the activities of the IRA and the IRB there during the war of independence and civil war. No book has been written on the topic. Indeed, many accounts of the Irish revolution accord little or no space to republicanism in Britain. The most significant piece of research to date is a thirty-seven page article by the historian Peter Hart entitled 'Operations abroad: The I.R.A. in Britain', first published in the *English Historical Review* in 2000. An article by the same author, entitled 'Michael Collins and the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson', originally published in *Irish Historical Studies* in 1992, examines a controversial event which contributed to the outbreak of the civil war. A third article by Hart, 'The social structure of the I.R.A.', originally published in the *Historical Journal* in 1999, also contains some relevant research. (All of these articles were re-published in Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at war 1916–1923* (Oxford, 2003).) Iain Paterson's article 'The activities of Irish republican physical force organisations in Scotland, 1919–21', published in the *Scottish Historical Review* in 1993, discusses republican activity in Scotland during the war of independence.

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[4] Adrian N. Mulligan, 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder: transatlantic Irish nationalism and the 1867 Rising' in *Social & Cultural Geography*, vi, no. 3 (2005), pp 439-54; idem, 'A forgotten 'Greater Ireland': the transatlantic development of Irish nationalism' in *Scottish Geographical Journal*, cxviii, no. 3 (2002), pp 219-34

[5] T. S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land' in idem, *The Waste Land and other poems* (London, 1940), p. 37

Another work of relevance is Keiko Inoue, 'The political activity of the Irish in Britain, 1919–1925' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2008).

Patterson has argued that the contribution of republicans in Scotland, and by implication that of their comrades in England and Wales too, to the IRA's campaign during the war of independence was 'slight'.[6] This author disagrees. The republican campaign was not spread evenly throughout Ireland. Some areas, such as west Munster and Dublin city, were significantly more active than other areas, such as the rest of Leinster. It is the argument of this thesis that the part played by republicans in Britain during the period 1919–23 was similar to that of their comrades in Leinster.[7] '... in a manner of speaking, our people in England are only the auxiliaries of our attacking forces,' wrote Michael Collins in June 1921.[8] In other words, republicans in Britain were adjuncts to the Volunteers in Ireland, 'auxiliaries' to the main 'attacking forces' in the campaign for Irish independence. It is the argument of this thesis that this was indeed the case. Through gunrunning and terrorist activity, republicans in Britain made a valuable contribution to the struggle for Irish freedom. The war of independence and civil war were ultimately won and lost in Ireland itself, but activities in Britain were of significance to their outcome.

As outlined in the summary, this thesis is mainly based on primary sources. I also made use of secondary literature on the IRA in Ireland. Comparing the republican movement in Britain with that in Ireland allows for the exploration of similarities and differences.

The chapters are organised thematically. Within each chapter, I have opted for a combination of the thematic and the chronological, so as to allow for a good mix of description and analysis. Such an organisation, however, gives rise to a certain amount of repetition, for which I beg the reader's forbearance.

The second chapter discusses how units of physical force republican organisations, mainly the IRA and IRB, were organised in Britain, examining how they were run, the type of people who became members and their reasons for joining. It also studies the wider republican movement, especially such organisations as the ISDL and Sinn Féin. The third chapter focuses on gunrunning, the acquisition and smuggling of munitions into Ireland. This was the most important activity of republicans in Britain. All aspects of the gunrunning

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[6] Iain D. Patterson, 'The activities of Irish republican physical force organisations in Scotland' in *Scottish Historical Review*, lxxii, no. 193 (1993), pp 39-59, at p. 46

[7] On the level of violence in Irish counties, 1917–23, see Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at war, 1916–1923* (Oxford, 2003), table 4, pp 66-7

[8] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 6 June 1921 (National Archives of Ireland [NAI], Dáil Éireann [DE] file 2/330)

process are examined including the types of munitions acquired, the means by which they were obtained, smuggled into Ireland and distributed to IRA units. The fourth chapter examines the campaign of terrorism perpetrated by Volunteers in Britain from November 1920 to July 1921. It discusses the character of the campaign and its effectiveness. The fifth chapter analyses the response of the British authorities – politicians, police, courts and prisons – to republicanism in Britain. Chapter six concludes.

2

'In the heart of the enemy lines': Organising Republicanism in Britain

I

Following the release of the Easter Rising veterans in late 1916 and early 1917, work began in earnest on the re-establishment of the republican movement in Ireland. In 1919, similar work began on the organisation in Britain, with the founding or re-founding of the Irish Volunteers. In November 1920, Rory O'Connor, the newly appointed officer commanding (O/C) Britain, told the men of the Liverpool IRA that they were 'in the heart of the enemy lines'.[1] The same could be said of the wider republican movement. This chapter examines the means by which the republicanism established itself in Britain and the fortunes it enjoyed there. Through the discussion of two brief episodes, section II provides an insight into the establishment and operation of the Volunteers in Britain. Section III describes the means by which IRA units were organised and the roles of the IRB, the Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Éireann. Sections IV to VI focus on the recruitment of Volunteers, the motivation of those who joined, and provide a social profile of those recruits. The subsequent sections then focus, successively, on the leadership of the various Volunteer units, training and discipline, along with the problem of unemployment which afflicted IRA units in 1921–22. Section X discusses the decline of the republican movement. Section XI concludes.

II

Sometime in late January 1919, Joseph Vize, newly appointed Irish Volunteer organiser in Scotland, wrote to Michael Collins from Glasgow. There, he had found two Volunteer companies riven with animosities. 'A' company, he reported, 'composed of a good number of undesirables and mixed citizen army & vol[unteer]s. trying to run the whole movement here',

[1] Quoted in Edward M. Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England* (Dublin, 1928), p. 26

constituted a dangerous impediment to the development of the Volunteer organisation in Scotland's biggest city. 'B' company, however, while somewhat disordered and frustrated by 'little differences between themselves', proved a much more exciting prospect. 'I am happy to report that I have reorganised B. [company],' he declared,

> by taking on myself the authority to issue a special mobilization order in the name of headquarters (Dublin [sic] and hope I have not done wrong in doing so,) and settled all little differences between them, had a meeting of about 60 members together, formed the company in sections, appointed N.C.O.s [i.e. Non-Commissioned Officers], and made same with Captains & Lieut[enant]s. into a committee for to carry on the company's work, the said committee are all of right type, so that B. Co[mpany]. is now on a solid footing …

With 'B' company members 'greatly pleased' with the re-organisation, Vize proposed to attempt reconciliation and amalgamation with its rival company. Failing that, he intended to call a meeting of all Glasgow Volunteers with the aim of re-organising the whole movement in the city, for 'there are quite a number of willing men here to help in that work and very anxious that something like it will take place at once'.[2]

The following month, however, with 'A' company still proving recalcitrant, Vize was forced to undertake a complete re-organisation of the Volunteers in Glasgow and its surrounding districts on the basis of a seven point 'system' drawn up by himself. The first, and most important, point stated that the 'Volunteer movement in Glasgow [is] to be controlled by Dublin Headquarters, who will issue <u>all orders</u> for the management of same'. The re-constitution of the movement according to the system was proceeding 'to the entire satisfaction of all here', wrote a pleased Vize.[3] 'A' company still proved an irritant, however. By early September 1919, Vize was contemplating suspending the whole company for not 'running straight'.[4] Specifically, he complained that Liam Gribbon, the company O/C, repeatedly ignored orders. Also, the company refused to give Vize access to its accounts. Vize was confident that suspension of the company would stop the rot in Glasgow, at the expense of losing only about twenty volunteers.[5]

Over three months later, however, Vize had yet to receive authorisation from Dublin to suspend Gribbon's company. The fact that the culprits were planning a fund-raising event, entitled 'A Night of Surprises', made Vize anxious that immediate action be taken for '<u>nobody will see a penny out of it</u>'. Vize, however, had already taken steps to frustrate

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[2] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but marked 'Recd 5.2.19' (University College Dublin Archives [UCDA], Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[3] 'Outlines of my new system', probably part of missing letter, Joe Vize to Michael Collins, c. Feb./Mar. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); original emphasis
[4] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 5 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[5] Ibid., 24 Oct. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

Gribbon's plans. As well as moving to deprive them of the usual venue for holding such events, he intended to enlist the services of a local priest and other Volunteer leaders to expose Gribbon as a 'fraud'. Anticipating a challenge to his authority, Vize beseeched Michael Collins to immediately send him his official appointment as 'organiser for Scotland', as well as an order for the disbandment of 'A' company. Lacking these two documents, he warned, the meeting would fail in its purpose, 'Gribbon will get hold of Edinburgh and we will be powerless to stop him'.[6] Taking the warning to heart, Collins duly sent authorisation for the suspension of 'A' company, on the grounds of failing to conform to the battalion requirements of the Volunteers' *General scheme of organisation*.[7] Vize fails to record whether 'A' company was actually suspended. In any event, the company's 'Night of Surprises' went ahead at the end of March, only to be disrupted by a party of Volunteers; Vize had previously told Collins that animosity towards Gribbon was running high amongst the rank and file of the other companies.[8] A week later, Vize tried to have Gribbon stripped of his job as distribution agent for an Irish newspaper in Scotland.[9]

On 20 July 1921, Art O'Brien, Dáil Éireann's representative in London and associate of the London IRA, wrote to Michael Collins about the situation in the capital. A significant number of Volunteers had lost their jobs. O'Brien had been alerted to the issue by a member of the ISDL, from whom an IRA officer had demanded £100 to help relieve the distress of the unemployed Volunteers. The ISDL man refused to hand over the money without O'Brien's permission. O'Brien discussed the matter with Reginald Dunne, O/C London IRA. Dunne refused to supply a clear statement on the issue, but O'Brien eventually ascertained that thirty-eight Volunteers had been out of work for some time and were consequently in need of assistance. Dunne thought that they should each receive £2 per week. With the IRA lacking the funds necessary to supply such assistance, Dunne felt that he was entitled to demand money from Irish organisations in London. O'Brien, however, disagreed, contending that as bodies such as the ISDL and the Irish National Aid and Central Distress Fund (INACDF) were subject to public audit, their donating large sums of money to the IRA could not be countenanced. Moreover, he stated that the ISDL did not have such funds in any case, while the INACRF was not established to cater for such needs. That, however, did not stop Dunne instructing his officers to approach treasurers of local ISDL branches for money. O'Brien said the treasurers were being threatened by the IRA men, while Dunne preferred to describe

[6] Ibid., 7 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); original emphasis
[7] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 14 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[8] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 15 Feb., 26 Mar. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[9] Ibid., n.d., but c. 7 Apr. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

them as 'demands'. In one case, an ISDL treasurer was so anxious to keep things above board that he entered his giving £10 to a Volunteer in his branch's balance sheet. 'Such childish acts are heading us for a fiasco', O'Brien declared, '... and at all costs its must be stopped.' He told Dunne that he should have brought the problem to the attention of IRA headquarters in Dublin. Dunne disagreed, insisting that the issue should be dealt with in London.[10]

The role to be played by the Cumann na mBan in any solution was also a subject of controversy. O'Brien maintained that the women's auxiliary should mount collections for funds, 'and if they cannot do this essential work, it is difficult to see what justifies their existence over here'. Yet, relations between the IRA and the Cumann na mBan in the capital had always been tense. This situation was compounded by the latter recently experiencing a split. The organisation's Dublin executive recognised one section as being the official body. Dunne, however, recognised the other section and insisted that the executive reverse its position. Describing the resultant situation as 'hopeless', O'Brien tried to impress upon the O/C London that he had no authority in the affairs of the women's auxiliary. Dunne insisted otherwise. Overall, O'Brien described Dunne as being stubborn and lacking perspective, and of having 'muddled notions'. 'He is, as you know, an excellent young fellow, and I have the greatest regard for him,' he told Michael Collins, 'unfortunately, he is young, and he has no experience, and is very sensitive, evidently, to guidance from anybody else.' O'Brien concluded by hoping that Collins would raise the matter with Dunne, the latter being scheduled to travel to Dublin in the coming days.[11]

Collins responded on 23 July. He agreed with all of O'Brien's arguments. It was bizarre that the issue of unemployed Volunteers should be ignored until they were on the verge of destitution, he wrote. Equally, it was 'outrageous' that IRA officers were 'coercing' money out of Irish societies. Moreover, Dunne's belief that he had the power to recognise Cumann na mBan branches was fanciful. The unemployment situation was 'serious', he noted, and he agreed with O'Brien's contention that the women's auxiliary should help raise funds to provide relief. Still, he wondered if any of the men were trade union members, and whether they were entitled to unemployment benefit. In any event, he promised to discuss the matter with Dunne. 'I am rather disappointed that any person could miss these few

[10] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 20 July 1921 (National Library of Ireland [NLI], Art Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8430/18)
[11] Ibid.

fundamentals,' he concluded, 'but I know we can easily put the thing right, so long as it is simply a misunderstanding.'[12]

O'Brien returned to the issue three days later. He feared that London would soon experience its own version of the 'Manchester business', a reference to the infiltration of the IRA in Manchester by a spy due to bad organisation. London's avoiding such a fiasco depended on IRA headquarters appointing 'someone of age and experience in general command here', he argued. Such a person, using tact and drawing upon experience, would have handled the unemployment situation better than Dunne. Diplomacy and skill would also be necessary to deal with the situation of the Cumann na mBan. The section recognised by the Dublin executive was 'estranged' from Dunne's IRA. 'I will only again insist upon the seriousness of the position if matters are not righted at once,' he concluded.[13]

III

Joe Vize, Art O'Brien and Reginald Dunne were just three, albeit prominent, people in the ranks of Irish republicanism in Britain in the period 1919–23. Between them, they straddled the republican movement. Vize and Dunne were military men, involved in organising and leading IRA units in Britain. O'Brien, meanwhile, was a major figure in the civilian side of the movement, seeking to publicise the Ireland's right to freedom by mobilising the Irish in Britain. The trio's day-to-day activities, however, often saw them mixing the military and the civilian, for both sides of the movement were intrinsically linked. Peter Hart states that it was the IRA's 'mobilization of deep communal and personal loyalties' that gave it its strength.[14] This was especially true of the republican movement in Britain, where individuals in the cities of London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and elsewhere gathered about themselves small groups of like-minded people.

In London, the major figures were O'Brien, Dunne, Sean McGrath and Sam Maguire. Born in London in 1872 to an Irish father who served in the British army and English mother, Arthur ('Art') O'Brien studied civil and electrical engineering. He then worked as an engineer in England, France and Spain. In 1898, he joined the London Gaelic League and served as its president between 1914 and 1935. He also joined the Irish Volunteers and the IRB. In the aftermath of the Easter Rising, he was involved in the establishment of the Irish National Aid Fund, a precursor to the INACRF, which catered for the rebels interned in

[12] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 23 July 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8430/18)
[13] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 26 July 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8430/18)
[14] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, p. 193

Britain and their relatives in Ireland. Around the same time, he became president of the Sinn Féin organisation in England and Wales. In late 1918, he agreed to a request from a delegation of recently elected Sinn Féin deputies, including Michael Collins, that he assume the full-time position of republican representative in Britain. His position was confirmed by Dáil Éireann, the rebel parliament, the following year. As London representative, O'Brien sought to publicise the Ireland's right to freedom by disseminating propaganda. In support of this, he helped found the ISDL in March 1919, serving as its vice-president. With American president Woodrow Wilson recommending national self-determination as the means of avoiding a recurrence of the world war which had wrought so much destruction over the previous four years, the ISDL hoped to secure the principle's application to Ireland.[15] Elizabeth MacGinley, then known as Lily Brennan, worked as O'Brien's secretary for a period in 1920–21. She remembered him as 'a very difficult person'.[16]

Reginald Dunne, the son of a former British Army bandmaster, was born in London in 1898. In 1916, he followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Irish Guards. Fighting in the Great War, he rose to the rank of corporal. However, after suffering a bad wound to his knee, he was discharged. He then began training as a school-teacher.[17]

Born in county Longford in 1882, Sean McGrath, an IRB man, joined the Irish Volunteers in London in 1914 and was involved in smuggling weapons to Ireland. He fought in the Easter Rising and was interned at Frongoch camp in Wales. During the war of independence, McGrath served as intelligence officer (I/O) of the London IRA and was heavily involved in gunrunning in the capital. When he assumed the position of general secretary of the ISDL, he gave up his job as a railway clerk. MacGinley described McGrath as 'a wonderful worker and organiser'.[18] Sam Maguire was born into a Protestant family in county Cork in 1877. He worked for many years in the central sorting office of the London postal service. A prominent figure in the London Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), captaining the city's teams in the All-Ireland football finals in 1901 and 1903, Maguire also joined the IRB. He later initiated Michael Collins, a fellow post office employee, into the

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[15] Ersz Manela, *The Wilsonian moment: self-determination and the international origins of anti-colonial nationalism* (New York, 2007)

[16] Keiko Inoue, 'O'Brien, Arthur Patrick Donovan' in *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge, 2009), accessed at http://dib.cambridge.org on 1 Dec. 2009; biographical sketch of Art O'Brien (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8461/31); Bureau of Military History Witness Statement [BMHWS] no. 860, Elizabeth MacGinley, p. 4 (NAI)

[17] Martin Wallace, 'Reginald Dunn and Joseph O'Sullivan' in *An tÓglach*, i, no. 7 (1963), p. 1

[18] Peter Beresford Ellis, 'Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain, 1919–1924', *Irish Democrat* online, accessed at http://www.irishdemocrat.co.uk/features/isdlgb-1919-24/ on 16 July 2010; Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, Ernie O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); Sean McGrath to Art O'Brien, 22 Mar. 1935 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8461/25); *The Times*, 29 Jan. 1919; BMHWS no. 860, Elizabeth MacGinley, p. 3 (NAI)

Fenian movement. During the war of independence, Maguire served as head of the London IRB. MacGinley remembered him as 'a wonderful man', an indefatigable worker in the cause of Irish freedom.[19]

In Liverpool, activities centred around the Kerr family: the father Neil Kerr Snr and his three sons Tom, Jack and Neil Jnr. The three siblings were veterans of the Easter Rising.[20]

In Manchester, the comparable figures were Paddy O'Donoghue, Liam McMahon, and Matthew Lawless.[21] Born in 1878, the Limerick man McMahon played on the Lancashire GAA team in the 1905 All-Ireland quarter-final against Kilkenny. It was while returning from the match in Dublin that he was sworn into the IRB. A member of Manchester's Gaelic League, in 1916 McMahon was appointed honorary secretary of the England and Wales branch of National Aid Fund. During the war of independence, he worked as I/O in the Manchester IRA.[22]

The Glasgow scene was dominated by Joe Vize, a Wexford man born in 1881. He joined the IRB at a young age and then worked as a merchant seaman. During the world war, his ship was torpedoed and sunk by a German u-boat.[23] Previous to Vize's arrival, Joseph Robinson was a major figure on Clydeside. However, his being sentenced to ten years imprisonment for gunrunning in early 1918 removed him from activities.[24]

These figures remained in charge of the republican movement in Britain until the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in December 1921. There were, however, some changes. Police arrests in the aftermath of the IRA's arson attack on Merseyside dock warehouses in November 1920 led to the internment and imprisonment of the Kerrs. The leadership was then assumed by Paddy Daly, an Offaly man who had immigrated to Liverpool in 1918.[25] Dennis Kelleher, a twenty-year old civil servant at the Board of Education, became more involved in matters in London when Sean McGrath was arrested in February 1921.[26] Glasgow also saw a change in leadership in July 1920, when Vize returned to Ireland to

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[19] Marie Coleman, 'Maguire, Sam' in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, accessed at http://dib.cambridge.org on 1 Dec. 2009; BMHWS no. 860, Elizabeth MacGinley, p. 2 (NAI)

[20] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 5, 14-15, 17, 25 (NAI)

[21] Ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 5-6; ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 3; ibid., no. 244, John McGallogly, pp 17-18 (NAI); Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)

[22] BMHWS no. 274, Liam McMahon, pp 1-3 (NAI)

[23] Máirtín Ó Catháin, 'Michael Collins and Scotland' in Frank Ferguson and James McConnel (eds), *Ireland and Scotland in the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2009), pp 160-75, at pp 162-3, 165; BMHWS no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 1; Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 3 Oct. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[24] *The Times*, 2 Feb. 1918; John Cooney, 'The Irish Republican Brotherhood in Scotland: the untold stories of Andrew Fagan and Michael O'Carroll' in T. M. Devine and J. F. McMillan (eds), *Celebrating Columba: Irish-Scottish connections 597–1997* (Edinburgh, 1999), pp 137-54, at pp 141-2

[25] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 1, 21-2 (NAI)

[26] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 1 Mar. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/328); Denis Kelleher to Art O'Brien, 18 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)

assume the new position of IRA director of munitions. He was replaced by Joseph Furlong, a fellow Wexford man who had joined the pre-war Irish Volunteers in London.[27] Furlong, in turn, was succeeded by D. P. Walsh during the truce.[28]

Just as in Ireland, the treaty of December 1921 precipitated a split in republican ranks in Britain. Those who chose the anti-treaty side included O'Brien, McGrath, Daly, and McMahon. Joining them was Joe Robinson, appointed O/C Scotland after spending four years in prison for gunrunning. Meanwhile, Maguire, Vize, Furlong, and Walsh took the pro-treaty side.

For republicans in Britain, the most important figure in the Dublin Volunteer leadership was Michael Collins. Born in county Cork in 1890, he worked in London from the age of fifteen to twenty-five, first in the post office savings bank, then in a stockbroker's, and finally a bank. It was while in the English capital that Collins became associated with advanced nationalist politics. He joined the IRB, the Irish Volunteers, Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the GAA. He met many of the people who would lead the republican movement in Britain in the period 1919–23, including Art O'Brien, Sam Maguire, Sean McGrath, and Neil Kerr Snr. In early 1916, Collins returned to Ireland. A few months later, he fought in the Easter Rising as an aide to Joseph Plunkett, one of the leaders of the rebellion. After being released from Frongoch internment camp at Christmas 1916, Collins set about helping to re-establish the republican movement in Ireland and rose rapidly through its ranks. Between the re-organisation of the Volunteers in 1917 and the truce of July 1921, he occupied a number of offices. On the military side, he was, at one time or another, director of the IRA's departments of organisation and intelligence, as well being adjutant-general. He was also treasurer and then president of the IRB. On the political side, he served on the executive of Sinn Féin, represented the constituency of South Cork in Dáil Éireann, and was minister for finance in the underground revolutionary government.[29] Collins did not confine his activities to these offices, however, for his zeal and energy lead him to involve himself in virtually every aspect of the republican movement that interested him. It was mainly in his capacity as a senior IRB member that Collins was involved in the activities of republicans in Britain.

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[27] BMHWS no. 335, Joseph Furlong, pp 1-3 (NAI)

[28] Ibid., no. 776, Joseph Booker, p. 5; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, pp 5-6; ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, pp 6-7 (NAI)

[29] Peter Hart, *Mick: the real Michael Collins* (London, 2005), pp 3, 23, 26, 61, 157, 172, 188, 203; Peter Hart, 'Collins, Michael (1890–1922)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn, Jan. 2008, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32506 on 15 July 2010; Sean McGrath to Art O'Brien, 22 Mar. 1935 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8461/25); Piaras Béaslaí, *Michael Collins and the making of a new Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1926), i, 217

As the war of independence progressed, other members of general headquarters (GHQ) staff became associated with republican activity in Britain. Roderick ('Rory') O'Connor was appointed O/C Britain in August 1920. Born in Dublin in 1883, he qualified as an engineer and spent four years working on the Canadian railways before returning to Ireland. A militant nationalist, his engineering expertise led to his being placed in charge of instructing Volunteers recently arrived from Britain in bomb-making prior to the Easter Rising. Imprisoned for his involvement in the rebellion, O'Connor later became involved in Sinn Féin. In March 1918, upon the establishment of Volunteer GHQ, he was appointed director of engineering.[30] In November 1920, with the arrest of Joe Vize, Liam Mellows became director of purchases (D/P). Mellows was born to Irish parents in Ashton-under-Lyme in Lancashire in 1892. His father was a soldier in the British army. Raised in Cork and Dublin, Mellows joined Na Fianna Éireann, the republican boy scouts, in 1911. He later became a full-time organiser for the movement. He also joined the IRB and the Irish Volunteers and led the Galway Volunteers during the 1916 Rising. Avoiding the subsequent police dragnet, Mellows escaped to New York. There, as well as being involved in gunrunning activity, he was associated with Eamon de Valera's American tour of 1919–20 which attempted to get support for Irish self-determination.[31] Both O'Connor and Mellows and their staffs visited Britain on a regular basis in 1920–21. Nevertheless, Collins remained an important figure for republicans in Britain throughout the struggle.

IV

Compared to the Irish Volunteers in Ireland, the re-organisation of the IRA in Britain in the years following the Easter Rising was somewhat delayed. Where re-organisation efforts in Ireland were well under way in 1918, across the Irish Sea such activities did not commence in earnest until the following year. Indeed, new IRA units were still being established in Britain in 1921.

Across Britain itself, there was variation in the timing and pace of re-organisation efforts. In Scotland, GHQ appointed Joe Vize to take charge in late 1918 or early 1919. In England and Wales, however, organisation seems to have been dependent on the initiative of people on the spot, people sometimes previously unconnected with violent Irish nationalism.

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[30] Lawrence William White, 'O'Connor, Roderick ('Rory')' in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, accessed at http://dib.cambridge.org on 1 Dec. 2009

[31] Marie Coleman and William Murphy, 'Mellows, William Joseph ('Liam')' in ibid., accessed at http://dib.cambridge.org on 1 Dec. 2009

As we saw earlier, two Volunteer companies already existed in Glasgow when Vize first visited the city in January 1919. These companies were remnants of the Volunteer organisation established in Ireland and Britain in 1913–14. In early 1913, angered by the British government's intention to grant a form of autonomy to Ireland in the form of establishing a home rule parliament in Dublin, the Ulster Unionists threatened rebellion and founded the Ulster Volunteer Force, a paramilitary organisation. In November that year, enraged by the Unionists' success in forcing the government to contemplate the partitioning of Ireland, nationalists in Dublin, led by Eoin MacNeill, the founder of the Gaelic League, responded by establishing a paramilitary army of their own, the Irish Volunteers. Its aim was to intimidate the government into honouring its pledge for all-Ireland home rule. The manhood of Ireland was enjoined to 'to enrol and arm themselves in order to secure and maintain the rights and liberties of the Irish people'.[32] Within a short period of time, thousands of Irishmen had enrolled in the organisation. In Britain, Glasgow seems to have been the first place to establish a Volunteer unit, in February 1914. '... Irishmen hae [have] now for the first time in over a hundred years the opportunity of arming and learning the use of arms ...,' wrote the Glasgow correspondent of the *Irish Volunteer* newspaper.[33] The 1st Glasgow and west of Scotland regiment of the Volunteers incorporated the districts of Stirlingshire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and, of course, Glasgow.[34] By the end of September 1914, Paisley boasted an organisation, as did such English cities and towns as London, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, St. Helens, Bolton, Wigan, and Tyneside, along with Cardiff, Glamorgan, the Rhondda district, and Swansea Valley in Wales.[35]

The Irish Volunteers, however, was not the first manifestation of violent Irish nationalism in Britain. The presence of Irish nationalists in Britain prepared to use violence to achieve Irish freedom usually only revealed itself at times when their fellow nationalists in Ireland were willing to do likewise. The history of physical force republicanism in Britain, therefore, is intimately linked with the Irish rebellions of 1798, 1803, 1848 and 1867.

The 1798 rebellion was the work of the United Irishmen, the first expression of modern Irish republicanism. Inspired by the French Revolution, the Society of the United Irishmen was founded with the aim of reforming the Irish political system. The government, however, alarmed at events in France, viewed the organisation as revolutionary and violently obstructed its attempts at peaceful reform. In 1798, the United Irishmen, boasting members in

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[32] The O'Rahilly, *The secret history of the Irish Volunteers* (Dublin, 3rd edn, 1915), pp 3-6
[33] *Irish Volunteer*, 7 Mar. 1914
[34] Ibid., 28 Mar., 1 Aug. 1914
[35] Ibid., 4, 18 Apr., 9, 16, 30 May, 6, 20, 27 June, 4, 11, 25 July, 8, 15, 22 Aug., 12 Sept. 1914

London, Manchester, and Birmingham, and the United Britons, its British comrades, resolved to aid a French invasion of the British Isles. However, their plans were disrupted by the arrest of prominent members in Britain. The rebellion went ahead in Ireland that same year. However, poorly armed, lacking effective communications, and riven with dissension, the United Irishmen proved little opposition for the British army.[36]

The United Britons re-organised the following year. In concert with remnants of the United Irishmen, they drew up plans once again for the outbreak of rebellions in Britain and Ireland upon the landing of a French invasion force. The plan, however, was thrown into confusion in July 1803 by the precipitate outbreak of rebellion in Dublin. A pathetic affair, the rebellion, headed by Robert Emmet, was crushed before the United Britons and the French had the opportunity of aiding it.[37]

Violent Irish nationalism next appeared in Britain in 1848, the year in which the Young Ireland movement launched what transpired to be another feeble rebellion. Frustrated with nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell's absolute renunciation of the use of violence to overturn the Act of Union of 1801, which had abolished the parliament in Dublin and incorporated Ireland into the United Kingdom, the Young Irelanders established the Irish Confederation. Branches of the organisation were founded in British cities, including London, Liverpool, and Manchester. There, Confederation branches entered into a wary alliance with the Chartist movement, a mass organisation dedicated to achieving constitutional reform in Britain. The British authorities viewed the alliance with alarm, fearing the spread of revolution to the United Kingdom. Their fear was justified for, as well as engaging in public agitation, many Confederates clubs were secretly arming themselves. Fearing a Chartist-Confederate rebellion in Lancashire, between April and August 1848 the authorities made a number of arrests and seized quantities of munitions, including pikes, swords, pistols, and guns. The remaining Confederates in England resolved to aid the imminent rebellion in Ireland. By threatening disorder, they hoped to prevent the despatch of troops across the Irish Sea. However, when the rebellion was launched in late July, the Confederates in England had neither the organisation nor the arms necessary to mount

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[36] Marianne Elliott, 'Irish republicanism in England: the first phase, 1797–9' in Thomas Bartlett and D. W. Hayton (eds), *Penal era and golden age: essays in Irish history 1690–1800* (Belfast, 1979), pp 204-21; E. W. McFarland, *Ireland and Scotland in the age of revolution: planting the green bough* (Edinburgh, 1994); Nancy J. Curtain, *The United Irishmen: popular politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791–1798* (Oxford, 1994), pp 254-89

[37] Marianne Elliott, 'The "Despard Conspiracy" reconsidered' in *Past & Present*, no. 75 (1977), pp 46-71

diversions. In any event, troops from Britain were not required to ensure the rebellion's suppression.[38]

The next year of rebellion in Ireland was 1867. The revolt was launched by the IRB. Akin to secret societies on the European continent, such as Blanqui's Society of the Seasons and Mazzini's Young Italy, the IRB (or 'Fenians') hoped to foment a rebellion by the Irish masses to overthrow British rule. The actual rebellion itself was effectively stillborn due to the IRB's lack of munitions and training, poor planning, bad leadership, and ineffective communications.[39] What was significant about 1867 for our purposes was the activities of the Fenians in Britain. Ó Catháin asserts that 'the Fenian movement was essentially an overseas movement'.[40] By 1860, the IRB organisation had established itself in a number of British cities, its membership in Scotland five years later being around eight thousand. One Fenian leader credited the *Irish People*, the newspaper which the organisation founded in 1863, with having planted the Fenian seed amongst the Irish in Britain.[41] The Fenians in England played a significant role in planning the 1867 rebellion. In January that year, frustrated with the delay in fixing a date for a rising, they decided to establish a directory to plan an immediate rebellion. The directory planned for simultaneous uprisings to take place in Ireland, London, and Liverpool on 11 February. This plan, however, was quickly shelved. Instead, the Fenians in England decided to seize arms from Chester Castle, a military fortress on the England-Wales border. The plan called for the arms to be transported, via commandeered train and steamboat, to Ireland, where their landing would signal the beginning of the rebellion.[42] On 11 February, over a thousand Fenians from various towns in England converged on Chester. However, the authorities, having been warned of the Fenians' plan by an informer, reinforced the town's garrison. Taking fright, the Fenians abandoned the proposed raid and fled the town. Many were arrested as they attempted to travel to Ireland.[43] Nevertheless, before the year was out Britain experienced two episodes of Fenian violence. On 18 September, an attempt to rescue two Irish-American Fenians from a prison van in Manchester resulted in the

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[38] W. J. Lowe, 'The Chartists and the Irish Confederates: Lancashire, 1848' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiv, no. 94 (1984), pp 172-96

[39] Peter Hart, 'The Fenians and the international revolutionary tradition' in Fearghal McGarry and James McDonnel (eds), *The Black Hand of republicanism: Fenianism in modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 190-204, at pp 194-5; Shin-inchi Takagami, 'The Fenian rising in Dublin, March 1867' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxix, no. 115 (1995), pp 340-62

[40] Máirtín Seán Ó Catháin, *Irish republicanism in Scotland 1858–1916: Fenians in exile* (Dublin, 2007), p. 247

[41] Martha Ramón, *A provisional dictator: James Stephens and the Fenian movement* (Dublin, 2007), pp 62-75, 151-9, 174; Ó Catháin, *Irish republicanism in Scotland*, pp 31, 47

[42] Ramón, *A provisional dictator*, p. 226; Takagami, 'The Fenian rising in Dublin, March 1867', pp 340-41; Leon Ó Broin, *Fenian fever: an Anglo-American dilemma* (London, 1971), pp 143-73

[43] Ramón, *A provisional dictator*, p. 227; Ó Broin, *Fenian fever*, pp 127-8

death of a policeman. In December, another rescue attempt of an Irish-American Fenian, this time from a prison in London, caused the deaths of twelve civilians and injured hundreds more.[44]

The last manifestation of violent Irish nationalism in Britain prior to the founding of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 occurred in the 1880s. For a period of seven years, beginning in 1881, and again in 1890, rival groups of Irish-American Fenians, some of whom had been born in Ireland and Britain, conducted a bombing campaign in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, some using gunpowder in their devices, others the newly invented dynamite. The aim, in the words of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, one of the leaders, was to inflict so much damage in Britain as to convince the government that 'she [i.e. England] will lose more than she can gain by holding Ireland'.[45] The episode represented 'diaspora' nationalism in action.[46] In the event however, while the attacks did cause panic and alarm amongst the public, the security establishment and the government, the 'dymanitards' failed to effect a change in the government's Irish policy.[47]

In October 1914, the Irish Volunteer movement split. The previous month, in response to the outbreak of the Great War, John Redmond, leader of the IPP, had called on Irishmen to 'account themselves as men not only in Ireland itself but wherever the firing line extends ...'.[48] The IPP, perceiving the Volunteers as a threat to its hegemonic control of Irish nationalist politics, had gained control of the organisation's provisional committee in June 1914. Now, however, MacNeill and some other founding members of the organisation rejected Redmond's call on Volunteers to serve in the British army. The IPP leader responded by establishing a rival National Volunteers. The ranks of the Irish Volunteers emptied as its members swelled the new organisation.[49] By October 1915, Patrick Pearse, the Irish Volunteer' director of organisation, was reduced to finding solace in the continued existence of the Volunteers in London and Liverpool, implying that the organisation had virtually ceased to exist elsewhere in Britain.[50] However, even in these two places, the Volunteers

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[44] Ó Broin, *Fenian fever*, pp 192-209; Elaine W. McFarland, 'A reality and yet impalpable: the Fenian panic in mid-Victorian Scotland' in *Scottish Historical Review*, lxxvii, no. 2 (1998), pp 199-223

[44] Ó Broin, *Fenian fever*, pp 210-26

[45] Quoted in Lindsay Clutterbuck, 'The progenitors of terrorism: Russian revolutionaries or extreme Irish republicans?' in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, xvi, no. 1 (2004), pp 154-81, at p. 164

[46] Mulligan, ''A forgotten 'Greater Ireland''', pp 219-34

[47] K. R. M. Short, *The dynamite war: Irish-American bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, 1979); Ó Catháin, *Irish republicanism in Scotland*, pp 126-39, 155-6, 180

[48] *Irish Times*, 21 Sept. 1914

[49] O'Rahilly, *The secret history of the Irish Volunteers*, pp 8-9, 17

[50] *Irish Volunteer*, 16 Oct. 1915 (New Series)

experienced a significant decline in membership, some following Redmond's advice to join the British army, others simply losing interest in the cause.[51]

Sometime in early 1916, the leaders of the remaining Volunteer companies in Britain received notice to bring their men to Ireland. The fact that Volunteers in Britain were liable to be conscripted into the British army also proved a motivation in their relocation to Dublin. Frank Thornton, O/C 'B' company, Liverpool Volunteers, claims that about 127 men from Merseyside moved to Dublin and took up residence at the Kimmage estate of George Plunkett. Joe Good remembered that Volunteers from London, Manchester and Glasgow, the majority born in Britain, arrived soon afterwards to join the 'Kimmage Garrison'. However, the Liverpool men constituted the majority of the garrison.[52] It has been estimated that between forty and fifty Volunteers and Fenians from Scotland participated in the Easter Rising in late April 1916, while the number for London has been put at around thirty. The London Volunteers suffered six fatalities and at least one severe injury, while their Scottish comrades suffered one fatality.[53]

Scottish involvement in the rebellion may have been greater but for the actions of John Mulholland, Scottish representative on the IRB supreme council. In the autumn of 1914, Mulholland had opposed plans for a rebellion during the Great War. Despite the supreme council approving the plan, he remained opposed and kept the Scottish IRB in ignorance of the preparations. Sometime in April 1916, a meeting of Motherwell and Wishaw IRB circles took place, with Mulholland in attendance. One account of the meeting states that Mulholland failed to provide definite details about the timing of the rebellion, resulting in no one from the three circles taking part in the Rising. Another account argues that Mulholland arrived so late to the meeting, held on 22 April, that the news that the rebellion was scheduled to begin the following day left the attendees with insufficient time to travel to Ireland.[54] Whichever account is nearer the truth, the upshot of Mulholland's behaviour was that a significant number of Scottish IRB men failed to participate in the Rising. The Scottish Volunteers who did participate in the rebellion seem to have come from Glasgow. Yet, even here, a measure

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[51] BMHWS no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 3; ibid., no. 510, Frank Thornton, p. 3 (NAI); Ernie Nunan, 'The Irish Volunteers in London' in *An tÓglach*, i, no. 12 (1966), p. 4; John T. ('Blimey') O'Connor, 'Some have come from a land beyond the sea' in *An tÓglach*, i, no. 12 (1966), pp 4-6; Joe Good, *Enchanted by dreams: journal of a revolutionary* (Dingle, 1996), p. 10

[52] BMHWS no. 510, Frank Thornton, p. 3 (NAI); Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 15-17

[53] Art Ó Bríain, 'Gaedhil thar sáile: some notes on the history of the Gaelic League of London' in *Capuchin Annual* (1944), pp 116-26, at p. 126; Nunan, 'The Irish Volunteers in London', p. 4; Máirtín Seán Ó Catháin, 'A land beyond the sea: Irish and Scottish republicans in Dublin, 1916' in Ruan O'Donnell (ed), *The impact of the 1916 Rising: among the nations* (Dublin, 2008), pp 37-48, at pp 38, 45-6

[54] BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, pp 1-2; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 1 (NAI); Ó Catháin, 'A land beyond the sea', pp 38-9

of confusion was evident. With the Rising expected to take place throughout Ireland, preparations were made for the Scots to be posted to Belfast. Glasgow IRB man Daniel Branniff was despatched to the city and charged with ensuring that the Volunteers were sent to Tyrone to join up with their Belfast comrades. The Scots, however, opted to travel to Dublin instead. Failing to link-up with their Scottish comrades and hearing of Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order, the Belfast Volunteers retreated.[55] The fiasco of Scotland's involvement in the 1916 Rising was a recurrent source of controversy during the war of independence and civil war. While the Volunteer organisation in other parts of Britain vanished in the aftermath of the Easter rebellion, those in Glasgow re-grouped and re-organised. However, the controversy divided them into two rival groups. One, led by Joseph Robinson, was composed mainly of those who had fought in the Rising. Those who had failed to mobilise provided the membership of the other group. The rival companies that Joe Vize discovered in Glasgow in early 1919 were these two groups, though by then under new leaders, Alex Carmichael and Liam Gribbon respectively, Robinson being in prison for gunrunning.[56]

When Vize began reorganising the Volunteers in Scotland in 1919, the aims of the Irish Volunteers, essentially the same as those set out at the organisation's first convention in 1914, were:

1. To secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland.
2. To train, discipline and equip for this purpose an Irish Volunteer Force.
3. To unite, in the service of Ireland, Irishmen of every creed and of every party and class.[57]

Its organisational structure was also similar. The *General scheme of organisation* declared that the 'tactical unit' of the organisation was the 'company'. The company was to consist of four sections, each with a membership of between nineteen and twenty-five. The total membership of each company, therefore, would number between seventy-six and one hundred. Command was vested in the O/C or captain. He was to be assisted by a 1st and 2nd lieutenant, an adjutant and a quartermaster. The next unit in the organisational hierarchy was the 'battalion', composed of between four and seven companies. Battalion officers included the commandant, vice-commandant, adjutant, and quartermaster. Three or more battalions

[55] BMHWS no. 222, Daniel Branniff, pp 3-7 (NAI)
[56] Ibid., no. 244, John McGallogly, p. 17 (NAI)
[57] Irish Volunteers, *General Scheme of Organisation* (Military Archives of Ireland [MAI], Michael Collins Papers, A/0032A, group 2, item 2)

constituted a 'brigade', which had its own commandant, vice-commandant, adjutant, and quartermaster.[58]

As well as using the *General Scheme of organisation* as a guide, Vize, as we saw earlier, drew up his own seven-point 'system' to aid his efforts. According to this system, control of the Volunteers in Scotland lay exclusively in the hands of GHQ in Dublin. New companies were to be established through Sinn Féin clubs. Dublin was to arrange a 'Programme of work' for each company. Moreover, twice or three times a year, every company was to be inspected by a member of GHQ staff.[59]

However, a central feature of Vize's approach to organisation work was missing from both the *General Scheme* and his own seven-point system, namely his reliance on the IRB. As he moved about Scotland, from Motherwell to Mid-Lanark, Glasgow to Edinburgh, Vize organised new Volunteer companies around local IRB circles and swore the new officers into the organisation. In Motherwell, for example, membership of the new company, initially numbering forty, was confined to the IRB. Subsequently, non-IRB men were permitted to join. Throughout, however, the company officers were always members of 'the Organisation'.[60] The failure of the IRB rebellion in 1867 had prompted the Fenians to change their strategy from one focused on fomenting mass insurrection to one where it sought to secretly infiltrate other organisations and use them for its own purposes.[61] From its foundation in 1913, the Irish Volunteers was infiltrated by the IRB.[62] Arthur Agnew remembered that when a Volunteer company was formed in Bootle, IRB officers instructed their men to join it in order to secure the key positions. Indeed, most of the Merseyside Volunteers were Fenians, he claimed. Joseph Furlong, a member of the London Volunteers, described the Fenians as the 'Back Bone [sic]' of the organisation in the capital.[63] Many Irish nationalists admired the Fenians for their indefatigable commitment to Irish freedom. While politics in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland was dominated by the IPP's peaceful attempt to secure 'home rule' or limited autonomy for the Irish within the British Empire, the IRB, though small in number, remained committed to the use of physical force to achieve complete freedom. For Michael O'Leary, a Kerry-born member of the Liverpool

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[58] Ibid.
[59] 'Outlines of my new system', probably part of missing letter Joe Vize to Michael Collins, c. Feb./Mar. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); original emphasis
[60] BMHWS no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 2 (NAI)
[61] Hart, 'The Fenians and the international revolutionary tradition', pp 194-5
[62] Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth century Ireland* (Manchester, 2009), pp 109-16, 121-7
[63] BMHWS no. 152, Arthur Agnew, pp 1-2; ibid., no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 3 (NAI)

Volunteers during the war of independence, the establishment of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 'not only fanned the dying embers of the Fenian fires' in Ireland and, by extension, amongst the Irish in Britain, but also 'resurrected the dormant spirit of freedom in the hearts' of Irishmen.[64] The split in the Volunteers in 1914 resulted in the IRB strengthening its control of the rump MacNeillite group in Ireland and Britain. The Fenians then manipulated the Volunteers into launching a rebellion in April 1916.

As part of its re-organisation efforts in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, the IRB adopted a new constitution. This constitution, with minor changes in 1920, served the organisation throughout the war of independence and civil war, until its dissolution in 1924. The aim of the IRB was 'to establish and maintain a free and independent Republican Government in Ireland'.[65] The means of achieving this was by 'force of arms', violence being wielded by the IRB itself in conjunction with other Irish military organisations, namely the Irish Volunteers. Membership of the organisation was open to every Irishman 'irrespective of class or creed, whose character for patriotism, truth, valour, sobriety and obedience to superior officers can bear scrutiny'.[66]

The basic unit of the IRB was the 'circle', led by a centre, a sub-centre, and a treasurer. The circle was divided into sections of up to ten members each and headed by a section leader. The overall governing institution of the IRB was the supreme council, a body which the constitution declared to be 'in fact, as well as by right, the sole Government of the Irish Republic'. Its enactments, therefore, were to be recognised as the laws of the Irish Republic until a republican government had been established after Ireland had secured its freedom from Britain. (In 1920, the IRB recognised Dáil Éireann as the government of the Irish Republic.) Membership of the supreme council was to consist of fifteen people, including three divisional centres from Britain, representing the south of England, north of England, and Scotland. Until the IRB's recognition of the Dáil in 1920, the president of the supreme council was 'in fact as well as by right, President of the Irish Republic'.[67]

No authoritative membership figures exist for the IRB in Ireland or Britain during the revolutionary period. A total membership of two thousand has been suggested for the organisation in 1916, and a similar figure has been suggested for the war of independence.

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[64] Ibid., no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 3-4 (NAI)
[65] IRB, *Constitution as revised to date 1920* (NLI, Florence O'Donoghue Papers, Ms 31,233), p. 1
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., pp 2-3, 6, addenda

James Byrne estimated that the Fenians in Scotland's Mid-Lanark area numbered around six hundred in 1919.[68]

Vize discovered that it was not always possible to ensure IRB control of newly founded Volunteer units. Sending Michael Collins the names and addresses of officers in four of Glasgow's five companies, he commented that most were 'of the right kind', that is to say reliable members of the IRB. However, the fact that non-IRB members held such important positions showed the limits of his power to fashion the Volunteers to his liking and the importance of local politics. Their holding office 'for the present … cannot be avoided', he wrote, but '... steps will be taken when an opportunity presents itself to remedy this'.[69] Another obstacle to Vize's plans was the unexpected opposition the Volunteers encountered from the local Sinn Féin clubs. His 'system' had simply stated that new Volunteer companies would be established through such clubs. Now, however, Vize condemned them as 'a rotten lot', 'good only for singing and dancing', and asked Collins to intervene immediately to rectify the situation.[70] A more co-operative spirit soon manifested itself. In 1922, when Joseph Robinson was re-organising the IRA in Scotland in opposition to the treaty, he also made use of Sinn Féin clubs.[71]

In England, the re-organisation of the Volunteers seems to have been a more informal affair. Accounts vary as to the details regarding the re-formation of the Volunteers on Merseyside. All, however, indicate that the re-organisation efforts, in 1917 or 1918, were initiated by the people on the ground, including Hugh Early, Tom Kerr, and Michael O'Leary. Tom Craven, O/C of one of the Liverpool companies before the Easter Rising, became commander once again.[72] Following his involvement in the escape of de Valera and others from Lincoln prison in February 1919, Paddy O'Donoghue, president of the Sinn Féin club on Richardson St., decided to establish the Volunteers in Manchester city.[73] The following year saw William O'Keeffe and a few fellow Connaught natives establish a

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[68] John O'Beirne-Ranelagh, 'The Irish Republican Brotherhood in the revolutionary period, 1879–1923' in D. G. Boyce (ed), *The revolution in Ireland, 1879–1923* (London, 1987), pp 137-56, at p. 144; Joseph M. Curran, 'The decline and fall of the IRB' in *Éire-Ireland*, x, no. 1 (1975), pp 14-23, at p. 16; BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, p. 2 (NAI)

[69] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 28 May 1919; 'Outlines of my new system', probably part of missing letter Joe Vize to Michael Collins, c. Feb./Mar. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[70] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 28 May, 6 June 1919; 'Outlines of my new system', probably part of missing letter from Joe Vize to Michael Collins, c. Feb./Mar. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[71] Joseph Robinson to Eamon Donnelly, 5 May 1922 (NAI, Cumann na Pobloachta and Sinn Féin Papers, 1094/14/2)

[72] BMHWS no. 1535, Hugh Early, pp 1, 6, 9-10; ibid., no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 18-22 (NAI)

[73] Ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 1-6 (NAI); see pp 197-201 below

company in nearby Salford. They subsequently made contact with O'Donoghue's company.[74] Staying in 1920, frustration with the English public's indifference to events in Ireland led Gilbert Barrington and Richard Purcell to begin organising Volunteer companies. Only in November 1920, after making cautious inquiries about how to link up with IRA units in other parts of Britain, did the Tyneside men come into contact with Volunteer officialdom, in the form of Manchester's Liam MacMahon and O/C Britain Rory O'Connor.[75] Nineteen-twenty also saw the establishment of the IRA in Birmingham by a number of Irishmen, formerly members of the Volunteers in Ireland, who were working on a housing scheme in West Bromwich. As with their Tyneside comrades, it was late 1920 before they made contact with GHQ. Prior to this, however, they did affiliate themselves with the Liverpool IRA.[76] The establishment of the Volunteers in the Sheffield area also seems to have been done on local initiative and without any reference to Dublin.[77] The IRA in Nottingham consisted of seven men who met up but had little knowledge about how 'to go about work'.[78] GHQ did have an input in the re-formation of the Volunteers in London in late 1919. Around September that year, Sean McGrath complained about the existence of 'a great many wild young chaps' in the capital's IRA. In order to bring them under discipline, he asked Michael Collins for permission to appoint a committee to take charge of the Volunteers for a six-month period. Collins responded by recommending the appointment of an O/C and two lieutenants, as recommended by the *General Scheme of organisation*. In March the following year, GHQ was informed that the London Volunteers were 'very anxious' to affiliate with Dublin.[79]

In contrast to Vize's organisation work in Scotland, neither IRB circles nor Sinn Féin clubs seem to have played a central role in the establishment of the Volunteers in England. True, Paddy O'Donoghue, one of the founders of the Manchester IRA, was president of a Sinn Féin club. However, he does not specify the club or its members taking a leading part in Volunteer affairs in the city.[80] Newcastle's Gilbert Barrington states that he and five others were sworn into the IRB by Mick McEvoy, a member of the O/C Britain's staff. This, however, seems to have taken place after the Tyneside men had already established the Volunteers in their area. Previous to this, while the Fenian organisation did exist in the

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[74] BMHWS no. 1678, William O'Keeffe, p. 7 (NAI)
[75] Ibid., no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, pp 1-2 (NAI)
[76] Ibid., no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 1, 5, 15 (NAI)
[77] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[78] Ibid.
[79] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, c. Sept./Oct. 1919 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0457, group VIII, item 1); Michael Collins to Sean McGrath, 9 Oct. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429/11); Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 27 Mar. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/321)
[80] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue (NAI)

district, it was 'virtually dead'.[81] The main exception to this informality seems to have been Liverpool. There, according to Michael O'Leary, IRB control of the newly established Volunteers was ensured from the beginning. He claims that the IRB moved to control the council of Irish societies, a body which co-ordinated the activities of Liverpool's various Irish organisations, such as the GAA, the Gaelic League, and the Irish National Foresters (INF). The societies were invited to affiliate with the council and appoint representatives thereon. Fenians within each society ensured that only fellow IRB men were appointed as representatives. 'In this way,' O'Leary boasts, 'we were able to solidly unite all Irish organisations and speak as one body.'[82]

The apotheosis of this informal Volunteer organising in England was found in the operation of companies unaffiliated with GHQ. Affiliation was mainly about money. It involved the payment of an annual affiliation fee to Dublin, as well as an annual levy of two shillings per Volunteer.[83] Unaffiliated units, therefore, did not pay such fees to GHQ. In July 1920, Neil Kerr complained that a new Volunteer unit had been established on Merseyside. The O/C, a man named Pevoy, claimed to have received authorisation from Dublin, but Kerr had his doubts. '[T]his man is under suspicion and very much at present,' he warned Michael Collins, asking him to make enquiries on the matter.[84] That same year, a company was formed in the Irish Club, Erskine St., Hulme, with Charles Harding as O/C. They operated 'more or less "on their own" and were not working in harmony with the main [Manchester IRA] Company [under Paddy O'Donoghue]', Collins was informed.[85] Specifically, they engaged in unauthorised gunrunning to Dublin and Drogheda and refused to share with O'Donoghue any details regarding the arrangements.[86] Collins' response was tart: 'If they [i.e. the Erskine St. company] don[']t want to act as organised disciplined Volunteers they are of course at liberty to do what they like, and if they do want to act as disciplined Volunteers, they must obey orders and get themselves into line with the requirements of the organisation.'[87] Members of the Erskine St. company were later tried and sentenced for mounting an arson attack on Manchester city centre in April 1921.

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[81] Mary A. Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside 1919–1921* (Dublin, 1999), p. 9
[82] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 18-23 (NAI)
[83] Michael Collins to Tom Craven, 6 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[56]); Michael Collins to Sean McGrath, 9 Oct. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain, Ms 8429/11)
[84] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. 6 July 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/2)
[85] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[86] Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, 11 Nov., 3 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[87] Michael Collins to Paddy O'Donoghue, 26 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)

As well as working with the IRB, the IRA also received assistance from the Cumann na mBan. The organisation was founded in 1914 as a women's auxiliary to the Volunteers. Led by Countess Markievicz, Cumann na mBan members took part in the 1916 Rising. In 1918, the organisation was described in its own constitution as being a body of 'independent Irishwomen' who pledged themselves to work for the Irish Republic side by side with those who were fighting for it. In pursuit of its aim to 'secure international recognition of the Irish Republic', and the evacuation of Ireland by the British 'Army of Occupation', the Cumann na mBan aimed to develop 'military activities in conjunction with the IRA'.[88] The organisation's prescribed activities included the administration of first aid, nursing of wounded soldiers, intelligence work, carrying of despatches, hiding munitions, the mounting of prison rescues, the commandeering of supplies, and the dissemination of propaganda.[89] Units of Cumann na mBan were to be organised into areas corresponding with those of IRA battalions. The basic unit of the organisation was the branch or squad. Each IRA company was to have a branch or squad attached to it. Each branch was to be headed by a captain, a secretary and a treasurer.[90]

Information on the Cumann na mBan organisation in Britain is sparse. At least one squad existed in Liverpool in October 1915, when the city's Volunteers called a meeting of Irish nationalist organisations in order to resist efforts to enrol Irishmen in the British army.[91] The following year, a squad still existed there, the MacNeillite Volunteers commending the women for their 'good fighting spirit'.[92] As Joe Vize travelled around Scotland organising the Irish Volunteers in 1919–20, he also established branches of the women's auxiliary.[93] The membership in Scotland during the war of independence has been estimated at 130.[94] Membership figures for the organisation in other parts of Britain are not known. However, by October 1920, there were twenty-one branches in England and Scotland affiliated with headquarters in Dublin.[95] During the subsequent twelve months, headquarters received £201 in subscription fees from branches in Britain. £89 of this came from eleven branches in Scotland; Manchester paid £70; Liverpool and St. Helens £22; and London £20. By way of comparison, £478 was paid by branches in Ireland, of which £69 10*s* came from Connaught

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[88] Constitution of Cumann na mBan, n.d., but c. 1918 (UCDA, Sighle Humphreys Papers, P106/1126[1-2]); Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable revolutionaries: women and Irish nationalism* (London, 1995 edn), pp 92-123

[89] Constitution of Cumann na mBan (UCDA, Humphreys Papers, P106/1126[1-2])

[90] Cumann na mBan, *Scheme of Organisation*, n.d., but c. 1918 (UCDA, Humphreys Papers, P106/1126[3-4])

[91] *Irish Volunteer*, 3 Oct. 1914

[92] Ibid., 17 July, 16 Oct. 1915 (New Series)

[93] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 15 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[94] Calculations of company memberships, Scottish IRA, n.d., but c. 1940s/1950s (Eamonn Mooney Papers, file EMP/3/C/13; papers in possession of Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk)

[95] British Army pamphlet, *The Irish Republican Army (from captured documents only)* (1921) (The National Archives, London [TNA], War Office [WO] file 141/40), p. 11

and £26 10*s* from Ulster.[96] A list of branches which paid affiliation fees between November 1920 and October 1921 indicates that there were at least six branches of the organisation in London. In Manchester, there were four branches, each associated with one of the four companies of the Manchester city IRA. There seemed to be two branches in the Liverpool area, one in Birkenhead and the other in St. Helens. Tyneside boasted three branches, one each in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Jarrow, and Chester-le-Street. Scotland possessed sixteen branches, seven of which were in Glasgow.[97] Six delegates from Britain attended the organisation's annual convention in October 1921, during the truce. 'Don't think it is going to be peace,' Markievicz told the convention. 'Go out and work as if the war was going to break out [again] next week.'[98] Sorcha McDermott remembered that the main activity of the Cumann na mBan in London during the war of independence was sending garments to victims of Crown violence in Ireland. Individually, some members also smuggled weapons and money to Ireland. In the capital, the organisation went under the title of 'The Irish Ladies Distress Committee', as the membership was fearful that they would be refused halls for social events if they used their Irish title. Such subterfuge caused dissension and led to the split in the London organisation referred to earlier.[99] During the civil war, branches of the organisation continued to exist in Liverpool, London and Glasgow.[100]

Finally, there was Na Fianna Éireann. A republican boy scouts movement, the organisation was founded by the IRB in 1909 in the face of Baden-Powell's British organisation.[101] Unfortunately, little information exists on the Fianna in Britain. In the autumn of 1914, there were two or three 'troops' in Glasgow, with a combined membership of 150.[102] During the war of independence and civil war, the organisation in Britain seems to have remained confined to Glasgow. Its membership there was later estimated at thirty-nine.[103]

As in the period before the Easter Rising, the motive behind all this organisation work – Volunteer, IRB, Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna – in Scotland and England during 1919–

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[96] Subscription to GHQ Organisation Funds, probably for 1920–21, n.d. (UCDA, Humphries Papers, P106/1130[11-12])
[97] 'List of those who have paid affiliation fees', Nov. 1920–Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Humphries Papers, P106/1132[1-16])
[98] Report of Cumann na mBan Annual Convention, 22–23 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Humphries Papers, P106/1131[1-25])
[99] BMHWS no. 945, Sorcha Mic Diarmada, pp 5-6 (NAI); see p. 10 above
[100] Evidence of Mary Finan before Home Office Advisory Committee, May 1923 (TNA, Home Office [HO] file 144/2866); BMHWS no. 945, Sorcha Mic Diarmada, p. 7 (NAI); O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 17 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746); O/C Britain to C/S, 29 Sept. 1923 (UCDA, Moss Twomey Papers, P69/37[190-94])
[101] Hay, *Bulmer Hobson*, pp 78-9
[102] *The Irish Volunteer*, 12 Sept., 17 Oct. 1914
[103] Calculations of company memberships, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

20 was the desire to acquire munitions and smuggle them to Ireland. The idea of founding the Volunteers so as to mount terrorist attacks in Britain seems not to have occurred to the organisers. Vize told the officers of the 2nd Scottish battalion IRA that gunrunning was their main task, and he presumably told other Volunteer units the same.[104] A desire to help supply the IRA in Ireland with materiel also informed the establishment of Volunteer companies upon local initiative in Manchester, Tyneside and Birmingham.[105]

However, some Volunteers in Britain during the war of independence entertained the idea of travelling to Ireland to fight with the IRA there, just as some had done in 1916. In 1920, Liverpool's John Pinkman, impatient with the lack of activity on Merseyside, was tempted to join to the IRA in Dublin. However, fearful of his mother's reaction to him quitting his apprenticeship, he dismissed the idea.[106] It was apparently intended that the IRA in Scotland join their comrades across the Irish Sea for, in March 1920, a meeting of the organisation in Glasgow allegedly resolved that IRA units should travel to Ireland 'as originally arranged', once orders had been received from Dublin. An informant told the police that the Volunteers preferred service in Ireland to that in Scotland.[107] In 1921, Liverpool's Edward Brady asked the O/C Britain, Rory O'Connor, for permission to transfer to Ireland. There, he believed, his skills would be put to better use. Moreover, the war in Ireland was much more exciting than that in England. O'Connor, however, refused the request. Brady possessed the skills necessary to successfully operate in Britain, he noted, and such skills were invaluable to the organisation for 'no matter how efficient a gunman might be in Ireland, he was hopelessly at sea when it came to carry out operations in England'. Reluctantly, Brady accepted O'Connor's decision.[108] During the civil war, a large number of Volunteers in Britain did travel to Ireland to partake in the fighting. At least twenty members of the Scottish brigade fought for the IRA in Dublin during the opening battle of the civil war, while 250 of their former comrades had joined the nascent Irish army by the following August.[109] Both Glasgow and Liverpool boasted of having IRA 'expeditionary forces' fighting in Ireland.[110] Such divisions in the ranks of the Volunteers in Britain were

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[104] BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, p. 1 (NAI)
[105] Ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 1-6; ibid., no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, pp 1-2; ibid., no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 1, 5, 15 (NAI)
[106] John Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, ed. Francis E. Maguire (Cork, 1998), p. 25
[107] 'Report on revolutionary organisations in the United Kingdom' [RROUK], no. 48, 30 Mar. 1920 (TNA, Cabinet [CAB] file 24/103)
[108] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 56-7
[109] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746); S. Fullerton to Minister for Defence, 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/06181)
[110] *Poblacht na hÉireann* (Scottish edition), 16, 23 Dec. 1922

symbolised by the death of Irish army soldier Sean Adair at the hands of Frank Carty's IRA column in Sligo. Adair was among the Glasgow Volunteers who had attempted to rescue Carty from a prison van in the city during the war of independence.[111]

The IRA organisation in Britain seems to have peaked sometime in the autumn of 1921. When Rory O'Connor was appointed O/C Britain in August 1920, the Volunteers boasted eight companies in three areas: Liverpool, London, and Manchester. By September the following year, that number had increased to thirty-one and the organisation had spread to other areas of Britain. Liverpool, designated no. 1 area, hosted two companies, one in the city itself, the other in St. Helens. The combined membership was one hundred. Manchester, no. 2 area, had a paper membership of thirty-five. No. 3 area, Tyneside, boasted twelve companies based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and its environs, along with Middlesbrough, Durham, and Hull. Individual company memberships ranged between seven in Ashlington and sixty-one in Jarrow. The total Tyneside membership was 335. London, no. 4 area, had four companies, based on compass points: south-west and west, south-east, north and north-west, and east. Membership ranged between sixteen in the south-west and west company and forty-six in the south-east company. The area had a total membership of 106. No. 5 area was Birmingham, where two companies, one in the city itself and the second in Coventry, had a combined membership of forty-two. Sheffield, no. 6 area, had eight companies located in the city and its environs, along with Doncaster. Each company, however, had a rather small membership, ranging between three each in the Mexborough and Rotherham companies and seventeen in the Barnsley company. The area's total membership was fifty-nine. A company had also been formed in Rugby, boasting a membership of five. The combined membership of the six areas and Rugby was 682. Organisational work was continuing in Swansea, Leeds, Wolverhampton and Wallsend.[112]

IRA membership in Scotland at this time was significantly higher. John Carney claimed that when he became brigade commandant in the autumn of 1920, the organisation consisted of just three battalions, totalling twenty-one companies, with an average strength of thirty men in each. His organising efforts over the course of the following year saw the number of companies in the 1st battalion increase from seven to ten. The 2nd and 3rd battalions saw increases, from six to fourteen and eight to sixteen companies respectively. He had also established a 4th battalion, consisting of eight companies, while the 1st company of the 5th battalion had just been organised. The average strength of each company now stood at

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[111] Cooney, 'The Irish Republican Brotherhood in Scotland', p. 152; see pp 201-02 below
[112] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-65])

fifty. Carney boasted that the total strength of the Scottish brigade was four thousand.[113] More realistically, another member of the Scottish brigade estimated membership to have been around two thousand at the time of the truce in July 1921.[114]

For detailed information on the various companies in the Scottish brigade and their areas of operation, we are dependent on the imperfect and incomplete recollections of those involved. According to these recollections, compiled in the decades following the end of the Irish revolution by Eamonn Mooney, an officer in the Scottish IRA, the brigade contained four battalions. The majority of the nine companies in the 1st battalion, established in 1914 and re-established in the period 1916–19, was based in Glasgow city and its suburbs. Two of the companies, however, were based outside the city: one in Uddingston and Mossend, the other in the area encompassing Dumbarton, Renton, Alexandria, Cardross and Kirkintilloch. The battalion's total membership was estimated at around seven hundred.[115] The 2nd battalion, established in 1918–19 and numbering eight companies with a total membership of about 775, was based in Lanarkshire, incorporating such towns and villages as Hamilton, Motherwell, Coatbridge, Bothwell, Calderbank, Bellshill and Mossend.[116] The 3rd battalion seems to have been founded in 1919. Composed of five companies and an estimated 130 men, it was spread across Edinburgh city, West Lothian, Mid- and West-Calder and Sterlingshire.[117] The 4th battalion contained at least four companies, but details have survived of only two. The first, 'B' company, with an estimated membership of two hundred, was seemingly established in 1920 and was based in Greenock and its districts of Gourock and Port-Glasgow. Dundee hosted the second, 'D' company, of which thirty-one members are listed.[118] Finally, a company existed in Fife, encompassing such towns and villages as Buckhaven, Methilhill, Lochgelly, Cowdenbeath, and Lochore. It also took in Kinrosshire. This company, with its small membership, does not seem to have been allocated to any

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[113] John Carney to C/S, 22 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Sean O'Mahoney Papers, Ms 24,474); it should be noted that Carney's membership figures do not seem to add up. He claimed to have expanded the Scottish brigade to forty-nine companies. If their average membership was fifty each, as he claims, then the total membership would be 2,450, and not his figure of 4,000. He may have omitted officers from his average company membership, but it is unlikely that there 1,550 officers, enough to bring the total brigade membership up to his figure of four thousand.

[114] S. Fullerton to Minister for Defence, 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/06181)

[115] Membership of 1st battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[116] Membership of 2nd battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[117] Membership of 3rd battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[118] Membership of 4th battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

particular battalion in the Scottish brigade.[119] According to this source, the total membership of the Scottish brigade IRA in July 1921 was between 1,600 and 1,900.[120]

The total membership of the IRA in Britain in the autumn of 1921, therefore, was somewhere between 2,200 and 2,700.

During the civil war, it was claimed that the membership of the Scottish brigade, loyal to the Provisional Government in Dublin, remained at two thousand.[121] Information regarding the republican or anti-treaty IRA in Scotland is sparse. In early January 1923, Patrick Murray, O/C Britain, reported that many of the Glasgow companies were very undermanned.[122] Later that month, Liam Lynch, IRA chief of staff (C/S), wrote that the Glasgow brigade had a membership of 140. Of this, however, only forty were deemed reliable. Lanarkshire boasted seventy men, while Sterlingshire had fifty. These three parts of Scotland were 'fairly well organised', he commented, due largely to enthusiastic efforts over the previous few weeks.[123]

The strength of pro-treaty Volunteers in England has not been recorded, though that of the anti-treaty IRA has. In January 1923, with the civil war in its seventh month, Lynch placed the strength of the Volunteers in England at a minimum of 289. In London, membership numbered only twenty. Still, the Volunteers there were 'well organised', largely due to it being the headquarters of the O/C Britain, Patrick Murray. In the north of England, Newcastle-upon-Tyne had twenty-nine Volunteers, Bedlington forty, and Barrow twenty-five. Chester-le-Street, Middlesbrough, Consett, Thornley, and Wallsend all had 'small numbers' of IRA men. Commenting on the north-east as a whole, Lynch was content that 'a fairly good Organisation' existed there, one which was improving week on week. Liverpool had twenty-five men and St. Helens fifteen. He judged these members 'fairly reliable'. Listing Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Cardiff, Bristol, Newport, and Plymouth, Lynch stated that 'very few' Volunteers were enrolled in any of these places. Still, organisational work had begun, albeit only recently in some, and he was confident that membership could be built up, perhaps to levels that were enjoyed during the war of independence. Finally, fifteen 'good men' constituted the Swansea Volunteers.[124]

The total membership of the IRA in Britain during the civil war, therefore, split, as in Ireland, due to the treaty, seems to have been around 2,500.

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[119] Membership of Buckhaven company, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)
[120] Calculations of company memberships, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)
[121] S. Fullerton to Minister for Defence, 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/06181)
[122] C/S to O/C Britain, 30 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[123] C/S to President de Valera and ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, Eamon de Valera Papers, P150/1749)
[124] Ibid.

Why, during the war of independence, was the membership of the IRA in Scotland over two-and-a-half times greater than that in England? A number of factors may have contributed to the disparity. Anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sectarianism may have been more pronounced in Scotland than in England, thus motivating Irish-born and Scottish-born second generation Irish to join the Volunteers.[125] Class conflict may have been another factor. James Connolly, the Irish trade union leader and Marxist theorist, was born in an Edinburgh slum. Following his execution in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, Connolly acquired great status amongst the politically-active Irish in Scotland. As Joe Vize discovered when he set about organising the Volunteers in Glasgow in 1919, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), founded by Connolly in 1913 to protect striking workers from the violent attentions of the Dublin police and later led by him into the 1916 rebellion, seems to have retained a presence in Scotland even while it was disappearing in Ireland.[126] George O'Brien, an organiser for Cumann na Poblachta, a republican party founded by Eamon de Valera in 1922 in opposition to the treaty, believed that the Irish in Glasgow were of a more pugilistic character than those in Liverpool. 'The Irish here in Liverpool have never (to my mind & knowledge) been Rebels,' he told de Valera. 'Having been closely in touch in Glasgow [illegible] I was surprised to find such waverers here.'[127]

The same factors may explain the difference in IRA membership in Scotland and England during the civil war. In the absence of first-hand testimony, we can only speculate that experience of anti-Irish sectarianism may have motivated the overwhelming majority of the Scottish brigade to support the treaty and thereby the establishment of an Irish state enjoying some measure of autonomy, even if it was short of that of an independent republic. However, given his opposition to British imperialism, it is unlikely that fidelity to the memory of Connolly motivated an acceptance of the treaty amongst the Scottish Volunteers. Rather, a more important factor was probably that of personality. Given their close relationship with Michael Collins, *the* major proponent of the treaty, Joe Vize and his gunrunning successors in Scotland may have used their personal influence to bring the brigade round to supporting the Provisional Government.

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[125] Stewart J. Brown, "Outside the Covenant': the Scottish Presbyterian churches and Irish immigration, 1922–1938' in *Innes Review*, xlii, no. 1 (1991), pp 19-45; Richard J. Finlay, 'Nationalism, race, religion and the Irish question in inter-war Scotland' in *Innes Review*, xlii, no. 1 (1991), pp 46-67

[126] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but marked 'Recd 5.2.19' (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); Brian Hanley, 'The Irish Citizen Army after 1916' in *Saothar*, xxviii (2003), pp 37-47

[127] George O'Brien to Eamon de Valera, 11 May 1922 (NAI, Cumann na Poblachta and Sinn Féin Papers, 1094/5/13)

IV

As we saw earlier, Joe Vize sought to organise Volunteer companies in Scotland around Sinn Féin clubs. By the end of 1921, there were sixty-five Sinn Féin cumainn or branches in Scotland affiliated with Dublin. Membership subscriptions for the year amounted to £4,045. England and Wales boasted only eight branches, with subscriptions of £4,711.[128] Here, however, the main nationalist political organisation was not Sinn Féin but the ISDL. This organisation was part of a general attempt by Dáil Éireann to harness the Irish outside of Ireland in support of Irish freedom. Following his escape from Lincoln Jail in February 1919, Eamon de Valera made arrangements to travel to the United States in order to get American support for Irish self-determination. However, before he departed from Liverpool disguised as a sailor, de Valera 'planned the aims and the constitution' of the ISDL.[129] The following month, the organisation was formally inaugurated in Manchester. The aims of the league were:

> To gather together the Irish residents in Great Britain, in order that they shall as a body support their compatriots in Ireland, and use every means in their power to secure the application of the principle of self-determination for Ireland, and in the meantime to render all and every assistance to Irish political prisoners in Ireland or Great Britain.[130]

Believing that it was 'the duty of the exiled Irish everywhere to aid their kindred at home' in securing international recognition of Ireland's right to self-determination, the founders of the ISDL believed that the league provided 'a common platform for all Irish Residents in Great Britain, who admit that Ireland is a nation, and [who] endorse her demand that she shall be so recognised by all other nations'. Membership of the organisation was confined to those of Irish birth or descent. The ISDL president was P. J. Kelly from county Tyrone, an Irish nationalist councillor in Liverpool. Art O'Brien became vice-president and Sean McGrath was later appointed general secretary.[131]

Due, perhaps, to the proliferation of Sinn Féin branches in Scotland, the Irish there proved unresponsive to the new organisation. Owing to the nature of the source available, ISDL membership and organisation in England and Wales is difficult to ascertain precisely.

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[128] Report of Hon. Secretary, Sinn Féin Ard Comhairle, 12 Jan. 1922 (NAI, DE 2/486)
[129] Eamon de Valera, 'GENERAL NOTE', n.d. (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)
[130] ISDL, *Constitution and rules* (1921), p. 3 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8438/13)
[131] Poster, 'IRISH SELF-DETERMINATION LEAGUE OF GREAT BRITAIN', dated, in handwriting, 5 June 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Mss 8427/42); ISDL, *Constitution and rules* (1921), p. 3 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8438/13); Sam Davies, ''A stormy political career': P. J. Kelly and Irish nationalist and labour politics in Liverpool, 1891–1936' in *Transactions of the historic society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, cxlviii, (1999), pp 147-89

The highest recorded membership figure, 38,726, relates to March 1921. The actual number of branches in which these members were organised was not recorded, but it was probably in excess of two hundred and fifty. The highest number of branches, 294, was recorded in November 1921, but the overall membership at that time was not noted.[132] At its height in late 1921, the league organ, the *Irish Exile*, enjoyed a monthly circulation of fifteen thousand.[133] The ISDL's most striking activity consisted of mass meetings and demonstrations, sometimes addressed by TDs from Ireland. In February 1920, for example, an overflow audience of over ten thousand people attended an ISDL meeting in the Albert Hall, London, to hear speeches by Arthur Griffith and Eoin MacNeill.[134] The organisation's more workaday activities included attending to the needs of Irish men in British prisons, along with collecting money for various Irish causes such as the Dáil loan and the Volunteer Defence Fund.

Máirtín Ó Catháin contends that the support which the Irish in Scotland gave to Sinn Féin during the 1919–23 period demonstrates 'the depth of [their] rootedness to Ireland'. Unlike the IPP and other political organisations, Sinn Féin did not seek to redress the difficulties, socio-economic and otherwise, being experienced by the Irish in Scotland. Rather, it was focused exclusively on affairs in Ireland.[135] The same could be said of those who supported the ISDL.

The IRA in Britain developed a close relationship with the ISDL and Sinn Féin. Thomas MacDonnell, a senior member of Scottish Sinn Féin, remembered that the organisation's branches allowed for the recruitment of men to the IRA and IRB.[136] Meanwhile, Gilbert Barrington, secretary of the ISDL's Tyneside district council and an IRA organiser in the area, recalled that

> As a general rule, the prime movers in the formation of a branch of [the] I.S.D.L. were also prominent in the recruitment of Volunteers. Not a great deal of pressure was necessary to encourage the formation of new branches; on the contrary, it was usual for the initiative to be taken locally. Similarly, it was not long after a branch of the I.S.D.L. was formed until endeavours would be made by some of the members to get in touch with responsible officers of the I.R.A. with a view to the establishment of a Company in the district … In this way, the

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[132] Keiko Inoue, 'Political activity of the Irish in Britain, 1919–1925' (Ph.D thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2008), p. 131

[133] Art O'Brien to Seamus MacManus, 31 May 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Mss 8429/36)

[134] *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Feb. 1920

[135] Máirtín Ó Catháin, 'A winnowing spirit: Sinn Féin in Scotland, 1905–38' in Martin J. Mitchell (ed), *New perspectives on the Irish in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2008), pp 114-26, at pp 122-3

[136] Thomas McDonnell's statement to the Military Services Pensions Board, 4 July 1939 (Mooney Papers, EMP/2/A/9)

> personnel in contact with each I.S.D.L. branch was, in general, the same as controlled the activities of the I.R.A. in the area.[137]

Hence, branches of the ISDL and Sinn Féin functioned as recruiting pools for the IRA. In 1920, Edward Roche, 'very active' in the London ISDL, was introduced to two men who asked him if he would 'link up' with the IRA. Roche agreed, and in a house on Baker St. he was sworn into the Volunteers. He was then assigned the task of raising an IRA unit in south-west London, in the Richmond, Kew, and Hounslow areas.[138] Edward Brady, an Ulsterman living in Liverpool, similarly got involved in the IRA through constitutional politics. After attending a public meeting in 1919 agitating for the release of Irish political prisoners, Brady met with an acquaintance and was prevailed upon to join Sinn Féin. 'His arguments seemed so to impress the mind of one politically ignorant of the significance of the state of affairs,' Brady later remembered, 'or of the logical outcome of the movement with which he was obsessed, that at his request, I gave him permission to nominate me as a member of his club.' In addition to Sinn Féin, Brady became involved in other groups advocating the Irish cause, including the ISDL. Through involvement in such activities as fundraising for the Dáil loan and disseminating propaganda, Brady became aware of the existence of the Volunteers, drilling and arming themselves with the aim of starting hostilities in Britain. Invigorated by the exciting atmosphere and the righteousness of the cause, he joined the Birkenhead company IRA.[139] During the civil war, the IRA in England remained in contact with the anti-treaty ISDL, while north of the border republicans established Poblachta na h-Eireann in Albain, or the Irish Republican Organisation in Scotland, to replace the rapidly disintegrating Sinn Féin clubs.[140]

British cities also boasted branches of the GAA and the Gaelic League, manifestations of cultural nationalism, the desire to preserve and celebrate Ireland's distinctive culture. By 1921, there were at least seven GAA clubs in London, and an unknown number existed in the rest of Britain.[141] The London Gaelic League, founded in 1898, was dedicated to the 'preservation, teaching, and extension of Irish as a spoken language', as well as to 'the cause

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[137] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, pp 9-10; see also ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 3 (NAI)
[138] Edward L. Roche to ?Military Pensions Board, 4 Aug. 1937 (UCDA, Ernie O'Malley Papers, P17a/154)
[139] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 16-23
[140] *Poblacht na hÉireann* (Scottish edition), 7 Oct., 16 Dec 1922; *Éire: the Irish Nation*, 27 Jan., 3, 24 Feb., 14 Apr. 1923
[141] 'A CALL FROM IRELAND', n.d., but 1918–21 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8436/5); attendance at GAA Annual Congresses, 1921–23 (GAA Archives [GAAA], Central Council Minute Book, 1911–1925, GAA/CC/01/02[537, 572, 639]); *Report and balance sheet 1924* (GAAA, Annual Reports, Balance Sheets and Motions for Congress, 1911–28), p. 60

of an Irish-Ireland'. In the period 1919–22, the organisation's paid-up membership varied between 466 and 1,100.[142]

As well as having overlapping memberships, therefore, the ISDL, Sinn Féin, Poblachta na h-Éireann in Albain, the GAA, and the Gaelic League constituted the milieu within which the IRA, the IRB, the Cumann na mBan, and Na Fianna Éireann existed. Often, there was little distinction between the organisations. Seamus Reader remembered that the Fenians, the Volunteers and the Sinn Féin organisation were 'very much mixed up' in Glasgow; Art O'Brien wrote likewise about London.[143] Events such as dances enabled Volunteers to socialise with supporters and sympathisers. While such supporters may not have been members of the ranks of violent republicanism, they did lend some service. Some allowed their addresses to be used in the clandestine postal system which enabled Michael Collins and other GHQ leaders in Dublin to communicate with Volunteer and IRB leaders in Britain. Some sheltered fugitive IRA men from Ireland or escapees from British prisons. Others allowed their houses to be used as arms dumps. As Michael Collins noted, 'people who were not prepared to go out and fight' nevertheless had 'some uses' and 'might be of great value to the actual fighters themselves'.[144] Indeed, the first mobilisation of the London IRA, in April 1920, was for the purpose of protecting Irish men and women from the violent attentions of an English crowd which took exception to their demonstration in support of hunger-striking IRA men in Wormwood Scrubs prison.[145] 'The last thing we expected was an Irish demonstration outside the prison in the heart of the enemy's country', one hunger-striker later told reporters,

> and it was a tremendous encouragement to us in our fight to know that our people in London were sympathising with us. It was simply splendid, and put great heart into the boys.[146]

Later that year, Volunteers acted as stewards at the large public meetings addressed by Daniel Mannix, the Irish republican archbishop of Melbourne.[147] Participation in such activities of the wider republican movement inculcated a sense of camaraderie and reinforced republicans' belief in the righteousness of their cause. Michael O'Leary stated that rallies in

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[142] Ó Bríain, 'Gaedhil thar sáile', p. 117; Gaelic League of London, *Constitution* (1919), p. 1; *Annual Report of the Gaelic League of London, 1921* (1921), p. 14; *Annual Report of the Gaelic League of London, 1922* (1922), pp 15, 19 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8433/32, 8436/5)
[143] BMHWS no. 933, Seamus Reader, p. 7 (NAI); 'IRB', n.d., but c. 1930s (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/22)
[144] Michael Collins to Art O' Brien, 13 June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330)
[145] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Apr.; *Irish Times*, 29, 30 Apr.; *The Times*, 29 Apr. 1920; 'London Battalion IRA' (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/51)
[146] *Freeman's Journal*, 10 May 1920
[147] BMHWS no. 696, Henry O'Hagan, p. 6; ibid, no. 797, Micheál Ó Laoghaire, pp 33-5 (NAI)

Liverpool 'helped to swell the Sinn Féin membership and afterwards to bring self-determination into operation'.[148]

Relations between Volunteers and the wider republican movement were not always smooth. As we saw earlier, Reginald Dunne, O/C London, had a somewhat fraught relationship with the Cumann na mBan and the ISDL. In October 1921, during the truce, he compounded the problem. Fearful that attendance at Gaelic League classes would bring unwelcome attention to the Volunteers, he prohibited London IRA men from attending. 'The war is not over; and I shall not cancel this order until peace is declared,' he wrote. When Art O'Brien expressed surprise at Dunne's having unilaterally issued an order so open to misinterpretation, Dunne accused O'Brien's informants of spitefulness and of attempting to sow discord between the two men. He assured O'Brien that he was not hostile to the Gaelic League itself, though he was contemptuous of many of its London members.[149]

In February 1923, *Éire*, a republican newspaper, criticized the London GAA for failing to support the republican cause during the ongoing civil war. In the past, the organisation had associated itself with every cause which sought to achieve Irish freedom, it was noted. 'If the London GAA cannot supply recruits for the Irish Republican Army it certainly can and should supply funds to maintain the Republic,' the newspaper declared. It would not suffice for young Irishmen in the capital to continue playing football and hurling while the Republic was in a life-or-death struggle with the 'Imperial Slave Staters': 'Irish games not wedded to Irish Nationality are of no more service to the Irish Republic than the playing of ping-pong ...'.[150] The London Gaelic League was also criticised for its aloofness from the republican cause. O'Brien noted that the treaty split and subsequent civil war gave rise to 'disruptive elements' in the organisation.[151] The Catholic Church was condemned for its hostility too.[152]

Security was often a concern when accepting new recruits into the Volunteers. John Pinkman, a Merseyside IRA man, states that admittance to the ranks of the city's Volunteers was dependent on a standing member vouching for the new recruit's integrity. Such a procedure was adopted to prevent the organisation being infiltrated by Irishmen working as British spies. If, despite his surmounting this obstacle, a doubt still remained about the advisability of admitting a new recruit, especially one from Ireland, subterfuge would be

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[148] Ibid, no. 797, Micheál Ó Laoghaire, p. 25 (NAI)
[149] Art O'Brien to Reginald Dunne, 15, 24 Oct.; Reginald Dunne to Art O'Brien, n.d., but c. 16–24 Oct. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/16)
[150] *Éire: the Irish Nation*, 24 Feb. 1923
[151] Ibid., 7 July 1923; Ó Bríain, 'Gaedhil thar sáile', pp 122-3
[152] *Poblacht na hÉireann* (Scottish edition), 2 Sept. 1922

employed to verify his bona fides. The recruit would be told that his joining the city's Volunteers was contingent upon his becoming a member of the INF's health benefit scheme. Once he had filled out the scheme's application form, his details were secretly noted down by INF secretary Nan Feeley. She would then forward the details to IRA GHQ in Dublin, which, in turn, would make enquiries regarding the recruit from the I/O in his home area.[153]

Some procedures, if not specifically these ones, seem to have been adopted by IRA companies in other parts of Britain. Nevertheless, two incidents of spying by Volunteers did occur in Britain. The most serious concerned the Erskine St. company of the Manchester Volunteers. Following an IRA arson attack upon the city centre in April 1921, police raided the company's headquarters, the Irish Club in Hulme. One man was shot dead and a number of others were arrested. When they were subsequently put on trial on charges of treason felony, one of their number, Charles Murphy, turned king's evidence. Sixteen of the defendants were found guilty and imprisoned for up to ten years each.[154] Edward Brady later stated that Murphy was a spy, and was admitted to the Manchester Volunteers after failing to gain entry to the Liverpool IRA. Murphy, he wrote, 'apparently acted as an *agent provocateur*' in encouraging the mounting of the arson attack in the city centre.[155] Michael Collins thought it 'a positive disgrace' that the Manchester IRA took Murphy into its confidence so quickly. Murphy was 'not one bit more guilty [for the prosecutions] than the men who were responsible for such a thing [i.e. admitting him to the organisation so hastily],' he continued. '... We must certainly fix the responsibility for accepting him as a member and detailing him for work.'[156]

The second incident ended with an execution on Ashford golf course in Middlesex on 3 April 1921, the day after the arson attack took place in Manchester. Three wounds were found on the body. On a piece of paper found nearby was written: 'Let spies and traitors beware – IRA'. At the inquest, the victim was identified as Vincent Fouvargue, a twenty year-old clerk book-keeper. Under the name Richard Stanton, Fourvargue had attended ISDL dances at Kelvedon Hall, Fulham. He had been at one such dance on the night of his death. The jury, some of whom had received threatening letters, reached a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown.[157]

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[153] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 21-2
[154] *The Times*, 4 Apr.; *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Apr., 15, 17 July 1921
[155] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 11-12
[156] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 23 May 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330)
[157] *The Times*, 4, 5, 7, 21 Apr. 1921

Fouvargue had been the assistant I/O of the 3rd or 4th battalion Dublin IRA. Captured by the British, he seems to have divulged information relating to his fellow Volunteers, perhaps after being tortured. The British then staged an ambush so as to let Fouvargue escape from their custody and re-join the IRA, where he would continue to spy for them. He subsequently moved to London and attempted to ingratiate himself with the Volunteers there. Brady states that his activities led to the arrest of a police sergeant secretly working for the IRA. It was then that Fouvargue's former comrades in the Dublin Volunteers became suspicious of him and alerted the IRA in London.[158]

Volunteer recruitment took place on a continuous basis. In August 1920, the IRA boasted just eight companies in England, spread across Liverpool, London, and Manchester. By September the following year, it had expanded to thirty-one companies, encompassing Tyneside, Birmingham and Sheffield, along with the three original areas. When Rory O'Connor visited Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the autumn of 1921, he found that the Tyneside battalion adjutant was away organising more companies.[159] Recruitment to the Scottish Volunteers ceased in 1921. Accounts disagree as to the precise date, with one claiming 11 July, the date the truce came into operation, and the other 7 December, the day after the signing of the treaty.[160]

V

Before a new recruit was admitted to the Volunteers, he was usually required to swear the following oath:

> I, the undersigned, desire to be enrolled for service in Ireland as a member of the Irish Volunteer Force. I subscribe to the Constitution of the Irish Volunteers, and pledge my willing obedience to my superior officers. I declare that in joining the Irish Volunteer Force I set before myself the stated objects of the Irish Volunteers, and no others.[161]

The oath of the anti-treaty IRA during the civil war called on members to swear that they would 'support and defend the Irish Republic against all enemies foreign and domestic [and] that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same'.[162]

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[158] Ernie O'Malley, *On another man's wound* (Dublin, 2002 [1936]), p. 317; Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 12-13; BMHWS no. 380, David Neligan, p. 4; ibid., no. 615, Frank Thornton, p. 42 (NAI)
[159] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[160] S. Fullerton to Minister for Defence, 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/06181); John Carney to C/S, 7 Dec. 1921 (NLI, O'Mahoney Papers, Ms 24,474)
[161] Irish Volunteers, *General Scheme of Organisation* (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0032A, group 2, item 2)
[162] Draft Constitution and Rules of the IRA, Apr. 1922, captured by Free State forces in Cork, 8 May 1923 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/93[13-15])

What motivated people to join the Volunteers and swear these oaths? Membership of the IRA was, after all, fraught with danger. Most of the British populace seems to have followed the prime minister, David Lloyd George, in viewing the IRA in Ireland as a 'murder gang', 'assassins' terrorizing the country.[163] For the Volunteers in Britain, 'the heart of enemy lines', the danger could only be worse. On a less demanding level, membership of the Volunteers also entailed spending hours at drill practice and the payment of a weekly membership fee.[164] Why, then, were people willing to devote time, money and energy to the Volunteers, as well as, *in extremis*, putting their lives at risk?

Unfortunately, of the two thousand and more people who joined the Volunteers in Britain, only a small minority have left accounts of their activities. Of this minority, only a few have left accounts containing the detail necessary for a competent discussion of the factors motivating their involvement with the Volunteers. Therefore, the following discussion relies on the testimony of twenty people who served in the Volunteers in Britain.[165] Seven of these were born or grew up in Britain, while the remainder were born in Ireland or America. Before we examine these accounts, however, it is necessary to briefly discuss the history of the Irish in Britain.

In 1841, four years before the potato blight struck Ireland, the Irish-born population of Britain was estimated be just under 416,000.[166] Over the following decade, a further 310,000 Irish settled in Britain, the overwhelming majority as a result of the Famine.[167] This, however, did not represent the peak of Irish emigration to Britain. In the decades after the Famine, Ireland lost almost half her population, mainly due to emigration. Britain and the United States of America were the destinations chosen by the majority of emigrants. As a result, by 1861, the Irish-born population of Britain numbered 805,717. Thereafter, except for a slight increase in the 1870s, it began to decline until it numbered just under 524,000 in

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[163] *The Times*, 11 Oct. 1920

[164] Michael Collins to Tom Craven, 6 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[56]); Michael Collins to Sean McGrath, 9 Oct. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Mss 8429/11)

[165] Bureau of Military History Contemporaneous Documents [BMHCD] no. 141/4, Thomas Craven (MAI); Good, *Enchanted by dreams*; Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*; Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*; interview with Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk, Eamonn Mooney's daughter, 6 Aug. 2009; BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington; ibid., no. 776, Joseph Booker; ibid., no. 828, James Byrne; ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly; ibid., no. 1535, Hugh Early; ibid., no. 684, George Fitzgerald; ibid., no. 335, Joseph Furlong; ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills; ibid., no. 1584, Patrick Murray; ibid., no. 696, Henry O'Hagan; ibid., no. 1678, William O'Keeffe; ibid., no. 797, Michael O'Leary; ibid., no. 510, Frank Thornton; ibid., no. 369, William Whelan (NAI)

[166] Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people", pp 627, 658

[167] Ibid., p. 658

1921.[168] For economic reasons, the Irish tended to settle mainly in urban areas, particularly the cities of northern England and Scotland. In 1841, the Irish constituted between 11.5 and 17.3 per cent the populations of Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow; eighty years later, the percentages were between 2.3 and 6.3.[169] London also boasted a significant Irish population.[170] All these figures, taken from census returns, refer only to those Irish in Britain who had been born in Ireland; their children born in Britain were not recorded as Irish. It is difficult, therefore, to estimate with any great certainty the size of the whole Irish population in Britain, encompassing those born in Ireland and their British-born descendants. One historian has tentatively estimated that the maximum number of Catholic Irish in Britain in the 1870s and 1880s was between one and one-and-a-half million.[171] By 1921, with the birth of second- and third-generation Irish, the Irish Catholic population as a whole in Britain would probably have exceeded two million.

Excepting those emigrants who fled Ireland during the Famine, most Irish immigrated to Britain for economic reasons. However, lacking valuable skills, they tended to be confined to menial jobs, such as labouring in factories and on railway- and building-construction projects. Native British workers often viewed the Irish as a threat to their living standards, accusing them of driving down wage levels. A number of anti-Irish riots ensued, in such workplaces as the Pontypool ironworks in 1834, Penrith railway works in 1846, and the mines and factories of Dunfermline in 1850.[172] However, employment and wages were rarely the sole causes of these violent confrontations. Other factors were at work. Many native Britons distained the Irish, objecting to their Catholicism, poverty and drunkenness. The first was seen as particularly objectionable, for Britain in the nineteenth century, despite the emancipation of Catholics, was a self-consciously Protestant nation. 'It was their common investment in Protestantism [in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] that first allowed the English, the Welsh and the Scots to become fused together, and to remain so, despite their many cultural divergences,' notes the historian Linda Colley. Britain's many wars with Catholic France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries then cemented the Protestant religion's place in the country's national self-identity.[173] In the 1850s and 1860s, anti-Catholic and anti-Irish riots occurred throughout Britain, including such towns and cities as

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[168] Ibid.; Fitzpatrick, 'Irish emigration in the later nineteenth century', p. 126; Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain', p. 690

[169] Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people", p. 659; Fitzpatrick, 'The Irish in Britain', p. 691

[170] Ibid.

[171] O'Day, 'Varieties of anti-Irish behaviour in Britain', pp 27-8

[172] Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people", pp 639-44

[173] Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, 1992), pp 367-8

London, Cardiff, Birkenhead, Stockport, Blackburn, and Oldham. Rome's restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England was a significant factor in these outbreaks of violence, as were British acclaim and Irish detestation of Garibaldi's assault on the Papal States during the wars of Italian unification, preacher William Murphy's anti-Catholic crusade, and the violence of Irish Fenian revolutionaries. After the 1860s, such anti-Irish violence declined in frequency. Yet, it appeared again in Lancashire, particularly between 1903 and 1909, where Conservative and Protestant domination of municipal politics mixed with the militant Protestant crusade of Pastor George Wise to create a combustible situation.[174]

With this background in mind, we will now analyse the biographical accounts of six Volunteers born or raised in Britain. Born in Liverpool around 1890, Thomas Craven became O/C of one of the city's two Volunteer companies in early 1916 and went on to fight in the Easter Rising. He resumed his command when the Volunteers were re-founded on Merseyside in 1919. In September that year, however, he resigned from the force and moved to New York.[175] Joseph Good was born in Soho, London, in 1895. In 1914, he joined the Volunteers in the capital, serving in the same company as Michael Collins. After being released from Frongoch internment camp, following his involvement in the Easter Rising, Good participated in various IRA activities, including gunrunning and the planned assassination of British cabinet ministers.[176] John Pinkman, born in Liverpool in 1902, joined the city's Volunteers in 1919 and participated in terrorist attacks over the subsequent two years.[177] Gilbert Barrington was born in Blackburn, Lancashire, in 1889. He helped found IRA companies in the Tyneside area in 1920–21 and took part in arson attacks and gunrunning activities.[178] Brothers Eamonn and Sean Mooney, born in Ireland and Scotland respectively, joined the Scottish Volunteers in 1914 and fought in the Easter Rising in Dublin and served in Scotland during the war of independence.[179]

A number of themes are common to the biography of these six men. Family background was a major factor in the six becoming Irish nationalists. Craven's parents were natives of Ulster. He credited his mother as the source of his 'love of Ireland and hatred of Britain'. In her native county Tyrone, she had been a member of the Ladies Land League, and

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[174] Fitzpatrick, "A peculiar tramping people", pp 645-51; O'Day, 'Varieties of anti-Irish behaviour in Britain', pp 29-36

[175] BMHCD no. 141/4, Thomas Craven (MAI); Tom Craven to Michael Collins, 25 May; Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 25 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[5, 24-25])

[176] Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp x-xi, 9, 14-99, 130-44, 174-6, 182-5

[177] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 9-10, 18-9, 32-53

[178] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, pp 4, 10; BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, pp 2-9 (NAI)

[179] Interview with Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk

later in Liverpool she joined various nationalist organisations. The pro-Boer sympathies of Craven's father were so pronounced during the South African War of 1899–1902 as to lead to the family home being attacked and wrecked by mobs on four occasions. His own pro-Boer stance and refusal to salute the Union Jack or wear a Queen Victoria button resulted in the young Craven being beaten up. Outside of the Boers, as a young boy playing at soldiers, Craven imagined himself fighting for Ireland, sometimes as United Irishmen Theobald Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet.[180] While Joe Good's father was also sympathetic towards the Boers, his parents generally were supporters of the IPP, treating the family to loud renditions of Irish MPs' speeches from the newspapers every Sunday. Good's sister, Agnes, became active in an Irish political society and also joined the Gaelic League.[181] Pinkman, despite his unusual name, traced his ancestry to county Fermanagh. His family home was a repository of Irish culture. His father was a devout Catholic, while his mother treasured and practised Irish customs and traditions. Both were Irish-speakers. They were also Irish nationalists. Irish song and dance provided entertainment at regular get-togethers, all of which took place under the gaze of engravings and pictures of IPP leader Charles Stewart Parnell and the Fenians. A cousin of Pinkman's named Bernie Meehan fought in the Easter Rising. While he was imprisoned in Frongoch, Pinkman's mother sent him food parcels. Following his release, Meehan lodged with the Pinkmans until he found a job in the city. Disgust at the executions of the Rising leaders motivated Pinkman's refused to salute the Union Jack at his school's Empire Day celebrations in 1916.[182] Gilbert Barrington's family had a long association with Irish nationalism. Family tradition stated that some ancestors had participated in the United Irish rebellion of 1798. Barrington's paternal grandfather was a member of the IRB. Although Barrington's father had been sworn into the Fenians by his father, he was 'very Irish in sentiment but always anti-physical force'. His politics took the form of moderate nationalism. He joined the AOH in South Shields, as did Gilbert. Educated by the Irish Sisters of Mercy near Bath, Barrington's mother was intensely nationalistic.[183] Both Mooney parents were republicans, with one of their parents in turn said to have been a founding member of the IRB. Both parents were also cultural nationalists, with the father working as an Irish language translator.[184]

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[180] BMHCD no. 141/4, Thomas Craven (MAI)
[181] Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 6-7, 13
[182] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 9-10, 14, 18
[183] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, pp 4, 10; BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, pp 2-9 (NAI)
[184] Interview with Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk

Gearóid O'Tuathaigh has argued that nationalism may have served 'an important and complex psychological function' for Irish immigrants in nineteenth-century Britain. It gave 'an exalted sense of purpose to lives that were otherwise spent in adverse social circumstances'. Moreover, 'by demanding freedom for the homeland', nationalism allowed immigrants 'to engage in a kind of revolt by proxy against their own depressed condition'.[185] Immigrants sometimes passed on these sentiments to their children in the twentieth-century.

The powerful influence which family relations had in relation to the moulding of a nationalist consciousness is evident in the significant number of siblings in the ranks of the Volunteers and the IRB in Britain. During the war of independence, the London IRA boasted at least four sets of brothers: Sean and Michael McGrath, Denis and Joseph Carr, Charles and William Robinson, and Joseph and Patrick O'Sullivan.[186] As well as the Kerr brothers, the Liverpool Volunteers also had the membership of Jimmy and Paddy Lowe, and Michael O'Leary and his brother.[187] At least twenty-two sets of brothers existed in the Scottish ranks.[188] As well as Eamonn and Sean Mooney, there was John and James McGallogly, and the McGovern brothers, Michael Patrick, and Thomas.[189] Joseph and Seamus Robinson were born into a republican family in Belfast, before moving to Glasgow in 1903. Both fought in the Easter Rising. Seamus then organised the IRA in county Tipperary, while Joseph returned to Scotland to direct gunrunning activity.[190] Fathers sometimes joined their sons in the Volunteers also. 'B' company of the 2nd battalion boasted three sets of fathers and sons: Kelly, Rafferty and Sullivan.[191] More extended family relations also existed. Brothers-in-law Robert McLoughlin and Felix O'Hanlon were members of 'D' company, 3rd battalion.[192] Given the number of members sharing the same surnames, 'A' company, 2nd battalion seems to have been a veritable family affair.[193]

A second factor in motivating involvement in the Volunteers, though explicitly mentioned in only two cases, was the influence of friends. In 1918, John Pinkman and his

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[185] Quoted in Mark Boyle, 'Towards a (re)theorization of the historical geography of nationalism in diasporas: the Irish diaspora as an exemplar' in *International Journal of Population Geography*, vii, issue 6 (2001), pp 429-46, at p. 435

[186] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); Reginald Dunne to Art O'Brien, 24 Apr. 1922; Art O'Brien to whom it may concern, 27 Apr. 1935 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/22, 8432/21); Wallace, 'Reginald Dunn and Joseph O'Sullivan', p. 1

[187] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 165; BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, p. 47 (NAI)

[188] Membership of Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[189] Interview with Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk; membership of 'A' company, 1st battalion; membership of 'H' company, 1st battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[190] Seamus Robinson statement (NLI, Frank Gallagher Papers, Ms 21,256); Marie Coleman, 'Robinson, Séamus' in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, downloaded from http://dib.cambridge.org on 1 Dec. 2009

[191] Membership of 'B' company, 2nd battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[192] Membership of 'D' company, 3rd battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[193] Membership of 'A' company, 2nd battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

cousin Bernie Meehan regularly attended ceilí dances at the local Sinn Féin club. There, they learned from Niall Lively, a neighbour with whom Pinkman had attended hurling matches, that a Volunteer company was about to be founded in the area. About six or eight men attended the inaugural meeting of the company, the seventeen-year-old Pinkman amongst them. 'More than anyone else,' he later wrote, 'Niall Lively ... was responsible for my joining the Company.'[194] Gilbert Barrington stated that, family influence apart, his involvement in the IRA on Tyneside during the war of independence was motivated by the sincere patriotism of Fr. Vaughan, the Catholic parish priest of South Shields.[195] The historian Charles Townshend has argued that the persistence of resistance to British rule in Ireland 'cannot be explained by the intellectual or even the emotional power of republican ideology, but only by an inheritance of communal assumptions validating its methods as much as its ends'.[196] Family and friends constituted the most important media by which such communal thinking was passed on to the next generation, especially among those who felt themselves 'exiled' from Ireland, forced to emigrate due to British misrule or malevolence. Indeed, Ó Catháin argues that the 'very shape and nature of Fenianism grew out of an Irish exile colloquy ...'.[197]

If families and friends constituted important influences in the development of an Irish nationalist outlook in these men, so too did popular books, newspapers and ballads. Craven eagerly read Irish history and remembered Fr. Kavanagh's *A popular history of the insurrection of 1798* (1880) as being the first book he ever read outside of school books. Aged fourteen, he then came across an advertisement for Arthur Griffith's *United Irishman* newspaper. Intrigued by the title, Craven decided to buy a copy. Impressed by Griffith's argument that Ireland could expect little help from Britain, he became a regular reader of the publication.[198] Aged about fifteen, Joe Good, solitary and imaginative, began to read Irish history. Soon afterwards, he encountered Irish songs and ballads for the first time when his sister Agnes brought home a Gaelic League songbook. He became enchanted by the romantic works of Thomas Davis, James Clarence Mangan, and Thomas Moore. The sentiments of such poems as Mangan's 'Dark Rosaleen' and John O'Hagan's 'Dear Land' resonated with Good, as he later remembered: 'These were thoughts which had run in my head since

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[194] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 18-9
[195] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 11
[196] Charles Townshend, *Political violence in Ireland: government and resistance since 1848* (Oxford, 1983), pp viii-ix
[197] Ó Catháin, *Irish republicanism in Scotland*, pp 247, 254; on the concept of 'exile', see also Kirby A. Miller, 'Emigrants and exiles: Irish cultures and Irish emigration to North America, 1790–1922' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii, no. 86 (1980), pp 97-125, at pp 98-101
[198] BMHCD no. 141/4, Thomas Craven (MAI)

childhood, and that I had never heard expressed – till now'. Following his sister into the Gaelic League, Good was introduced to *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the movement's newspaper. Here again, he found laid out in black and white sentiments and arguments regarding 'direct action' and 'physical force' which reverberated with him. With the newspaper in his pocket, Good felt conspiratorial, like 'a small Guy Fawkes'. Reflecting on his youthful hatred of British imperialism, Good noted the irony that British rule in Ireland at the time was relatively light-handed. However, as he lacked first hand information of conditions across the Irish Sea, he remained in ignorance of this.[199] John Pinkman, too, was influenced by his reading Irish history, learning of 'the cruelties suffered by the Irish people in the past'. The Great Famine, of 1845–51, was particularly instructive:

> My father was born less than ten years after the Great Famine when nearly two million [sic] Irish people were allowed to die of starvation. Irish people were dying on the roadsides eating grass while grain was being shipped out of Dublin to pay rents to absentee English landlords.

His reading and the nationalism of his parents, therefore, inculcated in Pinkman a hatred of British imperialism and its malign influence on Ireland.[200]

A fourth factor, somewhat connected that the last, was the influence of cultural nationalist organisations. The arguments in Griffith's *United Irishman* seem to have motivated Thomas Craven to become active in 'all phases of the Irish-Ireland and Anti-Parliamentarian Movement'. He joined the Gaelic League, the GAA, Sinn Féin, and the Wolfe Tone Clubs.[201] Joe Good, as we have seen, joined the Gaelic League. He also attended GAA matches and may have joined the organisation.[202] Aged sixteen, Pinkman joined the Roger Casement Sinn Féin club in Litherland. He considered his membership 'natural' in light of the 'strong Irish atmosphere' in which he grew up. He also attended hurling matches with friends.[203]

As we saw earlier, Mulligan has argued that the new interconnectedness between the British Isles and the United States of America, in terms of travel, communications, and the media, saw the development of a 'transatlantic Irish nationalist world' in the nineteenth-century. For Irish immigrants, Ireland 'operated as a symbolic anchor often imagined from

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[199] Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 5-8, 13
[200] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 18
[201] BMHCD no. 141/4, Thomas Craven (MAI)
[202] Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 7-8
[203] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 18-19

afar'.[204] By consuming popular media, such as books and newspapers, Craven, Pinkman and Good were participating in this imagining of Ireland from afar.

A fifth factor, in Pinkman's case at least, was that of sectarianism. Discrimination against the Irish and Catholics was evident in Liverpool, especially in the area of employment. Noting that he was one of only about six Catholic boys who attended the junior day technical school in Bootle, Pinkman, an altar boy in his youth, believed that Catholics were admitted reluctantly and only as a concession to the town's large Catholic population. In general, he believed that 'Catholics, especially Irish Catholics, were treated like dirt' on Merseyside. For Pinkman, such treatment was of a part with the oppression suffered by the Irish at the hands of British imperialism in Ireland.[205] Another environmental factor, that of the class struggle, was credited by Barrington as contributing to the rebelliousness of the Irish on Tyneside.[206]

A sixth factor was the influence of militaristic movements aimed at children. Joe Good was a member of the Irish-American alliance of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), and may have enrolled in its military wing, the Hibernian Rifles. He was also a member of the Catholic Boys Brigade, from which he stole a carbine upon being expelled for refusing to stand for the British national anthem.[207] In Glasgow, Eamonn and Sean Mooney were members of the Willie Nelson troop of Na Fianna.[208]

Sympathy with the cause of Irish freedom, borne out of anti-imperialist ideology, may also have motivated people to join the IRA in Britain. In a letter to the *Aberdeen Free Press* in August 1920, for example, 'A Birmingham Scot' said that 'surprising numbers' of Scots, himself included, had joined the Irish Volunteers, signifying 'our sympathy with Ireland's aspirations – and, incidentally, our detestation of England's tyranny "over there"'. They thereby pledged themselves 'to assist Erin when called upon to do so'.[209]

For the Irish born in Britain or those who grew up in Britain, the decision to join the Volunteers, therefore, can be seen as having been influenced by perhaps seven factors, namely family attitude towards nationalism, the involvement of friends in nationalist movements, consumption of nationalist popular media, membership of cultural nationalist organisations, experiencing sectarian discrimination, prior membership of militarist movements, and political support for the cause of Irish freedom.

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[204] Mulligan, 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder', pp 451-2; see pp 2-3 above
[205] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 12-15, 18
[206] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 9
[207] Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 9, 15
[208] Interview with Cathleen Knowles-McGuirk; Hay, *Bulmer Hobson*, pp 78-9
[209] *Aberdeen Free Press*, 7 Aug. 1920 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427)

Due to the lack of a comprehensive membership list for the Volunteers in Britain, the proportion of Irish-born, as opposed to British-born, men active in the force cannot be stated with any certainty. However, the surviving evidence indicates a very significant proportion, if not a majority, of the Volunteers active in Britain, at least during the war of independence, were born in Ireland. Gilbert Barrington stated that 'Those who were active [in the Tyneside IRA during the period 1919–21] were mostly Irish born'.[210] According to Paddy Daly, membership of the Liverpool Volunteers during the same period was 'mostly composed of labouring men coming across from Ireland'.[211] Irish-born men also seem to have constituted a significant proportion of the IRA in London, as well as that of the 2nd Scottish battalion.[212] What, therefore, motivated these Irish-born men to join the Volunteers and why did they fight in Britain?

Detailed biographical statements regarding service in the Volunteers in Britain have been left by twelve men born and raised in Ireland. Of these twelve, nine have provided sufficient biographical detail to enable us to discern possible influences leading to their involvement in the Volunteers. These influences prove to be the same as those in the cases of British-born Volunteers. Family background was the influence of which most of these nine were conscious. Joseph Furlong was born into a republican family in county Wexford. His father had been imprisoned during the Land War of 1879–81.[213] An immigrant from county Mayo, Patrick Mills joined his uncle in the Motherwell IRB in 1912.[214] Born in county Galway in 1899, William O'Keeffe, later a member of the Manchester IRA, remembered the nationalist tales his mother used to tell him and his siblings when they were young. Their favourite stories concerned local happenings during the United Irishmen's rebellion:

> ... the landing of the French at Killala on the 22nd August, 1798, and the battle at Castlebar on the 27th August which resulted in a humiliating defeat for the English – known as "The Races of Castlebar"; the return of the English soldiers to Mayo after the capture of the [French leader] General Humbert, when they pillaged and plundered and slaughtered the old, the infirm and the young who were unable to escape; also how Father Manus Sweeney of Lahardane was hanged in Castlebar after a mock trial because he shook hands with a French officer.

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[210] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 7
[211] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 18 (NAI)
[212] 'R. Ua D, O/C No. 4 London' to O/C Britain, 24 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/27[49-50]); BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, pp 2-3 (NAI); membership of Scottish brigade IRA, esp. 'H' company, 2nd battalion, 'C' company, 3rd battalion, 'B' company, 4th battalion (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)
[213] BMHWS no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 1 (NAI)
[214] Ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 1 (NAI)

In 1917–18, O'Keeffe's older brother aided the Claremorris Volunteers in carrying despatches.[215] Frank Thornton also remembered that his mother 'preached Fenianism' to her children.[216] Such romantic reverence for physical force and those who wielded it against British rule was not confined to incorrigible separatists. Rather, the mass of the Irish Catholic population, along with its political representative, the IPP, sympathised with such a view, informed as it was by a popular nationalism that portrayed Ireland as a righteous victim of British oppression.[217]

Furlong attests to the influence of his schooling in the formation of his nationalist outlook. He particularly remembered the Irish history lessons of his Christian Brothers teacher, Brother Collins. Due to the influence of Collins and his own parents, Furlong 'grew up a Rebel'.[218]

O'Keeffe evidences the influence of neighbours. Joe Brennan, the founder of the Claremorris Volunteers in the post-Rising period, 'was the Irish boy's ideal of what an Irishman should be', O'Keeffe remembered.[219] It was at the insistence of some of his workmates that Furlong joined the Wexford IRB in 1908.[220]

In addition to the influence or family, friends, neighbours and teachers, that of cultural nationalism is also instanced in two cases. Furlong states that he joined the Wexford Gaelic League immediately upon its establishment in the town.[221] Limerick man Liam McMahon, an important figure in Manchester during the war of independence, joined the Gaelic League when he moved to Liverpool in 1878. His membership of the GAA led to his being invited to join the IRB.[222] Historians of the IRA in counties Cork, Limerick, Longford and elsewhere have confirmed the importance of family, friends, schooling and inchocate nationalism in motivating Volunteer membership.[223]

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[215] Ibid., no. 1678, William O'Keeffe, pp 1-2, 5-6 (NAI)
[216] Ibid., no. 510, Frank Thornton, p. 1 (NAI)
[217] Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party: provincial Ireland 1910–1916* (Oxford, 2005), pp 79-84; Jonathan Githens-Mazer, *Myths and memories of the Easter Rising: cultural and political nationalism in Ireland* (Dublin, 2006)
[218] BMHWS no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 1 (NAI)
[219] Ibid., no. 1678, William O'Keeffe, pp 5-6 (NAI)
[220] Ibid., no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 1 (NAI)
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 1 (NAI)
[223] Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies: violence and community in Cork, 1916–1923* (Oxford, 1998), pp 202-13; Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, pp 49-60; Joost Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare: the experience of ordinary volunteers in the Irish war of independence 1916–1921* (Dublin, 1996), pp 364-7; John O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick: the republican campaign for independence in Limerick, 1913–1921* (Dublin, 2010), pp 204-08; Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish revolution 1910–1923* (Dublin, 2003), pp 159-61

We can see, therefore, that membership of the Volunteers in Ireland was often motivated by the same factors that prompted second generation Irish immigrants in Britain to join the Volunteers there. These factors were the family's political outlook, influence of teachers, neighbours and friends, and membership of cultural nationalist organisations. These factors combined to form a defiant nationalism that refused to accept the legitimacy of British rule in Ireland. The government's indulgence of Ulster Unionist opposition to home rule in 1912–14 exacerbated hostility to British rule, as did its reaction to the 1916 Rising and its attempt to impose conscription in 1918.[224]

Why, however, did these Irish-born men join the Volunteers in Britain? In ten of the twelve cases, economic necessity motivated temporary or permanent immigration to Britain. In the remaining two cases, immigration was prompted by their being charged with carrying out IRA activities in Britain. Of the ten cases of immigration encouraged by the lack of jobs in Ireland, five had some association with advanced nationalist politics before their moving. Paddy Daly, for example, senior Liverpool gunrunner during the war of independence, was a member of the Offaly Volunteers before moving to Merseyside in 1918 in order to take up a job as a clerical worker.[225] Joseph Furlong was a member of the IRB before joining the Volunteers in London in 1914.[226]

VI

Moving away from the issue of motivation, what can we say about the social make-up of the IRA in Britain?

Peter Hart has analysed a large sample of Volunteer members from throughout Ireland during the period 1917–1923, and has identified a number of characteristics to create a 'Volunteer typology'. Almost certainly a Roman Catholic, the Volunteer was probably under thirty years of age, likely to be unmarried, and likely to be unpropertied. He probably lived in an urban setting, was educated, and was at the beginning of his career in a skilled occupation.[227] While agreeing with Hart on the issues of religion, age, marital status and

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[224] Joost Augusteijn, 'Motivation: why did they fight for Ireland? The motivation of Volunteers in the revolution' in idem (ed), *The Irish revolution, 1913–1923* (Hampshire, 2002), pp 103-20, at pp 107-17
[225] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 1 (NAI)
[226] Ibid., no. 335, Joseph Furlong, p. 3 (NAI)
[227] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, p. 131

wealth, studies of IRA membership at the county level have emphasised the rural origins of most Volunteers.[228]

In the absence of regularly updated information on Volunteer membership in Britain, reliance has to be placed on snapshots, newspaper reports of trials, and recollections of those involved.

In terms of sex, the IRA had an exclusively male membership, with, as we have seen, a separate organisation, the Cumann na mBan, being the vehicle for female involvement in the struggle.

In the period 1920–23, over 150 people were arrested in Britain in relation to such republican activities as gunrunning, terrorism and other miscellaneous doings.[229] When we exclude women and others who were not Volunteer members, we are left with 110 names. Of these, the ages of seventy suspects were ascertained. The ages range from the teenage years to the sixties, specifically seventeen to sixty-four. Thirteen suspects were under twenty years old. Forty-seven were in their twenties, six in their thirties, one in his forties, two in their fifties, and one in his sixties. The average age was twenty-five years. (See chart 1, p. 53.)

With relation to the occupations of IRA men, Patrick Murray, who visited London in 1920, was under the impression that the majority of the capital's Volunteers worked in the British civil service.[230] Some primary evidence supports Murray's impression. When Sean McGrath was re-organising the London Volunteers in late 1919, he asked Michael Collins about the necessity of new recruits swearing the oath of allegiance to the Dáil, particularly those who, as civil servants, had taken an oath of allegiance to the British government.[231] Moreover, at least four members of the capital's IRA are known to have worked in the civil service. Dunne, the O/C London, trained as a teacher, Joseph O'Sullivan was a messenger at the Ministry of Labour, Sean Golden worked in the Land Registry Office, and Dennis Kelleher at the Board of Education.[232] Michael O'Leary states that the majority of Liverpool city Volunteers worked as dockers.[233] James Byrne noted that the preponderance of IRA men

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[228] O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick*, pp 183-90; Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish revolution*, pp 149-50; Fergus Campbell, *Land and revolution: nationalist politics in the west of Ireland 1891–1921* (Oxford, 2005), pp 259-62; Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 353-62; David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life 1913–1921: provincial experience of war and revolution* (Cork, 1998 edn), pp 169-70, 184-5

[229] *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Observer*, and *The Times*, 1920–23; it should be noted that some of those arrested on suspicion of illegal Irish political activities had the charges against them dropped before coming to trial, while others were acquitted of the charges at their trial.

[230] BMHWS no. 1584, Patrick Murray, p. 20 (NAI)

[231] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. Sept. 1919 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0457, group VIII, item 1)

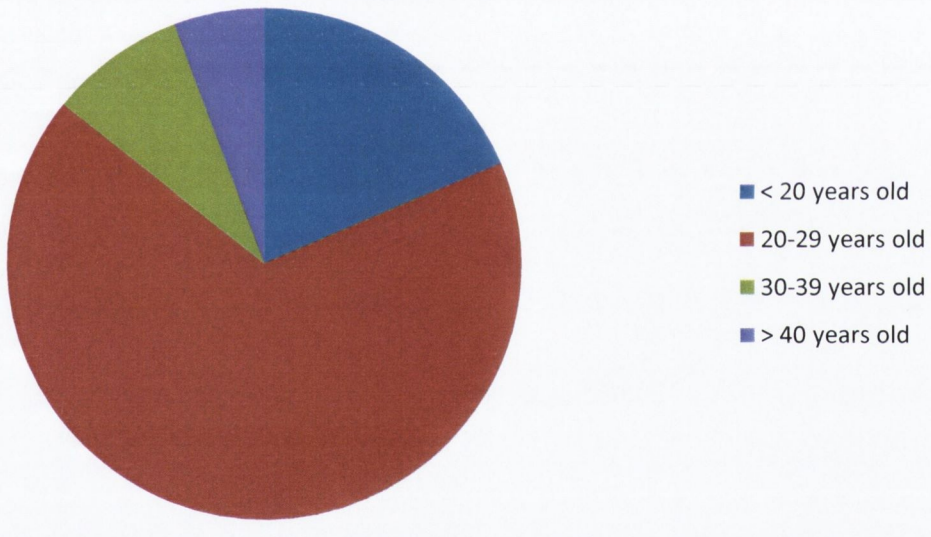
[232] *The Times*, 24 June 1922; Sean Golden to Art O'Brien, 18 Feb; Denis Kelleher to Art O'Brien, 18 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)

[233] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, p. 28 (NAI)

in the 2nd Scottish battalion during the war of independence worked as miners and steel workers. Miners dominated the Falkirk company, part of the 3rd Scottish battalion.[234] Mining also seems to have been the occupation of a majority of Volunteers in such Lancashire towns as St. Helens, Earlstown, and Wigan.[235] According to Gilbert Barrington, the Tyneside IRA was composed mainly of artisans, semi-skilled workers, and small tradesmen, along with a few teachers and businessmen. 'It seems that the relatively better educated, who understood the issues involved, were more active,' he comments. Many of these men were recent migrants, leading Barrington to suggest that 'their resentment at having to emigrate had not had time to die'. By remaining in contact with relatives in Ireland, they kept abreast of events there.[236]

Chart 1

Ages of seventy suspected republicans, 1920-23[237]



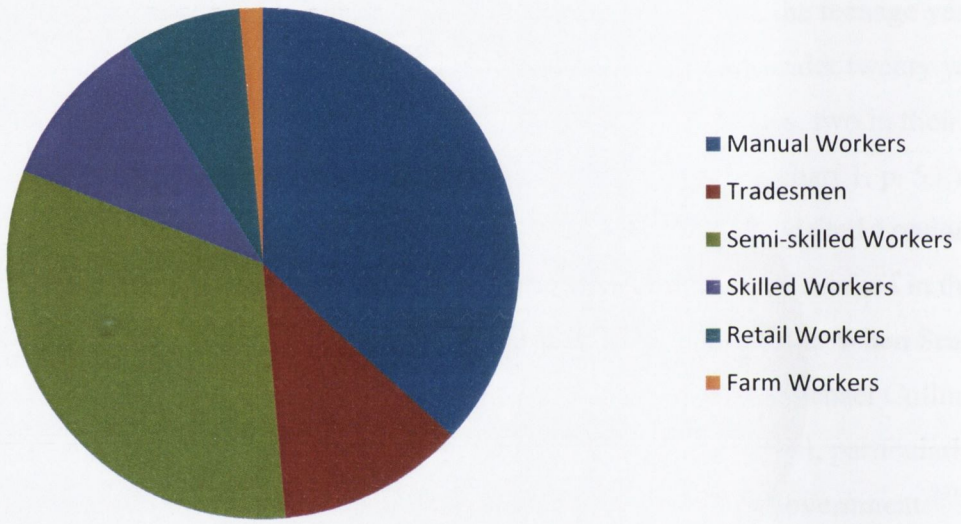
Of the 110 people in the accident sample, occupations are noted in sixty-eight cases. The most popular occupation was that of labourer, followed by clerk, motor mechanic and joiner. Twenty-five of the sample worked in manual jobs as labourers and ship-workers. Twenty-two worked in semi-skilled trades as clerks and machine labourers. Seven had skilled occupations, working as teachers and electrical engineers. Eight worked in such trade occupations as carpentry and plumbing. The remainder worked as grocers and farmers. (See

[234] Ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, pp 2-3; ibid., no. 696, Henry O'Hagan, p. 4 (NAI)
[235] Ibid., no. 1535, Hugh Early, p. 10 (NAI)
[236] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, pp 8-10
[237] For dataset and methodology, see appendix 2.

chart 2, below.) Of the sixty-eight, two were former policemen, while five had served in the British army during the Great War. Service in the British army seems to have featured in the career history of a considerable number of Volunteers. Enough former British soldiers sought membership of the London IRA in 1919 for Sean McGrath to ask Michael Collins about the necessity of their swearing the oath of allegiance to the Dáil.[238] Gilbert Barrington states that ex-British soldiers constituted a significant proportion of Tyneside IRA's membership, Barrington himself having served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the Great War.[239] Members of the London, Nottingham and Sheffield IRA were also former soldiers.[240]

Chart 2

Occupations of sixty-eight suspected republicans, 1920-23[241]



From scattered references in Volunteers' memoirs, it would appear that the overwhelming majority of IRA men in Britain were practising Roman Catholics.[242] Moreover, such memoirs also seem to indicate that the majority were unmarried.

The above data was culled from an accidental sample, in that it is taken from people who happened to be arrested by the police on suspicion of illegal Irish political activities. Therefore, it does not give a representative picture of the IRA in Britain. However, given the absence of comprehensive Volunteer membership details, the data can be used to give a

[238] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. Sept. 1919 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0457, group VIII, item 1)
[239] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, pp 4-5, 7
[240] *The Times*, 24 June 1922; O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[241] For dataset and methodology, see appendix 2.
[242] See, for example, Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 12, 77, 66-7

tentative picture of the Volunteers' social profile. The data suggests that, as Hart has argued, the average member of the IRA in Britain was a Roman Catholic single male in his mid-twenties, employed in a manual or semi-skilled job.[243]

How do Volunteer members compare with the wider Irish community in Britain? According to the census of 1911, the occupations which accounted for the largest number of Irish male workers in Scotland were iron and metal manufacturing (33.67 per cent), mining (16.16 per cent), general labouring (8.17 per cent), and the building trade (6.73 per cent). Manual labour, therefore, dominated the occupations of the Irish in Scotland.[244] As we have seen, the sample indicated that Volunteers tended to be manual or semi-skilled workers. It would seem, therefore, that IRA members were, on average, broadly representative of the Irish community in Britain, though with a tendency to be slightly more educated than their peers.

VII

How was a Volunteer company run? The *General scheme of organisation* outlined the formal government of the company. The O/C and two lieutenants, the senior company officers, were to be elected by the company members. The other officers, including NCOs, were then to be appointed by the O/C.[245] Such rules were not always followed. Upon visiting Manchester in October 1921, O/C Britain Rory O'Connor discovered that the leadership of the Volunteers was somewhat confused. O'Mara, O/C no. 1 company, was also in charge of no. 2 company as well as the Rochdale Volunteers. Matt Lawless was also in charge of the same companies, although he did not have any formal rank. O'Connor believed that neither man had the qualities necessary for the O/C position.[246]

Upon the initial foundation of Volunteer companies, the organisers usually dispensed with elections and appointed the officers themselves, especially when GHQ was involved. As we saw earlier, Michael Collins approved the appointment of three officers to bring the 'many wild young chaps' of the London IRA under discipline.[247] Joe Vize acted similarly in Glasgow.[248] Rory O'Connor appointed a brigade staff on Tyneside in November 1920.[249]

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[243] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, pp 127-8
[244] *Report on the twelfth decennial census of Scotland, iii* [Cd. 7163] (1913), pp v-vi
[245] Irish Volunteers, *General Scheme of Organisation* (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0032A, group 2, item 2)
[246] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[247] See p. 25 above
[248] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 27 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[249] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 2 (NAI)

Thereafter, as the memberships came under discipline, GHQ allowed the replacement of company leaderships to proceed through elections. On the other hand, the Birmingham Volunteers, established without any reference to Dublin, elected their own officers from the beginning.[250] Although GHQ retained the right to withdraw the commissions of the elected officers, the provision for elections effectively gave the rank and file *the* major role in deciding the company leadership. However, Dublin did not always approve of the officers so elected. The arrest of a large number of IRA men in Manchester in April 1921 led Michael Collins to complain of a 'general looseness' in the city's Volunteer organisation. The IRA leadership exuded an irritating laid-back 'happy-go-lucky air', he wrote.[251] In September and October 1921, IRA units in England were inspected by Rory O'Connor. Contemplating the renewal of terrorist attacks in Britain in the event of the peace negotiations collapsing, he placed special emphasis on ascertaining the 'Military outlook' of the various company commanders. While he was generally impressed by the officers in London, Sheffield and Newcastle, those in Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester and Liverpool left a lot to be desired.[252]

The Liverpool city company provides an example of the rank and file initiating an election to change the O/C. Sometime around September 1919, Michael O'Leary was elected company commander, replacing the America-bound Tom Craven. Soon, however, the men became disgruntled with O'Leary's leadership. His lectures were placing too much emphasis on political matters at the expense of such straightforwardly military issues as street fighting. Some feared that O'Leary's leadership was causing the men to lose interest in the Volunteers. Fearful that the company would continue to haemorrhage members as long as O'Leary remained in charge, John Pinkman and others called for an election. Tom Kerr, 1st lieutenant, was elected O/C and a suitable martial tone was re-introduced into Volunteer matters.[253]

Where possible, the election of the 1st lieutenant to the O/C position seems to have been the usual procedure in the event of the commanding officer proving unsatisfactory or being incapacitated. This was the case in Liverpool at any rate, which suffered the highest leadership turnover of any IRA unit in Britain. Following Tom Kerr's arrest in November 1920, in connection with the IRA arson attack on the Liverpool dock warehouses, Peter Roland became O/C. The following month, however, Roland, his 2nd lieutenant, and five

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[250] Ibid., no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 1, 5, 15

[251] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 23 May, 6 June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330)

[252] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])

[253] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 19-20; it should be noted that O'Leary himself claims that he retired from the leadership because he realised that he possessed neither the time nor the energy that he considered necessary to fulfil the role of O/C: BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 41-2 (NAI)

other Volunteers, were arrested in a public house.[254] Hugh Early, Roland's successor, was arrested in June 1921 in connection with an IRA attack on communications infrastructure. Edward Brady, 1st lieutenant, was then appointed acting O/C until another candidate was appointed, Michael Collins stating that an election was unnecessary.[255] A few days later, however, Brady, his 2nd lieutenant and three other Volunteers were arrested in another wire-cutting operation. Denis Fleming, 1st lieutenant, 'about the best man left, and also the most suitable for the position', was then appointed O/C without an election.[256] Such a high turnover of officers was unusual. When he visited Liverpool in October 1921, the O/C Britain, Rory O'Connor, noted that all the officers had joined the Volunteers within the previous six months. Meanwhile, about half the rank and file had left the organisation since November 1920. O'Connor attributed such high turnover to men leaving the city in search of employment. He considered this a serious problem, contending that 'men who are asked to operate in the city will do so with greater confidence if they are familiar with it'.[257]

The *General scheme of organisation* detailed the responsibilities of the various company officers. The O/C possessed ultimate responsibility of every aspect of his company, including 'discipline, organisation, equipment, training and general efficiency'. He was to command the company in 'peace and war', subject only to the commands of his legitimately elected superiors. Both the 1st and 2nd lieutenants were responsible for the efficiency of their respective half-companies. The adjutant was to act as an assistant to the O/C. He was to keep a register detailing attendance at parades and drill practice. In addition, he was charged with supervising general drill operations and the instruction of new recruits. The quartermaster's task was to ensure the security and maintenance of the company's munitions and equipment, as well as their distribution and collection as required. He was also responsible for company funds, including the collection and recording of the weekly subscription from members. A body called the company council was to be constituted of the captain, the two lieutenants, section commanders, adjutant and quartermaster. The purpose of the council was to advise the captain on any matters he submitted to it. However, it did not have any authority in the matters of discipline, command, and efficiency. These remained the sole concern of the O/C. Battalions and brigades had similar councils.[258] Despite the *General Scheme*'s silence on the issue, a position of I/O also existed. Sean McGrath filled it in London and Liam McMahon

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[254] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. 31 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[255] Ibid., 6 June; Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 9 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[256] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 13, 20 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[257] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[258] Irish Volunteers, *General Scheme of Organisation* (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0032A, group 2, item 2)

likewise in Manchester. The presence of I/Os has also been recorded in the 2nd battalion of the Scottish brigade.[259] Neither McGrath not McMahon detail the specific duties of their positions, but it presumably involved the gathering of information necessary for the successful mounting of gunrunning and terrorist operations. When Liam Lynch sought to recruit someone to the position in London in September 1922, he emphasised that a 'thoroughly efficient' man was needed for 'Our successes in Britain will depend mainly on perfect intelligence'.[260]

Once the companies, battalions and brigades had been established and their officers appointed or elected, their association with GHQ in Dublin seems to have varied significantly. During the war of independence, Michael Collins was in regular contact with the London Volunteers through Art O'Brien. Gunrunners Neil Kerr and Paddy Daly kept him abreast of developments with the Merseyside IRA. Manchester IRA's Liam McMahon claims that he had a 'most intimate' association with Collins.[261] In Liverpool at least, GHQ's close relationship with the local company ensured that its authorisation was necessary for the mounting of terrorist attacks in the spring of 1921.[262] In other areas, contact with Dublin depended on the extent to which IRA units were involved in gunrunning activities, with those heavily involved enjoying close relations.

Unlike the IRA in Ireland, the Volunteers in Britain were never formally recognised by Dáil Éireann. In March 1921, over two years after the outbreak of the war of independence, de Valera, president of the Dáil, declared that the revolutionary government was '*responsible for the actions*' of the IRA. Although belated, de Valera's comments elevated the IRA in Ireland to 'a national army of defence'.[263] Such recognition did not extend to the Volunteers in Britain, an army of offense. Like de Valera, *An t-Óglác*, the IRA's in-house journal, feigned ignorance in regard to Volunteer activities across the Irish Sea. Despite widespread press coverage of the Volunteers' terrorist campaign in Britain in 1920–21, the official organ of the IRA failed to address the matter. Indeed, its only references to the Volunteers in Britain were in relation to the jailbreaks of 1919 which witnessed the escape of, among others, de Valera from Lincoln prison and Piaras Béaslaí from Strangeways

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[259] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); BMHWS no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 2 (NAI); membership of 'B' and 'E' companies, 2nd battalion, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)

[260] C/S to O/C 1st Southern Division, 3 Sept. 1922 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/17)

[261] BMHWS no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 2 (NAI)

[262] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 28 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

[263] *An t-Óglác*, 15 Apr. 1921; original emphasis

prison.[264] This lack of recognition seems to have rankled with some Volunteers. In October 1921, anticipating the breakdown of the truce, O/C Britain Rory O'Connor recommended that the IRA in Britain be 'placed on a proper footing', either by a declaration of the resumption of 'hostilities in England, as well as in Ireland, or by an official statement in An t-Oglac'. Then, Volunteers on trial for IRA activities could declare their position to be 'soldiers acting under orders'.[265] The leader of the no. 4 London company contended that many British-born Volunteers felt under-appreciated, especially in the face of boasting by their Irish-born comrades. He too hoped that the issue would be addressed by GHQ or *An t-Óglác*.[266]

We can see then that the relationship between IRA units in Britain and GHQ in Dublin varied. This was also the case in Ireland. It was only in February 1920, thirteen months after the shooting dead of two policemen by members of the IRA at Soloheadbeg, county Tipperary, that *An t-Óglác*, GHQ's organ, came out unambiguously in favour of offensive warfare. In the interim, nineteen policemen and officials had been killed by the Volunteers. Therefore, as Fitzpatrick observes, 'The great mass of provincial Volunteers had drifted imperturbably towards revolution, oblivious to the whistlings of their leaders, governed by the logic of local experience.'[267] Augusteijn, however, argues that GHQ played a large part in spreading that violence throughout Ireland.[268] Nevertheless, Dublin's inability to supply provincial units with adequate amounts of munitions had the effect of limiting its influence over them.[269]

As we saw earlier, relations between the IRA in Britain and its leaders in Britain also seem to have varied. In August 1920, the IRA in Britain became the responsibility of an O/C Britain. The first person to occupy this post was Rory O'Connor.[270] In early 1922, with divisions appearing in the Volunteers due to the treaty, Joe Vize became O/C Britain for the pro-treatyites.[271] O'Connor continued in his position as O/C Britain for the anti-treaty IRA until his arrest by the Irish army in June 1922 after two days of fighting at the Four Courts in the opening battle of the civil war. The following September, he was succeeded by Patrick

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[264] Ibid., 27 Mar., 15 Dec. 1919 ; see pp 201, 255 below
[265] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[266] 'R. Ua D, O/C No. 4 London' to O/C Britain, 24 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/27[49-50])
[267] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, p. 179; *Return showing by monthly periods the number of murders of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and of soldiers, officials, and civilians, and the number of political outrages of persons and property in Ireland from the 1st day of January, 1919, to the 30th April, 1920* [Cmd. 709] (1920), p. 2
[268] Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, p. 183
[269] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 172-3; O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick*, p. 193
[270] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-65])
[271] S. Fullerton to Minister for Defence, 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/06181)

Murray.[272] (Three months later, O'Connor and Liam Mellows, who was also captured at the Four Courts, were among four IRA leaders executed by the Free State government in response to the assassination of a pro-treaty TD.[273]) Before his arrest, O'Connor appointed Joseph Robinson, released from prison after serving a sentence for gunrunning offences, to the position of O/C Scotland.[274] Following his arrest for involvement in the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson in June 1922, Reginald Dunne's position as O/C London was filled by Denis Kelleher. He demobilised the IRA in the capital. Anti-treatyites, however, re-mobilised it under the leadership of William Aherne.[275]

O'Connor and members of his staff paid occasional visits to Volunteer units. A 'Mr F.', visited Liverpool in April 1921 in order to plan terrorist operations with the local company.[276] 'Flan' and 'M. R.', other members of the O/C Britain's staff, spent some time in London in June 1921. They seem to have been involved in some sort of re-organisation of the Volunteers there, for Michael Collins feared that Flan lacked 'the comprehensive outlook [necessary] for directing and ordering an organisation over a large area'.[277] Mick McEvoy, another member of O'Connor's staff, visited Tyneside in 1920–21 to confirm leadership appointments and inspect the various companies.[278] IRA units sometimes received visits from Joe Furlong, D. P. Walsh and Liam Mellows, the latter being Vize's successor as D/P. However, these officers mainly concerned themselves with gunrunning rather than Volunteer affairs per se.[279] During the civil war, O/C Britain Patrick Murray visited Volunteer units in least two areas, Cardiff and Glasgow.[280] In the autumn of 1921, with membership of the IRA having increased fivefold over the previous year and the organisation enjoying a greater geographical spread, O'Connor advised that a divisional structure be created to effectively manage the force. He also advocated the establishment of a GHQ England in one of the centres.[281] Given, however, that he made these recommendations only two months before the signing of the treaty, it is doubtful if they were acted upon speedily. By January 1923, however, a GHQ had indeed been established, in London. Unlike O'Connor, therefore, who

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[272] Patrick Murray interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/88)
[273] *Irish Times*, 9 Dec. 1922
[274] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[275] C/S to Quartermaster, 1st Cork brigade, 7 Aug. 1922 (UCDA, Twomey Papers, P69/24[18]); O/C Britain to C/S, 2 Nov. 1923 (UCDA, Twomey Papers P69/120[40-41])
[276] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 23, 27 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[277] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 6 June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330)
[278] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 2 (NAI)
[279] Ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, pp 2-3 (NAI); Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 13 June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330)
[280] C/S to President de Valera & Ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749); C/S to O/C Britain, 30 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[281] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept., 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-65], P7/A/29[264-73])

travelled back and forth across the Irish Sea, Murray lived full-time in Britain. Formerly of the Cork IRA, Murray had asked to be supplied with a detailed plan of work before he would agree to assume the position. He was assisted by a staff consisting of a chemist, an engineer, an adjutant, and an I/O. These positions were also filled by Cork men.[282] When O'Connor was appointed O/C Britain, his mandate was 'to organise and carry out operations in Enemy Territory'.[283] His successor had five responsibilities. Four related to gunrunning. One, however, concerned the IRA in Britain in general, for the O/C had responsibility for 'All men working for [the] organisation, [in the] purchases [section] or otherwise'.[284] He remained in close contact with GHQ in Ireland and carried out its orders, supplying it with maps detailing IRA units in Britain, organising a clandestine communications system with republicans in America, and undertaking organisational work.[285] The O/C Scotland also toured Volunteer units on organisational work, as did members of his staff.[286]

As we saw earlier, the behaviour of Reginald Dunne, O/C London, also caused some problems. His heavy-handed attempt to deal with the problem of Volunteer unemployment in 1921, followed by his becoming involved in a split in the London Cumann na mBan, led to Art O'Brien to question his suitability for leadership. Dunne 'praised the work I did but did not like me personally because on some occasions I refused to take his orders', Cumann na mBan member Sorcha McDermott remembered, instancing an occasion when she refused to hand over the proceeds of a ceili to the O/C London.[287] O'Brien's distrust of Dunne was compounded a few months later when, without informing the Dáil's representative in London, the latter prohibited his men from attending Gaelic League classes.[288] Exasperated, O'Brien reproached Dunne for having failed to consult him before he issued the order. 'Without really generous co-operation from you, it will almost be impossible to prevent misunderstandings taking place amongst all the different organisations here,' he explained.[289]

The most serious breakdown in relations between an IRA unit, its commanding officer, and GHQ, occurred in the Scottish brigade in late 1921. John Carney, brigade O/C,

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[282] C/S to President de Valera & Ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749); Patrick Murray interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/88); C/S to O/C 1st Southern Division, 10 Sept.; O/C Britain to Divisional Adjutant, 22 Sept.; Divisional Adjutant to C/S, 4 Dec. 1922 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/17, P17a/51)

[283] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-65])

[284] Quartermaster General to O/C Britain, 5 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)

[285] Patrick Murray interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/88)

[286] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 17 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746); Joseph Robinson to Eamon Donnelly, 5 May 1922 (NAI, Cumann na Poblachta and Sinn Féin Papers, 1094/14/2)

[287] BMHWS no. 945, Sorcha Mic Diarmada, p. 7 (NAI)

[288] See p. 38 above

[289] Reginald Dunne to Art O'Brien, n.d., but c. 16–24 Oct.; Art O'Brien to Reginald Dunne, 24 Oct. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/16)

convened a meeting for 13 November in Uddingston in order to review the outfit's finances. Officers of the 2nd battalion, however, failed to attend. They sent Carney a letter stating that they refused to allow their quartermasters to attend any meeting until they were satisfied that he had authority from GHQ to convene such meetings. Carney claimed that the officers of the 2nd battalion knew full well that he had the necessary authority from Dublin, noting that they had obeyed his command to hand over their funds to him when he last did so, six months before. Carney, therefore, had 'no alternative but to bring a charge of mutiny against each and all of the Officers of the 2nd Battalion'. 'What makes these charges more serious', Carney noted, 'is that our country is at war at the present time.' He travelled to Dublin to submit a report on the incident to GHQ.[290]

Subsequently, Joe Vize travelled to Scotland and told Carney that he would assume command of the brigade. Carney, however, found Vize's attitude 'most irregular'. Thinking, moreover, that Vize intended treachery towards him, due to his reminding him 'of the several Officers of the S[cottish].B[rigade]. whom he [i.e. Vize] had let down', Carney offered to resign if it was felt that he had acted incorrectly. Vize refused the offer, but offered him an honourable discharge if he wished to leave the organisation. Vize then decided to postpone the proposed court-martial of the brigade quartermaster and the officers of the 2nd battalion in order to give himself time to inquire into the matter. Noting in February 1922 that the investigation had yet to be held, Carney complained that Vize had effectively encouraged disobedience of orders, so creating an unenviable situation for whoever was to assume command of the brigade, Carney himself having resigned. 'My impression now', he wrote, 'is that he [Vize] never intended to hold any Enquiry, this being only a subterfuge in order to shield his friends in the 2nd Battalion.'[291]

This tense situation was then compounded by the police capturing thirteen Volunteers, including the commandant of the 1st battalion, while they were packing munitions into boxes in Tullcross in December 1921. Carney blamed Vize for the fiasco, claiming that if he had arrived sooner in Glasgow from Dublin, instead of travelling to Motherwell for underhand purposes, the issue of backlogged munitions could have been dealt with sooner and the arrests avoided. Vize, it seems, was seeking to lay the blame on the commandant of the 1st battalion. 'I never thought Commandant Vize could be so unscrupulous, and dishonourable, in order to take the blame from his own shoulders for the loss of the material at Tullcross, and to save his friends at Motherwell,' Carney commented. He also stated that Vize had started

[290] John Carney to C/S, 7 Dec. 1921; ibid., 22 Feb. 1922 (NLI, O'Mahoney Papers, Ms 24,474)
[291] John Carney to C/S, 7 Dec. 1921; ibid., 22 Feb. 1922 (NLI, O'Mahoney Papers, Ms 24,474)

organising a new brigade in Scotland without informing him, thus throwing the old brigade into confusion.[292] Carney travelled to Dublin to discuss the situation with the C/S, Richard Mulcahy. Unfortunately, the upshot of that meeting and subsequent developments in regard to the whole situation are not known.

Patterson has argued that the republicanism in Scotland suffered 'deep internal divisions' which 'depleted the movement's morale and organisational effectiveness'.[293] He does not refer to the episode above, but undoubtedly he would see it as being symptomatic of such divisions. Those he does refer to include the existence of unruly Volunteers in Glasgow, IRB men apparently more interested in supplying the ICA with weapons than sending them to GHQ, and controversy regarding the Scottish gunrunning accounts. The latter two issues will be discussed later. However, while acknowledging the existence of such divisions, this author believes that Patterson has exaggerated their singularity and the consequences which flowed from them. As we have seen, the existence of a rebellious Volunteer company under Liam Gribbon in Glasgow did not prevent Joe Vize from organising companies in other parts of Glasgow and Scotland. Even the most active IRA units in Ireland suffered similar problems, mainly as a result of bad organisation.[294] Such problems did not diminish their morale and neither did it that of the Scottish IRA to any great extent. Undoubtedly, the Volunteers in Scotland, and by extension those in England and Wales too, were not as active as their most energetic comrades in Ireland. This, however, was not due to internal divisions but rather to the fact that, as we shall see, their role was limited to gunrunning, with the mounting of a terrorist campaign being of only secondary importance.

It would seem, therefore, that the relationship between IRA units in Britain, their leadership in Britain, and GHQ in Dublin, varied considerably during the war of independence and civil war. Those intimately involved in gunrunning tended to have closer relations with Dublin than those not as engaged in munitions procurement. In the Scottish case, tension between the gunrunning and Volunteer sides of the movement led to mutiny. Personality also seems to have played a role here.

Just as their relationship with Dublin varied, so did that between the different IRA units themselves. Rory O'Connor stated that the eight companies which existed in England in August 1920, spread across London, Liverpool and Manchester, were acting autonomously and in isolation from one another. In October the following year, he judged that an

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[292] John Carney to C/S, 22 Feb. 1922 (NLI, O'Mahoney Papers, Ms 24,474)
[293] Patterson, 'The activities of Irish republican physical force organisations in Scotland', p. 46
[294] 'SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN COUNTRY UNITS', 7 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[169])

improvement had come about in communications between the various units, now numbering thirty-one companies and spread across a wider area.[295] We noted already that the Birmingham Volunteers affiliated themselves with the Liverpool IRA. James Cunningham fails to explain what such an affiliation specifically involved.[296] Presumably, however, it entailed close contact between the two units. O'Connor later recommended that the Nottingham IRA devote themselves to gunrunning under the direction of the Birmingham Volunteers, thereby involving the Birmingham men in another affiliation.[297] Outside of such affiliations, relations between IRA centres were fostered to some extent by the complicated business of gunrunning. With Liverpool seen as the safest port from which to smuggle the munitions to Ireland, the Merseyside men received regular visits from their London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow comrades.[298]

The IRB seems to have had a significant role in the command of the Liverpool Volunteers. However, Fenian control was dependent on the compliance of the commanding officer. By April 1921, the O/C, Hugh Early, although an IRB member, had 'fallen away somewhat' from the control of the local Fenian executive, Paddy Daly told Michael Collins. Such an alteration in the relationship between the IRB and the Volunteers on Merseyside had been caused by the institution of direct communications between Early and the O/C Britain, along with the innovation whereby the former was now planning operations solely in consultation with O'Connor's representative in Liverpool. Having 'acquired this power', Early proceeded to collect a significant amount of money from various Irish organisations, including the Cumann na mBan. His refusal to reveal the quantity so collected reinforced suspicions which already existed against him in the minds of the IRB regarding the lenient treatment he had received from the authorities in connection with IRA arson attacks. Taken as a whole, 'things look very "fishy"', Daly noted. He himself, however, did not believe that anything nefarious was afoot. Still, he suggested that the O/C Britain's representative take complete control of the Volunteers. Under such an arrangement, he hoped that the rules and constitution of the IRA would be fully observed, implying that this was not the case under Early. Such procedures would ensure that

> ... the O/C and the other officers meet at periodical times to discuss volunteer matters, that an adjutant be appointed, and that a quarter-master be appointed to look after the funds and any fire-arms belonging to the Co[mpan]y.

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[295] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept., 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-5], P7/A/29[264-73])
[296] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 1, 5, 15 (NAI)
[297] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[298] See pp 131-2 below

O'Connor's representative taking charge of the Volunteers need not involve his remaining permanently on Merseyside, Daly added. Rather, the company O/C would be answerable to him, sending him regular reports on the situation. Alternatively, Daly proposed that a member of the Liverpool IRB executive, appointed by his colleagues and ratified by GHQ, assume the position of 'sub director' of the Liverpool IRA. This man would then act as an intermediary between Dublin and the company O/C, and would be involved in the planning of operations with other IRA officers.[299] The sources do not record if Daly's suggestions were implemented. However, Michael Collins told Daly that IRB man Sean McGarry would 'deal with all local questions, and fix up things on a firm basis'. McGarry did spend some time in Liverpool, but the nature of his reforms, if any, are not recorded.[300]

Early later stated that he had found the IRB to be of little use and was only a nominal member.[301] This raises questions about the importance of the Fenian organisation. Augusteijn states that the re-organisation of the Volunteers in Ireland in the period between the Easter Rising and the general election of 1918 saw a decline in the importance of the IRB. For the military-minded, the 'Organisation' was superfluous as the Volunteers were now openly defying the British authorities. Eamon de Valera and Cathal Brugha, the future minister for defence, subscribed to this, believing that secret societies were no longer necessary.[302] Nevertheless, in Cork city and county, it was militant IRB men who forced the pace from 1917 onwards by mounting unauthorised attacks on policemen.[303] Marie Coleman contends that IRB membership in county Longford was small and that its influence among ordinary Volunteers was minimal. However, Fenianism was 'an important motivating factor for the leaders of republicanism' in the county.[304]

In Britain, the position of the IRB was ambiguous. Ordinary Volunteers were sometimes kept in ignorance of the organisation's existence. Leaders like Joe Vize used the Fenians as bedrock for the re-organisation of the Volunteers. Others, however, were sceptical of the IRB's value. Liverpool's Paddy Daly found his Fenian colleagues little help with gunrunning matters. Moreover, due to his youth, they balked at Daly succeeding Neil Kerr as

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[299] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 27 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[300] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 5 May; Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 11 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5); Laurence William White, 'McGarry, Seán' in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, downloaded from http://dib.cambridge.org on 15 Oct. 2010
[301] BMHWS no. 1535, Hugh Early, p. 11 (NAI)
[302] Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, p. 86
[303] Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, pp 240-42
[304] Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish revolution*, pp 163-4

centre for the north of England, and consistently tried to undermine his position. In the latter part of the war of independence, the IRB's 'power as a secret organisation was very much on the decline', Daly later wrote.[305] Sean McGrath captured the ambiguity of the organisation when he stated in later life that he was 'suspicious of some of the men who were in the I.R.B. It was an organisation joined without serious thought'.[306]

VIII

For training purposes, Volunteer companies usually mobilised once or twice a week. The main activity performed at such meetings was drill practice, sometimes using real weapons, otherwise dummy rifles. On 24 June 1919, police in Renfrewshire, Scotland, observed a group of Irishmen performing drill on the Old Clay Road, Scotstounhill. At about 8 p.m.,

> a man of about 45 years of age and an Ex Army Non. Comm[issioned]. Officer, shouted out "Fall In" and the Company did so, afterwards going through the following movements – "Squad" "Attention." "Number", "Form Fours", "Re-Form Two Deep", "Form Fours, Left." "By the Right, Quick March." and the Company, numbering about 80, aged from 19 to 30 years, then marched off in formation of fours along "Clay Road" Dumbartonshire [sic], thence by Anniesland, (Knightswood) within the City of Glasgow boundary to the Canal.

The police noted that the men were well practised in the drill.[307]

Semaphore, a means of communication using flags, was sometimes taught at meetings. Lectures were given on street and house fighting, the correct use of firearms and bombs, along with general military tactics and first aid. In addition, Volunteers sometimes received editions of *An t-Óglác*, which contained articles on military tactics and proper organisation, along with commentary on engagements between the IRA and Crown forces in Ireland and exhortatory editorials from GHQ.[308] When Joe Vize was founding new half-companies in Glasgow in mid-1919, he made provision for each unit to practice drill in its local Sinn Féin hall once a week, while instruction with other units in the same company was to take place at headquarters once every month. Such an arrangement, he argued, was required to meet both the high number of recruits and their desire to train locally.[309] Initially,

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[305] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly pp 29-30, 32-3 (NAI)
[306] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, Mulcahy Notebooks, P17b/100)
[307] Chief Constable of Renfrewshire to the Secretary for Scotland, 28 June 1920, enclosing report by Inspector Samuel Cronie, 25 June 1920 (National Archives of Scotland [NAS], First World War Files, HH31/34/18)
[308] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 19-20; Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 23-8; BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 1; ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, pp 2-3; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, pp 1-2; ibid., no. 696, Henry O'Hagan, pp 4, 7 (NAI)
[309] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 27 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

meetings of the Liverpool company took place in the INF hall on Bridge Road, Litherland. Later, while O'Leary was leader, they moved venue to the basement of 93 Scotland Road. Tom Kerr appointed John Pinkman one of the company mobilisers. Receiving notification of a meeting, it was his job to call at his comrades' lodgings and inform them. For security reasons, Pinkman did not use the terms 'IRA' or 'Volunteers' on this work, but rather the code term 'Irish Literary Society'.[310]

'The Volunteer at the beginning of his training is a civilian,' *An t-Óglác* noted,

> and [he] thinks just like the other civilians around him. His business is to make himself a soldier, and the task is by no means easy, because he can give only a limited part of his time to it, and during the rest of the time he is just the same as ever.

This being so, it was the duty of the officer to set the pace. In particular, he was to eschew a civilian or relaxed attitude, especially in relation to matters of administration and discipline.[311] The *General scheme of organisation* recommended that twelve men in each company be detailed for a number of 'Special Services', including first aid, engineering, scouting and despatch-carrying.[312] As with all the recommendations of the *General scheme*, the extent to which such strict theory was translated into reality is debatable. However, sixty-one people were said to have been detailed for special services in the Scottish Volunteers.[313] The *General Scheme* itself seemed to recognise the potential disparity between theory and practice when it advised its readers that the paramount objective of Volunteer organisation was 'to secure the general efficiency of the company as a fighting unit rather than its conformation to an ideal type'.[314]

We have few insights into the relations between rank and file Volunteers. Dennis Brennan complained that some members of the London IRA were 'show off boys. They were always at a dance pretending to be in the know, which they weren't.'[315] Staying in the capital, tensions existed between and amongst Volunteers from Ireland and those who were born in Britain. In the autumn of 1921, the O/C of no. 4 London company complained that 'The men from each county [in Ireland] hang together like Freemasons. Cork men think that their men of their city & county have won the war; Kerry men imagine they are the salt of the earth – & so on'. This rivalry was exacerbated by the men from Ireland scorning those born in London.

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[310] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 18-21
[311] *An t-Óglác*, 19 Dec. 1919
[312] Irish Volunteers, *General Scheme of Organisation* (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0032A, group 2, item 2)
[313] Calculations of company memberships, Scottish brigade IRA (Mooney Papers, EMP/3/C/13)
[314] Irish Volunteers, *General Scheme of Organisation* (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0032A, group 2, item 2)
[315] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)

Many of the latter were quite sensitive about their accents and mannerisms. He contended that these men were shouldering a burden unknown to their Irish-born comrades. The British-born men were risking their prosperity by involving themselves in IRA activity. With 'very little to interest them materially in our cause' and sometimes encountering hostility from their parents, such men fought 'because of the blood that's in them'. Contending that such tensions probably existed in other parts of Britain as well, the O/C hoped that an address from GHQ, in the style of a stirring *An t-Óglác* article, would soothe them.[316]

As well as training, discipline and good conduct were urged on the Volunteer soldier.[317] Evidence exists of only four IRA court-martials taking place in Britain in the period 1919–23. Two took place on Merseyside in 1919 or 1920. The first saw two Volunteers charged with making private gain from the sale of munitions acquired by the Liverpool company. Convicted of the offence, they were dismissed from the IRA.[318] In the second, John Pinkman and a number of his comrades were put on trial for an unauthorised raid on a gunsmith's shop.[319] Sometime in 1921 or 1922, William Robinson, an officer in the London IRA, was expelled from the organisation along with his brother Charles, presumably after a court martial, due to their having committed 'certain military offences'.[320]

The fourth court-martial, in the autumn of 1923, saw Seamus Reader, O/C Scottish brigade and former Na Fianna instructor, and Tim Healy, brigade quartermaster, charged with misappropriating funds between the previous 29 April and 30 June. At that time, near the end of the civil war, Reader and Healy were the only active members of the brigade staff in Scotland, the remaining members having been arrested and deported to Ireland the previous March. The allegedly misappropriated money, amounting to £102 11*s* 6*d*, was received by Healy from the brigade battalions, O/C Britain Patrick Murray, the Cumann na mBan, and Countess Markievicz. At the court martial, Healy pleaded guilty to misappropriating £43 11*s* 6*d*. His account of the remaining £59 was vague. Reader denied any knowledge of the money or its misappropriation but admitted that his failure to check Healy's accounts was a derogation of duty. In his evidence, the O/C 1st battalion Scottish brigade stated that the battalion council, dissatisfied with Reader's management of brigade funds, had recommended that he, the O/C 1st battalion, sit on the brigade council. Refusing to discuss the matter, Reader suspended the council and the entire 1st battalion. Reader stated that he suspended the

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[316] 'R. Ua D, O/C No. 4 London' to O/C Britain, 24 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/27[49-50])
[317] *An t-Óglác*, 23 Sept. 1921; John Carney to C/S, 7 Dec. 1921 (NLI, O'Mahoney Papers, Ms 24,474)
[318] BMHWS no. 797, Micheál Ó Laoghaire, p. 22 (NAI)
[319] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 22-8; see p. 89 below
[320] Reginald Dunne to Art O'Brien, 24 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

battalion because of its indiscipline and insubordination. He had refused to answer questions regarding the brigade finances because some of the money had been expended in sensitive areas, particularly £7 'given for information'. The court ruled that both Reader and Healy were guilty of deliberate misappropriation of funds and 'sentenced them to be dismissed with ignominy from the army'. The court explained that the leniency of the sentence was motivated by the fact that the defendants being unemployed made the recovery of the money impossible. Also, 'the peculiarities of our position in Britain make any other capital punishment impossible'. Holding, however, that it had not been proven that Reader had misused the money, the C/S, Frank Aiken, ruled that only Healy should be dismissed with ignominy.[321]

IX

Insubordination was one threat to the efficient operation of Volunteer units in Britain. Another, and perhaps more formidable, danger was that of unemployment. London's Art O'Brien raised the issue with Michael Collins in July or August 1921. The situation was one of 'continual risk and menace', and, with the number of cases of distress increasing, it was getting 'more serious as each day goes by'. O'Brien advanced Dunne, the O/C London, £150 to deal with the problem and was trying to source more money.[322] According to Dunne, around fifty-six men were out of work, with thirty-eight being in need of immediate assistance. He recommended that they each receive £2 per week.[323] Collins stated that the cases of unemployment could only be evaluated by deciding whether or not it was necessary to have IRA men in certain areas planning operations to be carried out in the event of the truce breaking down.[324] O'Brien agreed. However, he urged an immediate response. 'It is coming up against us now on all sides,' he warned, instancing cases in London, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and other areas, 'and [it] is going to create a great deal of mischief, annoyance and unpleasantness, unless we deal with it now in a definite manner.'[325] Rory O'Connor, the O/C Britain, confirmed the extent of the problem in London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Sheffield. Noting that the resultant financial distress was forcing some of the men

[321] O/C Britain to C/S, 29 Sept.; C/S to O/C Britain, 8 Oct. 1923 (UCDA, Twomey Papers, P69/37[188-94])
[322] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 10 Aug. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8430/19)
[323] Ibid., 15 Aug. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8430/19)
[324] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 17 Aug. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/331)
[325] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 22 Aug. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/331)

to sleep on the streets and allowed another to eat for only four days a week, he feared for the continued existence of the capital's Volunteer units.[326]

The Quartermaster of the London IRA provided specific details on sixteen Volunteers in need of assistance in the capital. All had joined before the truce. Other Volunteers who had joined after 11 July 1921 were also experiencing distress, he noted, but as their commanders had not yet 'proved the worth of these men' they had been omitted from the list. Of the sixteen, six had lost their jobs due to suspected involvement in Irish nationalist activities. In the North London company, for example, J. Walsh and J. Woodrofe, a cooper and a motor mechanic respectively, had both lost their jobs due to being 'Suspected of participation in IRA activities'. Of the remaining ten people, six had become unemployed due to the economic turndown. The other four were unable to find work. The men's respective commanders recommended that each receive financial assistance amounting to between £1 10*s* and £3 10*s* per week. The total sum for the sixteen Volunteers amounted to £37 per week.[327] Two months later, in February 1922, the situation was only worse. M. O'Higgins, a squad leader in 'A' company who had worked in a post office, was 'Thrown out of work owing to arrest and internment'.[328] Volunteers in Middlesbrough were also suffering. 'They want some ready money to take them to Ireland and to keep them for a few weeks without working,' Liam O'Faolain told O'Brien of his fellow Volunteers. '... It is impossible to obtain any work here now ...'.[329]

Collins and O'Brien thought of relieving such distress by raising funds from the various Irish organisations. The distribution of the money would then be entrusted to the INACDF, an organisation which was created in early 1921 by combining the various Irish fund-raising organisations that had been established in Britain in support of the republican movement. Hitherto, the INACDF had expended its money on defending suspects arrested in Britain, maintaining the families of men tried and convicted in Britain as well as the dependents of men from Ireland imprisoned in Britain.[330] In January 1922, however, O'Brien complained that the 'wretched truce' was frustrating the administration of relief.[331] In response, Dunne proposed that a 'combined civil & military board of inquiry' be established to investigate the situation. Each Volunteer in distress could be interviewed by the board,

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[326] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[327] London battalion QM to Art O'Brien, n.d., but c. 3 Dec. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)
[328] Art O'Brien to C/S, 16 Feb. 1922, enclosing list by Reginald Dunne (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)
[329] Liam O'Faolain to Art O'Brien, 22 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427)
[330] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 8 Nov.; Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 10 Nov. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/451)
[331] Art O'Brien to Reginald Dunne, 17 Jan. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/16)

which would be composed of two INACDF officials, two IRA officers, and a chairman.[332] Taking Dunne's recommendation on board, a joint committee of the INACDF began hearing cases and dispensing relief in the form of weekly grants of between ten shillings and £4. On 22 February, for example, a meeting of the joint committee approved a weekly grant of ten shillings each to J. P. Ware and T. Martin, fifteen shillings to T. Cooper, £1 each to A. M. Clark, Jack Blake, J. Thomas and P. Stevens, £1 10*s* each to J. White, J. Black and J. Cooke, and £2 each to J. Andrews and P. Baker. Cooper, Ware, Martin and Black were also in receipt of fifteen shillings per week unemployment assistance.[333] In March 1922, O'Brien estimated that the organisation had received over one hundred applications for aid, along with numerous applications for 'special grants'.[334] Such special grants often gave applicants the funds necessary to move back to Ireland. A Volunteer named Creaghan, for example, injured in the explosion of an IRA munitions factory in London in July 1921, was in receipt of a weekly grant of £2 and had it exchanged for a lump sum of £5 to finance his return to Ireland.[335]

However, the decisions of the joint committee soon became the subject of controversy. Patrick Kerrigan, a member of 'A' company London Volunteers, complained of having received no assistance. He had been on trial for IRA activities. Acquitted of the charges, he, nevertheless, had lost his job as a result of the press publicity. Living with his parents and his five younger brothers, Kerrigan was in great distress as his father did not work and he himself was unable to find employment. Meanwhile, the men who were on trial with him, presumably having been released from prison under the general amnesty in January or February 1922, were receiving £1 10*s* per week. Kerrigan felt he was entitled to the same relief being received by his comrades, describing it as 'a down wright [sic] shame leaving one man out of a Bunch'.[336] At a meeting of his local ISDL branch, he was offered £5 relief. However, outraged to learn that some of his comrades were being given more, up to £15 10*s*, he refused the offer. 'The least I expected from the I.N.A. was to get my board and lodgings paid,' he complained. Demanding that his case be revisited, he stated that if he was not treated as he thought he should, he would reveal all the details to his fellow ISDL members. He would then resign from the league and 'A' company. '... I am treated since I came out of

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[332] Reginald Dunne to Art O'Brien, 4 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)
[333] Minutes of Joint Committee of Irish National Aid Committee, held at 182 Shaftesbury Avenue, 22 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/9)
[334] Art O'Brien to James Lawless, 9 Mar. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/9)
[335] Sean McGrath to Art O'Brien, 17 May; Art O'Brien to Sean McGrath, 18 May 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/9); see pp 168-9 below
[336] Patrick Kerrigan to Art O'Brien, 5 Mar. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

jail [i.e. acquitted of the charge] as if I was a Black & Tan,' he protested. 'If I was a one [sic] I would be working to-day, not parading the streets.' While his comrades were receiving kudos and financial rewards for their involvement in the IRA operation, Kerrigan, who had, despite his acquittal, partaken in the operation, was receiving nothing.[337]

However, the most serious complaint regarding the INACDF came from William Robinson. 'I am merely an unemployed & invalid ex-convict living on the charity of my parents, in receipt of no assistance whatever,' he complained to O'Brien in April 1922. Had he not sacrificed his 'health, my piece of mind, my pocket-money, my time, & my liberty' for Ireland, he would now be working in a professional job, he claimed.[338] Robinson failed to mention that he and his brother Charles had been expelled from the London IRA. Dunne, the O/C London, also believed that recent events pointed to the brothers, whom he condemned as 'pests', having informed the British police of the identities of certain other IRA members.[339] Robinson also failed to acknowledge that he and his family had already received £124 from the INACDF over the previous five months. £30 was granted to Robinson's father to fund his passage to India, his mother received £30 to complete the purchase of a motor bicycle, £52 10s paid for two operations on Robinson's nose, £6 10*s* covered dental charges, and £5 was given to Robinson's mother to enable her to visit him in Parkhurst prison.[340] Unsurprisingly perhaps, the INACDF declined Robinson's request for further financial assistance.[341]

O'Brien worried, however, that Robinson's case was attracting 'notoriety' due to the allegations he was making against the INACDF. In particular, Robinson alleged that assistance was being granted to dozens of men 'who have not lost one penny piece for Ireland' and who had little connection with any Irish organisation prior to the truce. In addition, he stated that he knew of cases where men had deliberately left their jobs so as to claim assistance from the fund. Moreover, he claimed that he had proof that 'blackguards of the convert type' were also in receipt of funds.[342] O'Brien wrote to Robinson demanding that he substantiate these allegations, which were doing 'much harm'.[343] In particular, such charges of corruption were frustrating INACDF collections amongst the Irish population in London. Indeed, O'Brien feared that in the absence of 'a considerable revival of support from

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[337] Ibid., 11 Mar. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[338] William Robinson to Art O'Brien, 25 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[339] Reginald Dunne to Art O'Brien, 24 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[340] Sean McGrath to Art O'Brien, 29 Apr.; Art O'Brien to Sean McGrath, 29 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[341] Sean McGrath to William Robinson, 26 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[342] Art O'Brien to Sean McGrath, 29 Apr.; William Robinson to Art O'Brien, 25 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[343] Art O'Brien to William Robinson, 28 Apr. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

our people', the organisation would soon have to cease operation. Connie Creaghan, for example, declined O'Brien's invitation to an entertainments evening. Due to the 'misappropriation of these funds by headquarters in London', she felt unable to contribute to an event some of whose proceeds were going to the INACDF. She added that she would attend the event if the proceeds were sent to Ireland instead.[344]

Five weeks later, Robinson detailed his charges against the INACDF. His alleged corruption, obtaining money by false pretences, and misappropriation of funds against five men, including Reginald Dunne, the O/C London. He charged that in late 1921 and early 1922 two of the 'soi-distant "men's representatives"' on the joint civil and military board of the INACDF had conspired to raise funds for 'corrupt purposes' under the auspices of the fund. He then contended that the representatives had used their position of power to 'bribe, or to attempt to bribe certain men, in order that they should do what they, the said certain men, believed to be wrong'. Thirdly, he alleged that one of the representatives had misappropriated a sum of money voted by the board. Finally, he contended that the representatives had managed the affairs of the joint board 'in a most tyrannical, autocratic and impudent manner'.[345] He had already aired some of these allegations at a meeting of the Lewisham branch of the ISDL. It was 'pretty evident that Robinson is out to make mischief', O'Brien commented when a report of the meeting appeared in the *Catholic Herald* newspaper.[346] Robinson also hinted at an allegation of embezzlement against O'Brien himself. It concerned a complicated series of payments and re-payments involving O'Brien, Robinson's mother and the INACDF in relation to the purchase or sale of two motorbikes by the London IRA.[347] Robinson further brought to O'Brien's attention the fact that members of the capital's Volunteers had yet to return two bicycles which they had borrowed from their owners in late 1921.[348]

In the end, however, despite his litany of complaints and allegations, Robinson proved amicable. He met the INACDF committee on 17 June. At the meeting, the organisation decided to help Robinson pay his remaining bills. He came away from the meeting satisfied

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[344] Connie Creaghan to Art O'Brien, 19 Apr.; Art O'Brien to D. H. Evans, 1 May; Art O'Brien to Sean Golden, 18 May 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

[345] William Robinson to Joint Honorary Secretary of the INACDF, 4 June 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

[346] Art O'Brien to Sean McGrath, 20 May 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

[347] Art O'Brien to James Mooney, 13 May, enclosing statement of J. L. Mooney, 6 May; James Mooney to Art O'Brien, 17 May; Art O'Brien to James Mooney, 18 May; Art O'Brien to Sean Golden, 18 May; Sean Golden to O'Brien, 7 June, enclosing Sean Golden to INACDF Committee, 7 June 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)

[348] William Robinson to Art O'Brien, 10 June 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)

that he had 'secured justice'. He now believed that the INACDF had 'done their best for me, having regard to their lack of funds'.[349] The following year, however, when O'Brien's complicated financial dealings and comfortable living circumstances were revealed during his conspiracy trial, Robinson returned to the attack, noting that 'A week's salary of his [i.e. O'Brien's] would have been ample to meet any doctor's bills'.[350]

X

Like its creation, the decline of the IRA in Britain was intimately connected with events in Ireland. With its granting of dominion status to twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties, many Volunteers accepted the treaty of December 1921 as a satisfactory or at least a reasonable response by the British government to the demand for Irish self-determination. This was the reasoning of Liverpool's John Pinkman, for example. 'Now that Ireland was independent,' he remembered thinking at the time, 'we [Liverpool Volunteers] wanted to live and work there.' Although he was unhappy with the terms of the treaty, Pinkman went to Dublin and joined the newly founded Irish army in the belief that to repudiate the agreement would only besmirch the reputation of the nascent Free State.[351] Similar reasoning may have motivated the 250 members of the Scottish brigade who also joined the army.[352] As we saw earlier, between October 1921 and January 1923, membership of the IRA in England fell from around 682 to 289. Much reduced everywhere, the organisation essentially disappeared in such areas as Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Cardiff, Bristol, Newport, and Plymouth.[353] Acceptance of the treaty accounts for some, albeit an unquantifiable, part of this decline. Something similar occurred in the wider Irish movement. Its members satisfied with the treaty, the ISDL experienced a significant decline in its membership.[354]

Those who remained tended to reject the treaty. London's Art O'Brien was unimpressed by the agreement. 'Be not mislead into rejoicing and thanksgiving without cause or reason,' he warned the readership of the *Irish Exile* two days after the treaty was signed.

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[349] Ibid., 22, 23 July 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8432/21)
[350] William Robinson to the Secretary, Sinn Féin Reorganisation Committee, 4 Nov. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1776)
[351] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 82, 93
[352] S. Fullerton to Minister for Defence, 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1922 (MAI, Collins Papers, A/06181)
[353] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-5]); C/S to President de Valera and ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749)
[354] Art O'Brien to Seamus Ua Laoidhleis (James Lawless), 9 Mar. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)

> The claim of the people of Ireland is, and always has been, the recognition of the complete independence of their country. That is a claim no nation can forgo, and until it is met in their case the Irish race cannot rejoice.

The Irish delegation, he intimated, had been forced to sign the treaty under threat of renewed war by the British. The agreement constituted a 'milestone' on the road to achieving Ireland's freedom rather than the attainment of Irish freedom itself. Should the Dáil vote to accept the treaty, the Irish in Britain would 'bow their heads in resignation and take the road once again'. The English had 'won another round', he wrote bitterly.[355] In what would prove a prescient remark, on 8 December O'Brien told Michael Collins that he could not foresee the Dáil accepting or rejecting the treaty by the margin necessary to secure general consent in Ireland. Such indecision would have the effect of dividing the country and retarding the 'national movement' for 'a hundred years'.[356] O'Brien went on to capture the rump ISDL for the anti-treatyites in July 1922.

The reasoning of Liverpool gunrunner Paddy Daly exemplified the IRA's anti-treaty position. In April 1922, in the absence of any sign of reconciliation between the pro- and anti-treaty camps in Sinn Féin and the Volunteers, and balking at the thought that munitions he had sent, and was still sending, to Ireland would be used in a civil war, Daly reluctantly broke ranks with Michael Collins. Acknowledging that in signing the treaty the Cork man acted in what he considered to be Ireland's best interests, Daly nevertheless stood firm with the Volunteers: 'I am in sympathy with the majority of the IRA; I would wish them to continue now and finish the fight; I want to help them to do so'. To lay down arms now, with full independence yet to be achieved, only to begin the struggle again, years in the future, would be illogical, he continued. The interests of the 'big businessmen' and 'politicians', ensconced in the new Ireland in the interim, would work to prevent such a 'renewal of war'.[357] Collins responded by saying that the munitions Daly was sending to Ireland were indeed being used by Irishmen against their fellow countrymen, namely by opponents of the treaty against those who supported it. Collins maintained that the treaty commanded the support of the majority of the IRA, and constituted 'the one opportunity we may ever get in our history for going forward to our ideal of a free independent Ireland'.[358]

The split in republican ranks in Britain was epitomised by an incident in Liverpool in the summer of 1922. John Pinkman, the former Volunteer now enlisted in the Irish army, was

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[355] *Irish Exile*, Dec. 1921 (New Series, no. 2)
[356] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 8 Dec. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429/5)
[357] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 3 Apr. 1922 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[358] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 5 May 1922 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)

granted leave to visit his family in Liverpool. At Westland Row railway station, Pinkman met fellow Merseyside Volunteers Paddy Low and Hugh Early, the latter former company O/C. 'Are you going to Liverpool?', Early asked. 'Aren't you afraid to be going over there?' Pinkman replied that he was well able of taking care of himself, producing a Webley revolver from his pocket. The train then departed to Dun Laoghaire, where Pinkman caught the boat to Holyhead. One of his fellow passengers on the sea trip was Neil Kerr Snr and his wife. A few nights later, in Liverpool, Pinkman met Tommy O'Malley, a former comrade in the city's IRA. Suddenly, three men emerged from the darkness and demanded that Pinkman surrender his revolver. Pinkman denied that he was carrying a weapon. The assailants persisted. 'I've got orders to shoot you if you don't hand over that gun,' O'Malley said. Still playing the innocent abroad, Pinkman invited the men to search his house so as to persuade them that he did not possess a gun. Upon entering the house, two of the assailants produced revolvers. One of them denounced the treaty and the Free State. They searched the house but failed to find the gun. One of the assailants reiterated that they had received information that Pinkman had a revolver on his person when he left Dublin for Liverpool a few days earlier. Pinkman conceded that this was so but, concocting a story, stated that Neil Kerr had demanded that he hand over the weapon to him on the boat. The gang then insisted that Pinkman lead them to Kerr's house. While walking there, Pinkman tried to escape from his assailants but failed. Upon entering Kerr's house, Pinkman immediately asked that Kerr confirm that he had handed over his revolver to him on the boat. Realising the situation, Kerr did so, contending that there was no need for arms in Liverpool now that the war of independence had concluded. He then stated that he had sent the gun back to Dublin. Angry and confused, the assailants abused Pinkman and Kerr for supporting the treaty. 'I'm a traitor, am I?', demanded Kerr. 'Well, if I ever betrayed Ireland then I deserve to be shot. Shoot me now, if I'm a traitor.' Just as one of the gang levelled his gun at Kerr, Kerr's wife entered the room and pretended to feint with shock. Kerr then lunged at the gunman, who promptly turned and fled towards the door, followed by his comrades. In the hallway, Kerr and Pinkman fought with the four. Eventually, the assailants unlocked the front door, scrambled out into the street and made their getaway. Pinkman later admitted to Kerr that he still had the gun, hidden in his house. Reflecting on the whole episode, Pinkman believed that Early had tipped off his anti-treatyite Volunteer comrades about Pinkman being armed, the IRA, of course, being

anxious to acquire as much munitions as possible as tensions mounted over the treaty. Jimmy Lowe confirmed his suspicions.[359]

A desire to prevent the split in republican ranks reaching London seems to have been a factor in the decision of the O/C London Reginald Dunne and Volunteer Joseph O'Sullivan to assassinate Sir Henry Wilson, a retired military officer and Conservative MP. According to Michael Cremen, an IRA man sent to London to persuade the Volunteers there to join the anti-treaty side, the capital's Cumann na mBan were 'violently republican' and refused to co-operate with Dunne's Volunteers as they were suspicious of their attitude towards the treaty. Dunne beseeched the women's auxiliary to have patience, stating that there would soon be some activity. In the event, however, rather than re-uniting the ranks of Irish nationalism, the assassination, carried out on 22 June 1922, only exacerbated the standoff between the pro- and anti-treaty factions in Ireland and helped precipitate the outbreak of the civil war later that month.[360]

One organisation which did not split into pro- anti-treaty sections was the IRB. The organisation's supreme council took an ambiguous position on the treaty. One the one hand, it endorsed the agreement, yet, on the other, it allowed individual Fenians who happened to be members of the Dáil to vote with their consciences on the issue.[361] Due to Michael Collins being president of the IRB, the anti-treatyites henceforth viewed the organisation as having been instrumental in securing the ratification of the treaty by the Dáil in January 1922 by sixty-four votes to fifty-seven. As Mary MacSwiney, a stalwart republican, later argued, 'It was the IRB that had ruined us in getting the Treaty passed ...'.[362] Disgusted, republicans left the Fenian organisation to the pro-treatyites. By the outbreak of the civil war, the IRB was effectively dead.[363]

The IRA was 'hard hit' by the mass arrest of republicans which took place throughout Britain at the request of the Free State authorities on 11 March 1923.[364] In all, 110 people were arrested and deported to Ireland, including O/C Scotland Joseph Robinson and his staff, Art O'Brien and London Volunteers Sean McGrath and Denis Brennan, O/C Newcastle-upon-Tyne Anthony Mularkey, Manchester's Liam McMahon, and Liverpool's Denis and Pat

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[359] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 104-12; see Tom O'Malley's entry in Free State Army intelligence report, 'CHARGES AGAINST IRREGULARS LIVING IN ENGLAND', 12 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/182)
[360] BMHWS no. 903, Michael Cremen, pp 1-3 (NAI); see pp 146, 194-5 below
[361] 'THE ORGANISATION AND THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION IN IRELAND', 12 Dec. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[362] Mary MacSwiney to C/S, 25 June 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers P150/1752)
[363] Curran, 'The decline and fall of the IRB', p. 22
[364] C/S to O/C Britain, 9 Apr. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749)

Fleming. The deportations were subsequently found to have been illegal and the deportees were returned to Britain in May.[365] By then, however, C/S Liam Lynch had been killed in a skirmish with Free State forces in county Tipperary. With Lynch died the willingness to resort to drastic measures, including a plan to begin operations in Britain, as a means of shoring up the republican position.[366] On 24 May, Frank Aiken, Lynch's successor, ordered the IRA to 'dump arms'.[367] With the exhaustion of the republicans, the civil war in Ireland concluded.

The defeat of the republicans in the civil war, of course, signalled the end of the IRA in Britain as a fighting force. In a communication to local commanders, the O/C Britain, Patrick Murray, tried to soothe the pain of defeat with a call to perseverance:

> The objects for which the IRA was formed still await achievement. The lesson of the past is that patient and thorough organisation is the sure means to success. Discouragement and difficulties do not alter the determination of men like you who so far have persevered. The Ideal for which you worked in conjunction with your comrades in Ireland is yet before you. Its final realisation depends on the earnestness with which you face the new situation and the assistance which you will be in a position to give when again necessary.[368]

Five months later, it was reported that the Volunteers in Britain numbered 438, spread across London, Portsmouth, Swansea, Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Glasgow. The latter place accounted for over half the total membership. Portsmouth, Swansea and Glasgow were well organised, London and Birmingham disorganised, the remainder somewhere in between.[369]

XI

The post-Rising republican movement in Ireland began to re-organise itself in earnest in 1917. It was 1919 before similar efforts commenced in Britain, with the re-founding of the Irish Volunteers, the IRB, Cumann na mBan, and Na Fianna Éireann, the four organisations of Irish physical force republicanism. Joe Vize led the way in Scotland, and was soon followed by fellow IRB men in Liverpool and London. Later, new organisations were

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[365] *The Times*, 13 Mar., 10, 15 May 1923

[366] Adjutant General to O/Cs, 'Operation Order No. 17', 3 Feb; Eamon de Valera to Maurice Twomey, 14 Mar. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749); C/S to Eamon de Valera, 11 Apr. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1750)

[367] C/S to O/Cs of Commands, Divisions and Independent brigades, 24 May 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1752)

[368] O/C Britain to O/Cs 'ALL AREAS', 13 June 1923 (UCDA, Twomey Papers, P69/37[240])

[369] O/C Britain to C/S, 2 Nov. 1923 (UCDA, Twomey Papers P69/120[40-41])

founded in Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Tyneside. The membership of the IRA, at its peak in the autumn of 1921, lay somewhere between 2,200 and 2,700. Those of the other three republican organisations are unknown, but were probably in the hundreds. The Volunteer membership was made up of men born in Ireland and those born in Britain to Irish immigrants. Their reasons for joining the IRA can usually be traced to such factors as having imbibed a nationalist outlook from their family relations, the consumption of nationalist media, membership of cultural nationalist organisations, and experience of sectarian discrimination.

As in Ireland, the Volunteers in Britain suffered problems, including loose organisation, bad leadership, and squabbles over financial aid to unemployed Volunteers. Like their comrades across the Irish Sea, republicans in Britain disagreed as to the merits of the treaty of December 1921. Some accepted it as a reasonable answer to Ireland's demand for freedom. Others rejected it as an unacceptable compromise. During the civil war, Britain remained a base of operations for the anti-treaty IRA. However, its membership was much less than that of its pre-treaty ancestor and it suffered serious organisational problems. The mass arrest and deportation of 11 March 1923 hobbled republicanism in Britain for the remainder of the civil war.

In November 1920, discussing the nascent Tyneside IRA, London's Sean McGrath agreed with Michael Collins' statement that organising Volunteer companies in Britain was his most important task. The Tyneside men were 'only waiting [for] a visit from me to enable them to get direct[ly] in touch with you,' McGrath wrote.[370] What motivated Collins' interest in the establishment of Volunteer organisation in Britain was the opportunity it afforded for gunrunning, the clandestine acquisition and despatch to Ireland of munitions of war. It is to that topic that we now turn.

[370] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, 13 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/8)

3

Supplying an army: Gunrunning in Britain

I

As a military endeavour, the Easter Rising of 1916 was a failure. As a political exercise, however, the rebellion proved very effective, for it encouraged those who re-formed the Irish Volunteers and the IRB in 1917 to continue the struggle to overthrow British rule in Ireland. However, with only a limited amount of munitions available for purchase or theft in Ireland itself, rebels were forced to source materiel abroad. Britain was the main source of armaments procured overseas, and republican gunrunners there engaged in illegal and dangerous activities in order to provide munitions to their comrades in Ireland. As one Liverpool gunrunner expressed it: 'I always have it before me that we have got to help supply an army ...'.[1] This chapter discusses such gunrunning. Section II follows two gunrunners on missions to secure armaments. Section III discusses the people involved in gunrunning. Section IV deal with the types and quantities of materiel acquired by the gunrunners. Section V notes the arrangements made for the storage of such armaments, while section VI describes the transport of weapons to Ireland and their distribution there. Section VII concludes.

II

On 10 May 1919, Joseph Vize, chief IRB gunrunner in Scotland, wrote to Michael Collins. '[W]e are now on a few good lines that I expect to work with good results very soon ...', he declared. One line of inquiry concerned a big army stores, containing machine guns, revolvers, rifles and grenades. The rifles were broken down into their constituent parts. All

[1] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 28 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)

the parts were included except the wooden sections, which could be manufactured in Ireland. He concluded: '[I] intend to give it extra attention and try to strike something good.'[2]

Two-and-a-half weeks later, Vize was empathetic: 'We've struck oil'.

> There is now passing into our hands 500 Revolvers and 200,000 rounds of .303 [ammunition], don't think I've made a mistake in the figures, it[']s right, I'm making speeding up arrangements so that it will be in our hands as soon as possible ... I expect this to be extra good and intend working for it for all its worth, I'm going down there on Wed[nesday]. night to speed up things (It is outside the City) Send over what money you can by Nolan, to have on hand. This first lot will cost nothing only what I spent as bait about £30 or £40 up to now, but they will be expecting a present when all is got through before making another deal [.]

The first raid was scheduled for Wednesday night, 4 June. Further raids would be mounted every subsequent night until all the materiel had been removed.[3]

The following week, Vize informed Collins that the first raid on the army stores had been re-arranged for Tuesday night, 10 June. Between twenty-five and thirty thousand rounds of .303 ammunition were to be removed by motor car, along with revolvers by hand. Six dumps were arranged to receive the projected haul. The motor car would distribute the munitions between the dumps in the country, while a horse and cart would do likewise in the city. Vize did not know the number of revolvers in the store as the storekeeper 'is not a man you could buy over, so we must take it as he dets [i.e. tells?] us'. Moreover, the storekeeper had not yet indicated how or when he wanted to be rewarded for his co-operation. Still, Vize and his men expected to get a large haul of munitions: 'Everything is looking the best for us, (unless something unforeseen happens) and I have great hopes of doing something extra big for you (God grant it).' An excited Vize concluded with the admission that he feared that the projected raid would be frustrated before they had secured enough munitions, 'if we ever could get enough'.[4]

However, on 22 June, Vize informed Collins that, 'meeting our old luck', the operation had been cancelled. The day before the scheduled raid, Vize's agent, the army range keeper, was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment for pawning army boots, while his wife was given three weeks to vacate the family's lodgings at the base. Vize hoped that they might be able to acquire some of the munitions within that period. Nevertheless, he was keenly disappointed: '[T]he worst part of it is filling you and the boys with such hopes only

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[2] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 10 May 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[3] Ibid., 28 May 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); original emphasis
[4] Ibid., 6 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); original emphasis

to be dashed to the ground, it has not been for the want of working up the job I can assure you, we could only do our best'.[5]

While Vize contemplated his bad luck, a fellow gunrunner, Liverpool's Stephen Lanigan, was making preparations for a deal of his own in London. On 31 May, he informed Collins that he had received two 'promises' during the week. A former ICA member undertook to procure some army service pattern rifles, while a London man, 'a socialist of the revolutionary type', agreed to introduce him to a London contact in relation to securing handguns. With respect to the rifles, Lanigan asked Collins' advice on the maximum price he should pay.[6] Collins responded three days later, advising that £5 was the upper limit.[7]

Late the following month, after requesting that Collins send him a couple of hundred pounds in connection with the proposed London deal, Lanigan related the details of the projected transaction. He was pursuing the second avenue mooted on 31 May, except that ammunition rather than handguns was involved. He had been given one hundred rounds of .45 and 140 rounds of .303 ammunition as samples. On offer were thirty thousand rounds of the latter, packed in cases, for 3*d* per round, or £375 in total. A deposit of £75 was required up front, with the balance payable on completion of the deal. Rifles, grenades, pistols and trench knives were also available, enthused Lanigan, but no .45 ammunition was offered. He had already given a £3 deposit on some .44 American service automatic handguns. The dealer would only do business with Lanigan's contact, Dick James, a revolutionary socialist, and the munitions would be delivered to an address in London. Lanigan mused that the London IRA men would have to use as a dump somewhere accessible to a horse and cart or a car. The munitions would then be transported to Liverpool and thence to Ireland.[8] Collins thought the deal rather expensive. Encouraging Lanigan to secure a reduction in the prices, he nevertheless authorised a deal at the prices quoted.[9]

On 21 July, Lanigan told Collins that the deal had fallen through. Perhaps making a virtue of a necessity, he confessed to being relieved, for 'the danger of being swooped upon' by the police, along with the difficulties of transporting the munitions haul, had troubled him greatly. Another deal was proposed, however, whereby the same dealer would supply 150 rounds of ammunition per day, along with occasional rifles at £5 each. Lanigan introduced his contact to two members of the London IRA. The contact demanded a £20 deposit before

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[5] Ibid., 22 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[6] Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 31 May 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[59-60])
[7] Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 3 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[58])
[8] Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 24, 27 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[54])
[9] Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 27 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[51])

commencing business. Lanigan contemplated paying this himself, but as this might have caused confusion in the gunrunning accounts subsequently, he asked Collins to authorise the payment from London funds. The failure of the London Volunteers to supply an address to which the haul could be delivered was also a factor in Lanigan's refusal to pay. He said he had great confidence in his contact, Dick James, but noted that James was himself dealing with another middleman, an Irishman named Farrell, whose real name was Kavanagh. He suspected Kavanagh of 'buying the stuff from some East End crooks, and possibly adding to the price to make a bit for himself'. Nevertheless, Lanigan thought the new deal worthwhile, if only for the chance of obtaining precious .45 ammunition, one hundred rounds of which he had secured in London and sent on its way to Dublin.[10]

On 23 July, Collins approved the terms of the new deal in London, the purchase of 150 rounds of ammunition per day. .45 ammunition was 'very badly needed', he noted. £5 for a rifle was rather expensive, but it was not excessive.[11] That same day, however, Lanigan told Collins that he had received a tip-off that associates of Dick James had informed Scotland Yard of the latter's gunrunning activities.[12] The deal was off, and he advised the leaders of the London IRA 'to lie low for some time'. Unable to contact James, Lanigan did succeed in contacting Kavanagh. He told Collins that if the London Volunteers wanted to do business with Kavanagh, he would be able to arrange an introduction.[13]

III

Scarcity of weapons was a perennial problem for the IRA in Ireland. In 1917, in order to raise funds to buy arms, Volunteers held concerts, dances and collections. However, the number of firearms purchased with such funds was small.[14] The following year, during the conscription crisis, many Volunteers began to acquire weapons by raiding private houses, despite Sinn Féin's prohibition of such actions. Raids continued in 1919. In September 1920, IRA GHQ finally issued an order to raid houses for weapons.[15] In 1918, 311 civilians had their houses raided. In 1919, the figure was 196. In addition, the police suffered twelve raids and the

[10] Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 21 July 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[49-50]); original emphasis
[11] Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 23 July 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[47])
[12] Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 23 July 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[48])
[13] Ibid., 26 July 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[46])
[14] Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 72-3
[15] Ibid., pp 75, 93-4

military fifteen. Nineteen-twenty saw 2,802 raids for arms on civilians.[16] Despite these and other attempts to acquire weapons, the IRA was forced to exploit sources abroad in order to augment its arsenal.

In this, the IRA was continuing a tradition of enlisting foreign aid to overthrow British rule in Ireland, one which stretched back to the birth of Irish republicanism in the late eighteenth century. The source of these armaments was often Britain itself. In the run-up to the 1867 Fenian rebellion, munitions were procured in such English cities as London, Birmingham, and Liverpool, and smuggled to Ireland.[17] However, the failure to secure materiel from Chester Castle, an armoury on the England-Wales border, played a significant role in the ultimate failure of the rebellion in Ireland.[18] Between the rebellion of 1867 and that of 1916, Fenians in Britain procured small amounts of weapons and sent them to their comrades in Ireland in the hope that they would someday be used to fight for Irish independence.[19]

Joe Vize and Steve Lanigan were two of a small number of men who continued the tradition of gunrunning. Both were members of the IRB, the organisation which, by virtue of the fact that the Volunteers were not re-established in Britain until 1919 and 1920, had, by the beginning of the war of independence, consolidated its traditional role in the procuring and smuggling of munitions to Ireland. At that time, a handful of people dominated the Fenian movement in each of the four major centres of Irish activity in Britain. In London, Sean McGrath, Sam Maguire, and Art O'Brien were the men of importance, assisted by, among others, Fintan Murphy, Denis and Joseph Carr, Eamon O'Tierney, Martin Walsh, Anthony Mularkey, Martin Geraghty, and Sean Golden.[20] In the run-up to the Easter Rising, Sean McGrath, bought munitions in Birmingham and smuggled them to Ireland in his own and his friends' luggage.[21] In early 1919, however, he was arrested while making a transaction for materiel in London and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.[22]

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[16] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 177, 186; *Return showing by monthly periods the number of murders of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and of soldiers, officials, and civilians, and the number of political outrages of persons and property in Ireland from the 1st day of January, 1919, to the 30th April, 1920* [Cmd. 709] 1920, p. 2

[17] Mark Ryan, *Fenian memories* (Dublin, 1945), p. 38

[18] Takagami, 'The Fenian rising in Dublin, March 1867', pp 340-62

[19] Ryan, *Fenian memories*, pp 40, 47, 61, 171

[20] John J. Sherlock Statement (NLI, Ms 9,873), pp 1-3; Art O'Brien to the committee investigating London cases in regard to the Military Pensions Act, 17 Apr. 1941 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8461/26); Martin Walsh to ?Military Service Pensions Board, n.d.; Martin Geraghty to ?Military Service Pensions Board, 20 May 1937 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/154)

[21] Sean McGrath to Art O'Brien, 22 Mar. 1935 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8461/25)

[22] *The Times*, 29 Jan., 7 Feb. 1919; see pp 211-12 below

In Manchester, the comparable figures were Paddy O'Donoghue, Liam McMahon, and Matt Lawless.[23]

Joe Vize directed operations in Glasgow. Joseph Robinson's gunrunning activities on Clydeside in the post-Rising period had led to his being sentenced to ten years imprisonment in February 1918. In the event, he was released in early 1922. In the interim, Vize was assisted by John Carney, Alex Carmichael, Andrew Fagan, Michael O'Carroll and James Byrne, among others.[24]

Liverpool was the centre of Irish gunrunning in Britain. There, as well as Steve Lanigan, 'something of an agnostic', activities centred on Neil Kerr and his three sons, Tom, Jack and Neil Jnr. The patriarch 'had a capacity to get things done and to inspire people to do them effectively,' Paddy Daly noted.[25]

As the war of independence progressed, some changes occurred in the gunrunning personnel. In July 1920, Joseph Furlong, a Wexford man who had joined the pre-war Irish Volunteers in London, replaced Joe Vize in Scotland.[26] During the truce, Furlong was in turn succeeded by D. P. Walsh.[27] The IRA's arson attack on Liverpool dock warehouses in November 1920 led to the internment and imprisonment of the Kerrs and Lanigan. The leadership on Merseyside was then assumed by Offaly man Paddy Daly.[28] Following his arrest in February 1921, Sean McGrath's shoes were filled by Dennis Kelleher.[29] Michael Collins' injunction that 'the enemy must not be allowed to break up our organisation, no matter whom he takes' was therefore obeyed.[30]

Until December 1920, the gunrunners received their orders from the IRB in Dublin, the leadership of which during the war of independence was dominated by Michael Collins. Visits to Britain by Collins himself and other IRB leaders such as Sean McGarry ensured that the Dublin leadership remained in face-to-face contact with gunrunners in Britain. Periodic

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[23] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 5-6; ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 3; ibid., no. 244, John McGallogly, pp 17-18 (NAI); Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)
[24] D/P to Commandant Carney and Messrs Burke, Byrne and Fagan, 3 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[36-38]); Cooney, 'The Irish Republican Brotherhood in Scotland', pp 138-46
[25] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 5, 14-15, 17-18, 25 (NAI)
[26] Ibid., no. 335, Joseph Furlong, pp 1-3 (NAI)
[27] Ibid., no. 776, Joseph Booker, p. 5; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, pp 5-6; ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, pp 6-7 (NAI)
[28] Ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 1, 21-22 (NAI)
[29] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 1 Mar. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/328); Denis Kelleher to Art O'Brien, 18 Feb. 1922 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8424/13)
[30] Michael Collins, 'Memo to Liverpool', 9 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)

visits to Dublin by the gunrunners themselves fulfilled the same function.[31] In the summer of 1920, GHQ was re-organised and a number of new departments were created. Among them was a department of munitions purchases, headed by a director of purchases (D/P). Liam Mellows was appointed D/P in November 1920.[32] Despite Mellows and his lieutenants making extensive visits to gunrunning centres in Britain in 1921, Michael Collins continued to send orders to Liverpool and London. Liverpool's Paddy Daly states that he succeeded in working with both IRA and IRB leaders in gunrunning matters.[33]

During the civil war, both anti-treaty IRA and Free State forces continued to use Britain as a source of munitions, though the latter received armaments from the British government through official channels. IRA gunrunners in Britain dispensed with the IRB, as they attributed some of the blame for the outbreak of the civil war to the secret machinations of the Fenians. The ranks of IRA gunrunning during the civil war included a number of war of independence veterans such as McGrath, O'Brien, Mularkey, and the Carr brothers in London, Paddy Daly in Liverpool, and David Fitzgerald in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, along with new faces including Michael Cremens, as the IRA's D/P, O/C Britain Patrick Murray, and O/C London William Aherne. Joseph Robinson also returned as O/C Scotland. Gunrunning was directed from GHQ by the C/S, Liam Lynch, and the quartermaster general (QMG).

Mellows' appointment as D/P in 1920 both coincided with and stimulated the increased involvement in gunrunning of the IRA in Britain. Previous to this, Volunteer companies established in 1919 and 1920 in such English cities as London, Liverpool, and Manchester, had been involved in gunrunning, but only under the auspices of the IRB.[34] Now, IRA companies were becoming involved in their own right. This was signified by the development of Tyneside and south Wales as centres of procurement. In the former, gunrunning operations were run by the O/C Tyneside brigade, Richard Purcell, the quartermaster, Gilbert Barrington, and the adjutant, J. P. Connolly.[35] The procurement of munitions there had begun on the initiative of the men themselves, without direction from GHQ or other gunrunning centres. In late February or early March 1921, at about the same time that the Tyneside brigade began mounting terrorist attacks, Barrington was summoned to Dublin to meet Mellows. The D/P gave him instructions and money for the purchase of

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[31] Michael Collins to 'Donal', 13 Apr. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[72]); Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 23 May 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330); BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 21-2 (NAI)
[32] Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, ii, 161
[33] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 5, 14-15, 25 (NAI)
[34] Ibid., no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 1; ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 5-6 (NAI)
[35] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 13

arms.[36] When Connolly later moved to south Wales to source munitions there, he was replaced as adjutant by David Fitzgerald.[37]

In Scotland, the IRA had become involved in gunrunning somewhat earlier than in England and Wales, due to the fact that the re-organisation of the Volunteers there occurred earlier than south of the border. Patrick Mills, a native of Belmullet, county Mayo, was the 1st lieutenant of the Motherwell Volunteers. He remembered that the company's main activity was 'the collection of arms, ammunition and explosives to send to Ireland'.[38]

Of course, the distinction between the IRA and the Fenians was not clear-cut. In fact, Joe Vize often encouraged recruits to join both organisations. As well as being 1st lieutenant of the town's Volunteers, Patrick Mills was centre of the Motherwell IRB circle.[39] Dual membership of the IRA and the Fenians occurred in England too. London's Sean McGrath was centre of a Fenian circle, the senior gunrunner in London, and I/O of the capital's IRA.[40] Liverpool's Tom Kerr and Paddy Daly commanded the city's Volunteer company while also engaging in munitions procurement.[41] The same applied to O'Donoghue, McMahon, and Lawless in Manchester.[42] Ordinary rank and file Volunteers were often Fenian members as well. In September 1919, for example, Neil Kerr Snr assured Michael Collins that the trouble dogging the Liverpool company IRA would not affect the rank and file members involved in gunrunning, 'as they all obay [sic] [IRB] orders'.[43] The increased involvement of the IRA in gunrunning from 1919 onwards, therefore, did not lead to many changes from traditional IRB practice.

How was gunrunning organised? Birmingham's James Cunningham remembered the enormity of the job he had undertaken when he agreed to become Michael Collins' chief gunrunner in the city in 1921. 'I had a Herculean task ahead of me,' he later wrote. He decided to set up a clandestine gunrunning network separate from the city's Volunteers. Even Patrick O'Neill, the O/C, was kept in ignorance as to the gunrunning operations. Cunningham recruited gunrunners from Birmingham's Irish scene, which included the ISDL. 'I considered that the people with whom I was to work should, as far as possible, be inconspicuous in Irish

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[36] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, pp 8-9 (NAI)
[37] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 13
[38] BMHWS no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 2; see also ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, p. 2; ibid., no. 696, Henry O'Hagan, p. 4 (NAI)
[39] Ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 2 (NAI)
[40] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); 'IRB', n.d., but c. 1930s (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/22)
[41] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 1, 5, 14-15, 24 (NAI)
[42] Ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 5-15; ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 3 (NAI)
[43] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 25 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[24-5])

affairs,' he commented. Two recruits were 'real finds': Dan O'Malley, a third generation Irishman who had fought in the British army, and Tom Gilmore, a gunsmith with a small factory. Gilmore's factory became the warehouse and packing centre for gunrunning activities in Birmingham, while O'Malley, Cunningham's right-hand man, was in charge of the despatch of the consignments to Liverpool.[44]

In so arranging gunrunning operations, Cunningham was probably following the advice of Merseyside's Paddy Daly, whom he visited in early 1921. Daly sought to guarantee that the organisation of gunrunning activity in Liverpool in 1921 was confined to himself and his assistant. '[W]e rarely had to call on other members of the IRB,' he remembered, and '... a considerable number of people in the Volunteers did not know that such an organisation [i.e. gunrunning] was in existence at all.'[45] Daly, in turn, was following in the footsteps of the Kerrs, who had placed paramount importance on secrecy. Indeed, ignorance regarding the existence of Fenian gunrunning in Liverpool during Neil Kerr's time had led John Pinkman, a member of the Merseyside IRA, and some friends to raid a gunsmith's shop in 1920. Frustrated by the apparent inactivity of the Volunteers in Liverpool, they intended to send the munitions to Ireland to help the 'real soldiers'. The raid proved successful, with the gang seizing twelve revolvers and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. However, O/C Tom Kerr reproached the men. 'We have special [gunrunning] channels from England to Ireland; we've had them for years and they've never been discovered,' he declared. Mounting such a raid ran the risk of the police launching sweeps through Irish neighbourhoods, perhaps leading to the discovery of arms dumps. Kerr concluded by warning the Volunteers that they were to steer clear of gunrunning unless specifically ordered to do otherwise.[46] Indeed, Daly may have placed even more of a premium on secrecy than the Kerrs, for he even refused to take other members of the Liverpool IRB into his confidence. He argued that the assistance of such men was 'unnecessary as far as activities in connection with arms were concerned ...'.[47]

Few of the men involved in gunrunning have explicitly explained why they engaged in such activities. However, the reasoning of Newcastle-upon-Tyne's Gilbert Barrington was probably emblematic. Barrington later stated that it was frustration with the ineffectiveness of the ISDL's peaceful agitation in favour of Irish independence that motivated his involvement in the founding of a number of Volunteer companies in the Tyneside area in 1920. The acquisition of munitions and their shipment to Ireland were the companies' main activities.

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[44] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 4-6 (NAI)
[45] Ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 25-6 (NAI)
[46] John Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 22-8
[47] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 32-3 (NAI)

Violence, therefore, was seen as the only course open to Irish patriots desiring their country's freedom, with republicans in Britain volunteering to supply the munitions of war.[48]

Gunrunning was 'a very ticklesome job and any slip-up would reveal the whole system of smuggling such items to the enemy,' wrote one Liverpool Volunteer.[49] Gunrunning was, of course, illegal. The Explosives Act 1875 made the unauthorised transportation of explosives a criminal offence.[50] The Explosive Substances Act 1883 made it illegal to make or keep explosives with the intent to endanger life or property. Section five of the Act was particularly relevant to gunrunning, for it criminalised anyone who 'by the supply of or solicitation for money, the providing of premises, the supply of materials, or in any manner whatsoever, procures, counsels, aids, abets, or is accessory to, the commission of any crime under this Act ...'. Such a person would be charged with felony, 'and shall be liable to be tried and punished for that crime, as if he had been guilty as a principal'.[51] The Firearms Act 1920 made it illegal to possess a firearm without a certificate from the police. Also, the sale and repair of guns and ammunition was restricted to authorised dealers. In addition, the conveyance and export of firearms required police authorisation.[52] In Ireland, meanwhile, war-time legislation, continued into peacetime, made the ownership and carrying of most weapons subject to increasing restrictions, until in December 1920, when the unauthorised ownership of a firearm was made a capital offence in martial law areas.[53]

As the activities of Joe Vize and Steve Lanigan indicate, gunrunning in Britain was a cloak-and-dagger affair, involving the cultivating of contacts, the pursuit and evaluation of leads, the testing of munitions offered for sale, the organisation of arms dumps, and the transporting of weapons to Ireland. The gunrunners were sometimes aided in the task by people from outside the ranks of the Volunteers and the IRB. People in the wider Irish movement often played an important role in offering leads in regard to possible sources of munitions. Michael O'Leary, one-time captain of Liverpool Volunteers, recalled that ISDL members often provided the IRA with valuable intelligence concerning the location of

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[48] Ibid., no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 2 (NAI)
[49] Ibid., no. 1535, Hugh Early, pp 9-10 (NAI)
[50] Explosives Act 1875 (38 & 39 Victoria), accessed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1875/cukpga_18750017_en_1 on 7 Dec. 2009
[51] Explosive Substances Act 1883 (46 & 47 Victoria), accessed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1883/cukpga_18830003_en_1 on 7 Dec. 2009
[52] Firearms Act 1920 (10 & 11 George V) accessed at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1920/pdf/ukpga_19200043_en.pdf on 7 Dec. 2009
[53] 'MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT HOSTILE ORGANIZATIONS OBTAINING ARMS AND AMMUNITION', n.d., but c. 1917; see also proclamations from 1918–19 in same file (TNA, Colonial Office [CO] file 904/29[336-40, 447,458-9, 486, 518, 544]); *The Times*, 14 Dec. 1920; Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 177, 274 n 21-2

weapons.[54] The league was also sometimes used to provide cover for gunrunning operations. In September 1920, Michael Collins noted that Sean McGrath, the ISDL's general secretary, was using the cover of organisational work to locate some new sources of munitions on the north-east coast of Britain.[55] When Newcastle-upon-Tyne's Joseph Connolly moved to south Wales in 1921 to procure munitions, he did so under the guise of an ISDL organiser for the area.[56] The 'Removal and care of arms and ammunition' was one of the Cumann na mBan's eighteen prescribed activities, and members of the women's auxiliary helped with the procurement and storage of munitions.[57] More generally, Paddy Daly remembered that Irishmen throughout the north of England were always 'on the lookout for weapons that would be of use irrespective of whether they were in an [Irish] organisation or not'.[58] Sometimes, GHQ in Dublin passed on unsolicited offers of help it had received from people in Britain. In May 1919, a Fr. Keogh in Bayswater contacted Dublin, claiming to be in a position to supply materiel.[59] The following November, Countess Markievicz told Michael Collins that she had learned from an ex-soldier that at least seven hundred rifles were stored in an unused aerodrome in Georgetown, about seven miles from the town of Paisley in Scotland. Collins passed the information on the Joe Vize, 'for what it is worth'.[60] The sources do not record the upshot of these leads. A more successful lead was given to Birmingham's James Cunningham by a Tipperary man named Sweeney, who worked as a janitor at a seminary in the city. When Sweeney supplied a wax impression of the key to the seminary's armoury, the Birmingham men made a key. They then stealthily raided the premises, acquiring twenty rifles and around four thousand rounds of ammunition. Soon afterwards, Sweeney returned to Ireland.[61]

Some leads proved to be very time-consuming, complicated, worrying, and fruitless. In 1919, for example, the London gunrunners investigated *inter alia* two leads involving three soldiers. The first concerned soldiers named Burke and Quinn. Burke probably wrote to GHQ out of the blue offering his services. Fintan Murphy travelled to Warlingham, in Surrey, to make contact with him, but failed to locate him.[62] Eventually, contact was made and

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[54] BMHWS no. 797, Micheál Ó Laoghaire, p. 28 (NAI)
[55] Michael Collins to Neil Kerr, 23 Sept. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[56] Brian O'Kennedy to J. P. Connolly, 25 Feb. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8442/5)
[57] Constitution of Cumann na mBan (UCDA, Humphries Papers, P106/1126[1-2]); BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 8 (NAI)
[58] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 15-16 (NAI)
[59] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 13 May 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[60] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 14 Nov. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[61] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 10-11 (NAI)
[62] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 2 May 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)

Collins, believing that Burke was in a position to supply munitions, advised Art O'Brien to supply him with some 'ready money', along with an additional sum of £5 from a special account. Collins advised that if Burke proved to have munitions on offer immediately, O'Brien was to reach a deal with him. If, however, he needed to acquire munitions before he passed them on, O'Brien was use his judgement as to sending Burke to Ireland to meet members of the IRA, possibly including Collins himself.[63] When Burke travelled to Dublin, Collins arranged for a friend of Burke's named Quinn to expedite matters in connection with the procuring of munitions. O'Brien was to arrange for an intermediary to meet Quinn to arrange a place to dump the munitions. In addition, O'Brien was to supply Quinn with any funds necessary should the latter succeed in securing materiel. Collins had already given him £25.[64] O'Brien made arrangements for an intermediary to handle small quantities of munitions. However, he was sceptical of large quantities being secured. In fact, he anticipated a complete failure.[65] Collins shared O'Brien's scepticism, but thought it 'such a pity to let any chance slip'.[66]

Six months elapse before the next reference to Burke and Quinn in the surviving sources. By then, the London men were investigating a tantalising tip-off from P. J. Forde, an Irishman in the Connaught Rangers, who claimed to be in a position to help the IRA get hold of .303 ammunition from the Park Royal army base in London.[67] Collins was sceptical of Forde's proposal, as he was of all such unsolicited offers. However, 'one always feels disinclined to turn them down without some inquiry'. He therefore encouraged O'Brien to send someone to make contact with him.[68] O'Brien sent a man to meet Forde. He was not impressed by the soldier. His erratic temperament reminded him of Quinless, probably the same man as Quinn. All three soldiers, Forde, Quinn, and Burke, were veterans of Roger Casement's Irish brigade, an ill-fated attempt to recruit Irish members of the British army languishing in German prisoner of war camps for action in a rebellion in Ireland. Forde spoke mainly about money, demanding £60 to cover expenses, and he failed to specify how the ammunition was to be secreted out of the barracks. Nevertheless, O'Brien told his go-between to ask Forde to meet him again, at Charing Cross, and encourage him to bring with him any munitions he could lay his hands on.[69] Hearing of Forde's association with Quinless

[63] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 7 May 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[64] Ibid., 19 May 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[65] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 21 May 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[66] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 23 May 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[67] Ibid., 18 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[68] Ibid., 20 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[69] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 20 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)

and Burke, Collins advised O'Brien against wasting time, energy or funds pursuing the matter, implying that the duo had failed to supply any munitions. Still, if Forde arrived at Charing Cross with munitions of sale, he advised that they should be bought.[70] The following day, Collins warned O'Brien that he had received information that the British authorities knew of Burke's gunrunning activities and of his association with O'Brien.[71] O'Brien noted that Burke had called at his address, but he had not received any munitions from him.[72] 'He [Burke] is an informer', Collins warned the next day, 'and it is possible that he may be sent on a mission to implicate yourself'. With Burke being a friend of Quinless, Collins suspected the latter of involvement in the plot as well.[73] However, a week after warning O'Brien that his office was under police observation and that any munitions hidden there should be moved to a different address, Collins received information from Burke's former employer, the New Ireland Assurance Company, which convinced him of his bona fides.[74] The sources do not record the outcome of this episode, suggesting that Burke, Quinn, and Forde all failed to fulfil their promises.

Another affair fraught with danger concerned the gunrunner John Byrnes. Art O'Brien seems to have first met Byrnes, a passionate Communist who supported Irish self-determination, in early 1919. Subsequently, Byrnes offered his services, claiming that he was in a position to procure arms for the IRA. On one occasion, he handed a dozen .45 revolvers to Sean McGrath.[75] By the middle of June, O'Brien was offering to pay the expenses involved in Byrnes spending a week or a fortnight procuring materiel. Byrnes declined the offer, but evidently continued to supply small amounts of munitions to O'Brien, McGrath and Sam Maguire for Collins agreed to his request for an interview in November.[76] Collins had already met Byrnes, describing him as likeable and straight-forward.[77] In early December, Byrnes, by now using the alias Jameson, travelled to Dublin and met Collins.[78] Over the following few weeks, Jameson travelled back and forth between London and Dublin, making arrangements for gunrunning. However, Tom Cullen, a member of Collins' intelligence staff, expressed a strong dislike of Jameson. His colleague Frank Thornton, a member of the pre-war Liverpool Volunteers, agreed to set a trap in order to ascertain his bona fides. Suspecting

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[70] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 21 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[71] Ibid., 22 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[72] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 25 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[73] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 26 Nov. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[74] Ibid., 1, 8 Dec. 1919 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)
[75] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[76] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 22 May, 18 June 1919 (NLI, O'Brien Papers, Ms 8429/11)
[77] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 6 June 1919 (NLI, O'Brien Papers, Ms 8429/11)
[78] Ibid., 9 Dec. 1919 (NLI, O'Brien Papers, Ms 8426/6)

him of being a spy, Thornton arranged for Jameson to deliver a batch of munitions to an address on Dublin's Bachelors' Walk. Meanwhile, Jim McNamara, a contact in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) detective division, was asked to alert them if he heard of any police activity in the area. Jameson appeared at the address carrying a portmanteau of munitions, which he claimed he had secured from Communist sources in Britain and smuggled into the country. Soon afterwards, McNamara contacted Thornton to say that the police were planning a raid on premises in Bachelors' Walk. By the time the police raided the property, the IRA men had escaped. The raid pointed to Jameson being a spy.[79] Suspicions were heightened by similar police raids on IRA safe-houses which Jameson had visited. Volunteers also found incriminating evidence in his hotel room.[80] Using a friend of his, Sean McGrath learned that the address which Jameson had supplied him was not that of a business but merely an accommodation address.[81] Taken as a whole, these incidents 'proved conclusively that this man was a spy and it was decided that he should be eliminated,' remembered Dublin IRA man Paddy Daly. In March 1920, lured to Glasnevin under the pretext of meeting Collins, Jameson was executed.[82]

Jameson was just one of many people executed as spies by the IRA in Ireland. In his case, it transpired that he was indeed a spy. Working for A2, a branch of military intelligence established in 1919 with the aim of countering Communist attempts to penetrate the armed forces, Jameson donned the guise of a radical socialist and made contact with various revolutionary outfits, including those of the Irish republican movement.[83]

Gunrunners sometimes employed purchasing agents in order to maximise the quantity of munitions acquired. In May 1919, Michael Collins recommended that Joe Vize take on J. Corbett as an agent, as he claimed to be in a position to acquire gelignite and detonators in Scotland.[84] Vize demurred, as in his previous dealing with Corbett he found him impetuous, greedy and over-inquisitive.[85] With detonators in short supply, however, Collins insisted on Corbett's employment. In fact, he agreed a deal with the gunrunner himself, whereby Corbett would supply detonators at a price of £1 for 100. 'That price is not too high,' noted Collins, 'and if he is willing to do business on that basis do it'. If Corbett was not so willing, Vize was

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[79] BMHWS no. 615, Frank Thornton, pp 38-40 (NAI)
[80] 'STATEMENT BY Major-General Patrick O'Daly, 41, Naas Road, Inchicore', n.d., but c. 1965 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/D/8), p. 30
[81] Ibid.
[82] BMHWS no. 615, Frank Thornton, pp 38-40 (NAI); *The Times*, 4 Mar. 1920
[83] Julian Putkowski, 'The best secret service man we had: Jack Byrnes, A2 and the IRA' in *Lobster 94: journal of parapolitics*, no. 28 (1994), pp 1-38
[84] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 29 May 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[85] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 6 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

to ascertain his new terms.[86] Vize responded by saying that Corbett still owed him £2 on a previous deal. If this debt was paid, he would be prepared to meet him and agree some arrangement for the procurement of detonators.[87] However, a few months later, Vize wrote that Corbett's association with the ICA in Dublin made him wary of employing him. Principally, he was concerned about security, finding Murray, another ICA man and associate of Corbett, worryingly indiscreet. Murray's recent arrest did not surprise him. Vize hoped to secure Corbett's services exclusively for the IRA and, with this in mind, arranged a meeting. Stung in his dealings with the ICA, Corbett, a contractor with his own business, agreed to work for Vize. He immediately suggested that an Irishman, preferably from county Clare, be sent over to work for him as a miner. He would act as a conduit for the supply of gelignite and detonators between Corbett and Vize. This arrangement would enable Corbett to avoid storing munitions in his own house. Vize gave him £10 to get started.[88] Corbett held up his side of the deal with Collins, making at least one trip to Dublin with detonators costing £1 per hundred.[89] The following year, Bernard McCabe, a provisions merchant in Glasgow, also began to help with gunrunning, allowing his shops on Duke St., Dennistown, and Lindon Rd., Bridgeton, to be used as munitions dumps.[90] McGovern, an agent sent to Glasgow by Michael Collins, proved unreliable. In late 1920, Sean O'Sheehan, the Sinn Féin organiser in Scotland, told Collins that McGovern was very indiscreet in regard to his activities. On one occasion, he informed a public meeting that he was a member of the IRA. 'He and his people are in a humble position in life and a few months back he was very shabby,' Sheehan noted. 'He seems to have left his job. Yet he has blossomed out into spending money lavishly.' In particular, he had acquired a taste for clothes and alcohol. Moreover, his recent wedding had cost at least £100.[91] Vize said that he was disheartened to hear of the rumours regarding McGovern: 'he was one I would have trusted a long way, and I'm very much disappointed in him'.[92]

Seamus Barrett worked as an agent for Paddy O'Donoghue in Manchester, buying weapons from soldiers among other sources. On one occasion, Barrett claimed to have accumulated around £200 worth of munitions. O'Donoghue, however, was insistent on

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[86] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 19 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); original emphasis
[87] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 22 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[88] Ibid., 5 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[89] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 8 July 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[90] Bernard McCabe's statement to the Military Services Pensions Board, n.d., but c. 1950s (Mooney Papers, EMP/2/A/11)
[91] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 28 Oct. 1920 (NLI, Piaras Béaslaí Papers, Ms 33,916[2])
[92] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. 22 Feb. 1921 (NLI, Béaslaí Papers, Ms 33,916[2])

getting his money's worth and resolved to purchase only munitions of good quality from him.[93] In the event, he discovered that the gunrunner had only £50 worth of armaments. He also noted that Barrett was selling his munitions to anyone willing to pay for them.[94]

Earlier that year, Barrett had employed two agents of his own: Seamus Burke, a Waterford man, and Michael Weldon, a Limerick man who fled to Britain after 'some jobs'. Initially, they seemed promising.[95] In the event, however, O'Donoghue dispensed with Weldon's services when he learned that the Limerick man was calling on Irish priests in the Liverpool area asking for financial assistance as a Volunteer.[96] The following month, Burke could not be found.[97]

Corbett, McCabe, McGovern, Barrett, Burke, and Weldon all had previous connections with the republican movement, to a greater or lesser degree. Other agents, such as the former sergeant-major in the British army employed by Vize in September 1919, had no previous association with the movement at all.[98]

In January 1923, six months into the civil war, Lynch, the C/S, believed that a lot of gunrunning money had been wasted on paying agents who had proven to be of 'no use' in procuring munitions. He therefore recommended that the IRA in Britain dispense with their services and rely exclusively on Volunteers instead.[99]

While the number of people involved in gunrunning expanded as the war of independence continued, so did the number of places tapped as sources for munitions. Michael Collins and GHQ regularly encouraged the development of sources in towns and cities outside the four original gunrunning centres of London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow. In November 1920, Manchester's Paddy O'Donoghue began sourcing munitions in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[100] The following month, he noted that Liam Mellows and Rory O'Connor, D/P and O/C Britain respectively, were travelling to Tyneside to investigate new channels of supply. He had promised them that he would try to uncover new sources in the

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[93] Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. late Aug./early Sept. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[94] Ibid., 11 Nov., 3 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[95] Ibid., 19 July 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[96] Ibid., n.d., but c. 25 July 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[97] Ibid., 19 July, n.d., but c. 25 July, n.d., but c. late Aug./early Sept. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[98] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 27 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[99] QMG to O/C Britain, 5 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[100] Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, 29 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)

districts surrounding Manchester.[101] O'Donoghue also had 'clients' in Bolton supplying him with materiel.[102]

Meanwhile, noting that 'there was never a time when it was more important to get the goods', Collins asked Neil Kerr Snr if there was any possibility of finding new sources of armaments in Runcorn, a port town in Cheshire. Indeed, he suggested that any port where a motor boat could call would be worth investigating.[103] 'I wonder if we have any friends there [i.e. in Runcorn] at all,' mused Collins a fortnight later. 'It is like a place that Irishmen would be working.'[104] Kerr visited the town with Rory O'Connor on 18 November. He was unimpressed. The fact that the Liverpool men had no contacts there seems to have frustrated Collins' idea of sourcing or despatching munitions from the town.[105]

Birmingham's James Cunningham proved successful in making gunrunning contacts in Coventry, Stoke, Purslew, Nottingham and Wolverhampton.[106]

Sources outside Britain were also tapped. In February 1920, Vize told Collins that he had two seafarers sourcing munitions for him in New York. One was Larry Ryan, a veteran of Frongoch internment camp. They were travelling on separate ships, and Vize had given them £16 between them to ascertain the existence of any possible sources. With Ryan's ship scheduled to make only two trips between Glasgow and New York before plying between Liverpool and the 'Big Apple', Vize recommended that Ryan be introduced to the Merseyside men.[107] Collins, however, advised against Vize's sourcing of munitions in New York: '... what we want', he wrote, 'is people who will bring the goods rather than people who will get fresh supplies'. He, therefore, asked for details regarding the men Vize had sent, including the names of the boats they were travelling on.[108]

Both the Glasgow and Liverpool men made arrangements to receive munitions from the German city of Hamburg. Joseph Booker, a Scottish gunrunner, remembered that a German ship arrived in Leith about every ten days:

> The captain would bring from twelve to fifteen parabellums or "Peter the Painters" and ammunition, each trip. He would contact a barber whose name I cannot remember. He would in turn contact a Mr. Gordan, who, although not a Volunteer, was very friendly and used to buy guns for us whenever he got a chance. Mr. Gordan would send us a telegram when the

[101] Ibid., 3 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[102] Ibid., 13 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[103] Michael Collins to Neil Kerr, 8 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[104] Ibid., 21 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[105] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 27 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[106] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 12 (NAI)
[107] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 7 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[108] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 14 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

> ship had arrived. We were never allowed to have any direct contact with the captain or go near the ship. The arms were delivered by members of the crew to the barber's shop and collected by Mr. Gordan. At Gordan's house we oiled and greased the guns and packed them into suitcases ready for despatch to Liverpool.[109]

In mid-May 1920, Vize took delivery of one such batch from Hamburg, consisting of seventeen revolvers and a quantity of ammunition, worth £64 in total. For the return journey, he gave the seafarers £135, asking that they look out for bomb throwers and rifle grenades. '[T]hey promised to do everything possible to obtain all we want,' he told Michael Collins.[110] The following month, however, suspecting his agents of overcharging him, Vize resolved to arrange for another ship to travel to Hamburg unbeknownst to the first. He could then compare the prices they charged him.[111] During the civil war, munitions continued to be landed in Glasgow from Hamburg, although, on at least one occasion, the O/C Britain, Patrick Murray, refused to authorise their purchase.[112]

Liverpool's Steve Lanigan referred to the Hamburg source as the 'red villian [i.e. villain]', perhaps indicating that he was a Communist. In any event, the first consignment of munitions reached Liverpool on 8 April 1920, and Lanigan later told Collins that deliveries could be made every fortnight.[113]

Early the following year, Liverpool's Paddy Daly told Michael Collins that he was making arrangements for placing an agent onboard a ship travelling to Antwerp.[114] When T. Hoare, an Irishman who worked in the sailors' federation, told Daly that he hoped to get a friend of his a job on a ship, Daly contended that the friend might be useful in importing munitions from the Belgian city. He asked Collins' help in securing permission for Hoare's friend, a D. O'Meade, to leave Ireland.[115] Collins, however, had great difficulty in locating him. The surviving correspondence does not record Daly's success in placing O'Meade aboard the Antwerp ship. However, the Liverpool men did receive munitions from the Belgian city the following month. On 7 March, Daly told Collins that a seafarer was travelling from Merseyside to Dublin with a batch of munitions, including two Owen 97 guns

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[109] BMHWS no. 776, Joseph Booker, p. 2 (NAI); 'Peter the Painter' was the nickname given to a German Mauser pistol due to its use by a group of anarchists led by the mysterious Peter Piatkoff, who masqueraded as a house painter. In December 1910, in an aborted robbery and subsequent siege, the gang killed three London policemen. See Bernard Porter, 'Piatkoff, Peter (*fl.* 1910)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, online edn, Sept. 2010, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/92479, on 13 Oct. 2010

[110] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 15 May 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[111] Ibid., 11 June 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[112] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 17 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)

[113] Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 8 Apr., 28 May 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/2)

[114] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 20 Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

[115] Ibid., 29 Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

from Antwerp.[116] Further munitions received from Belgium and despatched to Ireland in March 1921 included 156.6 kg of explosives, six Winchester rifles, and four Owen guns.[117] Edward Brady, a member of the Liverpool Volunteers, remembered that he had inspected a consignment of munitions from Antwerp – .45 revolvers and five thousand rounds of ammunition – just a few hours before he was arrested on charges of involvement in IRA terrorist attacks.[118]

Collins believed that 'good business' was possible if the Liverpool men succeeded in placing an agent onboard a ship stopping at Genoa, in Italy. To facilitate such gunrunning, he provided a letter of introduction to Donal Hales, the Dáil's representative in the city.[119] Paddy Daly later stated that munitions were received in Merseyside from Italy. However, the infrequency of ships plying between Liverpool and Genoa prevented the city from becoming a regular source of armaments.[120]

From time to time, Liverpool and London also received munitions from New York, Berlin and Buenos Aires. These sources, however, were arranged by Collins and others in Dublin rather than by the gunrunners in Britain themselves.[121]

IV

The types and quantities of munitions acquired by gunrunners in Britain during the war of independence and civil war varied through time due to a number of factors. These included the orders they received from Dublin, the financial resources at their disposal, and the nature of the armament sources available. Michael Collins frequently made specific requests of his gunrunners in response to the demands of IRA units in the field. Many related to ammunition, the shortage of which was a constant problem for the IRA. Lack of .303 rifle ammunition was 'a haunting nightmare' for commanders of the flying columns, Tom Barry later wrote.[122] Florence O'Donoghue, I/O of the 1st Cork brigade, claimed that the lack of ammunition was often the paramount factor in dictating the nature of engagements with Crown forces. 'In the best days, there was no possibility of sustaining a fight involving more than the expenditure

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[116] Ibid., 8 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[117] Ibid., 11, 16, 18 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[118] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 94
[119] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 20 Dec. 1920, 13 Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[120] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 11 (NAI)
[121] Andreas Roth, 'Gun running from Germany to Ireland in the early 1920s' in *Irish Sword*, xxii, no. 88, pp 209-20; Emmet O'Connor, 'Waterford and IRA gun-running, 1917–22' in *Decies: journal of the Waterford Archaeological & History Society*, no. 57 (2001), pp 181-93; Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, pp 178-93
[122] Tom Barry, *Guerrilla days in Ireland* (Dublin, 1981 [1949]), p. 82

of twenty to thirty rounds per man,' he maintained. 'Actions therefore had to be short and sharp, and had to be broken off if not successful at an early stage.'[123] Tom Barry concurred, remembering that the West Cork flying column's limited supply of ammunition forced the Volunteers into 'a swift and intensive fight at close quarters' when they were surrounded by enemy forces at Crossbarry in March 1921.[124] When Richard Mulcahy, the C/S, learned that a lack of money had led a Glasgow gunrunner to decline an offer of nine thousand rounds of .303 ammunition, he reproached Liam Mellows: 'there are people in this country [i.e. Ireland] who would lynch us if they thought that we were in any way responsible for missing stuff like this'.[125] The widespread shortage of ammunition led *An t-Óglác* to advise that controlling its expenditure during fire fights was of great importance.[126] The high expenditure of ammunition by Limerick Volunteers during an attack on the RIC barracks in Kilmallock on 28 May 1920 led to a reprimand from GHQ.[127] Consequently, the supply of ammunition was a subject that continually exercised IRA leaders. 'Is there any chance of getting ammunition for these forty fives [i.e. .45 revolvers] [?]', Michael Collins asked Seamus Barrett, the Manchester gunrunner, in early 1919. 'Of all things we want it more badly than anything else.'[128] In January 1923, the QMG passed on to Patrick Murray a request from the Cork IRA that they be supplied with, among other munitions, .303, .45 revolver and .45 automatic ammunition.[129]

Of course, the provision of weapons themselves, in addition to the ammunition, was also a concern of the IRA leadership. 'Don[']t fail to [be] keeping all your eyes open for arms,' Michael Collins told Steve Lanigan in 1919, '... we[']re awfully short of .45 [revolvers]'.[130] During the civil war, Liam Lynch, recommended that Murray, the O/C Britain, purchase some Stokes guns, a type of trench mortar. 'You realise that one of these, with sufficient shells, would finish the war here very quickly ...', he wrote.[131]

The O/C of a flying column reviewed a number of revolver and semi-automatic handguns in *An t-Óglác* in March 1921. Revolvers were so called due to the chamber containing the bullets rotating somewhat each time the trigger was pulled, thereby positioning another bullet for firing. In the semi-automatics, the energy from the recoil of a shot caused

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[123] Florence O'Donoghue, *No other law* (Dublin, 1986 [1954]), p. 135
[124] Barry, *Guerrilla days in Ireland*, pp 125-6
[125] C/S to D/P, 22 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[23])
[126] *An t-Óglác*, 22 July 1921
[127] O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick*, pp 126-7
[128] Michael Collins to Seamus Barrett, 24 Apr. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9)
[129] QMG to O/C Britain, 17 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[130] Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 24 May 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[66]); original emphasis
[131] C/S to O/C Britain, 26 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)

the spent cartridge to be ejected and a live bullet to be positioned for firing. Such handguns varied in the size of the bullet they fired, known as the calibre and measured in inches. The O/C declared that both the Webley and Smith & Wesson .45 calibre revolvers were 'ideal weapons for the average Volunteer'. Both revolvers could be used to deadly effect, provided, of course, that the Volunteer was a good marksman. They were also easy to clean. The Colt .45 revolver, with its long barrel, was more powerful and accurate than the first two. Meanwhile, a high standard of training was recommended for successfully handling the Colt .45 automatic. This was due to the weapon's accuracy and speed of fire. Also, cleaning the gun's delicate mechanism demanded skill.[132]

Such handguns were short range weapons, useful at distances up to seventy-five yards (69 m).[133] 'Sunday morning[']s work has been felt more by the English people here than anything that has happened yet,' enthused Manchester's Paddy O'Donoghue, referring to the shooting dead of fourteen suspected British intelligence officers by the IRA in Dublin on 21 November 1920, later dubbed 'Bloody Sunday'.[134] The victims were killed at close range, perhaps using handguns supplied by O'Donoghue and other gunrunners in Britain.

Rifles were long range firearms and Michael Collins considered them to be 'the best of all' weapons.[135] Most Volunteers agreed. County Clare's Michael Brennan remembered that 'the moral effect of one rifle' in mid-1919 'was greater than that of a hundred shotguns'.[136] Rifles were seen as the most prestigious weapon: 'Nobody wanted to carry a shotgun,' one Cork Volunteer recollected.[137] In April 1921, the O/C 1st brigade, 1st Northern Division warned GHQ that 'a falling-off in the existing good spirit of the men' under his command was possible if his unit was not granted a batch of rifles.[138] Rifles facilitated accurate shooting at long distances due to the inside of the gun's barrel containing groves or rifling that caused the bullet, itself designed with corresponding groves, to spin as it travelled through the air. Like handguns, rifles varied in the calibre of bullet they employed. Types of rifles included the Winchester, Mauser, Martini-Henry and Remington. The most famous, however, was the Lee Enfield, the rifle acquired in the largest quantities by Irish gunrunners.

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[132] *An t-Óglác*, 1 Mar. 1921; James Marchington, *Handguns & sub-machine guns: semi-automatic pistols & revolvers* (London, 1997), pp 32-3
[133] *An t-Óglác*, 8 July 1921
[134] Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, 23 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10); Anne Dolan, 'Killing and Bloody Sunday, November 1920' in *Historical Journal*, xlix, no. 3 (2006), pp 789-810
[135] Michael Collins to Seamus Barrett, 24 Apr. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9)
[136] Michael Brennan, *The war in Clare: personal memoirs of the Irish war of independence* (Dublin, 1980), p. 38
[137] Quoted in Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, p. 254
[138] C/S to QMG, 26 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[243])

The gunrunners consistently fail to specify the models of Lee Enfield they acquired, but most were probably the Mark III .303 calibre with short magazine, the standard issue British army rifle during the Great War.[139]

Throughout the revolutionary period, GHQ was interested in innovative weapons, the most famous of which was the Thompson sub-machine gun. In July 1921, *An t-Óglác* hailed the weapon as 'OUR LATEST ALLY' in the war against the British.[140] An attempt by IRA men in New York to smuggle a large amount of such machine guns directly to Ireland in one shipment in mid-1921 failed due to the vigilance of the police.[141] Subsequently, however, small quantities of Thompsons were smuggled to Ireland via Liverpool.[142] Previous to this, gunrunners in Britain also attempted to acquire machine guns at the behest of Dublin. Such weapons were portable automatic firearms designed to fire bullets in rapid succession from a belt or magazine. Usually, a crew of men was required to effectively operate the gun. The shooting range of the Thompson, Lewis and Vickers machine guns varied between 762 and 975 m.[143] *An t-Óglác* held that the effective range of the machine gun was equal to that of the rifle. However, it boasted a number of advantages over the rifle. Experimentation had found that 'the fire of a machine gun is about twice as concentrated as that of riflemen firing an equal number of rounds at the same target'. Also, with the machine gun commanding a frontage of 1.8 m capable of delivering fire equal to that of thirty riflemen, it was a more effective and easily concealed weapon. Disadvantages included the fact that the concentrated nature of its fire required a higher level of marksmanship when operating the machine gun compared to the rifle. Machine guns were also more liable to temporary breakdowns. Moreover, the gun's peculiar noise and its habit of emitting steam when the water in the barrel casing reached boiling point meant that its position might be easier to locate by the enemy than that of a rifleman.[144]

As Peter Hart notes, the Thompson machine gun failed to live up to expectations. During the war of independence and civil war, the much-maligned shotgun was responsible for many more fatalities than the Thompson. Moreover, pistols and revolvers proved more death-dealing that the much sought-after rifle. The majority of fatalities inflicted by the IRA in Ireland during the war of independence occurred outside of ambushes or battles. Rather,

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[139] Ian Skinnerton, *The British service Lee: Lee-Metford and Lee-Enfield rifles and carbines 1880–1980* (London, 1982), pp 99-115
[140] *An t-Óglác*, 22 July 1921; original emphasis
[141] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, pp 178-93
[142] Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)
[143] *An t-Óglác*, 17 Feb. 1922
[144] Ibid., 5 Aug. 1921

'death was more likely to come at point-blank range, on doorsteps and in ditches'. Shotguns, pistols and revolvers were much easier to use in such situations than rifles and bulky machine guns.[145]

Explosives were another form of munitions the sourcing of which taxed Michael Collins and GHQ. 'If there is any chance at all, go ahead as quickly as you can laying in the stuff [i.e. explosives],' Collins told Liverpool's Neil Kerr Snr in late 1920, adding that the Glasgow gunrunners also be requested to send as much explosives as possible.[146] Explosive materials such as gelignite, ammonite, dinitrobenzene and trinitrotoluene, and chemicals such as potassium chlorate, were used in the manufacture of bombs. These were then employed in attacks on police stations and army barracks.[147]

IRA operations employing explosives were not always successful. In January 1921, the West Cork Volunteers mounted attacks on RIC barracks in Kilbrittain and Innishannon. All three attacks were unsuccessful due to the failure of homemade bombs to explode. Something similar happened at Drimoleague the following month. 'We were simply incapable of properly making a mine,' remembered Tom Barry.[148] Bombs supplied by GHQ were sometimes little better. An attack on the RIC barracks in Scariff, county Clare in September 1920 was scuppered by the failure of the bombs to explode. It was later discovered that the bombs' striking pins were too short, hence preventing the detonators from exploding.[149] As the war progressed, however, both GHQ and provincial units became much more adept at manufacturing and handling explosives. Indeed, Hart contends that the IRA's 'real technological advance' in 1921 was not the acquisition of Thompson sub-machine guns but the use of industrial explosives in mines. Such mines inflicted far more casualties on Crown forces during the closing stages of the war of independence than did the machine gun. For the IRA, gelignite and handguns were 'clearly superior' to machine guns as death-dealing weapons.[150]

The financial resources at the disposal of the gunrunners also influenced the types and quantities of munitions they acquired. As well as sending orders, Michael Collins and GHQ provided the money to fund the purchase of the munitions, be they ammunition, firearms or

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[145] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, pp 181-3, 187-9, 192-3
[146] Michael Collins to Neil Kerr, 4 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[147] BMHWS no. 1713, James O'Donovan, pp 8-9 (NAI); Rudolf Meyer, Josef Köhler and Axel Homburg, *Explosives* (Weinheim, 6th edn, 2007), pp 114, 147, 210-11, 260
[148] Barry, *Guerrilla days in Ireland*, pp 65-75, 93
[149] Brennan, *The war in Clare*, pp 38-9
[150] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, p. 193

explosives. Such money was raised from a number of sources including the Dáil.[151] Between April 1919 and September 1920, Collins sent around £1,500 to Manchester.[152] Between June 1919 and July 1920, he gave at least £2,550 to Vize in Glasgow.[153] In March 1921, D/P Liam Mellows sent £1,000 to Glasgow and £500 to Edinburgh.[154]

On 20 January 1920, for example, Collins sent Vize £500. On 11 June, the Scottish gunrunner supplied the following list of munitions and equipment he had purchased with the money:

[Quantity]	[Item]	[Cost £ s d]	[Quantity]	[Item]	[Cost £ s d]
2	Lee Enfields & Brt [?]	13 - -	1	Winchester .22	2 10 -
1	Do Do & Do [i.e. ibid]	6 - -	1	Webley	3 - -
2	Do Do @ 4/10/0	9 - -	1	"	3 5 -
2	Do Do @ 4/10/0	8 - -	1	" & 43 Rds	5 - -
4	Bayonets @10/6	2 2 -	1	"	4 - -
1	Lee Enfield, Brt & Equip	5 - -	2	" @ 2/10/0	5 - -
8	Lee Enfields @ 3/0/0	24 - -	1	Am[erican]. Colt	4 - -
1	Do Do	3 - -	2	Webleys @ 3/-/-	6 - -
150	R[oun]ds [of] .303[ammunition]	1 10 -	2	Do @ 3/5/-	6 10 -
1	Equipment	1 - -	1	Do	4 - -
98	Rds .303	17 - -	2	Do @ 65 rds	6 - -
-	.303	[0] 12 -	1	German Auto[matic]	5 - -
2	Rifles 1 L.E. 1 German	9 - -	1	Do	4 10 -
2	Lee Enfields & Bts	10 5 -	1	Webley	4 - -
1	Do	4 - -	5	Do @ 4/5/0	21 5 -
1	Do & Bayonet	5 5 -	1	Do	4 - -
1	Lee Enfield	4 12 -	2	Do	8 - -
			1	German Auto	3 - -
			1	Do	3 10 -
			1	Am[erican?]. Colt	3 - -
			2	Special @ 2/0/0	4 - -
			5	Webleys @ 3/10/0	17 10 -
			2	Do @ 3/5/-	6 10 -
			13	Do @ 3/10/-	45 10 -
			4	Do @ 3/10/0	14 - -
500	Electric Deto[nator]s	5 - -	1	Revolver	3 - -
1	Parcel soft stuff [i.e. explosives]	1 - -	900	Rds. .38	9 - -
L. Ryan [probably an agent of Vize's]		10 - -	450	Do .22 long	2 - -

[151] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, p. 175

[152] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Manchester gunrunners, Apr. 1919–Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9–P7/A/10)

[153] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Joe Vize, Jan. 1919–July 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

[154] D/P to Commandant Carney and Messrs Burke, Byrne and Fagan, 3 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[36-8])

16 lbs	Soft stuff	1 4 -
900	Ord. Detos	9 - -
1	Range finder	3 - -
1	Field glasses	1 - -
1	Gas Helmet	- 5 -
1	Pr[ism]. Glasses	2 10 -
1	Telescope	5 5 -
7	Weeks @ 4/4/0	29 8 -
800	E. Detos	8 0 0
12	lbs soft stuff	- 5 -
73	Detos	- 12 2
34	Do	- 7 6

1	Colt Auto	6 0 0
1	Smith & Weston	3 - -
1	Webley	5 0 0
	Amm[unition]	1 10 -
3	Holsters	- 15 -
1	Colt	4 10 -
2	Webleys @ 3/10/-	7 - -
2	Colts	7 10 -
103	Rds amm	- 15 -
55	Do	- 10 -
1	Revolver	3 - -
1	Sm[all]. Colt	4 10 -
1	Revolver .38	2 10 -
1	Webley	3 15 -
1	Do	3 5 -
General Ex[pen]ses, for trains, trams etc		7 - -

Eixes [Expenses] to Liverpool

Mar	10th	£6-17-0
"	16th	£5-10-0
"	23rd	£9-3-4
"	30th	£6-0-0
April	6th	£6-0-0
"	8th	£4-15-0
"	14th	£10-0-0
Total		£48 15 4

£251 7 0 (To be allowed for £16-7-0 on next a/c of £1000)

£265 - -
£251 7 -
£516 7 -[155]

The gunrunners did not always supply Collins with such clear accounts as these. In December 1919, Manchester's Paddy O'Donoghue confessed that heretofore he had sometimes dispensed money to 'lads' for the acquisition of munitions. As the armaments so purchased were often sent to Ireland without being inspected, the composition of accurate accounts was not always possible. He promised that hereon in he would insist on all munitions paid for from Manchester funds being collected in a central location for accounting before being despatched.[156] Also, despite repeated instructions that the Liverpool men distinguish between munitions received from different gunrunning centres 'so that we can keep our accounts

[155] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 11 June 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[156] Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, n.d., but date-stamped 24 Dec. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9)

straight', the often indiscriminate despatch of munitions to Ireland via Merseyside from 1920 onwards made book-keeping a difficult task for GHQ.[157]

The lack of accurate and comprehensive accounts was to prove a source of contention. In 1920, Cathal Brugha, the Dáil's minister for defence and Michael Collins' superior, began to suspect that the IRB was wasting Volunteer money in its gunrunning operations in Britain. Worried about the finances of the Glasgow operations in particular, he demanded that Collins investigate the matter. 'So long as the generally accepted laws of Accounting are not deviated from, I am satisfied,' Brugha wrote, implying that Collins' accounting was haphazard. 'My concern is to see that the Q.M.G. gets value in goods for the money I pay out.'[158] Stung by Brugha's accusations, Collins was disheartened to discover that at least £1,000 was improperly accounted for.[159] Ó Catháin argues it was Collins' 'instinctive anglocentric view', a product of his years in London, which resulted in the Scottish gunrunning operation degenerating into such a mess while that in England, and by extension Wales, continued to work effectively.[160] Piaras Béaslaí, the IRA's director of publicity, later described Brugha's demands for 'strict and tabulated accounts' as 'eminently unreasonable', especially given that many of the men involved in gunrunning in Scotland were incommunicado, either in prison like Vize, or on the run in Britain. The involvement of both the IRA and the IRB in gunrunning in Britain led to a certain amount of confusion, he conceded. However, the successful procurement of munitions required that agents be given 'plenty of funds and large scope and discretion'. Some agents had simply been unwise in their expenditure. Béaslaí speculated that Brugha's dislike of the IRB in general played a part in his attitude.[161] Richard Mulcahy, the C/S, later stated that Brugha had grown jealous of Collins and attempted to use the issue of the Scottish accounts to undermine him.[162] Collins himself seemed to sense this. Writing to Joe Vize about the issue, he stated that 'the whole thing has another motive, as you know very well'.[163] Vize agreed. 'What is the idea of all this [accounting] work?' he asked irritably. '[C]an't they [i.e. Brugha etc.] give men a chance, there[']s no doubt everything will

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[157] Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 27 Jan. 1920; Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. 5 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1, P7/A/3)
[158] Comments of the Minister of Defence, 23 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[39])
[159] Michael Collins to George McGrath, 15 Jan., 17, 21 Feb.; George McGrath to Michael Collins, 21 Feb. 1921 (NAI, DE 5/7, 5/15)
[160] Ó Catháin, 'Michael Collins and Scotland', pp 169-70
[161] Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, ii, 161-3
[162] 'Talk with Lieut. General Costello on the 23rd May 1963' (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/D/3[23]), p. 1
[163] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 16 Mar. 1921, reprinted in Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, ii, 162-3

turn out all right if they only wait a little time. They know who got the money, and it will be accounted for in good time.'[164]

Collins saw D/P Liam Mellows as an ally of Brugha's and treated him somewhat frostily. When Mellows queried the different gunrunning accounts, Collins told Vize that 'If the D.P. wished, he knows perfectly well the difference between one account and the other – no one knows better than he does.'[165] When, in 1921, a Liverpool gunrunner complained of lacking money, Collins relished the opportunity of contrasting his management of gunrunning finances with that of Mellows.

> You will understand that I could forward you some money for your own use, but in the way things are going here at present, I don't like doing this. It is up to those people who are making so much fuss to attend to things. Nothing like it happened when I was in charge of certain details. It should not happen now either.[166]

Mellows soon began to reciprocate the animosity, complaining that Collins was attempting to monopolise the purchase of materiel in Britain just to spite him. As Hart comments, however, this was improbable. Rather, it is more likely that Collins simply desired to continue to operate gunrunning in Britain as it had always been run – through the IRB.[167] In any event, Brugha would later resurrect the controversy regarding the Scottish accounts against Collins when the latter returned from London with the treaty.

As well as providing the funds, Dublin often advised on the prices to be paid for the weaponry. Thus, Collins directed one gunrunner to 'Never on any account give more than £6 without consulting' his Liverpool colleagues. This applied to rifles, revolvers and automatics. A price greater than £6 might be agreed in the case of a German automatic, complete with stock and fifty or one hundred rounds of ammunition, he continued. Still, if he were to be made such an offer, the gunrunner should consult the Merseyside men before agreeing to it.[168] As we saw earlier, when Liverpool's Steve Lanigan seemed about to make a deal for munitions in London in 1919, Collins advised him that £5 was the maximum he was to pay for rifles.[169] Around the same time, he approved the payment of 7*s* 6*d* per lb of gelignite and 1*s* 1½*d* per 55 ft (16.8 m) of fuse.[170] The following year, Collins insisted that £5 10*s* was the

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[164] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but date-stamped 27 Apr. 1921 (NLI, Béaslaí Papers, Ms 33,916[2])
[165] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 16 Mar. 1921, reprinted in Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, ii, 162-3
[166] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 28 Feb.; Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 9 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[167] Hart, *Mick*, p. 261
[168] Michael Collins to Seamus Barrett, 31 Jan. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9)
[169] See p. 83 above
[170] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 8 July 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

maximum price to be paid thereafter for individual munitions.[171] In early 1922, with the republican movement becoming increasingly divided on the merits of the treaty, Rory O'Connor appointed Joseph Robinson, recently released from prison, to the position of O/C Scotland and ordered him to acquire and smuggle weapons to Ireland as quickly as possible, irrespective of cost.[172]

Sometimes the funds to purchase munitions were raised in Britain itself, through contributions from Volunteers themselves, as well as through the organisation of dances, lotteries and collections patronised by the wider Irish community.[173]

In the acquisition of materiel, funds were employed in two different ways. In simple deals, money was handed over in return for weapons. Buying weapons from gunsmiths and British army soldiers recently returned from the world war were examples of such transactions. A Jewish gunsmith was one of the main sources of munitions for the London men.[174] Crucibles, large pots used in the mixing of chemicals for bombs, were bought by the Liverpool men from a firm named Rawltan Brothers. 'We found the Englishman always willing to do business,' commented Paddy Daly.[175] Other deals were more complicated, sometimes necessitating that financial expense be incurred ever before the munitions were actually acquired. Asking Michael Collins for an additional £500, Joe Vize explained that he had spent all his funds pursuing many different channels of inquiry, each of which required deposits and outlays. 'I must have money in those places,' he wrote in February 1920, '... [for] if one of them start[s] on a large scale, I would like to be able to meet them without calling in money from the other places ...'.[176] The employment of agents, so as to maximise the purchase of munitions, was also costly, as it sometimes necessitated the payment of something approaching a wage. 'I gave him to understand, if he wanted to make a few pounds, he was in the right place,' Vize wrote, in reference to an ex-sergeant-major who had offered his services.[177] Even the theft of munitions, from an army barracks for example, incurred costs. The munitions themselves were not purchased, of course, but bribes had to be paid so as to facilitate the theft. We saw earlier that Vize spent £30 or £40 as 'bait' in preparing a raid on an army stores.[178] This was probably a bribe for his contact, the army

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[171] Michael Collins to Paddy O'Donoghue, 7 Sept. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[172] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[173] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 1 (NAI)
[174] Dennis Kelleher interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107); BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, p. 6 (NAI)
[175] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 28 (NAI)
[176] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 15 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[177] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 27 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[178] See p. 82 above

range keeper. The subsequent arrest of the range keeper scuppered Vize's plans and the money spent had to be written off.

The gunrunners themselves were often conscious of expenses too. As we saw earlier, in mid-1920, seafarers on a boat plying between Glasgow and Hamburg agreed to procure munitions in Germany for Joe Vize. He, however, became dissatisfied with the prices they were charging, with revolvers costing, on average, £4 each, and ammunition 30*s* per one hundred bullets. The seafarers attributed the cost to a number of factors, including the exchange rate between sterling and the German mark and the expense of 'getting stuff lifted'. The frugal Vize was unconvinced, however, and, to ensure their honesty through price comparison, he made arrangements for another boat or two to work the same route.[179] Volunteer companies engaged in gunrunning sometimes established purchasing committees in order to control costs. The Motherwell IRA's committee, for example, decided that £3 10*s* was the maximum price they were willing to pay for a revolver. For an automatic, the figure was £4 10*s*.[180] In March 1921, in an attempt to solve problems relating to the financing of gunrunning in Glasgow and Edinburgh, Liam Mellows instructed John Carney, O/C Scottish brigade, and three other gunrunners to form a committee to control the procurement and despatch of munitions to Ireland.[181]

As well as the orders received from Dublin and the financial resources at their disposal, the quantities and types of munitions acquired by the gunrunners was dictated by the nature of the weapons sources available to them. As mentioned earlier, British army soldiers were a particularly fertile source, as on their return from the Great War many brought munitions home with them as souvenirs. Acting on initiative, individual Volunteers would approach the former soldiers and ask if they were willing to sell their weapons. Motherwell's James Byrne later stated that around one hundred rifles and 'a couple of hundred revolvers', all costing between £3 and £3 10*s*, were purchased in this way, along with a small amount of ammunition.[182] Paddy O'Donoghue remembered that the gunrunner Seamus Barrett similarly secured 'a big number of revolvers' from soldiers in Manchester. 'There could not have been much of a check by the British Army authorities on these guns judging by the rather easy way they could be disposed of,' O'Donoghue commented.[183] Ex-soldiers and seamen were also

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[179] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 11 June 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); see p. 98 above
[180] BMHWS no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 5 (NAI)
[181] D/P to Commandant Carney and Messrs Burke, Byrne and Fagan, 3 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[36-8])
[182] BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, pp 3-4, 8 (NAI)
[183] Ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, p. 6 (NAI)

good sources in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, while in Middlesbrough, armaments bought from seafarers were mainly used to arm the city's Volunteers.[184]

As well as selling their own weapons to them, soldiers often helped Irish gunrunners gain access to munitions held in army barracks. Such barracks, drill halls, shooting ranges, and similar facilities, with their arsenals of firearms, ammunition, and more, were alluring targets for Irish gunrunners. Glasgow's Joe Vize was very interested in mounting raids on such arsenals. In July 1920, he issued orders to all IRB centres in Scotland 'to report without delay any rifle ranges, drill halls or army stores in their districts ...'.[185] By then, he had already mounted a number of thefts. His first raid, on Hamilton army barracks, seems to have taken place in August 1919. Vize made contact with a quartermaster sergeant in the barracks. On the appointed night, a small group of Volunteers travelled to the barracks. At a location arranged by the quartermaster, two of the party climbed over the wall. They soon return with the rifles and handed them to their colleagues, who hid them under their coats. In all, ten rifles were seized, along with a quantity of ammunition.[186]

The successful raid whetted Vize's appetite for mounting similar raids on barracks in Georgetown and Maryhill, as well as paying a return visit to Hamilton. He was also interested in a large soldier demobilisation station. He told Collins that ten new Webley revolvers had been secured there, while arrangements were being made to acquire some machine guns.[187] The following month, he noted that his contact in Maryhill barracks, a sergeant in the machine gun stores, was only waiting to place a sympathiser, properly bribed, on sentry duty before 'starting work for us'. The machine guns would each cost between £250 and £300 new. Vize was prepared to offer £50 to £70. 'I was never so sure of anything as I am of this lot,' he boasted.[188] The sources do not record Vize's success in getting weapons from Maryhill, although two Volunteers, James Fagan and Robert O'Donnell, were later charged with soliciting a soldier to steal munitions from the barracks. They were both found guilty of conspiracy.[189]

Meanwhile, Hamilton barracks was 'just developing' as a source. Having secured ten rifles in the first raid, Vize expected many more.[190] When he learned that a sergeant working at one of the barracks was an Easter Week veteran recently rejoined the British army, Vize

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[184] Ibid., no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 9; ibid., no. 369, William Whelan, pp 8-9 (NAI)
[185] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but date-stamped 7 July 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[186] BMHWS no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 3; ibid., no. 776, Joseph Booker, p. 3 (NAI)
[187] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but c. 18 Jan. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[188] Ibid., 7 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[189] *Irish Times*, 17, 21 Mar. 1921
[190] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 7 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

hoped to arrange a meeting with him.[191] On 24 June, Vize and thirty Volunteers returned to Hamilton barracks. Having made arrangements with two soldiers, one of whom may have been the Easter week veteran, they seized forty German rifles and bayonets from the armoury and load them into a waiting taxi. The cost, probably in bribes, was £60.[192]

On 5 November 1920, Vize and his men raided the Orange Hall on Glasgow's Cowdaddens St. Five rifles and one thousand rounds of ammunition were seized, along with an amount of money and some regalia. The graffito 'Commandeered for the Irish Republican Army' was written on the wall.[193]

Republicans in other parts of Britain mounted similar raids, although much less frequently. In May 1921, the Liverpool and Birmingham Volunteers made preparations for a raid on a drill hall in the latter city. Paddy Daly expected the raid to net one hundred rifles, two machine guns and a large quantity of ammunition, 'without any difficulty'.[194] Two weeks later, one of the Birmingham men, perhaps James Cunningham, told him that the hall also contained 762 kg of explosive cordite.[195] The summer passed, however, without the raid being mounted. Perhaps in an attempt to motivate Daly, in September Michael Collins reminded him that ammunition 'is one of our greatest wants, so that no opportunity should be lost of obtaining it ...'.[196] The following day, Daly reported that the raid had taken place. Four Lee Enfield rifles and just under 3,500 rounds of .303 ammunition had been secured but, perhaps comparing it with his high expectations, Daly described the raid as 'a dismal failure'.[197] Fearful that the use of a motor car might attract attention and precipitate a political controversy regarding the breaking of the truce agreement, the Volunteers were forced to carry the booty on their persons, thus limiting the amount of rifles they were able to remove. Daly thought it might be possible to mount another raid. However, it could only be mounted after the truce had collapsed, as a second raid without the use of a motor car was not worth effecting.[198] Collins disagreed with Daly's view that the raid was a failure: 'If the Cork no. 3

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[191] Ibid., 15 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[192] Ibid., 27 June 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11); BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, pp 4-5 (NAI)
[193] Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 12 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3); RROUK, no. 80, 11 Nov. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/114)
[194] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 23 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[195] Ibid., 6 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[196] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 21 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[197] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 22 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[198] Ibid., 24 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)

[brigade] had had it [i.e. the 3,500 rounds of ammunition] at one period in last February, they would have smashed up 650 of the enemy'.[199]

On another occasion, James Cunningham and a priest named O'Connor succeeded in taking twenty Martini-Henri rifles from a drill hall in the Pottery area of Birmingham.[200]

Meanwhile, in March 1921, after his meeting with Mellows in Dublin, Gilbert Barrington and his fellow officers in the Tyneside IRA began raids of their own. 'C' company, led by E. Kerrigan and E. Costello, raided a drill hall in Gateshead and seized six rifles.[201] Four months later, 'C' company acquired three machine guns in a raid on Saltwell Park, a public park. In order to transport the guns from the scene, Barrington hired a horse and cart from 'a shady character', a member of the Askew Road gang. The machine guns, along with the rifles from the raid on the drill hall, were then transported to Liverpool.[202]

In London, gunrunners, including Denis Kelleher, made contact with a Sergeant Roche, a quartermaster in Chelsea Barracks. On a number of occasions, Roche smuggled small amounts of weapons out of the barracks to the gunrunners' car parked nearby. In November 1921, a group of IRA men from Ireland, led by Michael Hogan, arrived in London on a gunrunning mission. Having received £1,000 from Cathal Brugha, Clare's Michael Brennan had sent the men to the English capital to buy some materiel. However, learning of Roche, the Clare men decided against purchasing munitions and instead resolved to mount a raid on the barracks. Kelleher thought the plan impossible and refused to introduce them to Roche or allow them use of the car. However, Hogan eventually got in touch with Roche and arranged a deal. Hiring a taxi, Hogan and his colleagues drove into Chelsea barracks and filled it with rifles and ammunition. They then dumped the munitions in a builder's yard in Hammersmith. However, after dropping off his passengers at the Marble Arch, the taxi driver drove to the police and informed on them. Hogan and his men were arrested at their lodgings.[203]

The black market, of course, was another big source of armaments. James Cunningham remembered that the Birmingham 'underworld' was a fruitful source of armaments. However, he ensured that Dan O'Malley, his Birmingham-born right-hand man, accompanied him on any such missions, as the byzantine layout of the city's dens, lanes, courts and squares would have defeated his attempts to travel alone. As well as a guide, he

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[199] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 26 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[200] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 12 (NAI)
[201] Ibid., no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 9 (NAI)
[202] Ibid.
[203] Dennis Kelleher interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107); Brennan, *The war in Clare*, pp 107-08; *The Times*, 24 Nov. 1921

also used O'Malley as a virtual translator, as he found it very difficult to understand the slum dwellers' patois.[204]

Through local representatives of the Third Communist International, a body established by the Bolsheviks in Russia with the aim of fomenting revolution in Europe, the Tyneside gunrunners succeeded in acquiring a small number of machine guns.[205]

Meanwhile, in the mining districts of Britain, especially Lanarkshire in Scotland and Lancashire in England, the large number of mining concerns presented conspicuous and attractive targets for the acquisition of explosives. In such areas, the local IRA company was often composed entirely of miners.[206] At the beginning of each day's work, they were usually given a quantity of explosives to blast the rock and coal. Each miner setting aside a small amount of his allocation and smuggling it out of the mine at the end of the day meant that large quantities of explosives were acquired for little or no cost and without raising the suspicions of the mine owners.[207] During a coal strike in 1921, the St. Helens Volunteers, numbering about fifteen miners, decided to raid the mining depots for explosives. The strike provided cover for the raid, for it was common for out-of-work miners to steal explosives for utilisation in securing coal for their own domestic use. The Volunteers succeeded in seizing a considerable quantity of munitions, amounting to hundreds of lbs of gelignite, a vast quantity of fuse, and thousands of electric detonators. Paddy Daly remembered it as one of the biggest consignments of explosives acquired during the war of independence.[208] Michael Collins considered the St. Helens Volunteers such a valuable source of munitions that he agreed to provide funds to relieve the hardship they were experiencing as a result of the strike.[209]

The inconspicuous nature of the activities of the St. Helens miners meant that they escaped police attention. However, the occurrence of a number of overt raids on mining magazines did alert the police to the existence of Irish revolutionaries in Britain. On 26 July 1919, for example, three carts of gelignite and one hundred detonators were stolen from Greenfoot quarry in Glenboig, Lanarkshire. On 24 April the following year, 101.25 kg of gelignite, 4.05 kg of gunpowder, 550 detonators and 13.5 kg of fuse were taken from Robroyston Colliery, again in Lanarkshire. Between 5 and 9 May 1921, 45 kg of ammonite

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[204] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 6 (NAI)
[205] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 20; Emmet O'Connor, *Reds and the green: Ireland, Russia and the Communist International, 1919–43* (Dublin, 2004), pp 6-7
[206] BMHWS no. 777, Patrick Mills, p. 3 (NAI)
[207] Ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, p. 3 (NAI)
[208] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 17 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5); BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 31-2
[209] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 20 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)

was stolen from Platt's Colliery, near Wigan, Lancashire. In all, police returns recorded thirty-six such thefts in the period July 1919 to the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in December 1921, of which twenty-nine took place in Scotland. Irishmen were convicted of involvement in only four cases, but in twenty others Irish involvement was presumed or considered probable, sometimes strongly.[210] For example, the police commented that the theft of 4.5 kg of gelignite from Holomine, Gavieside, in West Calder, Scotland, on 14 April 1921, was 'Probably attributable to Irish agency', for 'no other reason' existed to explain it.[211]

In the run-up to the civil war, raiding collieries proved popular with the anti-treaty IRA. On 29 April 1922, eight collieries in south Manchester were raided, a large quantity of explosives and gunpowder was stolen, along with thousands of detonators. A railwayman who happened across an attempt to raid the premises of the Greengate Brick & Tile Company was tied up. Speculating that the raiders probably worked at the collieries, the press held that the main difficulty they encountered would have been in forcing the heavy iron doors of the store houses. The raiders succeeded in doing so in all but one colliery – Shedley – where they stole gunpowder from the powder house instead.[212] Thefts occurred in collieries in Yorkshire the following May and June, though the police did not rule in or out the involvement of the IRA.[213]

That same night, 29 April, saw the biggest single raid attempted by republicans in the post-treaty period. During the truce, Birmingham's Dan O'Malley had made contact with a man working in the Premier Aluminium Casting Company, a factory which was breaking down surplus war material in the city's Hay Mill district.[214] The worker agreed to supply O'Malley with some ammunition, and soon between eight hundred and one thousand rounds were being passed out of the factory every week. The factory, however, contained 'hundreds of millions of rounds' of ammunition. This, and the prospect of 'trouble at home over Belfast'[215], led the city's IRA, aided by their Liverpool comrades, to plan a raid on the premises. The plan called for twenty unarmed Volunteers to be admitted at intervals to the factory by O'Malley's contact. A lorry and a car would also enter the premises. The men would then load the transport with ammunition. Afterwards, they would each flee the scene

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[210] Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov.; Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct.; Chief Constable of Merthyr Fydfil County Borough to Home Office, 19 Oct.; Chief Constable of the North Riding to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 16 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[211] Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[212] *The Times*, 5, 6 May 1922
[213] Chief Constable of Yorkshire West Riding to Home Office, 13 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[214] *Birmingham Post*, 3 May 1922 (NAI, DE 2/410)
[215] See pp 122, 150 below

carrying as much ammunition on their persons as possible. However, on the night of the raid, the contact initially refused to open the gate, and only reluctantly admitted Cunningham to the premises. Suspecting a trap, Cunningham started to walk back in the direction the Volunteers were coming. Suddenly, two armed plain-clothes policemen jumped out from behind a wall and arrested him. 'I was knocked about a bit as they had expected I would be armed', he remembered.[216]

Liverpool's Paddy Daly was also involved in the raid. When he and another Volunteer tried to summon the sentry at the factory gate, they heard a noise that sounded like boxes being smashed. Suspicious, they retreated across the road to await developments. Shortly afterwards, they saw a figure, wearing a white armlet, climb out over the factory gate and run up the road. Even more suspicious that something was afoot, Daly and his companion retreated to the main road, where they observed a large number of uniformed policemen. Feigning English accents, the two passed through the police ranks and returned to their lodgings.[217]

Daly and his comrade escaped the police dragnet. However, Cunningham and another five Volunteers, including Patrick O'Neill, O/C Birmingham IRA, were arrested during the botched raid.[218] London's Art O'Brien asked Michael Collins to help pay the men's legal fees, stating that they had been involved in 'illegal ammunition traffic apparently for national purposes'. Collins dismissed the appeal, noting that 'The "national purposes" of course are supplying our opponents here [i.e. the anti-treaty IRA] in order that these may be in a position to shoot down their fellow country-men'.[219]

Patrick Murray, O/C Britain in 1922–23, believed that the IRA leadership in Ireland did not fully appreciate the difficulties involved in operating in England during the civil war. For example, Jim O'Donovan, director of chemicals, proposed the establishment of a bomb-making factory in London, with the finished grenades being smuggled to Ireland. Plans such as these were hampered by the state of the republican movement in Britain. The Volunteers there were very divided by the treaty. Munitions sources employed during the war of independence were 'curtailed' by the Free State authorities, so republicans were forced to undertake the time-consuming task of developing new contacts. Arrangements in relation to

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[216] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 14-19 (NAI)
[217] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 40-42 (NAI)
[218] Chief Constable of Birmingham to the Assistant Secretary of State, Home Office, 23 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); see p. 212 below
[219] Michael Collins to George Gavan Duffy, 4 May 1922 (NAI, DE 2/410)

locating arms dumps and finding reliable seamen to smuggle munitions also had to be made anew. Still, despite the great difficulties, Murray found the men involved did a 'fine' job.[220]

The quantity of munitions smuggled to Ireland from Britain is difficult to estimate accurately due to the lack of a complete set of primary source records for the period and also because of the lack of precision in some of the extant correspondence. Of all the centres of Irish gunrunning, the best surviving evidence relates to Liverpool. The correspondence between Liverpool and Dublin shows that the despatch of munitions to Ireland increased in frequency as the war of independence continued. During the course of August 1919, for example, the Merseyside men twice sent munitions to Ireland.[221] The same month two years later saw eight despatches.[222] Moreover, not only did the frequency of the despatches increase as the conflict continued in Ireland, so did the size of the consignments. On 11 August 1919, a Colt revolver, an automatic pistol and a Webley revolver were consigned. Five days later, Steve Lanigan told Collins that 2,213 rounds of .22 ammunition, along with a Colt revolver and assorted ammunition, were being despatched to Dublin. He later included two more revolvers and thirty rounds of .303 ammunition in the batch.[223] Some of the eight consignments despatched from Liverpool the same month two years later were smaller in size than these, but the majority were much bigger. On 17 August, munitions from Glasgow and Manchester were despatched. The former amounted to twelve revolvers and two automatics, along with 416 rounds of ammunition, and twenty-two detonators. The Manchester batch was composed of six revolvers and five sporting cartridges.[224] Two days later, Paddy Daly wrote to Michael Collins as follows:

Goods forwarded Aug. 18th .21

Ex N-O-T [i.e. received from Nottingham]

11 Web[ley]. Rev[olver]s .45
2 Colt " "
1 Mauser Auto[matic] (P[eter the]. Painter)
2 Auto .32
1 Parab[ellum]. (long)
1 Auto .38 (Web & Scot)
5 Batteries.
500 2oz stick [of] G[elignite].
94 r[oun]ds [of] 303 [ammunition]
40 " .45 Rev Amm.
120 " Morris Tube Amm
40 Sport Cart[ridge]s
3 Coils fuse
75 yds. [of] cable
1 st[one]. Pot[assium]. Chlor[ate]
75 rds .25 Auto Am.

[220] Patrick Murray interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/88)
[221] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 11 Aug.; Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 16 Aug. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[18, 41])
[222] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 17, 19, 22, 23, 30, 31 Aug. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[223] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 11 Aug.; Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 16 Aug.; Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 20 Aug. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[18, 41])
[224] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 17 Aug. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)

142 Fuse Det[onator]s
50 Elect[ric]. Dets[225]

The total amount of munitions despatched from Liverpool in August 1919 was six handguns and over 2,243 rounds of ammunition.[226] The figures for August 1921 were four Thompson sub-machine guns, eight rifles, four bayonets, fifty-six handguns, 3,164 rounds of ordinary ammunition, 145 sporting cartridges, 102 rounds of Morris Tube ammunition, almost 28.58 kg of gelignite, 6.35 kg of potassium chlorate, 214 detonators, three coils of fuse, and 68.58m of cable.[227] As Daly's letter above reveals, while a sizable proportion of these munitions were acquired by the Liverpool gunrunners themselves, they received a large quantity from their colleagues in other parts of Britain, as Merseyside became the main port of despatch.

In early March 1920, the Glasgow gunrunners started to send their munitions to Liverpool for consignment to Ireland. In the ten months previous to this, the extant correspondence reveals that the Glasgow men despatched directly to Ireland twelve rifles, fifty-seven handguns, 161 sticks of gelignite, another 109.35 kg of gelignite, 2,702 detonators, 203 fuses, and 270 rounds of ammunition.[228] In September 1920, while examining a batch of munitions received from Glasgow, Tom Kerr accidently shot dead his brother Neil.[229]

Yet, the amount of munitions despatched to Liverpool from Glasgow did not increase steadily as time went by. In February 1921, Michael Collins complained that the amount of munitions being procured by the Glasgow men was declining. He reflected wistfully on the situation twelve months previously when Scottish gunrunning was going 'well' and 'the stuff was coming inn [sic] at such a fine rate'. He blamed the deterioration on the fallout from the Bothwell affair and the arrest of Harry Coyle.[230] On 28 October the previous year, a group of Volunteers from the 2nd Scottish battalion had attempted to raid a Territorial Army drill hall in Bothwell. In the course of the raid, a policeman was shot. Subsequent arrests disrupted the 2nd battalion's gunrunning activities.[231] The arrest of Harry Coyle and Charles McGinn,

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[225] Ibid., 19 Aug. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[226] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 11 Aug.; Steve Lanigan to Michael Collins, 16 Aug.; Michael Collins to Steve Lanigan, 20 Aug. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1[18, 41])
[227] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 17, 19, 22, 23, 30, 31 Aug. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[228] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Joe Vize, May 1919–Mar. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[229] Michael Collins to Neil Kerr, 6 Sept. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3); Joe Vize to Michael Collins, n.d., but date-stamped 27 Apr. 1921 (NLI, Béaslaí Papers, Ms 33,916[2])
[230] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 28 Feb. 1921 (NLI, Béaslaí Papers, Ms 33,916[2])
[231] Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, p. 5; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, pp 4-5 (NAI); see p. 213 below

senior Scottish gunrunners, after a car chase on 4 December, compounded the difficulties.[232] Mellows described the situation as a 'muddle', with various people owed money for munitions accumulating in Glasgow, some from IRB funds and others from those of the Volunteers. Attempting to rectify the problem, he insisted that stricter accounting standards be obeyed.[233] However, three months later, the situation worsened with police raids following the killing of a policeman during the IRA's failed attempt to rescue a comrade from a Glasgow prison van.[234]

The Manchester men sent their armaments to Ireland via Liverpool, especially from January 1920 onwards, though Merseyside's Paddy Daly held that some munitions continued to be sent directly to Ireland from Manchester from time to time. The quantities despatched from Manchester via Liverpool are not recorded in surviving correspondence. However, records for the period previous to the Liverpool arrangement reveals that £223 6*s* 6*d* worth of munitions had been procured by four gunrunners in the year 1919. The armaments included revolvers, gelignite, fuse wire and fuse caps.[235]

The extant records in relation to London indicate that 1919 saw the despatch of at least three rifles and twelve handguns directly to Dublin, along with a parcel of munitions, the contents of which was not stated.[236] While he was in London on the prospective munitions deal in July 1919, Lanigan sent one hundred rounds of .45 ammunition to Dublin.[237] The following year, an unknown quantity of rifles, at least four revolvers, and four thousand rounds of ammunition were despatched directly to Dublin.[238] From November 1920 onwards, munitions from the capital were sent to Ireland via Liverpool. Armaments sent by this route up to the truce included thirty rifles, fifty-three revolvers, nineteen automatic handguns, over 10,400 rounds of assorted ammunition, two hand grenades, one coil fuse, and a bayonet.[239] More materiel must have been purchased in London during this period,

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[232] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Mar. 1921

[233] D/P to Commandant Carney and Messrs Burke, Byrne and Fagan, 3 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[36-38])

[234] BMHWS no. 933, Seamus Reader, pp 9-11 (NAI); see pp 201-02 below

[235] Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136); correspondence between Michael Collins, Seamus Barrett and Paddy O'Donoghue, Apr. 1919–Jan. 1921, esp. Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, n.d., but marked 'Recd 5.12.19' (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9)

[236] Correspondence between Michael Collins, Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath, Mar. 1920–June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/321–2/330; NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)

[237] See p. 84 above

[238] Correspondence between Michael Collins, Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath, Mar. 1920–June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/321–2/330; NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8429)

[239] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, 16 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/8); Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 21 Dec. 1920, n.d., but c. 4 Jan., 10 Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3); Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 21 Feb., 2, 18 Mar. 1921(UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4); Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 30 Aug. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)

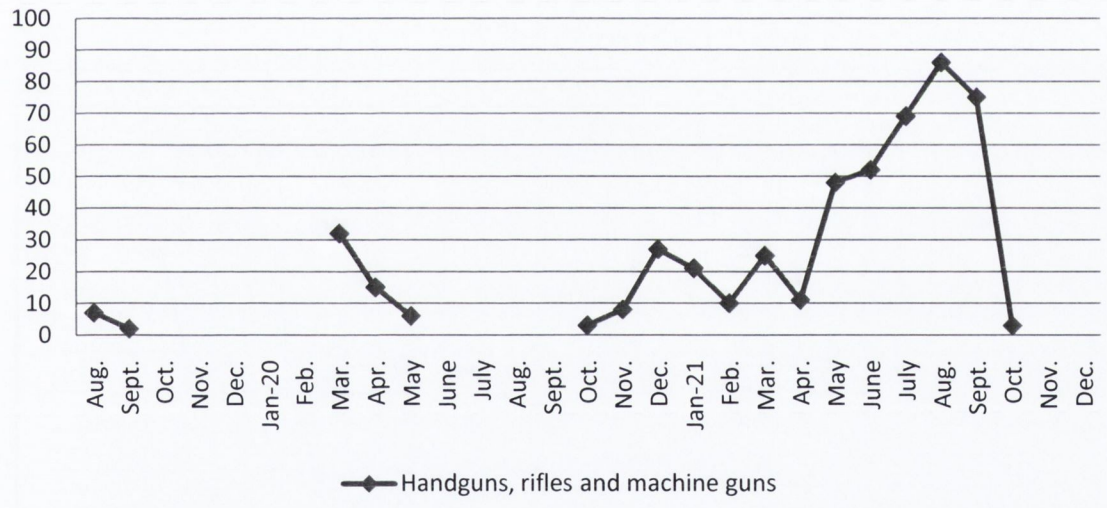
however, for, in late January 1921, the munitions account was overdrawn to the tune of £663.[240]

Only one piece of contemporaneous correspondence survives indicating that Liverpool also received munitions from Tyneside during the war of independence. On 2 July 1921, ten revolvers, five automatics, one Very pistol and four cartridges, 262 rounds of ammunition, thirty-one electric detonators, and 182.88 m of time fuse were sent to Merseyside.[241]

Overall, the two-year period from June 1919 to the truce in July 1921 saw the Liverpool men smuggle to Ireland 319 firearms, consisting of seven machine guns, twenty-seven rifles, and 285 handguns, along 24,450 rounds of ammunition, and 483.75 kg of explosives, mainly gelignite and ammonite.[242]

Chart 3

Quantity of firearms despatched to Ireland through Liverpool, Aug. 1919 - Dec. 1921[243]



'... for us in England there was no Truce; in fact if anything our activities were intensified,' Birmingham's James Cunningham later wrote.[244] Michael Collins encouraged

[240] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 27 Jan. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/327)

[241] Untitled note by David Fitzgerald, n.d., but c. July 1921, reprinted in Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, pp 24-5

[242] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Neil Kerr, Steve Lanigan, and Paddy Daly, June 1919–July 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1–P7/A/6)

[243] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Neil Kerr, Steve Lanigan, and Paddy Daly, June 1919–Jan. 1922 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1–P7/A/7); data is unavailable for the periods Oct. 1919–Feb. 1920, June–Sept. 1920, and Nov.–Dec. 1921; for dataset, see appendix 2

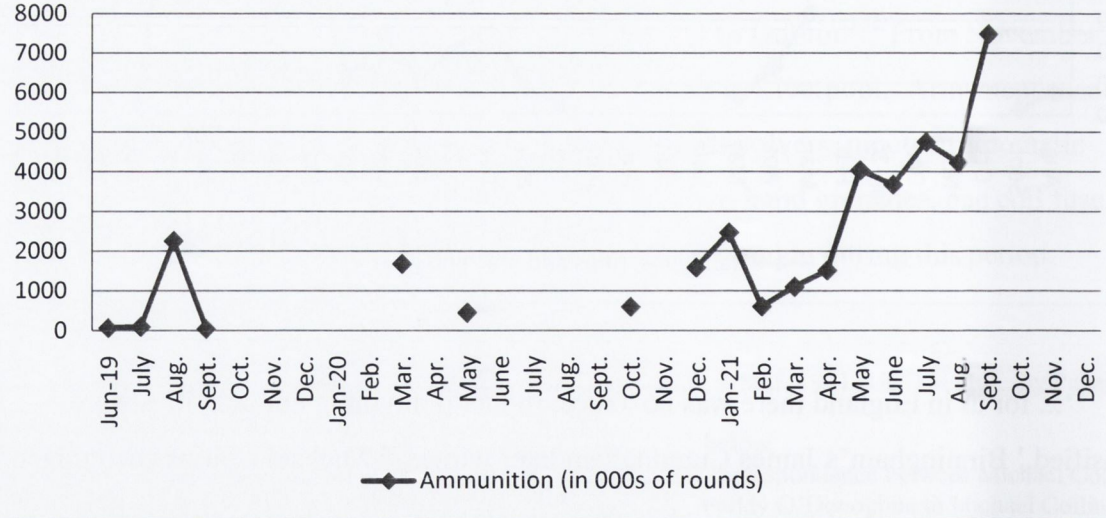
[244] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 14 (NAI)

the continuation of gunrunning during the truce. The opening of new sources 'may be very much more important in the future,' he wrote, 'and we might [i.e. must] be prepared for absolutely all eventualities,' hinting at the possible collapse of the truce and the renewal of warfare in Ireland.[245] As during the war of independence, the munitions despatched from Liverpool during the truce were received from Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Glasgow, Birmingham, Nottingham, and London, along with New York. Some, of course, originated in Liverpool itself. Gilbert Barrington later claimed that about £1,200 was expended on munitions in the Tyneside area between March and October 1921. The fruits of the expenditure amounted to between four and five hundred handguns and 'considerable quantities of explosives'.[246]

Interestingly, the extant correspondence indicates that while the period July–September 1921 saw a month on month increase in the number of despatches – five in July, eight in August, and fifteen in September – weapons smuggling seems to have collapsed in the last quarter of the year, with only one despatch for October and none for either November or December.[247]

Chart 4

Quantity of ammunition despatched to Ireland through Liverpool, June 1919 - Dec. 1921[248]

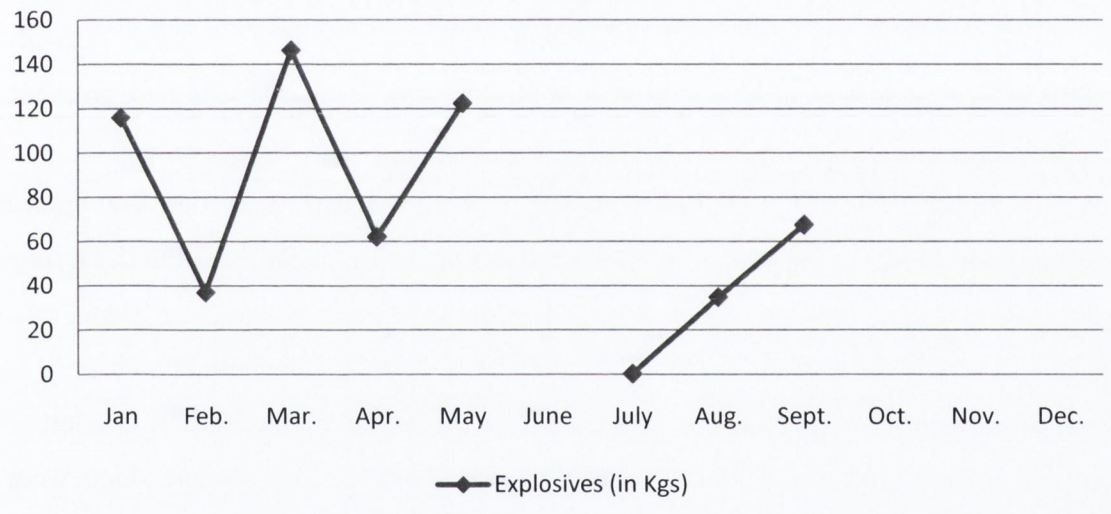


[245] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 19 Sept. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[246] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 8 (NAI)
[247] However, see pp 140-41 below
[248] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Neil Kerr, Steve Lanigan, and Paddy Daly, June 1919–Jan. 1922 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1–P7/A/7); data is unavailable for the periods Oct. 1919–Feb. 1920, Apr. 1920, June–Sept. 1920, Nov. 1920, and Nov.–Dec. 1921; for dataset, see appendix 2

The five-month period from the truce to the signing of the treaty on 6 December saw the despatch to Ireland through Liverpool of 181 firearms, consisting of twenty machine guns, forty-four rifles, and 117 handguns, along with 12,188 rounds of ammunition, and 102.2 kg of explosives, again mainly gelignite and ammonite.[249] Of course, other types of munitions and equipment were also sent to Dublin. During the truce period, this miscellaneous category included twenty-one bayonets, twelve daggers, 6.35 kg of potassium chlorate, 1,069 ordinary detonators, 253 electric detonators, 142 fuse detonators, 200 percussion caps, 3,024 springs, eight coils of fuse, 68.58 m of cable, five batteries, a field telephone, a periscope, and a bag of pellets.[250]

Chart 5

Quantity of explosives despatched to Ireland through Liverpool, 1921[251]



The quantity of munitions sent to pro- and anti-treaty forces Ireland during the post-treaty and civil war period is difficult to calculate authoritatively due to the lack of records.

During the civil war, the Irish army received materiel from the British government. Indeed, the two eighteen-pounder guns which were used to attack the Four Courts on 28 June

[249] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Paddy Daly, 12 July–6 Dec. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6–P7/A/7)

[250] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Paddy Daly, 12 July–6 Dec. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6–P7/A/7)

[251] Correspondence between Michael Collins and Neil Kerr, Steve Lanigan, and Paddy Daly, June 1919–Jan. 1922 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/1–P7/A/7); data is unavailable for the months of June, Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1921; for dataset, see appendix 2

1922, and constituted the opening shots of the civil war, were supplied by the British.[252] 'I hope you may be successful with your own forces aided by any equipment and supplies we can give you,' Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill told Michael Collins later that day. Victory over the republicans would save the treaty and allow the British government to demand that the Northern Ireland government bring to justice those responsible for the murder of Catholics in Belfast and Derry, he argued.[253] By the early hours of 2 July, the British had supplied the army with five armoured cars, sixty Lewis guns, and two thousand rifles.[254] Later that day, ten Lancias trucks, forty Lewis machine guns, five hundred revolvers with ammunition, eight hundred grenades, and 1,500 rounds of eighteen-pounder ammunition were handed over.[255] On 20 July, the Provisional Government received one thousand rifles it had requested to equip its troops for combat in Munster.[256] On 30 August, it received a further delivery of another five hundred rifles and twenty-five Lewis guns.[257]

Attempts were also made by the Provisional Government to exploit more dubious sources. Early 1922 had seen an increase in sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. Fearful that a failure to respond on its part would undermine support for the treaty, the government decided to clandestinely arm the Northern IRA for a campaign against the Unionist authorities. Frank FitzGerald, a London businessman and brother of Provisional Government member Desmond FitzGerald, was asked to source munitions in the British capital. During the war of independence, he and Joseph White, a fellow Irish businessman, had been involved in smuggling munitions for the IRA. In December 1921, FitzGerald had been charged with conspiring with others to steal munitions from Chelsea barracks in London. While the charges against him were subsequently dropped, some of his co-defendants were found guilty.[258]

After making inquiries, FitzGerald learned that munitions could be acquired from the British army's disposal board, with Horace Soley & Company acting as an intermediary. The company had supplied munitions to the IRA prior to the treaty. In June 1922, Sean MacMahon, QMG of the Irish army, authorised the payment of £10,000 to FitzGerald for the purchase of Hotchkiss machine guns, rifles and revolvers. FitzGerald and White then entered

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[252] Telegram, Andy Cope to Lionel Curtis, 7.34 a.m., 28 June 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[253] Telegram, Winston Churchill to Andy Cope, 12.30 p.m., 28 June 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[254] Telegram, GHQ Ireland to War Office, 4.35 a.m., 2 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[255] Telegram, Andy Cope to Winston Churchill, 10.31 a.m., 2 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[256] Telegram, ibid., 10.53 p.m.; telegram Mark Sturgis to Andy Cope, 11.06 p.m., 29 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[257] Telegram, Loughnane to Mark Sturgis, 2.04 p.m.; telegram, Freeston to Loughnane, 3.50 p.m., 30 Aug. 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[258] *The Times*, 24, 25 Nov., 10 Dec. 1920, 19 Jan. 1921; see p. 112 above

into negotiations with Horace Soley. In August, they paid the company a deposit of £2,250 for ten thousand rifles. That same month, they received five Hotchkiss guns. However, Scotland Yard had learned of the men's activities and seized the weapons.[259] In the autumn and winter of 1922–23, FitzGerald continued to acquire munitions, mainly revolvers and explosive chemicals, for the army. However, his activities soon ran into further controversy, with Horace Soley threatening him with legal action due to unpaid bills. It later transpired that FitzGerald had earned a large profit by charging the Irish army significantly higher prices for the munitions than he himself had paid. Moreover, the quantity of munitions of which the army had actually received delivery was less than that for which it had paid.[260]

The uncovering of Frank FitzGerald's clandestine gunrunning activities led the British government to demand that the Irish authorities cease attempting to acquire munitions in such a manner. Churchill proposed that the Provisional Government should, in the first instance, apply to him for any munitions it required. He would then ascertain whether the British government was in a position to fulfil the request. If so, the munitions would then be supplied on credit, with payment to occur at a later date. If the British government was unable to meet the request, the Provisional Government would be free to source their munitions elsewhere. However, Churchill requested that he be kept informed of any orders placed with other parties. The British were 'endeavouring through our intelligence service to keep track of all attempts on the part of the irregulars [i.e. the anti-treaty IRA] to purchase munitions in this country or abroad,' he explained.

> You will readily see that efforts of our agents are stultified, unless I am fully informed of all transactions for which the Provisional Government is responsible. We cannot tell which is which. We track an irregular order and find it backed by the Free State.[261]

The Provisional Government agreed to the new procedures and throughout the autumn and winter of 1922 the army continued to receive supplies of munitions from the British, though the total quantity is unknown.[262]

For the anti-treaty IRA, Liverpool continued to be the main port of despatch, receiving munitions from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and London. On 15 March, the Newcastle

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[259] ?Lionel Curtis to Winston Churchill, 25 Aug. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/6); Michael Farrell, 'Frank FitzGerald and the arms crisis of 1922' in *Magill*, vi, no. 6 (1983), pp 31-5

[260] Farrell, 'Frank FitzGerald and the arms crisis of 1922', pp 31-5; *Epitome of the reports from the Committee of Public Accounts on the appropriation accounts for the years 1922–23 to 1933–34, inclusive, and of the minutes of the Minister for Finance thereon* (Dublin, 1937), pp 160-65

[261] Winston Churchill to William Cosgrave, 26 Sept. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/11)

[262] William Cosgrave to Winston Churchill, 18 Oct. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/11); British cabinet conclusions, 22 Nov. 1922 (TNA, CAB 23/39)

men sent an amount of handguns to Liverpool.[263] This would seem to indicate that the munitions listed by the Tyneside men as being on hand the previous January may also have been sent to Merseyside for despatch to Ireland.[264] If so, then the munitions despatched to Liverpool from Newcastle in early 1922 amounted to six machine guns, one Lee Enfield rifle, sixty-three revolvers, thirty-nine automatics, 1,700 rounds of ammunition, 45 kg of gelignite, one hundred sticks of gelignite, 214 detonators, 27.4 m of fuse, a Mills grenade, and other miscellaneous equipment.[265]

In December 1922, the O/C London, William Aherne, told C/S Liam Lynch that £330 14*s* 4*d* had been spent on the purchase of munitions, probably over the previous couple of months. An additional £224 had been run up in expenses associated with the procurement of these armaments. The munitions amounted to two tonnes of potassium chlorate, 711.23 kg of DNT, an explosive, 17,500 rounds of rifle and revolver ammunition, seven hundred sporting cartridges, fifteen .45 revolvers, fifteen drums of putty, a one pound bar of peroxide, and a three pound bar of ballistite. The majority of the munitions had been despatched to Ireland with the help of a Merseyside merchant.[266] However, police seizures ensured that very few of these munitions actually reached the IRA in Ireland.[267]

Joseph Robinson in Glasgow sent an unspecified amount of munitions to IRA headquarters in the course of 1922, some of which were landed at Dundalk. He also sent 2,500 rounds of 9mm ammunition an IRA unit in Tipperary.[268] In October, a steamer out of Glasgow was found in Sligo bay with an undisclosed quantity of munitions on board.[269]

Extant IRA correspondence for 1923 fails to specify the amount of munitions despatched to Ireland. In January, the QMG wrote that he was happy to learn that 'supply is so good'.[270] The Glasgow men continued to send materiel, during January at least.[271] In February, an unspecified quantity of munitions was awaiting despatch from Liverpool. The O/C hoped that the Limerick and Drogheda boats would collect them.[272] On 4 April, Liam Lynch wrote that he was pleased that gunrunning was continuing in spite of the mass arrests

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[263] Untitled, undated memo, reprinted in Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 30
[264] David Fitzgerald to D/P, 4 Jan. 1922, reprinted in ibid., pp 28-9
[265] Untitled, undated memo; David Fitzgerald to D/P, 4 Jan. 1922, both reprinted in ibid., pp 28-30
[266] O/C London to C/S, 8 Dec. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[267] C/S to O/C Britain, 30 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[268] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[269] *The Times*, 7 Oct. 1922
[270] QMG to O/C Britain, 17 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[271] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[272] O/C Liverpool to O/C Britain, 7 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)

and deportations of the previous month.[273] Six days later, Lynch died from wounds suffered during a fire fight with Free State troops on the Knockmealdown mountains in county Tipperary. The IRA dumped arms the following month.[274]

The surviving sources, then, would seem to indicate that at least 124 firearms, consisting of six machine guns, one rifle, and 117 handguns, were sent to Ireland during the post-treaty and civil war period. Also despatched were 21,700 rounds of ammunition and 959.45 kg of explosives.

Overall then, to the extent that the sources specify the amounts and types of munitions sent to Ireland via Liverpool, the four-year period from June 1919 to May 1923 saw thirty-three machine guns, seventy-two rifles, 519 handguns, 58,338 rounds of ammunition, and almost 1.55 tons of explosives procured in Britain and elsewhere and sent across the Irish Sea.

These figures, tentative as they are, do not represent the total amount of gunrunning in Britain during the war of independence and civil war. As the conflict continued, the British police began to intercept and seize munitions destined for Ireland.[275] Moreover, some IRA men engaged in gunrunning outside the official channels of the IRA and IRB. Provincial units were often dissatisfied with the quantity of supplies they received from headquarters in Dublin. Michael Brennan made a number of trips to GHQ in order to plead for weapons. All he received, however, was 'a few revolvers occasionally'. He never received any rifles. This caused great resentment among the Volunteers in Clare.[276] Many provincial units believed that Michael Collins, a Cork man, deliberately favoured his own county in terms of rifle distribution. To some extent, their suspicions were correct. In March 1921, a GHQ staff memo noted that the counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, and Tipperary constituted the 'War Zone', the area in Ireland where the Volunteers and Crown forces clashed most frequently. Hence, the IRA in this area was 'entitled to supplies of all kinds and must be kept munitioned [sic] as fully as possible'.[277] Even so, the IRA in Cork often found itself short of munitions. O'Callaghan states that GHQ was of 'limited assistance to the Limerick Volunteers in their efforts to procure arms and ammunition'. As well as undermining GHQ's authority in the

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[273] C/S to O/C Britain, 4 Apr. 1923 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/51)
[274] C/S to Eamon de Valera, 11 Apr. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1750); C/S to all ranks, 24 May 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1752)
[275] See pp 215-16 below
[276] Brennan, *The war in Clare*, p. 38
[277] Ibid.; Staff Memo, 'THE WAR AS A WHOLE', 24 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[171-3])

provinces, Dublin's failure to supply adequate amounts of materiel had the effect of motivating some units sent their own representatives to Britain to procure munitions.[278]

In September 1919, Joe Vize complained to Michael Collins of such unauthorised gunrunning. A man named James O'Connell, claiming to be connected with GHQ, was receiving munitions from a member of 'B' company, Glasgow Volunteers. Vize asked Collins to ascertain the bona fides of the arrangement. Otherwise, Vize was going to shut it down, for 'if those fellows are caught it would mean the closing of our working channels, or perhaps worse'.[279] Two months later, Vize reported that a man named Patrick Connell, or O'Connell, was in Glasgow. As he too claimed to be working for GHQ, this was probably the same man as James O'Connell. Connell had tapped into one of Vize's sources and was offering inflated prices for munitions: £5 for one hundred rounds of ammunition and £8 to £10 for rifles. '[H]e is doing great harm,' Vize complained, urging Collins to have him 'looked up, or locked up'.[280] Collins informed Vize that there was no Patrick Connell working in Glasgow for GHQ and authorised his arrest.[281]

Connell/O'Connell proved to be just the first of many engaged in unauthorised gunrunning in Britain during the war of independence. Collins took the position that such missions by inexperienced men ran the risk to disrupting the activities of his full-time gunrunning network. News that a Volunteer from Mayo had been purchasing munitions in Liverpool in 1920 led him to declaim that he 'would be better employed letting the people who are already at that work go ahead while he himself got on with his work in Mayo'.[282]

A couple of months later, when he learned that an Alderman Lynch of Sligo was purchasing munitions in Liverpool, Collins reminded the chief Liverpool gunrunner of GHQ's attitude towards such activity. 'You thoroughly understand don't you', he told Paddy Daly,

> than [i.e. that] any man working on his own is not to be facilitated unless authority is got from this side. People who have not a long experience in working these matters don't know the harm [they do] by spreading things about in a larg[e] circle.[283]

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[278] O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick*, p. 193; Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 172-3
[279] Joe Vize to Michael Collins, 5 Sept. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[280] Ibid., 16 Nov. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[281] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 22 Nov. 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[282] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 23 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[283] Ibid., 5 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)

The permission of either the ministry of home affairs or GHQ was required for anyone to leave Ireland, he continued at a later date. Anyone lacking such authorisation 'is a deserter or a fugitive', and was to be shunned.[284]

Despite Collins' orders, however, some gunrunners continued to help comrades from Ireland. In the autumn of 1921, a group of Wexford IRA men, charting their own trawler, persuaded some of J. P. Connolly's gunrunners in south Wales to sell them weapons for their company. However, owing to some mishap which led to the involvement of the police, the armaments, numbering nineteen rifles, were dumped, one of Connolly's gunrunners was arrested, and two others went on the run. Connolly's men later recovered their materiel.[285]

Some members of the IRA in Britain also engaged in unauthorised gunrunning. In late 1920, Paddy O'Donoghue told Michael Collins that no. 2 company of the Manchester Volunteers was sending munitions to Dublin, sometimes via Drogheda and other times direct by train. The Volunteers themselves refused to divulge any details regarding the arrangements, so he asked Collins to clarify that the munitions were indeed being received in Dublin.[286] Collins replied that no such deliveries had been received. He speculated that the weapons were being sent privately to individual Volunteers or companies in Ireland, and if they were being sent through Drogheda they were effectively lost. Such private gun-smuggling 'is the sort of thing that always creates disorganisation and disturbance', he complained.[287] In a raid on the company's headquarters on Erskine St. in April 1921, the police uncovered a large amount of munitions.[288] Meanwhile, the Scottish IRA allowed Sean Healy and Harry Coyle, representing brigades in Cork, Mayo and Sligo, to procure munitions in Scotland on the understanding that they eschew GHQ sources and that they co-ordinate their prices with the Scottish brigade's purchasing committee so as to avoid inflating the market. Coyle later became a member of the purchasing committee.[289] Iain Patterson has claimed that munitions received from Scotland had little impact on the IRA's campaign in Ireland during the war of independence. However, while the quantity of Scottish armaments distributed by GHQ might have been small, the amount of materiel received by IRA units

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[284] Ibid., 24 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[285] J. P. Connolly to D/P, n.d., but c. Sept./Oct. 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8442/5)
[286] Paddy O'Donoghue to Michael Collins, 11 Nov., 3 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[287] Michael Collins to Paddy O'Donoghue, 26 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)
[288] 'LIST OF AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES FOUND AT THE IRISH CLUB, ERSKINE STREET, HULME', n.d. (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[289] BMHWS no. 933, Seamus Reader, p. 6 (NAI)

through unofficial channels operated by Healy, Coyle and others, should not be underestimated.[290]

In 1920, Richard Walsh, brigade Adjutant of the Mayo IRA, received Michael Collins' permission to travel to Britain to procure munitions using funds raised by his own Volunteers. He succeeded in acquiring 'a considerable amount' of arms. Walsh despatched the munitions to Mayo via Dublin. However, he was angered to discover that GHQ had commandeered the consignment and sent it to Munster instead. When a similar fate befell a second batch, he sought and was granted permission by his brigade to engage in gunrunning outside of GHQ channels: '... I knew that brigades in Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and some of the midland counties had agents [in Britain] working in defiance of GHQ,' he later wrote. Walsh then returned to Britain, accompanied by Pat Fallon, a Mayo IRA member, and Joe Good, a London-born Volunteer and Easter Rising veteran who was now working as an electrician for Walsh's business. From February to July 1921, the trio travelled around Britain purchasing armaments. Visiting London, Birmingham, Bradford, Liverpool, Manchester, among other places, they acquired significant quantities of materiel. Despite the enterprise being unauthorised, Walsh received help from such IRA and IRB gunrunners as the Carr brothers in London, and Hugh Early, O/C Liverpool company Volunteers. Mayo-born members of the Merseyside IRA also assisted the trio. In London, while they acquired a large number of weapons, ammunition proved hander to procure. However, when Walsh learned that a gunrunner for the Cork IRA in London was suffering from a surfeit of ammunitions and a lack of weapons, he agreed to exchange a certain amount of his arsenal, handing over handguns in return for ammunition. 'Irish countrymen in England were very friendly to us when they knew our purpose,' Good recalled. In Sheffield, the trio secured weapons from a criminal gang.[291] Collins, however, was not impressed by their activities. He told Paddy Daly that it was 'a positive disgrac[e] that such a man [i.e. Walsh] should be away from his own area doing work that local men over at your side could do'.[292] GHQ decided to punish Walsh by confiscating the munitions he had procured in Britain. This included nineteen revolvers, over two thousand rounds of ammunition, bombs, and rifle grenades.[293] Collins believed that Walsh's gunrunning adventure in Britain had done 'a lot of harm evidently'.[294]

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[290] Patterson, 'The activities of Irish republican physical force organisations in Scotland', pp 44, 46
[291] BMHWS no. 400, Richard Walsh, pp 129-39 (NAI); Joe Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 183-5
[292] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 9 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[293] Ibid., 25 June, 7 July; Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 5, 8 July 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6)
[294] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 7 July 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6)

Walsh's visits to Britain led him to form a jaundiced opinion of GHQ's direction of gunrunning. The method adopted by GHQ for procuring munitions in Britain was 'faulty', he wrote. Some of the gunrunning agents were 'useless', as they lacked all initiative, preferring to wait for the weapons to come to them rather than seeking out sources of supply themselves.[295] 'I discovered in knocking about England', he wrote,

> that some of the men in areas where great activity was supposed to exist in the procurement of arms that the men [sic] engaged were taking things very easy. I found that there was a lot of what can be described as laziness.[296]

Walsh held that GHQ should have development more comprehensive procedures for the procurement and importation of munitions. Noting that armaments were imported from continental Europe towards the end of the war of independence, he believed that such missions should have been attempted earlier, especially given that 'millions and millions of firearms of every sort' were available for purchase in post-war Germany. If more weapons had been available to the IRA, more people would have joined the Volunteers, he held.[297]

Walsh's criticisms are corroborated to some extent. Jim Phelan, a peripatetic member of the IRA, remembered that Egdon Heath in Dorsetshire served as a virtual graveyard for thousands of British army tanks. If the IRA 'had *wanted* tanks,' he wrote, 'a company of men could have driven away a machine each, across that heath, and in all probability no one would have noticed'.[298] Wyndham Childs, of the London Metropolitan Police, claimed that 'thousands of rifles, machine guns, revolvers, Mills grenades, shells, etc., were lying about in dumps'. Due to army demobilisation and the increased police workload, these munitions were 'absolutely unguarded'. He remembered one specific incident of lax security which the Volunteers could have exploited had their intelligence service learned of it. A lorry-load of war surplus munitions was being transported from London to the Midlands. When the lorry broke down, the driver abandoned it at the side of the road in order to seek help. 'If the IRA organization in England had known of the situation,' Childs reflected, 'they might have secured enough ammunition to have kept their body on its legs for years.'[299]

Dublin itself seems to have been dissatisfied with gunrunning operations in Britain. Sean McGrath states that Michael Collins attempted to revitalise the IRB in London in 1920,

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[295] BMHWS no. 400, Richard Walsh, p. 129 (NAI)
[296] Ibid., pp 134-5
[297] Ibid., pp 166-8
[298] Jim Phelan, *The name's Phelan: the first part of the autobiography of Jim Phelan* (Belfast, 1993 [1948]), pp 257-8; original emphasis
[299] Sir Wyndham Childs, *Episodes and reflections* (London, 1930), pp 199, 203-04

in the hope of increasing the amount of munitions procured and despatched to Ireland. The IRB men proved unresponsive to the idea, however, leading McGrath to become suspicious of his fellow Fenians' commitment to the cause.[300]

Yet, Peter Hart has argued that the IRB's 'old and well-tested smuggling routes', carrying a 'small but steady trickle of weapons from the black markets of England and Europe, and from the gun shops of America', proved much more reliable sources of munitions for the IRA in Ireland than did GHQ's grander gunrunning schemes, including that of importing 653 Thompson sub-machine guns directly from the United States.[301]

V

Once the munitions were acquired, they were usually hidden in dumps until an opportunity arose to despatch them to Ireland. Most dumps were located in private houses or business premises. In Manchester, with private houses unable to accommodate the accumulation of materiel, Paddy O'Donoghue hired a garage at the back of a nursing home, located in a quiet suburban district.[302] In Glasgow, a sympathetic coal merchant from Derry allowed Joseph Booker of the 1st Scottish battalion to open an arms dump at his business premises. Booker remembered that handguns were brought to the dump in paper parcels and shopping bags, while the rifles, dismantled, were carried in sacks.[303] The 2nd Scottish battalion had 'a number' of dumps and seven or eight safe stores.[304]

In Liverpool, such dumps were mainly located in the private houses of the Irish working class. 'They were the only people who would take a risk over there,' commented Paddy Daly.[305] Michael O'Leary agreed, remembering that although plenty of people sympathised with the Volunteers, few were willing to take the risk of storing munitions.[306] The houses of those willing to help were sometimes located quite near the docks. The whereabouts of others, however, necessitated the carrying of munitions for long distances to and from the port.[307] Sean Fitzgerald, an old Fenian, allowed the yard behind his house to be used as a dump. However, the discovery of J. P. Connolly's gunrunning activities in south

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[300] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[301] Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, p. 183
[302] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 6, 13 (NAI)
[303] Ibid., no. 776, Joseph Booker, pp 1-2 (NAI)
[304] Ibid., no. 828, James Byrne, p. 6 (NAI)
[305] Ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 4 (NAI)
[306] Ibid., no. 797, Michael O'Leary, pp 20-21 (NAI)
[307] Ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 4 (NAI)

Wales in October 1921 led the police to raid Fitzgerald's house. There they found six .32 revolvers, rusted and useless, three broken machine gun tripods, and thirty metres of fuse, all received from Tyneside. The actual munitions seized were of little value, Daly told Michael Collins, but the loss of a good munitions dump was a setback.[308] In 1921, Daly decided to move the dumps nearer to Nelson dock, the place where most Irish ships anchored. Indeed, the neighbourhood around these docks became 'a kind of headquarters' for the Merseyside gunrunners.[309] Hughie Morris operated a corner shop in the area, and Daly rented one of the rooms behind the premises. The set up was a good one, for the presence of the shop in the front provided an excuse for frequent visits; such visits, sometimes of strangers, to a private house might have aroused the suspicion of neighbours. Daly also noted that one could never be certain of the discretion of the occupants of private houses. Often, munitions were only moved to Morris' shop, from smaller dumps, when they were ready to be despatched to Ireland.[310] 'It is hard to believe', wrote Michael O'Leary,

> when I state that a lorry drove up to Morris's shop at 12 o'clock noon on a particular weekday, stopped, the tarpaulin was thrown back and there were delivered into this annexe six machine guns which he [i.e. Morris] took in himself, stored away and held in these stores until arrangements were made for shipment to Dublin.[311]

The Liverpool men were required to operate a large number of dumps due to their being ordered to receive and despatch munitions from other gunrunning centres in Britain. When Joe Vize, worried about the security of the armaments accumulating in Glasgow, suggested the opening of a new transport route to Ireland, Michael Collins recommended that he send the munitions to Liverpool, where 'Our communications ... are extremely good and our men are extremely good'. On 3 March 1920, Patrick Clinton and Patrick Sullivan, two of Vize's senior lieutenants, made the first journey, visiting Neil Kerr's house in Bootle with a small batch of munitions. '[W]e will be able to keep them [i.e. the Liverpool men] going for sometime [sic],' boasted Vize.[312] Nine Volunteers of 'A' company were subsequently assigned the task of so transporting the munitions belonging to the 2nd Scottish battalion. 'They travelled by passenger train in turn from Motherwell to Liverpool,' remembered James Byrne.

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[308] Ibid., pp 10-11; Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[309] Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)
[310] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 30-31 (NAI)
[311] Ibid., no. 797, Micheal O'Laoghaire, pp 20-21 (NAI)
[312] Correspondence between Joe Vize and Michael Collins, 7, 14, 15 Feb., 3, 14 Mar. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)

> This train left Motherwell at 11.30 each night and did not get into Liverpool until 6 in the morning. As it was very crowded the couriers had to remain in the corridor of the train all the night with their [suit]cases of material.

As time progressed, the Scottish men used road transport to carry the munitions to Merseyside. Just prior to the truce, they purchased a lorry for £585.[313] Liverpool and London gunrunners used cars for their work.[314]

The Liverpool men took delivery of armaments from other gunrunning centre in addition to Glasgow. From at least the autumn of 1919, gunrunners such as Steve Lanigan travelled to Manchester to collect accumulated munitions and arrange their passage to Ireland from Merseyside. In January 1920, this despatch system was set on a new and more effective footing.[315] Munitions from Birmingham were transported to Liverpool by railway, sometimes in the luggage of the gunrunners themselves, otherwise sent by carriage in crates disguised as pottery goods.[316]

On occasion, the Liverpool men made the journey to the other Irish centres to collect munitions for despatch. On 11 November 1920, for example, they drove their car to London. Two days later, the car began the return journey northward laden with twenty-six rifles, thirty-one automatics, twenty-five revolvers, six thousand rounds of automatic ammunition, nine hundred rounds of .303 ammunition, three hundred rounds of 'various' ammunition, two hundred sporting cartridges, two hand grenades, and six ammunition magazines.[317]

Some of these munitions from London may have been hidden in the house of the Brown sisters. Arrested in the aftermath of the IRA arson attacks in Liverpool in November 1920, Kathleen and Shelia Brown were charged with conspiracy to murder and to set fires.[318] In mid-January 1921, Paddy Daly told Michael Collins that the munitions hidden in the sisters' house were the last part of the backlog in Liverpool that remained to be despatched. As the likelihood was high of the sisters being acquitted of the charges against them, thus ending the police surveillance of their house, Daly felt it was best to refrain from attempting

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[313] BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, pp 3-4 (NAI); Bernard McCabe's statement to the Military Services Pensions Board, n.d., but c. 1950s (Mooney Papers, EMP/2/A/11); *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Mar. 1921
[314] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, 13, 16 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/8); Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 22 Dec. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/326)
[315] Michael Collins to Liam MacMahon, 18 Sept. 1919; Michael Collins to Seamus Barrett, 31 Jan.; Michael Collins to Paddy O'Donoghue, 6 Feb. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/9)
[316] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 8-9 (NAI)
[317] Neil Kerr to Michael Collins, 12 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3); Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, 16 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/8)
[318] *Irish Times*, *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1920

to remove the munitions for now.[319] Three weeks later, Daly was becoming impatient, hoping that at least one of the sisters would soon be acquitted so as to allow for the removal of the materiel.[320] On 13 February, Daly's prediction proved correct, when all charges against the sisters were dropped.[321] Five days later, he reported that the munitions hidden in the sisters' house had finally been removed. The batch contained armaments from Antwerp and London, including 100.8 kg of explosives, seven rifles, four Owen guns, along with 1,102 rounds of assorted ammunition for automatic handguns and twenty rounds for the Owen.[322]

Glasgow was another frequent port of call for the Liverpool men. Paddy Daly remembered once such journey, undertaken in the company of Tom Kerr. They travelled, uncomfortably, all night by train to Motherwell, each carrying two empty suitcases. Reaching their destination, they called to the house of a man named Burke, where their cases were filled with gelignite, revolvers, and 'anything in the nature of a lethal weapon'. Daly and Kerr then returned to Liverpool with their heavy luggage.[323]

Daly experienced a more eventful journey when Neil Kerr asked him to return to Clydeside to direct gunrunner Harry Coyle to Liverpool with a munitions-laden lorry. Daly travelled to Clydeside by train and secured lodgings with a sympathiser. The lorry journey was postponed, however, due to the failure of an arms raid on a drill hall. Finally, after a few weeks, another cargo of munitions was accumulated and loaded into an old Austin car. Coyle drove, while Daly and another Glasgow Volunteer occupied the passenger seats. 'The back of the car was packed up to the level of the top of the front seat,' explained Daly.

> ... One of us was forced to recline on top of this load at the back and it was a most uncomfortable position, but we changed around [positions] as we proceeded on the journey.

When the car broke down about twenty miles into the journey, the trio were forced to wait for the arrival of a mechanic the next morning, as they were ignorant of car maintenance. While attempting to fix the car, the mechanic drove it up and down the road as the trio looked on. However, he never looked under the rug behind the driver's seat. The party proceeded on their journey, but was forced to enlist another mechanic in Carlisle in order to fix the gearbox, from which smoke was emanating. Following a journey along dangerous mountain roads, the car's lights and horn failed in Preston. The trio purchased two bicycle lamps and a

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[319] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 17 Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3)
[320] Ibid., 10 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[321] *Irish Times*, 14 Feb. 1921
[322] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[323] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 6 (NAI)

whistle. The passenger in the front seat held one lamp out the window to illuminate the road in front for the driver, while the man in the back held the other lamp in the rear window so as to alert cars behind to their presence. The whistle, meanwhile, was employed as a horn. They reached Liverpool about twenty-four hours after they had left Glasgow.[324]

VI

The smuggling of munitions to Ireland took a number of forms. Sometimes, the gunrunners and their friends travelled to Ireland on passenger ships, carrying the armaments on their persons or in their luggage. This seems to have been a favoured method of the London gunrunners for a time, though Michael Collins frowned on the use of women as munitions couriers.[325] Glasgow's Joseph Robinson used the same method on at least one occasion during the civil war.[326] In the early stages of gunrunning in Birmingham, the men there used the normal postal service as the most convenient method of despatch. The parcels were often addressed to Dublin drapery houses such as Arnotts, Todd Burns and Ferrier & Pollocks. Volunteers employed in these workplaces would then take charge of the parcels, remove the munitions and carry them to a munitions dump. With several parcels being sent every week, post offices throughout the Birmingham area were employed as the repeated use of one or two post offices might have aroused the suspicions of the staff. The quantity of munitions so despatched was small, due both to a lack of money to fund large purchases and to the nature of the despatch system.[327]

However, the main method of smuggling was the hiding of armaments onboard trading vessels plying between Britain and Ireland. Some of the seafarers on these boats were Irishmen, many of whom were willing to smuggle munitions. Paddy Kavanagh and Billy Verner were such sailors. Indeed, their ship, the *S.S. Blackrock*, became the virtual flagship of republican gunrunning out of Liverpool. Paddy Weafer on board the *S.S. Wicklow*, Michael Byrne on the *S.S. Kildare*, a man named Morris, son of the shop owner Hughie Morris, on the *S.S. Kircaldy*, Paddy Larkin on a Dundalk boat, and a man named McGlew on the *Clarecastle*, a Guinness boat, completed the list of prominent Merseyside gunrunning seamen. Like-minded members of the Seamen's Union facilitated the employment of such

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[324] Ibid., pp 15-16
[325] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 24 June 1920 (NAI, DE 2/284)
[326] O/C Scotland to O/C Britain, 27 Feb. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[327] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 2 (NAI)

men by supplying the necessary documentation, sometimes forged.[328] Paddy Nolan was the main seafarer used to carry munitions directly from Glasgow to Dublin in 1919 and 1920. Michael Collins described him as a 'great old Brick', though he noted that Nolan was 'not as young as he was'.[329]

The most detailed accounts of smuggling activities have been left by seamen John Sherlock and William Nelson. In 1918, the forty-year old Meath man Sherlock's success in smuggling a case of revolvers and ammunition from St. Johns in Newfoundland to Dublin led to his being sworn into the Dublin IRA. Acting on Collins' instructions, he secured a job on a ship plying between Dublin and London, the *S.S. Lady Emerald*. His first job involved him delivering letters from Collins to the ISDL offices in London's Holborn district. About four days later, after meeting some of the senior London gunrunners, Sherlock returned to Ireland on his ship, having smuggled on board some arms.[330]

Sherlock was then promoted to boatswain, a position which entailed responsibility for maintaining the ship and its equipment. On the next journey to London, he engineered the dismissal of three English members of the crew. Their being replaced by three Irishmen in Dublin 'made things better for me', he later wrote. On the subsequent return journey to London, the remaining English crew members were also dismissed and were again replaced by Irishmen. Sherlock told these new crew members that in return for ensuring they got these jobs, the IRA expected them to help with the smuggling of munitions and letters. If they proved successful in these tasks, they would then be enlisted in the Volunteers. Sherlock succeeded in placing similar recruits aboard other ships on the Dublin-London route.[331] Such seamen included Eamonn Mooney, the Scottish Volunteer, Thomas Byrne, Owen Lynch, Patrick Tyrrell, John Kelly, Thomas Ahern, Patrick Barrett and his son Patrick, Michael Heaney, Thomas Ellis, and Liam Doyle.[332]

When Sherlock or one of his colleagues arrived in London, contact would be made with the local gunrunners and any accumulated munitions would be removed to the ship. Overall, the munitions transported by Sherlock and his men included rifles, revolvers and ammunition, along with high explosives, and such assorted equipment as wireless sets, range finders, and field telephones.[333]

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[328] Ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 11 (NAI)
[329] Michael Collins to Joe Vize, 11 June 1919 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/11)
[330] Sherlock Statement (NLI, Ms 9,873), pp 1-3
[331] Ibid., pp 3-4
[332] Ibid., p. 5
[333] Ibid., pp 1, 14-16

On the ships, the munitions were hidden in the seamen's bunks or private quarters.[334] In 1920, however, security at London port was increased, with customs officials instituting closer inspections of ships and their cargo. This made the hiding of munitions in the seamen's quarters a risky proposition. Discussing the problem with Michael Collins, Sherlock suggested that the munitions be secretly placed in such a position in the ship's hold that the normal cargo would obscure it from the customs officials. Collins agreed, and Sherlock instructed his contacts aboard the other Dublin-London boats to hide their consignments of materiel in a similar fashion.[335] Thus, after collecting a batch of munitions from a London gunrunner, the seaman, on returning to his ship, would 'take one of the Hatches opposite the Ladder':

> Descending to the hole [i.e. hold] the man in charge and one of the other [gunrunning] men would go down and place the war material underneath the cargo. The following day when the Hatches would be taken off the Customs [officials] would go into the hole of the Ship and the[y] would remain their [sic] untill [sic] the last Sling of the cargo went into the hole then the[y] would come up and wait there until the Hatches would be put on and covered with Tarpolins [i.e. tarpaulins] [.]

The procedure was a 'Splendid' success, Sherlock claimed.[336]

Sherlock operated out of London. From 1920 onwards, most munitions reaching Ireland from Britain were smuggled through Liverpool, Britain's major international port on the river Mersey. Many boats plied between Merseyside and Irish ports such as Dublin, Cork, Dundalk, and Sligo, William Nelson's *S.S. Killiney* being only one. According to Nelson, gunrunning was a relatively easy matter in 1917–18, as security around Liverpool docks was fairly lax. Upon reaching Merseyside, the seamen would make contact with the gunrunners, often in a pub called the 'North Star', which was owned by an Irishman named Hegarty. They would then be taken to the place where the munitions had been readied for despatch, often a house on Dublin St.[337]

The docks were seven miles long and occupied hundreds of acres of land. A high wall separated the dockland from the city. During working hours, entrance to the docks was gained through large gates. In the evening, however, these gates were closed, leaving narrow

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[334] Ibid., p. 6
[335] Ibid., pp 6-8
[336] Ibid., pp 8, 11
[337] William Nelson's Story (NLI, Ms 41,722), p. 1; William Nelson, '"Q" Company' in *An tÓglach*, ii, no. 2 (1966), p. 12

doorways guarded by policemen as the only means of entry.[338] 'Revolvers and ammunition were easy enough to handle,' remembered Nelson,

> as they could be stowed on the person; but rifles were a different proposition. Ways and means were found, however. Sailors in those days always used long canvas bags to carry their personal gear (Bed-clothes, sea boots, oil-skins, etc.); and those same canvas bags were ideal for carrying rifles. The modus operandi was to put the rifles into the bags, then stuff them around with anything available such as old newspapers and old rags, just to take the corners off. The bags were then taken on their owner's backs [sic] through the dock gates and on board ship, and many a little comedy was enacted in British docks. What could be more unsuspicious, for instance, than to see three sailors, half-drunk, trudging along the dock road, with sailor's bags on their backs? They would pause perhaps at the dock gates, one of them trying to persuade the others to go over for the last drink; but they would decide not to, then stagger through the gates with the Harbour Constable looking on.[339]

Aboard the ship, the munitions were hidden as best as possible. 'Secrecy was the key note of the whole operation', Nelson wrote, 'for even their [i.e. the seamen's] own ship-mates were not aware of what was going on under their very noses.'[340]

Such activity was done many hours before the ship was scheduled to sail, so as to avoid the increased security that accompanied the onset of departure time.

When ships arrived from New York, Hamburg and other places, the munitions were smuggled ashore, hidden in a dump, and smuggled back into the port when a ship bound for Ireland arrived. Later, however, it was decided to transfer the munitions directly from one ship to another, so as to save time and avoid running the gauntlet of port security. Paddy Daly and his assistant Tim O'Sullivan would board the incoming ship early in the morning and, with the help of the crew, move the armaments to the Irish boat.[341]

Relations between the gunrunners and the seafarers were not always smooth. In February 1921, declaring that he did not like Paddy Daly's method of managing Merseyside gunrunning, Harry Shorte asked that Michael Collins deal with him directly. 'I have run into debt here since my own money vanished', he wrote '& very little they [i.e. the Liverpool men] bothered about me ...'.[342] Collins told Daly of the seafarer's complaint, and asked him to assure the seaman that his contribution was valued.[343] Daly was surprised to hear of Shorte's complaint, stating that he had been well supplied with money. Indeed, Daly hinted that he himself was the one who had grounds for complaint against Shorte and not vice

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[338] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 3 (NAI); Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)
[339] Nelson, '"Q" Company', p. 12
[340] Ibid.
[341] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, p. 14 (NAI)
[342] Harry Shorte to Michael Collins, 23 Feb. 1921 (and not 1920 as it states) (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[343] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 8 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

versa.[344] He later stated that the seaman's demand to deal directly with Collins in gunrunning matters was 'in keeping with his own importance'. Daly argued that there had been no friction between himself and Shorte, and that no acrimony would arise in the future if he continued to give his munitions to the Liverpool men for shipment to Ireland.[345] Shorte 'always means well,' Collins noted, encouraging Daly to settle matters with him.[346] However, when the seafarer informed Dublin that that the captain of the ship on which he was travelling had warned him that the police were watching his activities and had arranged for seamen to give evidence against him, Collins despaired of Shorte's 'knack of getting himself discovered'.[347]

A few months later, a seafarer on a New York boat complained that the Liverpool men were two hours late in meeting him, causing him 'considerable embarrassment'. He threatened to quit smuggling weapons if there was a recurrence of such behaviour.[348]

Michael O'Leary later claimed that the security of the Liverpool gunrunning channels was such that 'Not even one round of ammunition was captured [by the police] or lost' by the Volunteers.[349] This is incorrect for, despite all the precautions taken, gunrunners did indeed lose munitions and the British authorities did capture some armaments.

Paddy Daly remembered an incident which occurred while he and Volunteer James McCaughey were smuggling munitions on board the *Clarecastle*. On their third trip to the ship, carrying rifles, the two were stopped by a customs official, who enquired after their business. Disbelieving their excuses, he placed his hand on their bag. 'There are rifles in that bag and I have to search it,' he said. Daly refused to allow him to search the bag, insisting that only a senior customs official could do so. Daly, however, was merely buying time, for instead of going to the senior customs official, who was in the stern of the ship, himself and McCaughey proceeded to flee the scene. The customs official gave chase, as did a policeman and some dockers, a 'reference to Sinn Fein was sufficient to rally their support'. Eventually, Daly and McCaughey were forced to drop the bag of rifles in order to make good their escape. The police later discovered the bag.[350]

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[344] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 11 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[345] Ibid., 8 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[346] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 14 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[347] Harry Shorte to Michael Collins, 28 May; Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 9 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[348] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 8 July 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6)
[349] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal O'Laoighre, p. 22 (NAI)
[350] Ibid., no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 7-9 (NAI); Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)

On another occasion, James Creaney, one of Sherlock's seamen, hid some munitions in his quarters onboard his ship. The following morning, a group of customs officials boarded the vessel. One of them went into Creaney's room, sat down and proceeded to read his newspaper. Fearful that the batch of munitions might be discovered, Creaney left the room under the pretext of cooking his breakfast in the galley, left the ship and contacted Denis Carr, the London gunrunner. Informed of the predicament when he arrived in the capital later that day, John Sherlock boarded the ship and retrieved Creaney's clothes, reasoning that if the seaman himself had returned he would have been detained as the munitions had likely been discovered. Creaney was then sent to Liverpool where he went to ground for a while, before securing a job on a White Star ship sailing to New York.[351]

On 29 November 1921, Liverpool customs officials made a significant discovery of munitions on the *S.S. Baltic* out of New York. Paddy Daly told Michael Collins that the discovery of a parcel of box magazines during a routine search of the ship had precipitated a more detailed examination. The seized munitions consisted of ten Thompson sub-machine guns, fourteen box magazines, fourteen revolvers and automatics, and one Remington rifle. Daly offered to 'take all responsibility for breach of [the] truce agreement'.[352]

Those munitions that did reach Dublin safely were transferred from the ships onto ferry boats crossing the river Liffey. John Sherlock hid armaments in his own lodgings on the south side of the city, from where they were removed to dumps by members of the Dublin IRA.[353] The stationing of 'Black and Tan' RIC men in the Holyhead Hotel on the North Wall led Sherlock to warn Michael Collins that ferrying the munitions across the Liffey would thenceforth be a risky enterprise. Collins, therefore, agreed to his suggestion that a dump be created on the south side of the city.[354]

Following incidents in which some gunrunning seamen were questioned and searched by the police in Dublin, the seafarers refused to unload the munitions. In response, Sean McGarry, IRA QMG, summoned William Nelson and Archie Kennedy to a meeting. Kennedy was a docker. Nelson had taken up the same occupation due to his failure to secure the officer's ticket necessary for him to continue working as a seaman. McMahon told them that munitions were accumulating in Liverpool and Glasgow due to the refusal of seamen to take them ashore in Dublin. He, therefore, ordered the establishment of a special unit to transport the armaments from the ships to the dumps. Nelson and Kennedy set about

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[351] Sherlock Statement (NLI, Ms 9,873), pp 19-20
[352] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 1, 5 Dec. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[353] Sherlock Statement (NLI, Ms 9,873), p. 5
[354] Ibid., pp 5-6

recruiting men to the unit. However, security required that each man's bona fides be confirmed before he was approached. Eventually, a group of between eight and twenty was formed. Later, in the backroom of a shop on Sir John Rogerson's Quay, the O/C Britain, Rory O'Connor, administered the IRA oath of allegiance to the newly formed 'Q' company of the Dublin Volunteers.[355]

The men usually operated in groups of four. They mostly worked during the day, but sometimes in the early hours of the morning as well. On occasion the munitions were removed from the ships on cargo hoists. Mainly, however, they were moved by the men themselves, who then carried them – 'ammunition in their pockets, revolvers stuck in their belts around their waists' – to a dump located in the cellar of a house on Rogerson's Quay, from where they were later removed to other stores. The increased activities of the police in the area meant that the men had to stay alert.[356] In 1920, the police instituted close inspections of every ship that landed in Dublin. However, the activities of the 'Q' company men were not adversely affected to a great extent, as they simply waited until the police had finished their inspections before boarding the ships and unloading the munitions. However, they did suspend their nocturnal work as a result.[357] The company continued its activities during the truce. However, as the IRA had officially agreed to suspend gunrunning under the terms of the truce, the dockers were warned that they would have to take responsibility if they were caught by the police.[358]

In late November 1921, the QMG sent Mulcahy, the C/S, an account of the munitions he had received the previous month and subsequently distributed. He had received four machine guns, eight rifles, seventeen automatics, fifty-eight revolvers, 25,321 rounds of assorted ammunition, 110 grenades, 2,259 kg of explosives, and a further 2,337kg of raw material for explosives. The overwhelming majority of these munitions were received from the D/P, who, in turn, probably sourced a significant amount in Britain.[359]

In terms of distribution, twenty IRA units throughout the country received portions of these munitions. Between them, the five northern divisions, 1st to 5th, received one machine gun, nine automatics, twelve revolvers, 2,234 rounds of assorted ammunition, and 110.25 kg of explosive raw material. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd southern divisions took delivery of two machine guns, one rifle, seven automatics, fifteen revolvers, 5,376 rounds of assorted

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[355] Nelson's Story (NLI, Ms 41,722), p. 2
[356] Ibid., p. 3; Nelson, '"Q" Company', p. 12
[357] Nelson's Story (NLI, Ms 41,722), p. 3
[358] Ibid., p. 3
[359] QMG to C/S, 28 Nov. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/30[9, 11-13])

ammunition, and 319.7 kg of explosive raw material. The north and south Wexford brigades acquired two automatics, two revolvers, eighty rounds of automatic ammunition, twenty grenades and 27 kg of explosive raw material. The south and west Mayo brigades obtained one machine gun, 300 rounds of automatic ammunition, and 27 kg of explosive raw material. The 1st eastern division received one machine gun, one revolver, two hundred rounds of automatic ammunition, and 54 kg of explosive raw material. The 1st western division took possession of three automatics, nineteen revolvers, forty-three rounds of rifle ammunition, 2,193 rounds of assorted ammunition, fifty grenades, and 112 kg of explosive raw material. One machine gun, one revolver and 5,400 rounds of assorted ammunition were sent to the Dublin brigade. The south Roscommon brigade accepted one rifle, three revolvers, and 2,008 rounds of assorted ammunition. Of the remainder, 200 rounds of revolver ammunition went to the midlands division, three automatics and thirty rounds of automatic ammunition to the Galway city IRA, 27 kg of explosive raw material to the Tuam brigade, and three revolvers and 174 rounds of assorted ammunition went elsewhere. Finally, the director of chemicals received 2,369 kg of explosive raw material.[360]

GHQ's method of distributing munitions to IRA units around Ireland was rather precarious, Mayo's Richard Walsh remembered. Periodically, provincial brigades sent men to the capital to claim some of the arsenal. It was then their responsibility to transport the munitions to their brigade area. The main method of transport was by rail, and many railway workers risked their lives by helping IRA men to smuggle munitions around the country. Another method involved placing munitions amongst the normal supplies being sent from Dublin to shopkeepers or merchants around the country. Once the box of supplies was delivered, the munitions would be removed by Volunteers in the businessmen's employ. Overall, Walsh described the distribution system as 'chancy'.[361]

VII

Gunrunning, the acquisition and smuggling of weapons to Ireland, was the most important activity of the republican movement in Britain. In London, Liverpool and Glasgow, the IRB, under the direction of Michael Collins in Dublin, ran the clandestine operation, having been involved in smuggling small quantities of munitions to Ireland from these areas for over half a century before the outbreak of the war of independence. Elsewhere, in Birmingham, on

[360] Ibid.
[361] BMHWS no. 400, Richard Walsh, pp 140-47 (NAI)

Tyneside and in south Wales, IRA units acted on their own initiative in forwarding armaments to Ireland and only later came under the control of GHQ and D/P Liam Mellows. Sometimes, munitions were purchased, from soldiers or black market traders. Otherwise, they were stolen, from collieries and army barracks. The machine guns, rifles, handguns, explosives and ammunition were then smuggled to Ireland by seafarers. In January 1921, Collins told Manchester gunrunner Paddy O'Donoghue that the supply of munitions would prove to be 'the main feature in overcoming the enemy'.[362] In the event, the IRA in Ireland did not defeat the British. However, it did succeed in forcing a stalemate in hostilities, which in turn led to the truce and the treaty of December 1921. During the civil war, both Free State and republican forces procured munitions in Britain. While the former received munitions from the British government through official channels, the latter was forced to continue clandestine gunrunning. However, co-operation between the Free State government and the British authorities ensured that sources tapped by the Irish during the war of independence were closed to republicans. The Free State authorities realised that in order to defeat the anti-treaty IRA in the field it would have to disrupt its supply of arms from abroad, especially from Britain. The mass arrest and deportation of republicans in Britain in March 1923 achieved this.

The contribution of the republican movement in Britain to the Irish war of independence was not limited to supplying munitions of war. In November 1920, the IRA began a terrorist campaign in Britain, employing munitions acquired in its gunrunning activities. That is the subject of the next chapter.

[362] Michael Collins to Paddy O'Donoghue, 5 Jan. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/10)

4

'We are doing what you are doing in Ireland': IRA terrorism in Britain

I

The beginning of the war of independence is usually traced to 21 January 1919, when members of the Tipperary Volunteers killed two RIC policemen near the village of Soloheadbeg. However, it was the following year that the IRA's campaign of terrorism against British rule in Ireland began in earnest. In November 1920, that campaign was extended to Britain with attacks in Liverpool and London. Over the subsequent seven-and-a-half months to the truce of July 1921, reports of 'Sinn Fein outrages', as they were called, became regular features of British newspapers, as throughout the country farms and railway infrastructure suffered arson attacks, telegraph and telephone infrastructure was disrupted and Crown forces' relatives were terrorised. As one Volunteer declared, firing shots over the heads of staff members in a Manchester cafe in April 1921, as his comrade sprinkled the premises with paraffin, 'We are doing what you are doing in Ireland'.[1] During the civil war, the anti-treaty IRA planned for the return of terrorism to Britain. This chapter examines such terrorism. Through the discussion of two terrorist operations, section II provides a close insight into the type of attacks mounted by the Volunteers in Britain. Section III considers the motivation behind the terrorist campaign. Sections IV and V examine the planning and execution of the attacks and provide analysis thereof. Section VI focuses on the effects of the IRA's campaign, and section VII concludes.

II

At a meeting of the Liverpool city company IRA in February 1921, O/C Hugh Early informed his men of an order to launch arson attacks on local farms in retaliation for farms

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, 11 July 1921

being burned in Ireland by 'Black and Tan' RIC men. Early told his men, teamed up in small groups, to reconnoitre local farms and choose a suitable target for attack. Two Volunteers, John Pinkman and Charlie O'Gorman, discovered an 'ideal' target, a farm on the outskirts of Litherland, where several large barns were filled with hay and straw. They chose the farm because its proximity to the town's back-alleys would facilitate an easy getaway once a fire had been started. However, on 9 March, at the subsequent meeting of the company, Early informed his men that the plan had changed. Instead of launching attacks on the farms they had each chosen, the Volunteers were now ordered to set fire to farms in the Little Crosby area. Two targets, Whitehouse Farm and Hill Farm, had been chosen, at opposite sides of a country lane. Dissatisfied with the plan, that night the group of eight Volunteers reluctantly travelled to Little Crosby by train, and continued to the farms on foot.[2] 'We are having some farm-work to-night', Paddy Daly, the Liverpool gunrunner, told Michael Collins that same day, 'just to keep the local co[mpan]y in practice.' The exercise culminated with thirteen fires blazing in Liverpool and its surrounding towns. Those within the city boundaries, such as the three in Birkenhead, were reported to be small in size, 'the damage being confined to barns and haystacks'. However, the other fires, especially that at Ormskirk, were more extensive. Sixty tons of clover stacks were destroyed by fire at Mill Farm in Lunt. A fireman tackling one of the blazes was killed when his engine overturned.[3]

Edward Brady had been placed in charge of orchestrating that night's farm fires in Liverpool's Wallasey district. Agricultural areas were reconnoitred, rough maps were prepared and suitable targets were chosen. The Volunteers were divided into groups, each of which was allocated a number of targets. At a company meeting, petrol and paraffin were distributed amongst the different groups, as were guns and ammunition. A time-table for the orderly destruction of the farms was circulated. The following night, the men met at Birkenhead's ferry-boat landing stage and set off towards their respective targets. At its first target, the constant barking of local dogs and the presence of a number of people led to Brady's group cancelling the attack and moving on to their next target. In total, they started fires on four farms, including haystacks and buildings. It was an 'awesome-terrible spectacle', Brady later wrote, 'shooting flames into the inky sky'. Brady and his men then proceeded to make their escape across fields, so as to avoid capture by the police on the

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[2] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 48-50

[3] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 9 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4); Chief Constable of Cheshire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 20 Oct.; Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); *The Times*, 11 Mar. 1921

roads. As they 'tramped wearily across the open country', they came across an isolated hay rick. Brady waded across a mucky river and set it alight too.[4]

Pinkman's contribution to the night's operation was not so impressive. When he and his comrades reached the laneway, Pinkman asked if the farms they were to attack were equidistant from the road, for if they were not, the fire at the farm closer to the lane would illuminate the men on their way to the second farm, possibly alerting passers-by to their presence. He was assured that the farms were equidistant from the road. They then divided into two smaller groups and set off to burn down hay barns and any other targets they could find. As Pinkman and his accomplices neared their target, however, a Volunteer from the second group ran across their path. They then found themselves up against a fence when flames from a fire at the second farm illuminated the sky. Pinkman's concern had proved prescient. Panicking, they ran about frantically trying to escape. As they ran in the direction of the train station, they noticed people on the foot bridge. By now the two farms were on fire, sparks from the first having blown across the road and started a second conflagration. Convinced that they had been spotted, the men dived into a hollow in the ground beside a ditch. There, they debated what to do. Unable to run across the electric railway lines, the four decided to rush their way across the foot bridge. Pinkman threw away his revolver, confident that his using it would result in him and his comrades being 'slaughtered'. With Pinkman in front, they made an attempt to rush across the bridge. 'I fought like a tiger', he remembered,

> – and so did the others – until I was finally pinned down by two men who nearly broke my arms as they twisted them behind my back. As they dragged me from the bridge towards the station platform, I could hear someone shouting, 'Throw him over! ... throw the bastard over!' Then I heard a train approaching and I prayed to God for the train to hurry and get into the station before they threw me onto the tracks. When we got to the platform I tried to dig my heels in, and struggled with every ounce of strength left in me to stop them from getting me to the edge of the platform. 'Throw him in!' – several people were shouting now – 'In with him! Throw the Sinn Féin bastard in!' But the train roared and shot past without even slowing down. It was an express. O Jesus, Mary and Joseph! I thanked God and began to relax. I had to: I was exhausted.[5]

'I hope our next move will have more effective results and come off very shortly,' wrote Paddy Daly, reflecting on the arrest of six Volunteers, one of whom was shot by a sharp-eyed farmer.[6] Edward Brady later wrote that the precautions which he and his men took in

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[4] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 38-41

[5] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 48-54; Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); *The Times*, 11 Mar. 1921

[6] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 11 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4); *The Times*, 10, 11 Mar. 1921; Chief Constable of Cheshire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 20 Oct.; Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

covering their tracks were lacking in the case of Pinkman. Travelling to the targets in a body, he concluded, was 'tactically a mistake'.[7]

At around 2.30 p.m. on 22 June 1922, Sir Henry Wilson, Conservative MP, having unveiled a war memorial at a railway station in London city centre, alighted from a taxi outside his house at 36 Eaton Square, Belgravia. Two members of the IRA, Reginald Dunne, the O/C London, and Joseph O'Sullivan, had been awaiting his arrival for almost half-an-hour. As Wilson crossed the road to his house, the two followed him, O'Sullivan going straight after Wilson and Dunne endeavouring to intercept him before he reached the front door. Within about four yards of Wilson, O'Sullivan aimed his gun and fired two shots. The bullets appear to have missed their target. As Wilson was about to turn round, however, Dunne, from about seven or eight yards, 'fired three shots rapidly, the last from the hip'. Staggering on the footpath, Wilson was hit once more by a bullet from O'Sullivan's gun. Hit in the arm, leg, and torso, he collapsed on the path and died. The assassins, both of whom had leg injuries sustained in the Great War, fled the scene. However, the shouts of Wilson's butler alerted passers-by, and workmen repairing the road alerted the police. A chase ensued. O'Sullivan 'shot P.C. Marsh who endeavoured to grapple with me,' Dunne later remembered:

> We were walking along at this time with a yelling mob behind us. A Victoria [cab] came along and we boarded it. Even at the time I was amused at the energy with which the prim, livered old driver whipped up his horses, very much conscious that two guns were pointed at his back. We rode along like princes for about 150 yards, firing one or two shots to keep the mob back [thus injuring a civilian].

Running into another hostile crowd, the two dismounted from the cab and made their way along a side-street. Pursuing policemen threw truncheons and a milkman flung a few milk bottles. Hit on the head by a truncheon, O'Sullivan was arrested. Dunne was then seized from behind, a bottle was broken over his head and he was beaten with truncheons.[8]

III

What motivated IRA terrorism in Britain? The answer appears to have been revenge. In the summer of 1920, Ernie O'Malley, an IRA organiser, attended a meeting in Dublin of GHQ staff and senior Volunteer commanders from around Ireland. The country officers, he remembered, 'pressed for a campaign in England to counteract the destruction of creameries

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[7] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 42

[8] *The Times*, 23 June 1922; Reginald Dunne to new O/C London, n.d., but c. 9 Aug. 1922 (BMHCD no. 188/6/2, Frank Thornton [MAI])

and houses by the military and police'.[9] When George Fitzgerald, an I/O connected with GHQ, was sent to London to mount terrorist operations, he was told by Michael Collins that such attacks were 'by way of reprisals for burnings that were carried out at home by the Military and the Black and Tans'.[10] The recollections of IRA men in Britain contain similar justifications. The argument of Paddy O'Donoghue, O/C Manchester IRA, is typical:

> Following the deliberate burnings by the Auxiliaries [in Ireland], the Army Executive [in Dublin] decided that the Volunteers in the English cities should adopt retaliatory measures in their areas ... It was felt that the people in England should be made conscious of what the people in Ireland were suffering as regards depredations carried out by the Crown Forces.[11]

For Michael O'Leary, the burning of Cork city by Crown forces, as well as their sacking of Balbriggan, in north county Dublin, and of Trim in county Meath, called for revenge attacks 'of a similar nature' in England: '... we believed "an eye for an eye"'.[12] The sacking and looting of Trim also figures high in Edward Brady's justification for the unleashing of what he admits was 'terrorism'.[13]

The recruitment of 'Black and Tans' and 'Auxiliaries' to the RIC in 1920 represented the British government's belated response to the rebellion in Ireland. By then, the Irish police force had shown itself completely unable to deal with IRA violence. In 1919, Volunteer attacks on RIC barracks and patrols had caused the deaths of eleven members of the force. In the first nine months of 1920, ninety-four were killed. In response, the police evacuated isolated rural barracks, retreating to and reinforcing barracks in large towns and urban areas. Resignations and retirements due to the resultant low morale left the force undermanned, thus exacerbating its weakness. The British government was loath to admit that a war was taking place in Ireland. Instead of mobilising the army, therefore, it responded by militarising the police. An RIC recruitment drive was undertaken in Britain. Between July 1920 and July 1921, almost nine thousand British ex-servicemen were recruited to the force. The 'Black and Tans', so called because of the mismatched clothing they wore, were former rank and file soldiers recruited to the RIC proper. The 'Auxiliaries', on the other hand, were former army officers recruited to a special auxiliary division of the police. Heavily armed and poorly trained, both groups soon acquired reputations for terrorism and looting in their attempts to

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[9] O'Malley, *On another man's wound*, p. 188
[10] BMHWS no. 684, George Fitzgerald, p. 28 (NAI)
[11] Ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 10-11 (NAI)
[12] Ibid., no. 797, Micheál Ó Laoghaire, pp 42-3 (NAI)
[13] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 64

combat the IRA's guerrilla warfare.[14] On 20 September 1920, in response to the shooting dead of Inspector Burke in Balbriggan, Auxiliary police from the nearby Gormanstown barracks descended on the village, where they shot dead two civilians and caused over £130,000 worth of damage to property.[15] The episode was repeated in Trim a few days later where, in response to an IRA attack on the town's police barracks, a group of 'Black and Tans' or Auxiliaries shot two young men and inflicted an estimated £50,000 worth of damage to property owned by Sinn Féin sympathisers.[16] The British government tacitly condoned such 'reprisals' as natural reactions to the criminality of the IRA.[17] Edward Brady later argued that it was the adverse publicity which such terrorism caused, rather than any enthusiasm for Sinn Féin or the IRA per se, that led the mass of the Catholic population in Ireland to support the republican movement.[18]

The proposal to launch a terrorist campaign in Britain found its most forceful advocate in Cathal Brugha, the minister for defence. Brugha seems to have been preoccupied with mounting operations in Britain, for he had previously led a group of Volunteers to London with the aim of assassinating members of the British cabinet in the event of Irishmen being conscripted into the British army. According to Sean Ó Murthuile, a senior IRB man, 'the idea of carrying the war into England was not one that Dail Eireann wholeheartedly acquiesced in'. However, Brugha, 'adamant and stubborn', insisted on the plan and he eventually won the argument.[19] Thereafter, Brugha remained a steadfast supporter of the campaign. During the truce, he attempted to get the support of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) for a renewal of the IRA's terrorist campaign in Britain in the event of the peace talks collapsing.[20]

The aim of launching a terrorist campaign in Britain, therefore, was to avenge the violence of Crown forces in Ireland. There also existed a related desire to force the British people to confront and acknowledge the violence being perpetrated in their name across the Irish Sea. As Paddy O'Donoghue put it, the overall aim of the Volunteers' terrorist campaign was 'to bring home to the British people the sufferings and conditions to which the Irish

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[14] David Leeson, 'The 'Scum of London's Underworld'? British recruits for the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1920–21' in *Contemporary British History*, xvii, no. 1 (2003), pp 1-38
[15] *Irish Times*, 22, 23, 28 Sept. 1920
[16] Ibid., 28 Sept., 2 Oct. 1920
[17] *The Times*, 11 Oct. 1920; Kenneth O. Morgan, *Consensus and disunity: the Lloyd George coalition government, 1918–1922* (Oxford, 1979), p. 128
[18] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 123-4
[19] Sean Ó Murthuile manuscript, n.d., but c. mid 1920s–early 1930s (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7a/209), pp 126-7
[20] O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, p. 56

people were being subjected by their police and soldiers …'.[21] Michael Collins voiced similar sentiments. He disagreed with the comments of Barry Egan, the Sinn Féin deputy-mayor of Cork city, that the Irish had no quarrel with the English people. Such talk was nonsensical, Collins argued, for the English people were indeed responsible, through their politicians, for the events in Ireland. 'It is not by getting them to avoid this point, but by getting them to understand it that any good will be done,' he contended.[22] It was hoped, therefore, that the terrorist campaign would lead to a frightened and enlightened British public putting pressure on their public representatives to rethink the government's Irish policy. The British government recognised the logic of the IRA's terrorist campaign. Speaking in the wake of arson attacks on farms, Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Irish Chief Secretary, declared that the IRA was 'frantically working in the hope of intimidating the British people and the British Government by the revolver and the torch'.[23]

However, once the terrorist campaign began in Britain, in November 1920 with an attack on warehouses and timber yards on Merseyside, the exigencies of war, including competition among rival units and the desire for prestige, began to motivate activities. 'Some of our people here are wondering why we don't carry out something similar to the operation of Nov[ember 1920]. here,' Liverpool's Paddy Daly told Michael Collins in February 1921. The following week, arson attacks on farms were duly executed, motivated less by any Crown reprisal in Ireland than by a desire to keep in practice, as well as a wish to imitate their comrades in Manchester.[24] Prestige was also a motive in a revenge attack on a Liverpool farmer. As we saw earlier, in March 1921, Volunteers attempting to set a fire were disturbed by the gun-wielding land-owner. One was shot. Hearing that the farmer was boasting of his exploit in the local press, the Liverpool IRA decided to mount a revenge attack in order to preserve their *amour propre*.[25]

Events in Ireland also motivated the other form of IRA terrorism in Britain, namely assassinations. Sir Henry Wilson's murder was the only Volunteer assassination plot in Britain to be effected. There were, however, a number of other such plots which, for one reason or another, were not carried out. The first, in the spring of 1918, involved a group of ten to twelve IRA men travelling to London. Faced with a German offensive on the Western Front, the British government had decided to extend compulsory military service to Ireland.

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[21] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, p. 11 (NAI)
[22] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 13 June 1921 (NAI, DE 2/330)
[23] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxviii, cols 631-4 (21 Feb. 1921)
[24] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 28 Feb., 4 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[25] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 77-80; see pp 176-7 below

Led by Cathal Brugha, the group was given the task of assassinating the British cabinet before the order in council ratifying Irish conscription could be signed.[26] In September 1920, Patrick Murray, a member of the Cork IRA who would go on to become O/C Britain of the anti-treaty IRA during the civil war, led a three man team to London. Their mission was to assassinate a member of the British cabinet in the event of Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, dying on hunger strike in Brixton prison.[27] Attempts on the lives of an RIC man and a British soldier, both of whom served in Ireland, were also mooted.[28] Two British hangmen, scheduled to execute IRA men in Derry jail, were targets of another assassination attempt in 1921.[29] Sir Henry Wilson had served as security advisor to the Northern Ireland prime minister, James Craig, and his assassination was motivated mainly by nationalist outrage at his perceived role in orchestrating Protestant attacks on Catholics in Belfast and Derry. However, Dunne, the O/C London, also seems to have hoped that the assassination would provoke the British into revoking the treaty and renewing its war against the IRA. The Irish, divided over the merits of the treaty, would then re-unite in the face of the common enemy.[30] Dunne and O'Sullivan being sentenced to death for Wilson's murder precipitated a variation on the assassination theme, namely the planned kidnapping of the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII. The London Volunteers were to demand their comrades' freedom in return for freeing the heir to the throne. An attempt to capture the royal seems to have taken place at Bournemouth, but it was unsuccessful.[31]

During the civil war, anti-treaty IRA terrorism in Britain was motivated by the fact that their Free State opponents were being supplied with munitions and expertise by the British government.[32] 'As the Republican Government has repudiated the Treaty,' the C/S, Liam Lynch, observed,

> I can see no reason to be put forward against active hostilities against the common enemy [i.e. England], even in his own country. He is waging war against us – if anything, more desperate than before. All his resources are at the disposal of the Free State Army including finance, experience, artillery, general supplies, etc.

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[26] Joe Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, pp 127-42; BMHWS no. 369, William Whelan, pp 5-7 (NAI)
[27] Patrick Murray to Florence O'Donoghue, 14, 26 Jan. 1959 (NLI, Florence O'Donoghue Papers, Ms 31,296[1]); BMHWS no. 1584, Patrick Murray, pp 17-20 (NAI)
[28] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 16 Feb.; Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 15 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[29] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 37-8; ibid., no. 922, James Cunningham, p. 15 (NAI)
[30] Keith Jeffery, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, a political soldier* (Oxford, 2006), pp 256-80
[31] 'London Battalion I.R.A.'; Martin Walsh to ?Military Pensions Board, n.d. (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/51, P17a/154)
[32] On the munitions supplied by the British to the Free State army, see pp 121-23 above; on Royal Navy attempts to prevent gunrunning by the anti-treaty IRA, see pp 208-09, 216-17 below

England was to be the target of IRA wrath, as it was 'directly responsible' for the fratricidal warfare in Ireland. Lynch's reference to England as the 'common enemy' may indicate that he hoped that attacks in England would lead the British government to attempt a re-conquest of Ireland, thus re-uniting republicans and Free Staters in the face of the invader.[33]

Most rank and file Volunteers seem to have supported the IRA's terrorist campaign without demur. The fact that attacks might have the effect of alienating the general population in Britain, including those of Irish descent, seems to have been of little concern to Volunteers, those born and raised in Britain included. According to the sources at our disposal, only one Volunteer seems to have raised any such qualm. Upon learning that some of his colleagues were planning to rescue a Sligo IRA man from police custody in May 1921, Glasgow Volunteer Seamus Reader expressed the fear that an attack on unarmed policemen might disgust the populace and cost the republican movement 'the support of the Scottish people'. His fellow Volunteers did not share his concern, however, and proceeded with the rescue attempt.[34] '... we did not consider such questions as danger, the logical conclusion of our efforts, or the consequences either to ourselves or to the community,' Edward Brady wrote of his fellow Merseyside Volunteers. 'There was the great purpose always present in mind – the freeing of Ireland from English domination.'[35] Rather than fearing the consequences, then, most Volunteers were excited to be involved in terrorist activities. On 27 November 1920, after setting fire to a timber yard on Liverpool's Grove St., John Pinkman and his cousin Bernie Meehan returned home to watch their handiwork. They saw 'the flames from the timber yard getting higher and higher, and the smoke clouds rising in columns from various points near the docks'. The following day, the two were impatient to read of their exploits in the newspapers, particularly the amount of damage that they had caused. 'We got a laugh reading the various estimates of the numbers of [IRA] men involved in starting the fires,' Pinkman wrote. '*The Times* said at least fifty were involved.'[36] Edward Brady too delighted in the media attention. He was 'highly amused' by press accounts of the farm fires mounted on Merseyside on 9 March 1921, which he had partly orchestrated.[37]

However, when he was initially called upon to participate in the operation, Brady's scruples momentarily kicked in: 'my conscience seemed to rock – to waver on the right or the wrong of the action I was allotted to perform'. Yet, his qualms about the employment of

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[33] C/S to President de Valera and Ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749)
[34] BMHWS no. 933, Seamus Reader, p. 10 (NAI); see pp 201-02 below
[35] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 22
[36] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 37-8
[37] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 41-2

violence were soon quieted by internalized military discipline: '[I] soon found myself ready to go on my mission, satisfied at any rate that I was not doing anything criminally wrong, or morally unlawful, as I considered that a state of war existed [between Ireland and England]'.[38] A similar sense of discipline enabled Brady to participate in the raids on lodging houses accommodating would-be Irish emigrants who had been branded deserters by GHQ. 'We never considered the illegal side of our mission,' he wrote in 1928. '... The work was given to do – it was not our business to question the right or wrong of it.[39] John Pinkman's scruples were not quieted so easily, however. Upon learning that some of the emigrants had suffered ill-treatment at the hands of the 'Black and Tans', Pinkman and his party realised that 'the story of them being traitors and renegades was a cruel lie'. They then returned them their passports. Moreover, on the way home, Pinkman realised the hypocrisy of the situation. Some of the Liverpool Volunteers who had condemned the emigrants for abandoning Ireland were themselves effectively guilty of the same crime. Emigrants from Ireland with no family ties on Merseyside, they too should have returned to Ireland to participate in the fight, he thought.[40]

Assassination assignments, the other main form of IRA terrorism in Britain, sometimes elicited from Volunteers less enthusiasm than attacks against property. When, in March 1921, Michael Collins requested that action be taken against a British army officer over-zealous in performing his duties in Cork and now residing in Liverpool, Paddy Daly replied that 'there are very few in the organisation here who would undertake any such work', indicating that most Merseyside Volunteers viewed assassination as a distasteful exercise. In the event, three men volunteered for the operation, but imperfect intelligence frustrated its successful execution.[41] A few months later, Edward Brady was given the task of executing an RIC Auxiliary officer recuperating in a hotel in Blundelsands, near Liverpool. After some 'careful planning', Brady, masquerading as a commercial traveller, secured a room in the hotel on the same landing as that of his quarry. Not knowing the policeman by appearance, he decided to enter into conversation with his fellow guests. In the event, the first guest he approached proved to be his target, a fact which Brady verified by comparing the guest's signature in the hotel's visitors' book with that on a RIC report which the GHQ had forwarded to Liverpool. By shadowing the man, Brady learned his movements. With this

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[38] Ibid., p. 29
[39] Ibid., pp 51-2
[40] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 31-2
[41] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 15, 21 Mar.; Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18, 19 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

information, he drew up a plan for kidnapping and executing the policeman. At 11.45 p.m. on a specified night, two groups of Volunteers were to make their way to a meeting place near the hotel. One group was to travel by train. Travelling by taxi, the other group was to commandeer the vehicle, which would be used to transport the subsequently kidnapped RIC man to a remote location where he would be executed. On the night, Brady and his accomplices reached the rendezvous location by train. However, the taxi carrying their associates never arrived. Frustrated, Brady contemplated raiding the hotel and executing the RIC man in his room. This, however, was a 'wild' idea. They, therefore, cancelled the operation and hailed a taxi for the journey back to Liverpool. Coincidently, the taxi proved to be the one which the Volunteers had planned to commandeer. Brady later learned that his accomplices had travelled to Blundelsands in the taxi but the driver had driven away just as the Volunteers were about to hijack his vehicle. The IRA men fired shots at the car but it did not stop. Brady was 'not sorry' that the planned execution was so scuppered.[42]

Most of the IRA assassination attempts mounted in Britain were carried out by men active in the Volunteers in Ireland. The main exception was the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson, carried out by two members of the London IRA. Reginald Dunne defended his and Joseph O'Sullivan's actions by referencing the fact that as soldiers in the British army during the Great War they had taken human life in the name of self-determination and freedom for small nations. He held that Britain, in its relations with Ireland, hypocritically refused to abide by these principles. Indeed, it proceeded to divide Ireland in two, and in Northern Ireland 'outrages were being perpetrated that are a disgrace to civilisation'. Such outrages included the deaths of around five hundred people and the wounding of nearly two thousand others, the expulsion of twenty-three thousand from their homes and nine thousand from their employment. Wilson, he continued, was responsible for this 'Orange Terror': 'He was at the time of his death the Military Adviser to what is colloquially called the Ulster Government, and as Military Adviser he raised and organised a body of men known as the Ulster Special Constables, who are the principal agents in this campaign of terrorism.' With Ulster Catholics suffering so, Dunne declared that the assassination of Wilson was motivated by the 'same principles for which we shed our blood on the Battle Field of Europe'.[43]

Events in Ireland also motivated an ambiguous form of terrorism: the intimidation of people emigrating from Ireland. In July 1920, alarmed by the level of emigration from the

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[42] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 66-73

[43] Reginald Dunne statement (BMHCD no. 188/6/3, Frank Thornton [MAI], reprinted from *Irish Independent*, 21 July 1922)

country, especially of men of military age, Dáil Éireann issued a decree prohibiting emigration without specific permission from the minister of home affairs. Emigration, argued *An t-Óglác*, was a 'cowardly desertion of the native land at a time when she is in the throes of a bloody struggle for freedom and her fate hangs in the balance'. The 'sternest measures' were, therefore, necessary to counteract it.[44] The IRA in Britain, the man entrepôt for Irish emigrants, was authorised to use all means, including physical force, to tackle the problem. In February 1921, armed Liverpool Volunteers raided a number of lodging houses, confiscated the passports and travel tickets of Irish emigrants, and warned them to return to Ireland.[45]

A desire to revenge acts of British oppression in Ireland, therefore, was the main motive behind IRA terrorism in Britain during the war of independence. However, other factors, such as prestige, competitiveness between different IRA units and desires to obliterate the treaty and re-unite Irish republicanism, also played some role in launching attacks. Reginald Dunne's aim of re-uniting the ranks of Irish nationalism through an act of violence in Britain may have found an echo in the strategy of Liam Lynch during the civil war. Mainly, however, IRA plans to launch terrorist attacks in Britain in 1922–23 were motivated by the fact that their pro-treaty opponents were benefitting from munitions and intelligence supplied by the British. Most Volunteers had few qualms about perpetrating violence against property, though that against individuals seems on occasion to have caused some scrupling.

IV

The planning of terrorist operations in Britain was undertaken by IRA officers in Britain and members of O/C Britain Rory O'Connor's staff visiting from Dublin. From the beginning, GHQ set down the parameters of the campaign. Firstly, O'Connor was instructed to confine operations to England. No outrages were to be mounted in Scotland or Wales. This was motivated by a romantic (and rather spurious) belief that the Scots and Welsh were fellow 'Celts' suffering tyranny at the hands of the Anglo-Saxon English.[46] Liam Lynch ordered a similar policy during the civil war. Although republican forces were strongest in Scotland, he recommended refraining from launching attacks there, as the Scots (and presumably the

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[44] *An t-Óglác*, 15 Aug., 18 Sept. 1920
[45] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 46-54; Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 30-32; *Irish Times*, 21 Feb. 1921
[46] O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])

Welsh too) were 'more or less Gaelic'.[47] In fact, however, disregarding GHQ's ruling, the Volunteers in Scotland mounted ten attacks during the war of independence, one of which caused the death of a policeman. O'Connor was further ordered to ensure that in mounting attacks every effort be made to minimize civilian casualties. Moreover, he was charged with ensuring that unemployment amongst the Irish section of the population was avoided as much as possible. Therefore, attacks on large employers, such as factories and mines, were effectively prohibited.[48]

Initially, GHQ played a dominant role in the selection of targets for attack. In August or September 1920, Paddy O'Donoghue attended a meeting in Dublin where the topic for discussion was the mounting of terrorist attacks in Britain. With relation to Manchester, it was suggested that attacks be launched against the Stuart St. electrical power station and the waterworks at Clayton Vale.[49] Meanwhile, GHQ sent Jack Plunkett to Merseyside 'to investigate the possibility of attacking the docks there and if possible crippling them'.[50] GHQ's involvement in planning continued the following year. In Liverpool, and presumably elsewhere, GHQ approval was needed for the mounting of attacks. In February 1921, Paddy Daly noted that some Volunteers were impatient to mount another operation similar to that of the previous November. 'Of course we cannot act on "our own" without the consent of GHQ,' he concluded, perhaps an oblique way of asking for Dublin's permission.[51] By April, the role of headquarters in mounting operations in Liverpool was personified in the arrival of a member of the O/C Britain's staff, charged with planning operations in conjunction with the local IRA leadership.[52] Yet, Dublin still had significant input in the mounting of operations. In June 1921, it ordered a co-ordinated attack on communications infrastructure to take place in Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and St. Helens, among other places.[53] Mick McEvoy, another member of Rory O'Connor's staff, helped to plan operations on Tyneside.[54] O'Connor himself sometimes visited IRA units to inspect plans and assess past operations. For example, when Denis Brennan approached him with a plan to attack London's Lots Road power station, the O/C Britain approved of the target but recommended that hammers rather than explosives be employed to destroy the turbo generators. He also

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[47] C/S to President de Valera & Ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749)
[48] O/C Britain memo to ?C/S, reproduced in *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxviii, cols 632-3 (21 Feb. 1921)
[49] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, p. 11 (NAI)
[50] 'Liverpool' in 'Account by Jack Plunkett of Events of 1914–21' (NLI, Count Plunkett Papers, Ms 11,397)
[51] Paddy Daly to Collins, 28 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[52] Ibid., 27 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[53] BMHWS no. 1535, Hugh Early, pp 8-9 (NAI)
[54] Ibid., no. 773, Gilbert Barrington, p. 3 (NAI)

enlisted the services of a trainee electrical engineer, asking him to assist Brennan by locating the station's underground cables. In the end, Brennan's failure to secure the architectural plans of the power station scuppered the planned attack.[55] In September 1921, Cathal Brugha instructed O'Connor to travel to Britain to organise and evaluate plans for 'an Active offensive' in the event of the peace negotiations breaking down.[56] George Fitzgerald noted that, once the London IRA had confidence in their ability to mount attacks, they started acting on their own initiative, with little input from GHQ or the O/C Britain.[57]

As well as helping to plan attacks against property in Britain, GHQ also helped prepare attacks against RIC men and their relatives in Britain. In order to ascertain the home addresses of 'Black and Tan' and Auxiliary policemen men, GHQ authorised raids on the mails. In December 1920, for example, a mail bag containing the correspondence of Auxiliary RIC members stationed at Dublin's Beggars' Bush barracks was stolen by a group of IRA men after an exchange of shots with police at the Shelbourne Road post office.[58] Furthermore, Dublin also encouraged the mounting of assassination attempts in Britain. Volunteer Joe Good remembered being told in 1918 that GHQ had decided 'to shoot members of the British government and thus prevent their signing the order-in-council which would make the application for conscription in Ireland operative'. The ten- or twelve-man assassination squad was commanded by Cathal Brugha, the Volunteers' C/S at the time.[59] In 1920, GHQ was involved in another plot to assassinate members of Lloyd George's government. Patrick Murray, who volunteered to lead the mission to London, met Michael Collins in Dublin. 'He told me it was decided to shoot a member of the British cabinet, should Terry [MacSwiney] die [on hunger-strike in London's Brixton prison],' Murray recollected. Collins made arrangements for London IRB leader Sam Maguire and the capital's IRA to lend Murray and the other assassins all possible assistance in their mission.[60] On at least one occasion, GHQ ordered the assassination of a British soldier on leave in Liverpool. The soldier, named Donnerman, had been 'hunting down our people in Cork', Michael Collins told Paddy Daly in March 1921. 'Perhaps something can be done.'[61] Collins also approved of the plan to assassinate the British hangmen who were scheduled to execute

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[55] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[56] O/C Britain to C/S, 9 Sept., 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/24[63-5], P7/A/29[264-73]); BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Barrington, p. 3; ibid., no. 684, George Fitzgerald, p. 30 (NAI)
[57] BMHWS no. 684, George Fitzgerald, p. 28 (NAI)
[58] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 64-5; *The Times*, 15 Dec. 1920
[59] Joe Good, *Enchanted by dreams*, p. 131; James Quinn, 'Brugha, Cathal' in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, downloaded from http://dib.cambridge.org on 1 Dec. 2009
[60] Pa Murray to Florence O'Donoghue, 14 Jan. 1959 (NLI, O'Donoghue Papers, Ms 31,296[1])
[61] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 15 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

two IRA men in Belfast.[62] Although the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson in June 1922 was authorised by neither the leadership of the pro- nor anti-treaty IRA, there is evidence that Collins had sanctioned it during the war of independence. 'I know for a fact that the orders for this execution, as well as two others, were given by the late General M. Collins prior to the Treaty split,' London's Sean McGrath wrote in 1953.[63] The two other people scheduled for execution by the London IRA were J. C. Bowen Colthurst, a British army officer who had executed a number of people out-of-hands during the 1916 Rising and was later found clinically insane by a court martial, and 'a woman who had betrayed people in Cork'.[64] Reflecting on the campaign up to the end of May 1921, GHQ, in the form of O/C Britain Rory O'Connor, judged it to have been 'fairly successful'.[65]

During the civil war, C/S Liam Lynch's GHQ had a major input in the planning of attacks. With the loss of Rory O'Connor at the beginning of the civil war, Lynch was impatient for someone to assume the vacant position of O/C Britain and begin planning operations. 'We are letting precious time pass by, and should have things going there already,' he wrote in September 1922, appealing to the O/C 1st Southern Division to allow two of his men to take up positions in Britain. In the event of the British 'going to war with us', Lynch believed that it would be in England that 'we will deliver our hardest blows against her'. He speculated that 'action' in Britain would take the form of 'a war on Political-leaders, and their leading Soldiers'. He also contemplated 'the carrying out of destructive operations in Cities'.[66] On the subject of 'Action, if and when, in Britain', a meeting of the IRA executive in October 1922 agreed that 'organisation' was the most important issue there at the moment.[67] In January 1923, Lynch informed the new O/C Britain, Patrick Murray, that GHQ was contemplating the mounting of 'active hostilities in England owing to the advanced development of [the] situation' in Ireland. Noting that such hostilities would take the form of an 'active destruction policy', he asked Murray to supply information on the ability of the IRA in Britain to mount such operations.[68] On 7 March, having learned that they had failed to secure certain munitions in Britain, GHQ sent Murray an order 'to have operations carried

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[62] BMHWS no. 824, Paddy Daly, pp 37-8 (NAI)
[63] Sean McGrath statement, 14 Oct. 1953 (BMHCD no. 247, Frank Lee [MAI]); original emphasis; see Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, pp 194-220
[64] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); Denis Kelleher interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107); Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: the Irish rebellion* (London, 2005), pp 193-5
[65] O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])
[66] C/S to O/C 1st Southern Division, 3, 10 Sept. 1922 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/17)
[67] Minutes of Executive meeting, 16–17 Oct. 1922: second Day of Executive meeting: 17 Oct. 1922 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/12)
[68] C/S to O/C Britain, 9 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)

out at once'.[69] However, Murray later implied that the IRA lacked the resources to plan and execute such attacks. Some of the orders he received from GHQ were 'ridiculous', he said. Moss Twomey, the assistant C/S, 'had no sense of reality'.[70]

On occasion, GHQ's orders were ignored.[71] The most spectacular instance of such insubordination occurred in May 1921 when Frank Carty, an IRA man who operated in counties Derry and Sligo, was arrested in Glasgow. Motivated into action by Derry Volunteers who had arrived in the city to liberate their comrade, the Glasgow IRA proposed to mount a rescue of Carty. However, fearful that any rescue attempt would precipitate police raids on Irish houses in the city and cause further disruption to the IRA's already disordered gunrunning network, the D/P, Liam Mellows, advised against it. D. P. Walsh, the chief gunrunner in Scotland, supported the suggestion that the planned rescue be postponed until Carty was about to be transported to Ireland for trial. However, the Glasgow IRA mounted their attempt as originally planned, attacking a prison van containing Carty as it passed along Glasgow's High St. on 4 May 1921. As occurred in the rescue of two Fenians from a prison van in Manchester in 1867, a policeman was fatally injured in the attack. Unlike the Manchester episode, however, the Glasgow Volunteers failed to rescue their comrade. Mellows' concerns for the consequences of any rescue attempt proved prescient, for a large number of Volunteers were arrested in the aftermath of the incident, causing the discovery of munitions dumps and the 'complete collapse' of gunrunning activities for a period.[72]

During both the war of independence and civil war, therefore, GHQ had considerable input into the mounting of terrorist operations in Britain.

Very little detail has been left regarding the detailed planning of terrorist attacks. Following the meeting in Dublin in August 1920, Paddy O'Donoghue returned to Manchester in the company of a chemist named Cripps who, after a tour of Stuart St. power station, advised the IRA on the best means of disrupting the power supply.[73] Accompanied by Tom Kerr, O/C Liverpool company, Jack Plunkett spent a week inconspicuously touring every inch of the city's dock system, 'every dock and dock gate, powerhouses, cranes, dock railways, piers, landing stages, etc., etc.', making notes as he went. Using Kerr's contacts, the duo were able to access areas normally prohibited to members of the public. Plunkett estimated that they walked twenty miles every day. Plunkett then returned to Dublin and

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[69] Ibid., 7 Mar. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[70] Patrick Murray interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/88)
[71] See p. 163 below
[72] BMHWS no. 933, Seamus Reader, pp 9-11 (NAI); extract from report by Lieut. M. Sheerin, Derry IRA, n.d. (MAI, Collins Papers, A/0411, group VIII, item III); see pp 201-02 below
[73] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, p. 11 (NAI)

submitted a comprehensive report to the C/S, Richard Mulcahy, detailing the most effective means of attacking the docks. Liverpool Volunteers had submitted plans of their own, but Plunkett judged them too ambitious to be realised. However, a plan submitted by Kerr, although rather over-ambitious too, was judged a sound basis for action.[74] While planning his attack on Lots Road power station in London, Dennis Brennan 'spent an evening with a bloke who worked there and ... was shown around the place', thus allowing him to reconnoitre the target, ascertaining its layout.[75] Sometime in early 1921, GHQ sent George Fitzgerald to London with the task of identifying targets for attack. He was then to draw up plans for the effective mounting of such attacks, although he himself was to refrain from involvement in the actual operations. In the capital, he met Sam Maguire and Reginald Dunne. 'I outlined a scheme to them for the burning of a number of large wholesale houses in a very old part of London where the majority of warehouses were located,' he recollected.

> ... We decided that the burning of certain [ware]houses would be attempted on a particular Saturday night at about 12 o'clock. The reason this time was selected was that the principal streets would be very crowded due to people coming from theatres and pictures houses etc. and we felt that this would provide the Volunteers with a good line of escape or get-away, by mingling with the crowd once clear of the warehouses area.

The means of setting the warehouses on fire was also discussed. The Volunteers were to arm themselves with 'burning materials of an inflammable nature'. The arsonists would penetrate the buildings using a diamond cutter to break holes in the windows. The inflammable material would then be set alight and thrown into the basements. Later, Fitzgerald also selected farms on the outskirts of the capital as targets for attack.[76]

Liverpool's Edward Brady remembered the preparations undertaken for the mounting of an attack on the relatives of policemen in Ireland. Having received from Dublin the addresses of fourteen RIC families, the neighbourhoods in which their houses were located were carefully reconnoitred. 'The districts were examined for means of retreat, and every precaution taken to make the intended raid successful,' he later wrote. For convenience, the paraffin and petrol to be used in the attacks were stored nearby. A plan was then drawn up, which scheduled the attacks for 11.45 p.m. on a Saturday night, anticipating that at such a time the occupants of the houses would be retiring to bed.[77]

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[74] 'Liverpool' in 'Account by Jack Plunkett of Events of 1914–21' (NLI, Plunkett Papers, Ms 11,397)
[75] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[76] BMHWS no. 684, George Fitzgerald, pp 28-9 (NAI)
[77] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 64-5

On another occasion, Brady was assigned the task of discovering the friends and relatives of a named Auxiliary member who was reportedly about to be sent to Liverpool or some part of England on a special mission. Ascertaining that there were three people of the same name as the Auxiliary living in the Merseyside area, Brady and his accomplice set out on their mission. The first suspect ran a public house. The Volunteers got into a conversation with a barman in the establishment. After discussing war service in France and enquiring about old friends, Brady was satisfied that the proprietor had no connection with the Irish police. The next suspect sold ice-cream. Again, a conversation proved that Brady had not found his target. However, the retailer told the Volunteers of a restaurant proprietor on the same street who had a son serving with the Auxiliaries in Ireland. The Volunteers went straight to the restaurant, where they drank some tea and 'made careful scrutiny of the lie of buildings, so that in the event of serious action being taken against this man, we would know where we stood'. In the event, the information gathered in this reconnaissance mission was never used, as the Auxiliary man's mission to Liverpool was shelved.[78]

In planning the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson, Reginald Dunne, the O/C London, made use of the media. Late on Wednesday, 21 June 1922, Joseph O'Sullivan drew Dunne's attention to a notice in that day's *Evening News* newspaper which stated that Wilson was set to unveil a war memorial at Liverpool St. railway station the following day. After consulting with another IRA officer, Dunne and O'Sullivan went to the station to ascertain the exact time at which Wilson was scheduled to unveil the memorial. The ceremony was set for 2 p.m. However, the hall in which the memorial was located was to be closed to the general public for an hour prior to the unveiling, thus preventing the Volunteers from taking up a position adequate for their purposes. Frustrated, Dunne and O'Sullivan then made arrangements to meet at the clock on Vauxhall Bridge Road at lunch time the following day. Dunne does not say when he had the idea of assassinating Wilson as he returned home from the unveiling ceremony. However, he did note that the interim of twelve hours afforded little time for 'adequate preparation'. Due to O'Sullivan's disability, Dunne later had 'momentary regrets' about involving him in the operation. Yet, the lack of time for sufficient planning, along with O'Sullivan's availability, his enthusiasm for the project, and his courage, meant that Dunne felt justified in choosing him as his accomplice. Thus, the following day, Dunne and

[78] Ibid., pp 35-6

O'Sullivan met, armed, at the appointed time. They then made their way to the vicinity of Wilson's home in Eaton Place and lay in wait for him.[79]

As we saw earlier, on at least one occasion members of the Liverpool IRA were given the task of finding their own targets for attack, in this case farms. Presumably, the Volunteers then submitted their targets for approval of the leadership. In the event, however, the leadership decided to allocate targets of its own.[80] Planning for the first incendiary attacks in the Tyneside area was undertaken by the IRA brigade staff. They chose as their targets a bonded store, an oil refinery and a timber store. About a week before the attacks were scheduled to be mounted, Rory O'Connor visited the area and approved of the plans. The brigade staff, assisted by O'Connor's representative Mick McEvoy, then inspected the properties, decided on the best means of attacking them, and selected Volunteers for the operation.[81] The following month, the brigade staff ordered the Tyneside companies to organise operations themselves. After choosing their targets, companies submitted plans for their targets' destruction to the Volunteer brigade council. Members of the council then inspected the targets in person and sanctioned or vetoed the arrangements. In May, the plans were put into effect with the mounting of farm fires and attacks on communications and railway infrastructure.[82] Edward Brady states that in planning attacks on farms, the Liverpool IRA ensured that 'the ground was carefully surveyed, and rough maps made of the places selected for destruction'. With relation to the mounting of attacks on communications infrastructure, he remembered that the preparations involved were demanding and wide-ranging. Ordnance survey maps were studied carefully, the area most suited for the attacks was then chosen, and Volunteers were selected for participation.[83]

During the summer and autumn of 1921, the Volunteers made plans for the resumption of attacks in the event of the truce breaking down.[84] In some IRA units, the costs involved in such planning, including travelling expenses, seem to have been borne by GHQ. In others, however, such as Tyneside, the local Volunteers bore the expense themselves. In October 1921, Rory O'Connor stated that he intended to give each area an average of about £50 to defray the expenses involved in planning future operations.[85]

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[79] Reginald Dunne to new O/C London, n.d., but c. 9 Aug. 1922 (BMHCD no. 188/6/2, Frank Thornton [MAI])
[80] See p. 144 above
[81] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 14
[82] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Barrington, pp 6-7 (NAI)
[83] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 38, 82-3
[84] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[85] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 22; O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct.1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])

Due to the mid-week work commitments of Volunteers, most IRA terrorist operations occurred on weekend nights, mainly Saturdays. The cover of darkness, of course, reduced the chances of being apprehended.

Some of the attacks were planned to take place simultaneously across England. As we have already seen, the November 1920 arson attacks, the inaugural event of the IRA's terrorist campaign, were planned to involve simultaneous operations in Liverpool, Manchester and London. In March the following year, Volunteers in Liverpool and Manchester drew up plans for synchronized attacks in their local city centres.[86] In June 1921, a co-ordinated attack on communications infrastructure was to take place in Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and St. Helens, among other places.[87]

For various reasons, some of the plans which were drawn up by the IRA were never implemented at all, some were tried but failed, while others were realised in a modified form. We have already seen some examples of the former, including Dennis Brennan's plan to attack London's Lots Road power station. In October 1920, Michael O'Kelly Simington, a member of the London Volunteers, was convicted of the unlawful possession of architectural plans of the Irish Office in Old Queen St., stolen from the Office of Works, his former place of employment. Simington failed to explain his behaviour. Therefore, we can only speculate that he might have stolen the plans for use in organising terrorist attacks in the Whitehall area. Interestingly, George Fitzgerald remembered taking Michael Collins for 'a good look at Scotland Yard and the principal Government offices in Whitehall' in the autumn of 1920. A precedent for mounting attacks on such targets was set in the 1880s, when government buildings in Whitehall suffered at the hands of O'Donovan Rossa's dynamiting 'Skirmishers'.[88] Another plan, mooted but never implemented, called for the destruction of the Crossley motor company premises in Manchester, presumably motivated by the fact that Crown forces in Ireland used the company's vehicles.[89] A further plan envisioned an attack on a house being occupied by a member of the royal family in London's St. James' Square.[90] During the truce, plans for bombing the electric train at Bootle were found in the lost wallet of a Cork Volunteer.[91] O'Connor, the O/C Britain, estimated that the number of unsuccessful

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[86] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 31 Mar., 8, 14 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[87] BMHWS no. 1535, Hugh Early, pp 8-9 (NAI)
[88] *The Times*, 22 Oct., 23 Nov. 1920; BMHWS no. 684, George FitzGerald, p. 11 (NAI); Short, *The dynamite war*, pp 105-06
[89] Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 9 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[90] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); Martin Geraghty to ?Military Pensions Board, 20 May 1937 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/154)
[91] *The Times*, 4 Feb. 1922

attacks carried out in the period up to the end of May 1921 constituted about ten per cent of the total attempted.[92] The failed attempt to kidnap the Prince of Wales in August 1922, with the aim of using him as a hostage in negotiations for the release of Dunne and O'Sullivan, is an example of a plan which proved unsuccessful when tried.

In early November 1920, while on the trail of the C/S, Richard Mulcahy, the police mounted a raid on a house in Dublin. Mulcahy escaped the dragnet, but only at the cost of allowing some of his correspondence to fall into police hands. Jack Plunkett's plans for attacks in Manchester and Liverpool were among the correspondence and they were subsequently publicized by the Irish Chief Secretary in the House of Commons and published in the press.[93] On the back foot, the IRA nevertheless decided to modify its plans, proceeding with part of its plotted attacks: the burning of warehouses and depots. In the end, however, it was only on Merseyside that this revised plan was realised. Pinkman states that GHQ, realising that the Volunteers in London and elsewhere were insufficiently organised to mount the attacks, told the Liverpool men to cancel their plans. However, the Kerrs and Steve Lanigan made the argument for proceeding with their plans regardless, and Rory O'Connor eventually gave permission.[94] Paddy O'Donoghue, O/C Manchester, later blamed bad organisation for his companies' failure to act that night.[95] In April 1921, the roles were reversed: members of Manchester's renegade no. 2 company, based in the Erskine St. Irish Club, Hulme, launched arson attacks on hotels, warehouses and cafés in the city centre, despite their Liverpool comrades still awaiting permission from GHQ for a similar operation in what was planned as a simultaneous attack. The Manchester attacks were 'a failure', noted Merseyside's Paddy Daly.[96] The Liverpool men regained the initiative two months later with the GHQ-ordered simultaneous attack on communications' infrastructure in London, Manchester, Tyneside, and Merseyside. Learning that many of the IRA units were ill-prepared for the operation, Dublin ordered the Merseyside men to postpone the attack. However, frustrated by the repeated postponement of operations and with their lines of communications being too slow to prevent the attacks going ahead anyway, the Liverpool Volunteers proceeded with their plan.[97]

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[92] O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])
[93] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxv, cols 506-07 (24 Nov. 1920); *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1920
[94] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 35-6
[95] Michael Collins to Neil Kerr, 27 Nov. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3); BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, p. 12 (NAI)
[96] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 8 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[97] BMHWS no. 1535, Hugh Early, p. 8 (NAI)

Over the course of the IRA's seven-and-a-half month long terrorist campaign from November 1920 to July 1921, attacks were mounted on warehouses, factories, farms, and private houses, as well communications' and railway infrastructure.[98] How and why were properties chosen for attack? With relation to the planned attack in Manchester in November 1920, the power station and the water works were targeted because of the city's dependence on them as sources of electric power. Stuart St. power station was a place of 'great importance' in connection with the powering of the city's trams and the local coal mines, Jack Plunkett noted. Meanwhile, with Clayton Vale waterworks supplying power to more than half of Manchester's factories, as well as its trams and coal mines, Plunkett contended that if the supply was disrupted, the city would 'shut down'.[99] Targets in Liverpool also seem to have been chosen with the aim of making an impression on the public. John Pinkman remembers being 'overawed' by the inventiveness and destructiveness of the planed attack. In a 'devastating reprisal', the IRA was going 'to wreck the second largest dock system in the British empire'.[100] A plan submitted to Plunkett by Tom Kerr called for the destruction of the dock gates, so as to cause ships to be swept into the river Mersey by the ensuing rush of water. Plunkett thought this rather ambitious, as he did other plans submitted by the Merseyside Volunteers. Still, even his revised version of the plan aimed to achieve impressive results. The docks' inner gates, eight in number, were to be opened by means of the four pumps, all of which would subsequently be destroyed using gelignite. 'The object is to make it impossible to open or close the gates which are not destroyed, by hydraulic power, for a couple of tides,' Plunkett asserted. This would probably lead to a situation where boats 'would lie down and be seriously damaged'.[101]

George Fitzgerald does not explain why warehouses were chosen as targets for attack in London. However, Rory O'Connor, does. In early 1921, he expressed a belief that deficiencies in training meant that the IRA in Britain did not possess the ability to successfully mount major attacks. 'Minor operations', however, could be carried out, including the destruction of buildings. When the Volunteers failed to set fire to the warehouses, Fitzgerald recommended that they turn their attention to burning farm crops, another one of O'Connor's minor operations. Suspecting that the failure was due to the

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[98] In May 1921, the IRA in Britain was also involved in a campaign of window-scratching, that is scratching shop windows with sharp objects. However, due to the lack of sources detailing this activity and the difficulty of quantifying it, I have reluctantly decided to ignore it; see O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20]).

[99] Jack Plunkett to C/S, n.d., but c. Oct. 1920, reprinted in *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1920

[100] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 33

[101] Jack Plunkett to C/S, n.d., but c. Oct. 1920, reprinted in *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1920

Volunteers suffering from nervousness, Fitzgerald hoped that the relatively easy task of burning haystacks would instil confidence in the men.[102] Farms were objects of attack in Ireland too, particularly in Connacht. Nineteen-twenty, for example, saw 1,114 agrarian outrages. However, these attacks, despite some IRA involvement, were motivated more by land-hunger than nationalism per se. Indeed, Fitzpatrick argues that '"I.R.A. engagements" [in county Clare] were in many cases thinly disguised land seizures', a judgement which Campbell says applies with equal force to county Galway.[103] Attacks on farms were relatively safe to mount. As the London Metropolitan Police noted, 'nothing is easier [to do] than to fire a [hay] rick ...'.[104] O'Connor would have agreed. Assailing communications and railway infrastructure, targets of attack in Ireland too, was another minor operation which the O/C Britain judged the IRA capable of mounting.[105] Paddy Daly made a similar argument, claiming that, with no recourse to 'technical or scientific laboratories', Volunteers were perforce restricted to arson attacks on farms and hotels. A critic might dismiss such operations as 'pin pricks', he conceded, yet, equipped as it was, the IRA 'could not have done more'.[106] John Pinkman and his fellow Liverpool inmates at Dartmoor numbered among the critics. From their prison cells, they condemned attacks on telegraph infrastructure as 'reckless and futile' and held O/C Hugh Early responsible. Their animus for Early was motivated by their having been captured during an arson operation which he had planned incompetently. They did, however, approve of farm fires and attacks on the homes of Irish policemen.[107]

However, the relative ease of the task and the high likelihood of the perpetrators escaping detection were not the only reasons why such farm fires were mounted. Overawing the British public seems to have been an important factor too. In February 1921, the Liverpool Volunteers planned to attack farms, thereby enclosing the city in 'a circle of fires'. This would probably have proven as impressive a spectacle as the destruction of the city's docks.[108] Intimidating the populace was also the aim of attacks proposed by the O/C Britain

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[102] BMHWS no. 684, George Fitzgerald, pp 29-30 (NAI); O/C Britain to ?C/S, n.d,. but c. Jan/Feb. 1921, reproduced in *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxviii, cols 632-3 (21 Feb. 1921)

[103] Campbell, *Land and revolution*, pp 246-55, 262, 264-8; David Fitzpatrick, 'The geography of Irish nationalism 1910–1921' in *Past & Present*, no. 78 (1978), pp 113-44, at p. 119; Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 62, 130-32, 146-7, 153-4, 193, 220; Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, p. 50

[104] RROUK, no. 94, 24 Feb. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/120)

[105] O/C Britain to ?C/S, n.d. but c. Jan./Feb. 1921, reproduced in *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxviii, cols 632-3 (21 Feb. 1921); Charles Townshend, 'The Irish Republican Army and the development of guerrilla warfare, 1916–1921' in *English Historical Review*, cxiv, no. 321 (1979), pp 318-45, at pp 330-31

[106] Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)

[107] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 55, 66; see pp 143-6 above

[108] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 48

himself. If 'one train were wrecked it would have the effect of causing considerable alarm to the travelling public ...', O'Connor wrote in early 1921. Also, by plunging towns into darkness through attacks on the gas supply, the IRA might generate conditions conducive to the mounting of 'direct action' by communists, the unemployed, and the 'mob'. Attacks such as these would cripple 'the daily life of enemy people'. O'Connor also hoped that such attacks would have an economic effect. The targeting of trains might cause 'extra expense to the railway companies either in patrolling the railway lines or in employing pilot engines ...'.[109]

A similar motive seems to have been the aim of a number of operations proposed by Liverpool's Paddy Daly. In March 1921, he suggested that the Volunteers blow-up the five oil tanks which fuelled the liner ships. He imagined the destruction: 'The oil, being in a very thick state, would float on the surface of the water and on being ignited would burn the gates of many of the docks and would also damage many of the ships.'[110] A few weeks later, he advocated a bomb attack on the city. So as to maximise the damage inflicted, it was proposed to disrupt the water supply in order to prevent the fire brigade from tackling the resulting incendiary fires. If this was achieved, 'whole streets would probably be demolished' in the attack, Daly enthused.[111]

In the Tyneside area, local politics sometimes informed the choosing of targets for attack. In March 1921, miners' protests against bad working conditions at the Rising Sun colliery motivated the IRA, many of whom were miners themselves, to attack a farm owned by the company. Class conflict may have played a role in the selection of other targets for attack by the Tyneside IRA.[112]

During the truce, the IRA planned for the resumption of attacks in anticipation of the peace talks collapsing. Plans were submitted by units in six areas: Birmingham, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Sheffield. 'B[lack] & T[an] houses' were the most popular targets, along with communications, road, rail, canal and lighting infrastructure, power stations, unnamed 'Individuals' and such manufacturing capacity as rope works and oil works. Miscellaneous targets included the residence of Lord FitzAlan, the viceroy of Ireland, a brewery and some joiners' shops in Newcastle, along with the Maypole dairy factory and a bus garage in London, and RIC men in Liverpool. The Sheffield IRA,

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[109] O/C Britain to ?C/S, n.d. but c. Jan./Feb. 1921, reproduced in *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxviii, cols 632-3 (21 Feb. 1921)
[110] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 4 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[111] Ibid., 24 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)
[112] Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 10 n 15

whose relatively recent foundation seems to have precluded their mounting attacks during the war of independence, planned to derail troop trains and flood the lower part of the city by bursting a dam. The London Volunteers also asked for permission to raid banks and post offices and to hold up pay clerks. By mid-October 1921, plans for ninety per cent of such operations had already been completed.[113] Indeed, Tyneside's Gilbert Barrington states that 'The personnel to undertake these operations had already been provisionally selected and were only awaiting instructions to act'.[114]

Very little information exists as to the targets chosen for attack in the IRA's planned terrorist campaign in Britain during the civil war. The O/C Britain, Patrick Murray, states that C/S Liam Lynch wanted 'bridges etc blown up'.[115] Given that the truce period saw the IRA making plans for the destruction of bridges, among other targets, in the event of the peace talks collapsing, anti-treaty republicans in Britain may simply have adopted those plans. In 1922, a pro-treaty member of the Tyneside IRA told police that his anti-treaty comrades were about to begin reconnaissance work on prominent buildings and bridges, along with manufacturing and railway infrastructure. A campaign of terrorism was to be launched in the event of the British army re-occupying southern Ireland. In comparison to the situation during the war of independence, IRA men involved in this mooted terrorist campaign were authorised to kill when necessary.[116] In a search of the lodgings of one Herbert Wrigley in the aftermath of Sir Henry Wilson's assassination, the police found notes on a petrol station, a gas factory, and underground power stations in the London area. As documents mentioning the IRA were also uncovered, such notes may have been part of the reconnaissance for choosing targets for a terrorist campaign.[117] When Eamon de Valera, head of the anti-treaty republican government, approved Liam Lynch's recommendation that attacks be mounted in Britain, he urged that 'The first blow should be concerted BIG, followed quickly by a number in succession of other blows'.[118] Lacking any further details, we can only speculate that targets were chosen for attack with the intention of impressing the British public. As we have seen, O/C Britain Patrick Murray thought that many of these plans were unrealisable given the limited resources at the disposal of the IRA in Britain.[119]

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[113] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[114] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 13 (NAI)
[115] Patrick Murray interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/88)
[116] Colonel Carter to Scott, 1 May 1923, enclosing 'Instructions regarding I.R.A. movements in Tyneside Area', n.d. (TNA, HO 144/3748)
[117] *The Times*, 27 July 1922
[118] Eamon de Valera to C/S, 2 Feb. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749); original emphasis
[119] See pp 157-8 above

In February and July 1922 and again in June the following year, before, during and after the civil war, robberies were mounted on post offices in Brentford and Liverpool, and on a bank in Prestwich. In the Liverpool episode, in June 1923, a post office clerk named Thomas Lovelady was shot dead. The involvement of the IRA in these robberies in Britain is difficult to state definitively. That of June 1923 seems to have been motivated by the desire of Jim Phelan and Sean McAteer, two peripatetic IRA men, to acquire money for the dependents of their imprisoned anti-treaty comrades in Ireland. The other robberies may have had a similar motive.[120]

The IRA's choice of targets for attacks against property during the war of independence and civil war, therefore, seems to have been informed by a number of factors, including the capabilities of the organisation, a desire to terrorise the British public, the hope of damaging the British economy, class conflict, the likelihood of being apprehended by the police, and, perhaps, a desire to acquire funds to provide for comrades' dependents.

In their attacks on warehouses, farms, timber yards, factories and communications and railway infrastructure, the IRA mainly chose arson as the best means of destruction. Why so? After all, a precedent existed for the use of bombs in Britain as part of a campaign to rid Ireland of British rule. In the period 1881–87, and again in 1890, Irish-Americans Fenians had conducted a bombing campaign in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow. Targets included such public buildings as the House of Commons and the Tower of London, the capital's underground railway system, along with army barracks, gas works, and government and police offices. The campaign did not succeed in its aim of forcing the British government to grant Irish independence. Indeed, the IRB, which had viewed the whole episode with distaste, prevailed upon their American cousins to call off the bombing campaign for fear that its continuation would undermine the efforts of the IPP to secure limited autonomy for Ireland within the British Empire.[121] Still, O'Donovan Rossa, one of the leaders of the bombing campaign, was a revered figure amongst Irish nationalists. Why, then, was his example not emulated? Why was arson preferred to the bomb as the means of carrying out terrorism in Britain?

In fact, during the truce, the IRA did make plans to use bombs in terrorist attacks in the event of war being resumed. Sometime in the spring or summer of 1921, a bomb-making

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[120] *The Times*, 21 Apr. 1922; *Manchester Guardian*, 29 May, 16, 19, 23 June, 3, 4, 11, 28 July, 11 Aug. 1923; Jim Phelan, *The name's Phelan: the first part of the autobiography of Jim Phelan* (Belfast, 1993 [1948]), pp 280-82; Barry McLoughlin, *Left to the wolves: Irish victims of Stalinist terror* (Dublin, 2007), pp 239-52

[121] Short, *The dynamite war*, pp 50-51, 200-01, 225-8, 259-60

factory was established in a garage in Greenwich, London.[122] On 28 July, three explosions and a large fire engulfed the premises. A Volunteer named Michael McInerney later died of his injuries in hospital.[123] The police were convinced that the garage was being used 'by persons of Sinn Fein sympathies for the manufacture of incendiary bombs for the purpose of fire raising in and around London'.[124] They asked an expert from Woolwich Arsenal to examine the evidence. He described an incendiary bomb found on the premises. It consisted of

> a cardboard cylinder, about 5″ long and 2½″ diameter, closed at each end with a perforated tin cap, and with a tin tube passing longitudinally through the centre. The tube passes through the outside of the caps, and is fixed by splitting and turning over the ends, leaving a clear hole through the full length of the cylinder. The interior of the cylinder is filled with a mixture resembling Aluminium Incendiary Composition.[125]

These bombs may have been the same as those recommended to Richard Mulcahy by Rory O'Connor three months later. One of the London IRA officers had perfected the design of an incendiary device, the manufacture of which did not require the employment of machinery. O'Connor had witnessed the testing of one such bomb and found it 'satisfactory'. He then made arrangements for three men to be assigned full-time to their manufacture. Contending that four hundred such bombs could be produced per week, O'Connor noted that quantities could be supplied to IRA units elsewhere in Britain, the cost of materials and labour being charged of course. Alternatively, London could send the explosives formula to those IRA units equipped with a chemist, thus enabling them to begin manufacturing the bombs themselves.[126] Presumably, these bombs were intended for use in Britain in the event of the truce collapsing. In January 1923, Liam Lynch raised the issue of bombs, advocating the establishment of a munitions factory in Britain to manufacture incendiary grenades. He also contended that mines manufactured from petrol tins, which had been used effectively in Dublin, could be used in Britain too. The skill to make them was not lacking, for he contended that the O/C Britain Patrick Murray's adjutant was as good an engineer as any in the IRA in Ireland.[127] However, in the end neither bombs nor mines were used, for the mass arrest of republicans in March 1923 prevented the launching of their terrorist campaign.

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[122] O/C Britain to C/S, n.d., but noted 28 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[91])
[123] *Manchester Guardian*, 30 July, 2 Aug.; *Kentish Mercury*, 5 Aug. 1921 (TNA, Metropolitan Police Office [MEPO], file 3/489)
[124] Detective Inspector Ebsury to D. D. Inspector, 29 July 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/489)
[125] D. D. Inspector to Superintendent Metropolitan Police, 8 Aug. 1921, enclosing J. Bogg to Controller, 3 Aug. 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/489)
[126] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[127] C/S to President de Valera and Ministers, 30 Jan. 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1749)

In the attacks that did take place, namely those which occurred during the war of independence, arson was the predominant means of attack. As Volunteers themselves have offered no explanations, we can only speculate as to why this was so. One factor may have been the lack of bomb-making expertise. Although their involvement in smuggling munitions to Ireland gave the IRA in Britain access to explosive material, they might have lacked the expertise necessary to construct bombs from it. This was certainly so in Liverpool.[128] Meanwhile, GHQ might have taken the view that such expertise was more valuable to the organisation in Ireland than it would be in Britain. Arson, in contrast, required little expertise. Another issue arguing against the use of incendiary devices may have been the desire to avoid inflicting casualties on innocent civilians. Rory O'Connor had been ordered to ensure that in mounting attacks every effort be made to avoid civilian casualties and that unemployment amongst the Irish be kept to a minimum. In February 1921, he requested, apparently unsuccessfully, that such conditions be revoked in the name of military effectiveness.[129] Although fire could prove fatal, it was not as insidious a killer as an exploding bomb. A second factor may have been the relatively inexpensive nature of the materials required to mount arson attacks. Fuels such as paraffin oil and petrol were easy to acquire, as were the rags and paper which were soaked in the fuel, set alight with matches, and then thrown on the hay stack or amongst the raw cotton in the warehouse.

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As we saw earlier, O/C Britain Rory O'Connor believed that the IRA lacked the training necessary to launch major attacks in Britain. Yet, even with relation to the minor operations which the Volunteers did mount, no information exists regarding the training which the Volunteers underwent in order to carry them out. However, given that the Volunteers carried weapons with them on such operations, the shooting practice they performed as part of their general training would have been of some benefit. In relation to the mounting of arson attacks, advice, if not training, was provided by an *An t-Óglác* article of July 1920 on the best means of ensuring the effective 'demolition of enemy works' by fire. With relation to the fuel employed, turpentine was recommended over petrol, but paraffin oil was the best of all. Petrol was difficult to control due to its fluidity. Also, due to its propensity to evaporate

[128] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 4 Mar. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[129] O/C Britain to ?C/S, n.d., but c. Jan./Feb. 1921, reproduced in *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxviii, cols 632-3 (21 Feb. 1921)

quickly, setting fire to petrol often involved igniting petrol vapour in the air, potentially causing a dangerous back draft. Finally, petrol tended to burn itself out very rapidly, leading to a situation where the object it coated might sustain only superficial damage. Paraffin, on the other hand, suffered none of these disadvantages. Though it was more difficult to ignite than petrol, paraffin burned for longer, hence increasing the chances of destroying the target. 'I[t] should be used with some solid substance,' the author advised,

> such as wood shavings, straw or cotton waste which might be helped with small sticks, broken up furniture and the like, the whole being placed where it will get a good hold. In the case of a building the fire should be started at a staircase, or wooden partition or even a few planks placed near the rafters of the roof.
>
> The windows of the building should be opened to ensure a good stream of air and also to allow the heavy smoke of the burning oil to escape. This is most necessary for good results as the smoke, having no means of escape, may smother the flames and extinguish the fire.[130]

Assembling on the night chosen for the mounting of attacks, paraffin oil in bottles was one of the tools which were dispensed to the Volunteers. Along with other arson paraphernalia, such as matches and cotton-waste, they also received bolt-cutters for use in gaining access to warehouses and factories, along with saws, pliers and wire-cutters to cut telegraph poles and wires. They were also given weapons. In addition to such tools, Volunteers were assigned their specific tasks for that night's operations.[131]

Edward Brady, chosen to participate in the attacks on Liverpool warehouses in November 1920, remembers taking precautions beforehand to divest himself of any incriminating documentation: '... I made a careful examination of all papers, letters, etc., in my possession, and destroyed anything I thought might be used in evidence against me in the event of arrest while carrying out the work allotted to me'.[132] 'Orders were to clear your house of all stuff and songs [i.e. munitions] etc. when going out,' London Volunteer William Robinson noted, indicating that such precautions were urged on all units participating in terrorist operations.[133] Despite this, however, a significant number of Volunteers were arrested when the police, responding to attacks, found compromising evidence either on their persons or at their lodgings. Suspected of attempting to set fire to a timber warehouse in Finsbury, London, in November 1920, ISDL pamphlets and a membership form were found

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[130] *An t-Óglác*, 1 July 1920

[131] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 38, 83; Barrington, *The Irish independence movement on Tyneside*, p. 14

[132] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 29

[133] William Robinson to ?, n.d., but c. mid-1921, reproduced in appendix i of cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255)

at Robinson's lodgings. Two months later, police found bolt-cutters, used to break gate locks, at the residence of Denis Tangley, one of Robinson's accomplices in an attempted attack on an oil works.[134] Incriminating documentation, including a Sinn Féin membership card and a letter advocating the assassination of the British prime minister, was found in the lodgings of Patrick Flynn, one of four men arrested on a charge of shooting at a policeman in Salford, Manchester, on 2 January 1921.[135] Later that month, when Wilfred Kenny was apprehended by police for drilling holes in barrels of oil in Wandsworth, London, incriminating documents were found on his person.[136] Some Volunteers, therefore, proved careless in making preparations for involvement in terrorist attacks.

Very little information is available regarding the Volunteers wearing special disguises while participating in terrorist operations. For the warehouse fires, Brady wore 'a smart lounge suit and soft hat', an inconspicuous outfit. Three months later, in order to gain admittance to the lodging houses accommodating emigrants from Ireland, Brady and his party of fifteen Volunteers audaciously posed as detectives seeking to interview guests suspected of having links with the IRA. In an attack on a farmer in May 1921, members of the Liverpool IRA wore masks. The following month, while engaged in a wire-cutting operation, they wore overalls and caps 'which gave to anyone who noticed them the impression they were workmen returning from their work with their tools'.[137] Members of the Tyneside IRA were masked when they set fire to an aerodrome on Newcastle town moor in April 1921.[138] Gilbert Barrington remembered that they employed what could be construed as another form of disguise while they were on wire-cutting operations. Cumann na mBan members 'accompanied the men detailed to carry out the operation. Had the men gone alone they would have attracted attention, but with their escorts it appeared to all and sundry that they were courting couples'. A similar ruse was employed by the London Volunteers.[139]

The mode of travel by which the Volunteers reached their targets obviously depended on the targets themselves. Targets located in urban areas, such as warehouses and factories, could be reached on foot, by tram or by bus. Farms, however, were located some distance outside the cities and travel often necessitated the use of trains, taxis or private motor cars

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[134] Superintendent 'G' Division, London Metropolitan Police, to ?Commissioner of London Metropolitan Police, 29 Nov. 1920 (TNA, MEPO 3/466); William Robinson to ?, n.d., but c. mid-1921, reproduced in appendix i of cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255)
[135] *The Times*, 2 Feb. 1921; see p. 228 below
[136] *The Times*, 17 Jan. 1921; see p. 237 below
[137] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 30, 47, 78, 83-4
[138] *The Times*, 11 Apr. 1921
[139] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Barrington, pp 7-8 (NAI); Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)

and, in the case of Merseyside, ferries.[140] On 17 June 1921, a taxi-driver was bound and gagged at gun-point by four men whom he had driven to the Burnt Ash Hill area of London's Grove Park. 'Hands up [,] we are members of the Irish Republican Army,' they told him, 'don't say a word'. Depositing the driver in a field, the four then drove the taxi a short distance. Two of the taxi's lamps were found in a nearby field. No damage was found on property in the area, perhaps indicating that the men's operation had miscarried.[141] As we saw earlier, on 9 March Edward Brady's group of IRA men took a circuitous route to the farms which they had been allocated to burn. They did this so as to avoid arousing suspicion as to their movements. John Pinkman's group, on the other hand, failed to take such precautions, and Brady judged this a tragic mistake.[142]

Most Volunteers seem to have been armed while participating in these operations. Such weapons were acquired by the IRA as part of their gunrunning activities. In Liverpool and London at least, the weapons were distributed among the Volunteers before the mounting of operations and then collected afterwards. For the warehouse fires in November 1920, for example, Edward Brady was supplied with a .45 Colt revolver and twenty rounds of ammunition. 'I was armed and so were practically all the men except those who had to climb poles & carry saws etc.,' London's Edward Roche remembered, concerning attacks on communications infrastructure. The 'safe return & custody of guns' was one of his responsibilities. In May 1921, Paddy Daly, the chief Liverpool gunrunner, proposed that the munitions be sold to the Volunteers, either on an individual basis or collectively to their company.[143]

Given that GHQ instructed the IRA to avoid fatalities in these operations, the main purpose of the weapons seems to have been to intimidate anyone who attempted to frustrate the setting of fires or the cutting of telegraph and telephone lines. Night watchmen, railway signalmen, charwomen and civilians found themselves threatened with such weapons. At about 7.50 p.m. on 12 February 1921, as John Duffy, the night watchman at the Premier Rubber Works on Manchester's Bromley Street, entered his workplace, he exchanged pleasantries with two men. They pushed past him as he unlocked the door. 'What's the

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[140] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 39

[141] Superintendent 'R' Division, London Metropolitan Police to ?Commissioner, London Metropolitan Police, 17 June 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/466)

[142] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 39; see pp 143-6 above

[143] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18 May; Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 26 May 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5); Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 30; Edward L. Roche to ?Military Pensions Board, 4 Aug. 1937 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/154)

game?' Duffy asked. 'Come on and we'll let you see,' said one of the men, producing a revolver and grabbing the night watchman by the collar. Pushed face-first up against a wall with the revolver at his neck, Duffy was warned that he would be shot if he turned around. 'I could hear the other man making a noise, and I knew that he was trying to set fire to the building,' Duffy remembered. 'There was a sudden glare, and I knew that he had succeeded in firing a lot of returned bags which were used to send out rubber heels.' The arsonists fled and, as soon as Duffy thought it was safe, he began tackling the fire. Suffering from nervousness due to the incident, the night watchman committed suicide a few months later.[144] Also in February 1921, Irish emigrants in Liverpool lodging houses were held at gunpoint while Volunteers divested them of their passports and travel tickets.[145] In April 1921, charwomen in two Manchester warehouses found themselves looking down the barrel of a gun while IRA men sprinkled paraffin oil on the cotton goods and set it alight. Meanwhile, a Volunteer fired shots over the heads of staff members in Lyons' Popular State café as his accomplice sprayed the premises with paraffin.[146] In May 1921, when the IRA launched a campaign against the property of RIC men's relatives in London and Liverpool, the occupants were sometimes held at gunpoint while Volunteers went about setting fire to the contents of their houses.[147] Maud Downer described a raid on her parents' boarding house in Tooting, London, on 14 May 1921. One of the tenants, Mr Pratt, had a son in the Irish police force. Around 10 p.m., while playing cards with her parents, sisters and a friend of the family, she heard a knock on the door:

> I went downstairs and opened the street door and saw 4 men standing against the door. The tallest of the men who stood on my right side said "Is Mr Pratt in?"[.] I said "I do not know but I will see"[.] I then went down the passage to Mr Pratt's kitchen which is on the ground floor at the rear, opened the door and saw that the room was in darkness. I then returned to the street door and said to the men who were standing on the door step "I'm sorry, he's not in"[.] The tall man said "Can we wait[?]" I then called out "Dad" in order that father could come down and see the men. I then went upstairs and passed Father who was coming down, on the stairs. I heard as soon as I got into the kitchen, a man's voice which I recognised as that of the tallest man who had spoken to me, say "Put your hands up. It is all right. Go upstairs." Dad then came into the kitchen followed by 2 men who were then wearing handkerchiefs which covered their faces, but I could see their eyes. The tallest man whose voice I again recognised then said "All put your hands up. We'll only keep you 5 minutes. It's quite all right." Both men pointed big black shiny revolvers at us. I then heard the noise of breaking glass and furniture being moved about in the front room. After about 3 minutes I heard someone go downstairs to the front door and then a man's voice said "It's all clear". The two men who

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[144] *The Times*, 14 Feb.; *Manchester Guardian*, 28 June 1921
[145] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 48, 51
[146] *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Apr., 11 July 1921
[147] The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 18 Nov. 1922 (TNA, MEPO 3/462)

were covering us with revolvers then backed out of the kitchen, closed the kitchen door, and left the house. I then rushed to the front room and saw that there was a huge flare in the middle of the room and I could smell spirits burning. Dad and [family friend] Mr Jermain then rushed in and tried to put out the flames. I then saw that there was a fire in the top back bedroom and shouted for help. A number of neighbours then arrived and helped to put out the flames. I also saw that the bedclothes in the back bedroom, which adjoins the kitchen, had been thrown back over the end of the bedstead and were soaked with spirits but had not been lighted.[148]

On a few occasions, as well as being held at gunpoint, night watchmen and signalmen were bound and gagged.[149]

Sometimes, however, arsonists wielded their arms for more than the purpose of warding off those likely to attempt to prevent the setting of fires. In a number of cases, Volunteers discharged their weapons at policemen and civilians in order to escape from the scene of the crime or prevent the raising of the alarm. On 27 November 1920, a group of IRA men fleeing the scene of a warehouse fire on Liverpool's Jordan St. fired shots at a pursuing policeman. The bullets missed the constable but struck and immediately killed a civilian, William Ward, who was trying to help in the capture of the arsonists.[150] On 2 January 1921, in Salford, Manchester, a policeman was shot through the wrist and in the chest when he attempted to bring two suspicious men to the police station for questioning.[151] Two weeks later, in London's Wandsworth district, three policemen came under fire when they attempted to arrest a group of men acting suspiciously in the vicinity of an oil works.[152] The same night that John Duffy was held at gunpoint, a second night watchman, at a tar and resin works in Holt town, was fired at as he attempted to escape from his captors.[153] The following week, a farmer on the Cheshire/Lancashire border was shot at when he interrupted an attempt to set fire to his barn.[154] On 18 March, four men were observed burning straw ricks in a field adjoining Morden Road, near Mitcham, London. Giving chase, two civilians came under gunfire. The police joined the pursuit and eventually one of the arsonists was apprehended.[155] In May 1921, having failed to set fire to the house of an RIC man and being chased down the

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[148] Statement of Maud Ethel Downer, 15 May 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/489)
[149] *The Times*, 11 Apr., 18 June 1921
[150] Ibid., 29 Nov; *Irish Times*, 1 Dec. 1920
[151] Chief Constable of Salford to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 18 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); *The Times*, 3, 4 Jan., 1 Feb. 1921
[152] Superintendent of Wandsworth Division, London Metropolitan Police, to Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922 (TNA, MEPO 3/462)
[153] *The Times*, 14 Feb. 1921
[154] Ibid., 21 Feb. 1921
[155] Ibid., 19, 22 Mar. 1921; Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 18 Nov. 1922 (TNA, MEPO 3/462)

road by the householder's Airedale terrier, the raiders responded by shooting the dog.[156] Martin Geraghty remembered himself and his accomplice using their guns to escape from police during a wire-cutting operation in London.[157]

In a few other incidents, Volunteers fired shots seemingly with the deliberate intent of wounding, if not killing, people. As two Volunteers ran past a policeman, PC Boucher, in the corridor of an office complex in Manchester on 2 April, one turned and fired his revolver, hitting Boucher in the chest. Reeling somewhat, Boucher gave chase and was shot a second time. He continued chasing the men out of the building, where he blew his whistle and collapsed on the street.[158] Such incidents were repeated the following month as part of the IRA's campaign of intimidation against RIC men and their relatives. Four men called at 42 Bloenfontein Road, Shepherds Bush, and asked to see William Corns, formerly of the RIC transport division. Horace MacNeill, the householder, responded that his nephew did not reside with him. 'There was pushing and shoving at the door', remembered Denis Brennan, 'and some one [sic] was a bit trigger happy and he [i.e. MacNeill] got shot.' He died in hospital the following week.[159] During a raid on a house in Catford, shots were fired, injuring an elderly couple.[160] In St. Albans, a gang of four armed men raided the house of Lanclet Ashby, a RIC Auxiliary. Ashby and his wife were shot in the head and beaten with revolver butts, while their landlady was bound and gagged. Amazingly, the Ashby's survived the attack as the bullets failed to penetrate their skulls.[161] That same month, the Liverpool IRA launched a revenge attack against a farmer. In March, the land-owner had shot a Volunteer attempting to set a fire on his farm. The farmer then boasted about his achievement in the local press. The IRA was unimpressed: '... we were not in the temper to take this kind of boasting lying down,' Edward Brady remembered.

> To have ignored it would have been to admit fear, and the moral effect of such on other citizens in encouraging them to emulate this boasting fellow, might have had disastrous results – for us.

Thus, on 23 May, fourteen armed and masked men descend on the farm with the intention of 'roughing up' the braggart. However, failing to gain admittance to the house, the party split up in pursuance of a hastily altered plan of attack. Five men set fire to the outhouses and

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[156] *The Times*, 16 May 1921; Hugh Early interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/110)
[157] Martin Geraghty to ?Military Pensions Board, 20 May 1937 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/154)
[158] *Manchester Guardian*, 19 May 1921
[159] *The Times*, 23 May 1921; Denis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[160] *The Times*, 16 May 1921
[161] Ibid.

sheds, while the remaining nine proceeded to fire shots through the windows of the dwelling house. Brady sympathised with the plight of the occupants, trapped in a house under siege from the night outside, bullets smashing windows, flames from the burning out-houses spreading to the dwelling house itself. 'Yes! it was terrible,' he conceded, 'but it was all part of the war in the struggle of a nation to free itself.'[162]

The final such incident occurred on 18 June, when a railway signal man, Edward Axon, was shot through the window of his signal box near Marple station, Manchester. Axon was injured in the groin. Hearing a party of men approaching, he then threw a poker out the window and switched off the lights. The raiders entered the box and fired more shots, injuring Axon in the shoulder.[163]

As we have seen, Sir Henry Wilson was shot dead by two members of the London IRA. Born to Anglo-Irish stock in county Longford in 1864, Wilson had recently retired as chief of the imperial general staff, the highest military office in the British Empire. An ardent Unionist, during the war of independence he had continually pressed the British government to deploy greater military resources to Ireland so as to defeat the IRA. He condemned the truce of July 1921 as 'rank, filthy cowardice'. As a Conservative MP for North Down from February 1922, Wilson associated himself with the 'die-hards', a backbench faction which, amongst other policies, opposed the treaty. It was his services to the nascent Northern Ireland government as advisor on security matters that led to his death, as his IRA assassins, and Irish nationalists in general, held him responsible for the bloodshed that Ulster Catholics suffered in the communal violence of 1920–22.[164]

Due to the nature of the sources at our disposal, it is difficult to state with complete precision the number of terrorist incidents mounted by the IRA in the period November 1920 – July 1921. The sources can be divided into three categories: police records, IRA correspondence and memoirs, and press reports. Due to the partialities of the latter two, I have decided to rely mainly on the police records. The following graphs, therefore, are based on returns supplied to the Home Office by twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office in late 1922, as well as newspapers from the period.[165]

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[162] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 77-80; *The Times*, 11 Mar., 25 May 1921

[163] *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, 20 June 1921; Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922; Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[164] Jeffrey, *Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson*, pp 256-80; quote p. 273

[165] Returns to Home Office from twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, Dept. of Finance [FIN], file 1/1589); *Irish Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Times*, Nov. 1920–July 1921; due to the difficulties in dealing with the window-scratching phenomenon

In the period 27 November 1920–11 July 1921, the police suspected or attributed Irish political motives to 235 incidents, or attempted incidents, of terrorism in Britain. Of these, Lancashire saw ninety-seven incidents, the London Metropolitan area forty-six, Durham thirty, Northumberland nineteen, Cheshire fifteen, Kent nine, Yorkshire North Riding six, Warwickshire, namely Birmingham, two, and Essex one. Scotland, meanwhile, witnessed ten incidents.[166] Hence, parts of Britain saw more IRA terrorist operations than some areas of Ireland.[167] Outside of this time period, the police also suspected Irish political motives in relation to a small number of incidents. The destruction by fire of the Manchester city football grounds in early November 1920 was the most spectacular of such attributions. The others consisted of four farm fires in the Birmingham area in September and December 1921.[168] While the police may have been correct in suspecting IRA involvement in the latter incidents, it is unlikely that the Volunteers mounted the former. In 1925, faced with paying compensation for the attacks, the Free State government denied that the IRA was involved in any terrorist incidents which occurred outside seven-and-a-half month period, 27 November 1920–11 July 1921.[169]

From chart 6 (p. 179) we can see that Lancashire accounted for 41.3 per cent of all Irish terrorist incidents in Britain, the London Metropolitan area 19.6 per cent, Durham 12.8 per cent, Northumberland 8.1 per cent, Cheshire 6.4 per cent, Kent 3.8 per cent, Yorkshire North Riding 2.6 per cent, Warwickshire 0.9 per cent, Essex 0.4 per cent, and Scotland 4.3 per cent.[170] Also, chart 11 (p. 185) shows that, with the exception of two months, Lancashire was the most active region throughout the campaign.

(see note 98, p. 164 above), namely the problems of attribution and quantification, I have excluded that whole episode from the following statistics.

[166] Figures compiled from returns to Home Office from twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); I have grouped the returns into their constabulary areas as set out in *Reports of His Majesty's inspectors of constabulary for the year ended the 29th September 1921* H.C. 1922 (5), 18-27. Hence, Lancashire incorporates constabulary returns from Bootle, Lancashire County, Lancaster County, Liverpool city, Manchester city, Rochdale and Salford; Durham incorporates Durham and South Shields returns; Northumberland returns from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Northumberland and Tynemouth; Cheshire returns from Cheshire and Stockport; Warwickshire consists of Birmingham; an 'incident' of terrorism is counted as such according to the property or person targeted. Hence, one fire on a farm is counted as one incident of terrorism, as are two fires on the same farm on the same night etc.

[167] For the level of violence in Irish counties at roughly the same period, see Hart, *The I.R.A. at war*, p. 39

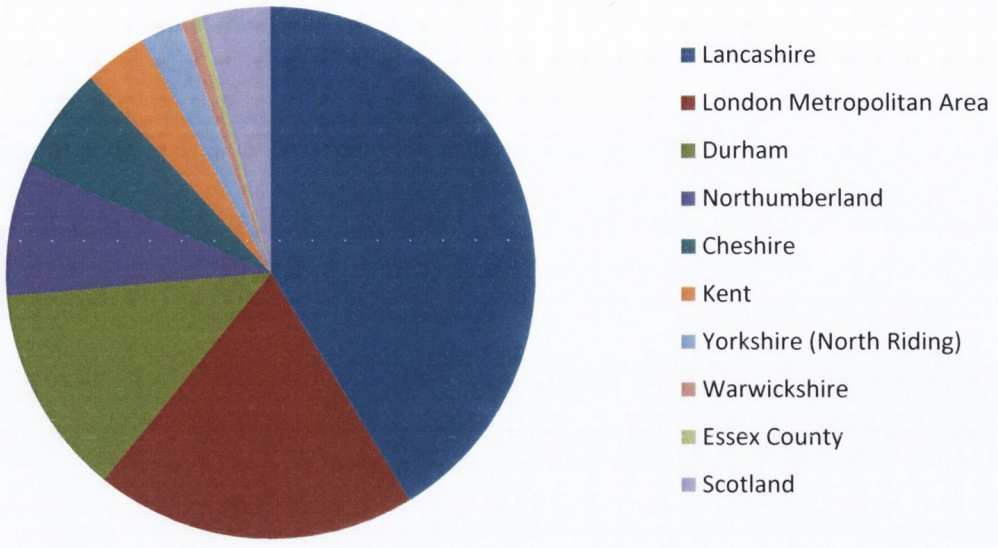
[168] Returns to Home Office from Birmingham and Manchester police, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

[169] Secretary, Dept. of Defence to Secretary, Dept. of Finance, 28 Jan. 1925 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

[170] Figures compiled from returns to Home Office from twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

Chart 6

235 incidents of terrorism ascribed Irish political motives by the police and the press, Nov.1920 - July 1921 (according to constabulary areas)[171]



What explains the regional variation in the number of attacks? The size of the Irish population may provide some explanation. According to the 1911 Census, of the administrative units in England and Wales, Lancashire had the third highest Irish population as a proportion of its overall population. Cheshire was fourth highest, Durham fifth, London sixth, Northumberland ninth and Kent tenth. These rankings do not strictly accord with those in chart 6. Also, Cumberland, the area with the second highest proportion, recorded no incidents of Irish terrorism at all. Yet, it would seem to be the case that those areas where the Irish population constituted a significant proportion of its overall population were more likely to experience incidents of Irish terrorism than areas not so endowed.[172]

Another factor which may explain the regional variation in the number of attacks is the differing outlooks of the various IRA units themselves. We already we saw that Michael O'Leary's sidelining of street-fighting in his lectures in favour of political topics led to his ouster as O/C Liverpool city company.[173] The rank and file, therefore, demonstrated a desire for military instruction. Such initiative was also evident in their pressing for the mounting of

[171] For dataset, see appendix 2.

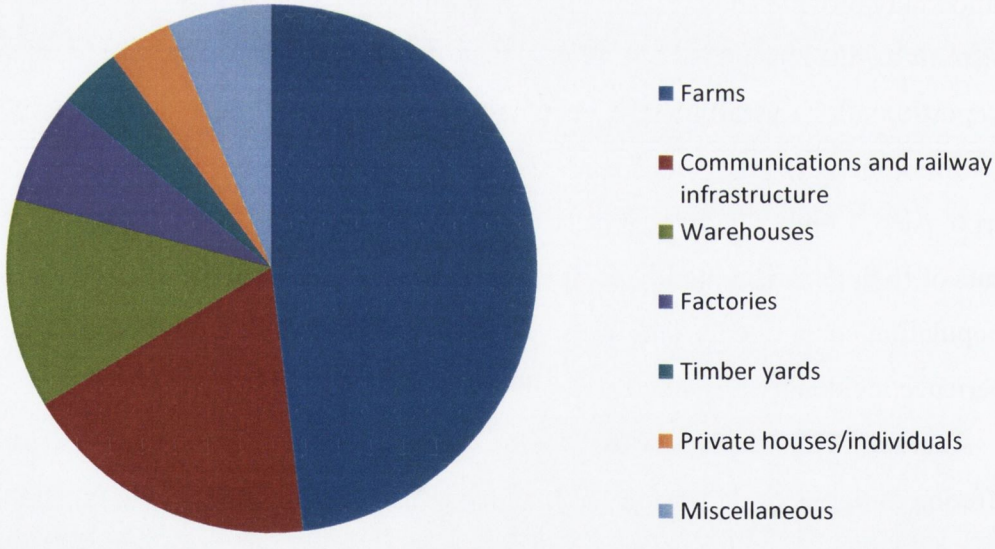
[172] *Census of England and Wales 1911, ix, birthplaces of persons enumerated in administrative counties, county boroughs, etc, and ages and occupations of foreigners* [Cd. 7017] H.C. 1913, table x, p. xiii; the unit with the highest proportion of Irish was Hampshire, a fact which the census report attributed in part to the stationing of naval and military personnel in the area, a significant amount of whom were Irish.

[173] See p. 56 above

operations in February 1921.[174] In his tour of the Volunteer units in the autumn of 1921, Rory O'Connor sought to ascertain the 'military outlook' of the officers in the expectation that terrorist attacks would soon re-commence due to the failure of the peace talks in London. He was particularly unimpressed by the officers in Birmingham. They lacked all initiative. His frustration was compounded by the fact that, being a great manufacturing centre, Birmingham would have been an 'excellent' place for the mounting of operations. Hence, the fact that only two incidents of terrorism occurred in the Birmingham area can be attributed to the cautious attitude of the local IRA leadership.[175] Historians of the IRA in Ireland have emphasised the importance of local leadership in the willingness of Volunteer companies to fight. Leadership was the 'decisive factor' in determining the level of IRA activity in county Limerick, for example. 'The units that did most of the fighting were, quite simply, the units that chose to create the opportunities to fight,' argues O'Callaghan.[176]

Chart 7

Targets of attack in 235 incidents of terrorism ascribed Irish political motives by the police and the press, Nov. 1920 - July 1921[177]



From chart 7 we can see that of the 235 incidents, 48.1 per cent involved attacks on farms, namely the burning of hay stacks, barns, and machinery. Attacks on communications and railway infrastructure, such as telephone and telegraph wires and poles, along with signal

[174] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 28 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)
[175] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])
[176] O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick*, pp 212-13; see also Campbell, *Land and revolution*, pp 269-70, 274
[177] For dataset, see appendix 2.

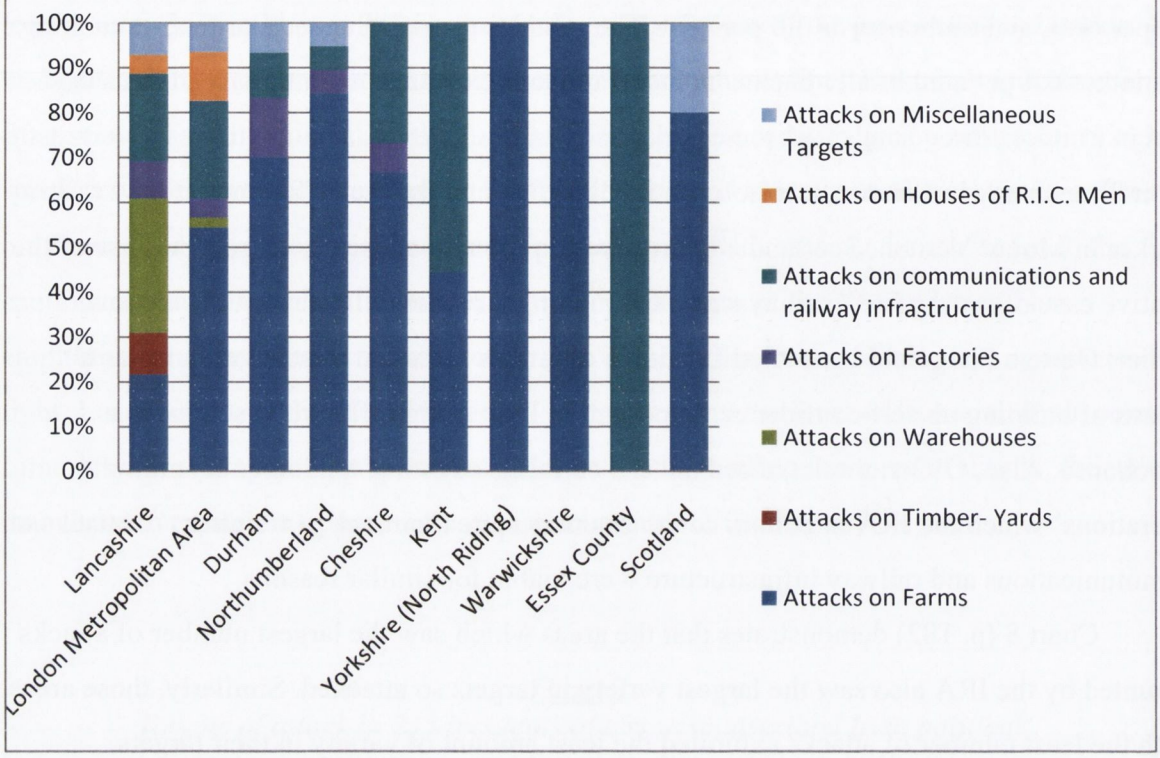
boxes, accounted for 18.3 per cent of incidents. Warehouses constituted another 12.8 per cent of targets attacked, factories 6.8 per cent, the dwelling houses of RIC men and their relatives 3.8 per cent, and timber yards 3.8 per cent. The remaining miscellaneous targets, amounting to another 6.4 per cent of all attacks, included a labour exchange and ministry of pensions' huts in London, three hotels and some park chairs in Manchester, an aerodrome in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a spy in London, a prison van in Glasgow, and the theft of money from a railway worker in Mount Vernon, Scotland.[178] Farms were probably chosen as targets because of the relative ease of setting fire to a hay stack and making a successful getaway. As we saw earlier, George Fitzgerald instructed London Volunteers to mount attacks on farms as a means of building up self-confidence, important in light of their failure to set fire to a warehouse. Also, O'Connor described attacks on farms as one of a number of 'minor operations' which the IRA in Britain could mount despite their lack of training.[179] Attacks on communications and railway infrastructure were viable for similar reasons.

Chart 8 (p. 182) demonstrates that the areas which saw the largest number of attacks mounted by the IRA also saw the largest variety in targets so attacked. Similarly, those areas with the least number of attacks exhibited the least amount of variety in their targets. Lancashire, the area in Britain which boasted the largest number of terrorist incidents, saw attacks on farms, communications and railway infrastructure, warehouses, factories, timber yards, and dwelling houses and their occupants, along with such miscellaneous targets as hotels. Essex, on the other hand, which saw the least number of attacks, witnessed only an attack on communications and railway infrastructure.[180]

[178] Figures compiled from returns to Home Office from twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); figures are rounded to the first decimal place.
[179] See p. 164 above
[180] Returns to Home Office from twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

Chart 8

Analysis of attacks mounted in each constabulary area[181]



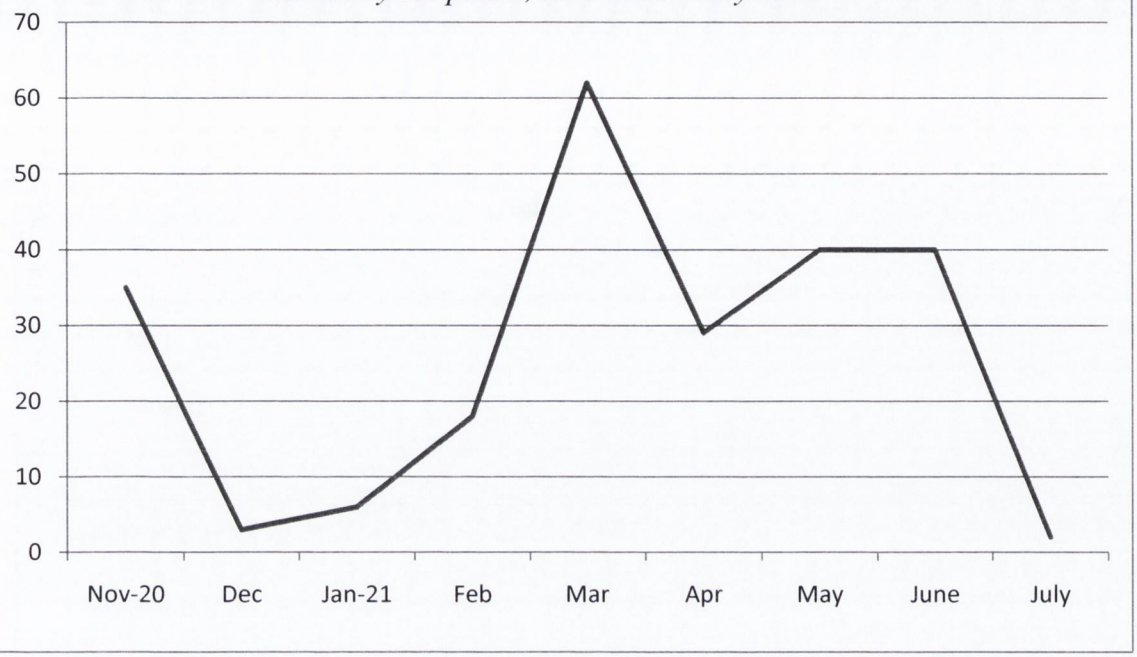
Why such a pattern? The argument that London and Lancashire boasted a variety of targets which the other areas lacked may have some currency with relation to Yorkshire North Riding. This, after all, was a rural area, lacking in the type of warehouses and factories which existed in the cities. Hence the preponderance of farms as targets for incendiarism. However, that explanation does not apply to Durham, Northumberland and Warwickshire. These areas possessed conurbations in which a variety of targets were available. Why, then, were more attacks not mounted? A lack of leadership may be one explanation. As we saw earlier, Rory O'Connor believed that the leadership of the IRA in Birmingham, Warwickshire, lacked 'the slightest military outlook'. The O/C, Patrick O'Neill, refused to countenance any operation 'on even a moderate large scale' lest the Volunteers' English landlords alert the police due to suspicions arising from the absence of their lodgers. Yet, a lack of leadership initiative does not seem to account for the relative lack of variety in the targets attacked by the Tyneside IRA in Durham and Northumberland for O'Connor found the officers there 'intelligent' and 'hard working'.[182]

[181] For dataset, see appendix 2.

[182] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])

Chart 9

Number of incidents of terrorism per month ascribed Irish political motives by the police, Nov. 1920 - July 1921[183]



[183]

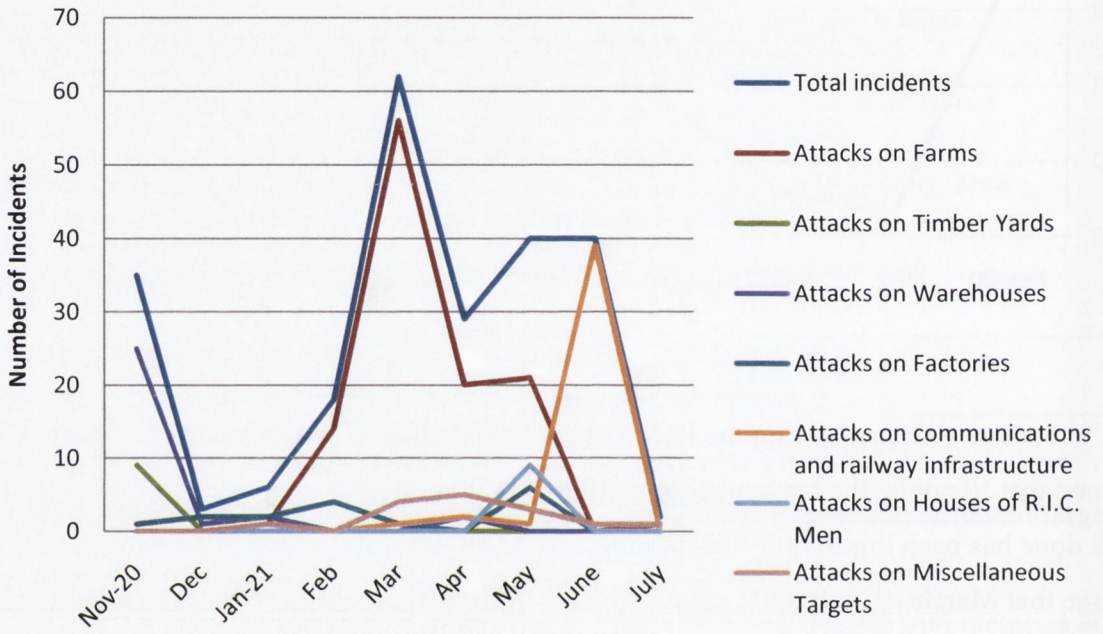
In June 1921, reviewing the IRA's operations to date, O'Connor, the O/C Britain, claimed that '(leaving the November operations in Liverpool out of consideration) ... the work done has been improving each month'.[184] Chart 9 indicates that this was not correct. We can see that March 1921 was the month which saw the largest number of terrorist incidents, sixty-two. May 1921 witnessed forty incidents, as did the following month, while November 1920 saw thirty-five. Contrary to O'Connor's assertion, therefore, there was no chronological month-on-month increase in the number of IRA operations carried out. The variation in the number of attacks mounted per month can be attributed to a number of factors. Foremost amongst them was the reaction of the police. The arson attacks on warehouses in November 1920 precipitated a major response by the Merseyside police as well as by their colleagues in London and Glasgow. A number of Volunteers, including O/C Tom Kerr, were arrested in Liverpool. Decapitated and under close police surveillance, the Liverpool IRA spent the subsequent few months lying 'quiet, very quiet'.[185] The arrest of a significant number of IRA men following arson attacks in the city centre on 2 April 1921 had a similar effect on Volunteer operations in Manchester.[186] Another factor was the type of target chosen for

[183] For dataset, see appendix 2
[184] Ibid., 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])
[185] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 47
[186] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 July 1921

attack. As the IRA's terrorist campaign proceeded, attacks on warehouses and timber yards declined, while those on farms and communications and railway infrastructure increased significantly. These latter targets were easier to attack, requiring less planning and preparation. Success in mounting attacks on such targets seems to have contributed to an increase in such attacks.

Chart 10

Breakdown of Chart 9 according to type of terrorist incident[187]

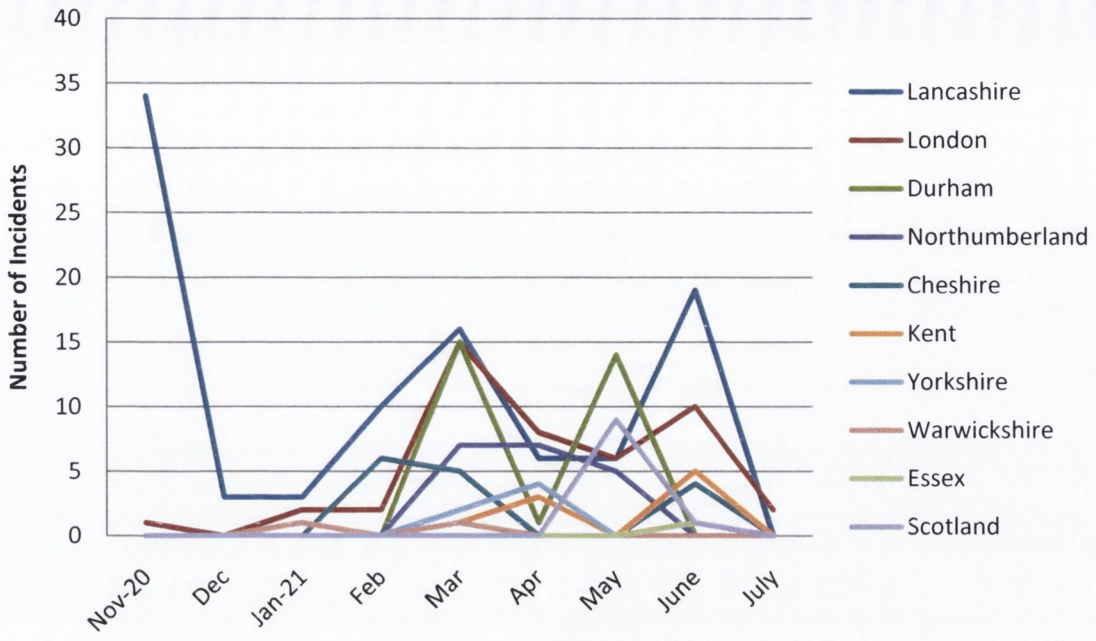


As we can see in chart 10, the number of farm fires increased from one in January 1921 to fourteen in February and fifty-six the following month. Farm fires constituted over ninety per cent of all attacks mounted in the latter month. Similarly, attacks on communications and railway infrastructure increased from one in March 1921 to two the following month, down to one in May and then increased to thirty-nine in June. Such attacks constituted over ninety-seven per cent of all attacks mounted in the latter month. Thus, it would seem that as the targets chosen for attack changed from warehouses to farms and infrastructure, Volunteers became practiced in mounting such operations, which in turn led to an increase in the frequency of attacks.

[187] For dataset, see appendix 2.

Chart 11

Breakdown of Chart 9 according to constabulary area[188]



According to the police, IRA terrorism in the period 27 November 1920–11 July 1921 inflicted damage to the value of £674,002 5*s* 11*d*.[189] As we can see in chart 12 (p. 186), incidents in Lancashire accounted for the overwhelming majority of this amount, 87 per cent in fact. Durham accounted for 6 per cent, Northumberland 2.3 per cent and London 1.85 per cent. The disparity is accounted for by the type of targets attacked in each area. As we saw in chart 8, warehouses constituted a far higher proportion of targets attacked by the IRA in Lancashire than they did targets attacked by Volunteers in other parts of Britain. Twenty-nine of the thirty IRA attacks on warehouses in Britain took place in Lancashire, causing £501,589 7*s* 7*d* worth of damage. All of the nine attacks on timber yards which took place in Britain were mounted in Lancashire, and in total £79,099 10*s* 1*d* worth of damage was caused. Lancashire also accounted for half of the IRA's sixteen attacks on factories in Britain, and its total of £17,492 6*s* 2*d* worth of damage. On the other hand, Lancashire witnessed only twenty-one of the 113 attacks on farms in Britain which, in total, caused £63,581 9*s* 6*d* worth of damage. Attacks on warehouses, therefore, with their valuable contents, caused the

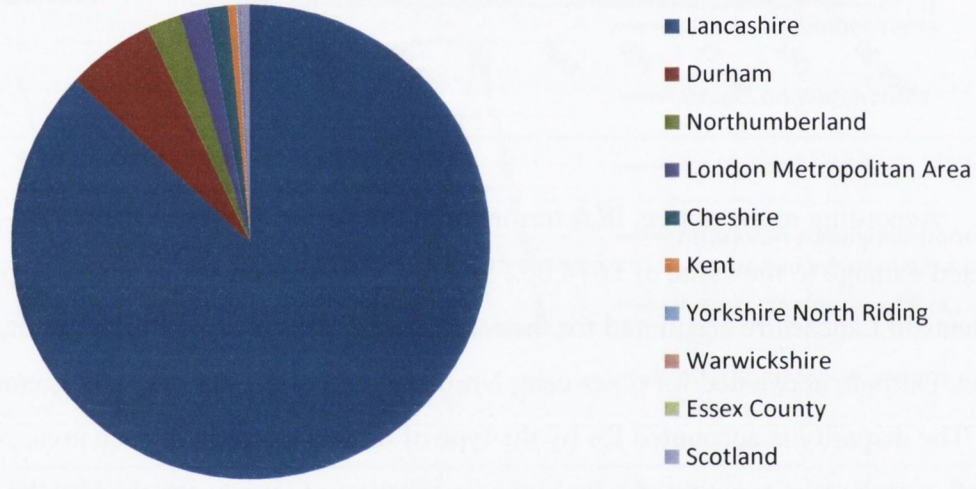
[188] For dataset, see appendix 2.

[189] Figure compiled from returns to Home Office from twenty police units, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); figures are rounded to the first decimal place. The monetary damage was calculated using figures for insurance compensation paid to the victim or, where such compensation was not paid, by using the owners' or police estimates of damage caused. It should be noted that in thirty-three incidents, including attacks on communications and railway infrastructure, the execution of the spy Vincent Fouvargue, and the attack on the Glasgow prison van, no figure was given for the damage inflicted.

greatest damage per attack in monetary terms, followed, in descending order, by attacks on timber yards, factories and farms. The overwhelming majority of attacks on warehouses took place early in the terrorist campaign. Indeed, attacks on twenty-four warehouses in Liverpool city centre and Bootle on 27 November 1920 caused damage to the value of £497,608 17*s* 6*d*. This constituted 73.83 per cent of the total damage caused by the IRA's seven-and-a-half month long campaign.[190] In 1925, the Free State government agreed to pay compensation of £500,000 'on account of damage done by Irish agency in Great Britain' between November 1920 and July 1921.[191]

Chart 12

Monetary damage caused by incidents of terrorism acribed Irish polical motives by the police (according to constabulary areas)[192]



VI

What was the effect of these acts of terrorism? The most immediate effect, of course, was the actual damage inflicted. Five people were directly killed in IRA terrorist attacks – William Ward in November 1920, Vincent Fouvargue in April 1921, Horace MacNeill and policeman Robert Johnston in May 1921, and Sir Henry Wilson in June 1922. If the death of Thomas Lovelady in June 1923 is taken into account, then six people were killed. In addition, a number of others were injured. C. H. Cornes, MacNeill's son-in-law, expressed the trauma of

[190] Ibid; note that in Chart 12, due to the difficulties of dealing with shillings and pence, I have rounded the figures for each area to the nearest pound.
[191] 'Extract from AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE IRISH FREE STATE GOVERNMENT', 21 July 1925 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)
[192] For dataset, see appendix 2.

losing a loved one. 'It is hard enough to think that this poor man's untimely death was practically because I was then in the Royal Irish Constabulary,' he wrote. His worries were compounded by the effect the death was having on MacNeill's widow. Her health was 'being undermined through having to continue living in the same house, and having to pass daily the door where it [i.e. the shooting] happened [:] the scene naturally all comes back to her especially at night time it is most terrifying for her to go near the door'.[193] Other victims of IRA violence endured similar emotional suffering. We noted earlier the suicide of John Duffy, the night watchman at the Manchester Premier Rubber Works attacked by the IRA on 12 February 1921. His wife told the corner's court that Duffy had complained of his nerves since the attack, when he was held at gunpoint. The attack led Duffy to arm himself with a revolver, and it was with this weapon that he shot himself on 25 June.[194] A similar such indirect death was that of the fireman who was killed when a fire-engine toppled over on top of him while tackling a Volunteer arson attack on a farm in Lancashire in March 1921.[195]

The IRA itself suffered three fatalities as a result of its terrorist operations. The first, that of John Morgan, occurred on 2 April 1921, when a shoot-out occurred at the Irish Club in Hulme, Manchester, between Volunteers and police investigating the arson attacks committed earlier that day.[196] The two other fatalities were the deaths of Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan, executed in August 1922 for the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson.[197]

As well as emotional suffering, the death of spouses and relatives also gave rise to financial problems. Despite the support of her two working sons, Mrs MacNeill, raising two other children, was found it difficult to pay her husband's funeral expenses of £150. In addition, the local council was threatening legal action due to her failure to pay the half-yearly rates of £40. Claiming that she was unable to find a smaller house, she also had to pay the upkeep of the family's large abode: '... I am left destitute,' she lamented.[198] Though the British government compensated RIC personnel who suffered at the hands of the IRA in Ireland, for financial reasons it refused to include in the scheme those who experienced similar attacks in Britain. The Irish Office did persuade the Treasury to grant MacNeill an ex gratia payment of £100, along with £300 from the Royal bounty fund. This money, however, was consumed by doctors' fees, living expenses, and funeral costs. If not for the intervention

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[193] C. H. Cornes to Home Secretary Edward Short, 25 Nov. 1921 (TNA, HO 144/22333)
[194] *Manchester Guardian*, 28 June 1921
[195] See p. 144 above
[196] *The Times*, 4 Apr. 1921
[197] Ibid., 11 Aug. 1922
[198] C. H. Cornes to Home Secretary Edward Short, 25 Nov. 1921; A. M. MacNeill to Lady Astor, 8 May 1922 (TNA, HO 144/22333)

of the Southern Irish Loyalist Association, who provided financial aid and clothing, MacNeill believed that she would have lost her home.[199]

Those who suffered attacks on their property also sometimes encountered financial difficulties. Finding that their insurance companies refused to compensate them for all the damage they suffered, some businesses had to bear the cost themselves. Indeed, in the aftermath of the November 1920 attacks on Liverpool warehouses, some insurance companies introduced a specific policy covering 'malicious damage by Sinn Fein or other evilly disposed persons', implying that previous policies would not cover such an eventuality.[200] RIC man S. R. Kerr spent over £400 replacing the uninsured furniture which was burned when his Liverpool house was attacked in May 1921. As in the case of Horace MacNeill, the government refused his request for help.[201] Meanwhile, the destruction of crops such as oats and barley, probably destined for the market place, deprived farmers of some income. As well as the cost of the damage inflicted, there was also the cost of repair. Businesses suffered dislocation as they restored damaged buildings, machinery and stock. Farmers suffered likewise as they repaired hay barns and outhouses. The destruction of their hay stacks may have forced farmers to purchase hay or other crops on the market in order to feed their animals over the winter months. Attacks on communications infrastructure had the effect of disrupting intercourse. Such attacks in Lancashire in early June 1921, for example, caused significant interruption to telegraphic and telephonic communications between Liverpool and the north of England for up to three days.[202]

An indirect victim of the Volunteers' terrorist campaign in Britain was the IRA in Ireland, for attacks usually precipitated a police response which in turn affected the operation of gun-smuggling to Ireland. In the aftermath of the Liverpool arson attacks on 27 November 1920, the police raided the houses of a large number of well-known Irish nationalists. With the arrest of Neil Kerr Snr, his son Tom, and Steve Lanigan, the Merseyside gunrunning organisation was decapitated and, much to Michael Collins' irritation, activity was perforce suspended, thus depriving the Volunteers across the Irish Sea of much-needed armaments. Within little over a week, however, Paddy Daly had stepped into Neil Kerr's shoes and

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[199] H. R. Boyd, Home Office, to Harry Varney, Buckingham Palace, 21 July, 3 Nov. 1922; A. M. MacNeill to The Queen, 9 Oct. 1926 (TNA, HO 144/22333)
[200] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 18 Dec. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/326)
[201] 'Re. Premises 16 Harewood Street, Liverpool PARTICULARS OF DAMAGE'; Whiskard to Troup, 18 Jan. 1922; S. R. Kerr to Andrew Bonar Law, 7 May 1923 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[202] *Morning Post*, 4 June (TNA, HO 144/4645); *The Times*, 9 June 1921

munitions smuggling was resumed.[203] Increased police vigilance in the wake of the Liverpool attacks also led to the arrest of two senior Scottish gunrunners in Alloa. This contributed to the confusion which engulfed gunrunning operations north of the border in late 1920 and early 1921. The police reaction to the shooting of a policeman during the attempted rescue of Frank Carty from a prison van in Glasgow five months later compounded the mess.[204]

How does the IRA's terrorist campaign in Britain compare with that in Ireland? The war of independence in Ireland can be divided into four stages. The first stage, from 1919 to early 1920, saw Volunteer units continue the raids for arms which had engaged units from 1917 onwards. In the second stage, from January to the summer of 1920, units began attacking RIC barracks. The robust reaction of the authorities precipitated the third stage, involving the IRA's creation of active service units, or flying columns, full-time combat units composed of men on the run. With the disbandment of the flying columns in the winter of 1920, the fourth and final stage saw Volunteer units return to harassing Crown forces by disrupting communications and travel infrastructure.[205] In 1919, seventeen RIC men were killed by the IRA. In the first six months of 1920, the figure had more than doubled to forty-one fatalities. By 31 March 1921, just over three months before the truce, a total of 270 policemen and ninety-eight soldiers had been killed.[206] We can see, therefore, that a large increase in police fatalities coincided with the creation and operation of the flying columns. Augusteijn argues that two factors were critical in enabling the Volunteers in Ireland to wage bloody guerrilla warfare. The first was the alienation of the Volunteers' community from the forces of law and order, while the second was the separation of IRA men from the restraining influence of that community. By removing Volunteers from the influence of neighbours and friends, the flying columns enabled them to overcome the social and psychological barriers which normally prohibited the killing of policemen and soldiers.[207]

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[203] 'G' to Michael Collins, n.d., but date-stamped 1 Dec.; Michael Collins, 'Memo to Liverpool', 4 Dec.; Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, c. 5 Dec. 1920 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/3); Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 47

[204] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Mar. 1921; BMHWS no. 933, Seamus Reader, pp 9-11 (NAI); see p. 158 above, pp 201-02 below

[205] Townshend, 'The Irish Republican Army and the development of guerrilla warfare', pp 324-5, 329-31; Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 183-4

[206] *Return showing by monthly periods the number of murders of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and of soldiers, officials, and civilians, and the number of political outrages of persons and property in Ireland from the 1st day of January, 1919, to the 30th April, 1920* [Cmd. 709] (1920), p. 2; *Return showing by monthly periods the number of murders of members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and of soldiers, officials, and civilians, and the number of political outrages of persons and property in Ireland for May and June 1920* [Cmd. 859] (1920), p. 2; *Hansard 5 (Commons)*, cxl, cols 463-4 (7 Apr. 1921)

[207] Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 342-8

While the IRA in Ireland had the support of a large alienated populace and established flying columns, their comrades in Britain had a much smaller support base and lacked flying columns. As they did not record their opinions on the matter, it is impossible to gauge the attitude of the politically-inactive Irish in Britain towards IRA terrorism in Britain. The attitude of Irish actively involved in republican politics was ambiguous. In November 1920, nationalists in Manchester expressed incredulity at the press' publication of Jack Plunkett's report detailing plans for terrorist attacks in the city. They contended that the document had been forged by the British authorities.[208] No mention of the seven-and-a-half month long terrorist campaign appeared in the *Irish Exile*; neither did the newspaper cover the IRA's campaign in Ireland. Perhaps it believed that the mass of the ISDL membership did not support terrorism. This may explain why the newspaper's coverage of violence in Ireland focused exclusively on reprisals carried out by Crown forces.

The Volunteers in Britain failed to emulate their colleagues in Ireland in the establishment of flying columns. The night before the Liverpool docks attack in November 1920, anticipating a police crackdown, Michael O'Leary suggested that a flying column be created so as to facilitate terrorist operations. However, Rory O'Connor disagreed.[209] According to Seamus Mooney, by mid-1921 the 1st battalion of the Scottish brigade IRA had formed a flying column. It was composed of between twenty and thirty men specially selected from the companies in the battalion. The column's (undisclosed) activities were mainly in the west of Scotland, though they sometimes ranged as far east as Edinburgh and Leith. However, as the members seem to have been living at home throughout, this flying column was not comparable to those in Ireland.[210]

Does the failure of the IRA in Britain to establish flying columns account for its failure to fight a terrorist campaign similar to their colleagues in Ireland? In other words, did the communities in which they resided constrain the Volunteers in the type and intensity of operations they could mount? While this was certainly the case in Ireland, where operations were sometimes modified so as to avoid discommoding the populace for example, it does not appear to be true of Britain.[211] The sources at our disposal do not indicate any attempts by the friends or neighbours of IRA men or by organisations such as the ISDL or Sinn Féin to influence the Volunteers' terrorist campaign there. Rather, the only constraints imposed were those set down by GHQ. In contrast to the IRA in Ireland, therefore, the Volunteers in Britain

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[208] *Irish Independent*, 27 Nov. 1920
[209] BMHWS no. 797, Micheál Ó Laoghaire, pp 43-8 (NAI)
[210] Seamus Mooney's statement on the 'Smashing of the Van' incident, n.d. (Mooney Papers, EMP/5/36)
[211] Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 313, 317-19, 324, 327-8

seem to have operated free from communal constraints. That this did not lead to the IRA in Britain matching or exceeding their comrades in Ireland in the quantity and character of operations mounted must be ascribed to the fact that the *raison d'étre* of the two were different. For the Volunteers in Ireland, attacking policemen and soldiers, the personification of foreign rule, was an end in itself. The Volunteers in Britain, meanwhile, living in a hostile environment and deficient in comparison with their comrades across the Irish Sea in both membership and in the level of support they received from the general populace, existed only to assist the IRA in Ireland. For them to have engaged in similar attacks on policemen and soldiers in Britain would have been foolhardy, for the response by an outraged government would probably have led to the collapse of the republican movement through mass arrests. This, in turn, might have precipitated a breakdown in gunrunning, the most important activity of republicans in Britain.

The press gave considerable coverage to IRA activities, usually employing the term 'Sinn Fein' in the articles' headlines, as in 'SINN FEIN PLOT IN LIVERPOOL', 'SINN FEIN FIRES IN LONDON', 'SINN FEIN FARM FIRES', 'SINN FEIN'S WAR ON ENGLAND', 'SINN FEIN TERRORISM IN LIVERPOOL AND LONDON', and 'SUPPOSED SINN FEIN MURDER'.[212] A number of Volunteers held that such publicity had a good consequence. 'It had a very good effect as it got great publicity in the [illegible] Papers,' remembered London's Dennis Kelleher, referring to the IRA's attack on RIC men and their relatives in May 1921.[213] His comrade Dennis Brennan claimed that as a result of the Volunteers' attacks on communications infrastructure, 'The man in the street knew there was something going on. The papers played up our little acts tremendously'. Indeed, the nature of the attacks led the newspapers to believe that the IRA had a 'tremendous organisation' in the capital and was very well equipped, thus exaggerating its strength and arsenal.[214] The Manchester IRA was also heartened by media coverage of its activities. John McGallogly was unimpressed with the efforts of a party of Volunteers under his command to set fire to a cotton print works, but 'the papers gave it a better write up' than he expected.[215]

As well as sometimes encouraging the Volunteers themselves, however, press coverage of their activities also influenced the British reading public. 'People were very suspicious of the Irish then,' Dennis Brennan recollected.

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[212] *The Times*, 29 Nov. 1920; *Daily Express*, 4 Mar.; *Pall Mall Gazette & Globe*, 10 Mar.; *Morning Post*, 11 Mar.; *Liverpool Courier*, 16 May; *The Times*, 7 June 1921, respectively (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[213] Dennis Kelleher interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/107)
[214] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100); original emphasis
[215] BMHWS no. 244, John McGallogly, p. 19 (NAI)

> They [i.e. the English] think it is the [Irish] bloke they know themselves [who was committing the outrages] ... At my digs I w[as] sure they were suspicious for I came home often at 3/[i.e. or]4 o clock [in the morning] and I wasn't used to late hours and always something happened in the papers when I was in late.[216]

Fear and anger, as well as suspicion, were aroused by the terrorist campaign. There was great indignation amongst the Rochdale populace at the burning of a local cotton mill in February 1921, so much so that a movement for the boycotting of Irish cotton workers was started.[217] We saw earlier that members of the public tried to throw John Pinkman, labelled a 'Sinn Fein bastard', into the path of the on-coming train as he and his accomplices attempted to flee the scene of some farm fires on Merseyside in March 1921.[218] Similarly, Reginald Dunne believed that the members of the public who apprehended him after the shooting of Sir Henry Wilson would have lynched him but for the intervention of the police.[219] In Cheshire at least, anger at IRA activities led members of the public to volunteer to work as special constables to help the police prevent future outrages.[220] However, IRA attacks did not always provoke anger on the part of the public. On one occasion, an open-air ISDL meeting was held alongside Annfield railway station in Durham. Despite the fact that the station was a smouldering ruin as a result of it being attacked by the IRA the previous night, the audience, consisting mainly of local miners, contributed 'a substantial sum' of money to a republican fund.[221]

Rory O'Connor noted the press commentary:

> The comments on [sic] the press, such as I have seen, take the same line, viz, What can 'Sinn-Fein hope to gain by this campaign, England cannot be intimidated by terrorism and the campaign is only calculated to make the English People irreconcilable'.[222]

Some newspapers, however, did see the logic of the IRA's campaign. In an editorial in early March 1921, the *Manchester Guardian* condemned as 'despicable criminals' those responsible for farm fires which had occurred in Manchester earlier that week. Yet, the newspaper proceeded to place their crime in the context of events occurring in Ireland. The arson attacks in Manchester were part of the 'horrible game of felony, counter-felony and counter-felony yet again that is carried on between the lawless extremists of Sinn Fein and

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[216] Dennis Brennan interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[217] *Daily Chronicle*, 15 Feb. 1921 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[218] See p. 145 above
[219] Reginald Dunne to new O/C London, n.d., but c. 9 Aug. 1922 (BMHCD no. 188/6/2, Frank Thornton [MAI])
[220] Chief Constable of Cheshire to J. N. Brickland, Home Office, 5 Mar. 1921 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[221] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Barrington, p. 11 (NAI)
[222] O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])

the lawless element in the irregular police now in Ireland'. In response to the burning of a police barracks by the IRA, the RIC Auxiliaries burned creameries owned by people unconnected with the Volunteers. In turn, the IRA in Britain attacked the property of farmers unrelated to the offending Auxiliaries. 'At every step', the editorial lamented, 'there is the same abomination of cruelty, injustice, and unreason.' In order to break the cycle of destruction, the newspaper proposed a two-pronged solution. The preservation of law and order required both that the perpetrators of such arson attacks be brought to justice and that similar crimes be prevented in the future through the watchfulness of specially mobilised special constables and soldiers. It also warned against vigilantism, the 'mobbing of inoffensive Irishmen or wrecking their property', for such attacks would themselves precipitate reprisals. The spiral of violence would then lead to a situation where 'decent Englishmen and decent Irishmen' were 'outnumbered' by perpetrators of violence and the two countries would 'sink to the level of a criminal lunatic asylum with the keepers away'.[223]

This second approach hinted at a political, rather than military, solution to the Irish question. In the end that was the approach which the British government chose to pursue. With Ulster Unionists' objections to all-Ireland home rule addressed by the granting of limited autonomy to the Protestant-dominated six north-eastern counties of Ireland, the British government was faced with the prospect of resorting to martial law and 'crown colony government' in order to suppress the IRA's rebellion in the south. Reluctant to take such a step without exhausting all available avenues beforehand, the government agreed to a truce on 11 July 1921 and began to explore the possibility of a negotiated settlement. Almost five months later, on 6 December, the articles of a peace treaty were agreed, according to which the majority of Ireland was to become a dominion within the British Empire.[224]

The role IRA terrorism in Britain had in motivating the British government to pursue such a course is almost impossible to ascertain. No government minister admitted the influence of such terrorism. Sean Ó Murthuile believed that the campaign 'had the effect of concentrating the average Englishman's attention of what was being done in Ireland in his name'. He was doubtful, however, if Englishmen, thus enlightened, actually influenced the government's thinking on the Irish problem.[225] Yet, the fact that the activities of the 'murder gang', as the British prime minister called it, precipitated the provision of increased security for senior politicians surely brought home to legislators, at the most personal level, the

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[223] *Manchester Guardian*, 4 Mar. 1921
[224] *Articles of agreement for a treaty between Great Britain and Ireland* [Cmd. 1560] H.C. 1921
[225] Ó Murthuile manuscript (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7a/209), pp 126-7

implications of their Irish policy.[226] At the least, the campaign was 'a thorn in the side of the authorities'.[227]

The political consequences of IRA terrorism committed after the treaty are easier to track than those committed during the war of independence. In June 1922, a *Times* editorial described the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson by Dunne and O'Sullivan as a deed which 'must rank among the foulest in the foul category of Irish political crimes', an outrage unparalleled in the history of modern Britain. An angry country, it continued, would wreck revenge not alone against those who perpetrated the act but also those others 'who have tolerated the system of political murder of which this crime is an outcome'. The following day, a second editorial demanded that responsible Irishmen take to task 'the militant sections of Irish opinion'.[228]

The British cabinet met six times in the seventy-two hours following Wilson's assassination. That event was just the latest in a number of incidents since the signing of the treaty the previous December which had strained the government's patience with Dublin. Foremost amongst them was the residence in Dublin's Four Courts since April 1922 of a group of heavily armed anti-treaty IRA men, under the leadership of the O/C Britain, Rory O'Connor. The prime minister, David Lloyd George, told Michael Collins, the head of the pro-treaty Provisional Government, that Scotland Yard had received intelligence indicating that 'active preparations are on foot among the irregular elements of the IRA to resume attacks upon the lives and property of British subjects both in England and in Ulster'. He, therefore, demanded that Collins take military action against the IRA, and offered to loan the Irish army the military equipment to do so. Failure to act would constitute a breach of the treaty, he concluded.[229] The British cabinet rejected Collins' request that they share the intelligence with him on the grounds that to do so would endanger the lives of the people who supplied it. Later, it was admitted that 'There was no proof as yet of any connection between the IRA or at any rate between the Four Courts and the murder [of Wilson]'. Still, it was thought 'by no means improbable' that the assassination had been 'instigated' by the Four Courts, 'that focus of seditious activity'.[230] Collins' procrastination so annoyed the cabinet that it contemplated a British army assault on the Four Courts. Indeed, on 24 June, it ordered

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[226] See pp 219, 224-5 below
[227] Paddy Daly interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/136)
[228] *The Times*, 23, 24 June 1922
[229] Cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922; David Lloyd George to Michael Collins, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255)
[230] Cabinet conclusions, 11 a.m. meeting, 24 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255)

just such an attack for the following day.[231] However, the commander of British forces in Ireland, General Macready, refused to carry it out. His representative later explained to the cabinet that such an attack would have been counter-productive. It would have had the effect of exposing British troops in other parts of Ireland to attack at the hands of the outraged populace. He also believed that it would 'draw the two wings of the IRA together' in opposition to the British, which indeed had been the aim of Wilson's assassins. With the army leadership opposing an attack on the Four Courts, the cabinet resolved to dispense with a British military solution to the problem and instead pressurise the Provisional Government to deal with the issue forthwith.[232]

The cabinet did not have to wait long for Collins to authorise an attack on the Four Courts. Two days after Macready's refusal to launch an attack, IRA men under O'Connor's command kidnapped a Free State army officer. His patience at an end, Collins ordered an attack on the headquarters of the anti-treaty IRA. The following day, 28 June, the Irish army opened fire on the garrison using British weapons.

Contrary to wishes of Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan, therefore, the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson hastened rather than avoided the outbreak of civil war in Ireland. IRA plans for terrorist attacks in Britain during the civil war were scuppered by the mass arrest and deportation to Ireland of republicans in March 1923.

VII

In November 1920, with the burning of cotton warehouses in Liverpool, the IRA began a terrorist campaign in Britain. It was motivated by outrage at the activities of the RIC in Ireland, and aimed to force the British government to change its Irish policy. Over the course of the subsequent seven-and-a-half months, the IRA perpetrated 235 attacks, mainly taking the form of arson. Targets included farms, factories, warehouses, and communications and railway infrastructure situated mainly around the British cities of Liverpool, London, Manchester and Newcastle-upon-Tyne. RIC men and their relatives were also attacked. Reflecting on the campaign up to the end of May 1921, the O/C Britain, Rory O'Connor, judged it to have been 'fairly successful'. Ninety per cent of operations attempted had been mounted successfully and he was 'satisfied' that over five million pounds worth of damage

[231] Ibid., 5.30 p.m. meeting, 24 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255)
[232] Ibid., 11.30 a.m. meeting, 25 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255)

had been inflicted.[233] In June 1922, the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson, by two members of the London IRA probably acting on their own initiative, played a role in the outbreak of the civil war in Ireland. Due to problems of organisation, it was not until early March 1923 that the anti-treaty IRA in Britain was ordered to launch a new terrorist campaign there. However, the mass arrest and deportation of 11 March scuppered those plans.

In the next chapter, we will look at the response of the British authorities to republican activities in Britain, both terrorism and gunrunning, and hence republicans' experience of the criminal justice system.

[233] O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])

5

Combating the 'Sinn Fein movement' in Britain: the response of the British authorities

I

'We have murder by the throat,' British prime minister David Lloyd George declared in early November 1920, promising the imminent defeat of the Volunteers in Ireland.[1] By the end of the month, however, Crown forces there had suffered a number of deadly attacks and the IRA had extended its terrorist campaign to Britain itself. 'The Sinn Fein movement, in its Irish Republican Army stage, is spreading to this country [i.e. Britain],' the Irish Chief Secretary was forced to warn the House of Commons. 'It has its own areas, its own commandants, its own soldiers in this country.'[2] This chapter studies the reaction of the British authorities to the threat posed by Irish republicanism in Britain. Section II discusses two IRA operations targeting the police and the prisons in Britain. Section III discusses the political situation in post-war Britain and the British Empire, the context which coloured the government's view of the republican movement. Sections IV and V examine the means by which politicians and the police attempted to stymie the IRA, while sections VI and VII focus on republicans' experience of the criminal justice system in Britain, the courts and the prisons. Section VIII concludes.

II

In May 1918, about 150 members of Sinn Féin were arrested in Dublin on suspicion of involvement in an attempt to mount a rebellion in Ireland with German assistance, akin to the Easter Rising of two years previously. Forty-six of the prisoners, including Eamon de Valera,

[1] *The Times*, 10 Nov. 1920
[2] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxv, cols 505-07 (24 Nov. 1920)

president of Sinn Féin, were then deported to Britain and interned.[3] When Christmas 1918 passed without their being released, some of the prisoners began to think of launching escape attempts. De Valera later explained that, with the Paris peace conference imminent, his desire to escape from Manchester's Lincoln prison arose from the realisation that American public opinion would have 'much say' in deciding Ireland's fate. The American public, therefore, needed to be informed of Ireland's desire for an independent republic. However, IRB man Harry Boland maintained that the escape was motivated by the fear that de Valera's continued incarceration would precipitate Sinn Féin's collapse through the Irish public losing interest in it.[4]

Whatever motivated his desire to escape, de Valera felt that it could not be realised without outside help. Noticing that a door on one of the exercise grounds provided an exit from the prison, he thought of the idea of manufacturing a key to fit the door's lock. Managing to use his position as an altar server to secure an impression of the chaplain's key in candle wax, de Valera decided to communicate his escape plan to his comrades in Dublin. He got Sean Milroy, another prisoner and Sinn Féin's director of elections, to draw illustrations on two postcards. The first depicted IRB man Sean McGarry, a third prisoner, attempting to gain entrance to a house using an outsize key, accompanied by a caption: 'He can't get in Christmas 1917'. The wards of this key were a life-size copy of those of the key which de Valera had impressed in wax. A second illustration showed a depressed McGarry in a prison-cell staring at an outsize keyhole, with the caption: 'Christmas 1918 can't get out'. Again, this keyhole was a life-size copy of the keyholes on the prisoners' cell-doors. These postcards, along with instructions in Latin for their forwarding to McGarry's wife in Dublin, and further instructions in Irish for the manufacturing of the key, were sent to a friend of one of the prisoners under the cover of requesting a bottle of whiskey for Christmas. After a long delay, the postcards reached the McGarrys in Dublin, where their message was eventually discovered.[5]

A key was made in Dublin according to the prescribed dimensions and taken to Lincoln prison secreted in a cake by Fintan Murphy, a former member of the London Volunteers now resident in Ireland. Murphy masqueraded as a commercial traveller merely obliging a friend by delivering a cake to a friend of his in the prison, Peter DeLoughrey, the

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[3] *The Times*, 20 May 1918

[4] Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 266; typescript account by Eamon de Valera of his escape from Lincoln jail, n.d.; 'Lincoln Escape', notes by Harry Boland, n.d. (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)

[5] Typescript account by Eamon de Valera of his escape from Lincoln jail (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620); Marie Coleman, 'Milroy, John Ignatius ('Sean')' in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, accessed at http://dib.cambridge.org on 15 Oct. 2010

mayor of Kilkenny. As the gruff chief warder stabbed the cake with a knife, Murphy expected the key to be discovered at any moment. Amazingly, however, the key remained hidden. Murphy left the prison and the cake was delivered to the DeLoughrey. However, it was discovered that the key was too small, even though it matched the dimensions of the wax impression. De Valera realised that the impression must have shrunk as it cooled and hardened.[6] A second key was manufactured in Manchester. It was again secreted in a cake, this one baked by the wife of the gunrunner Liam McMahon. The cake was then carried on the train to Lincoln by Kathleen Talty, McMahon's sister-in-law. After breakfasting with Michael Collins and Frank Kelly, a Dublin IRA man, Talty took the cake to the prison. This key also failed to work.[7] It was then that DeLoughrey, a former locksmith, told de Valera that he would be able to manufacture a key from a blank if he could examine one of the lock mechanisms. This was communicated to Dublin, which responded by sending blank keys and files to the prison, once more secreted in a cake. DeLoughrey's key worked. Further communications set a date for the escape of the trio of de Valera, McGarry and Milroy.[8]

By this stage, Michael Collins had made detailed plans for hiding de Valera and the other escapees. These arrangements were based on reconnoitring done by Collins himself, Harry Boland, Fintan Murphy, Frank Kelly, and members of the Manchester IRA led by Paddy O'Donoghue and Liam McMahon. A number of taxis were secured to transport the fugitives from Lincoln to Manchester, a journey of over eighty miles. Changing taxis along the route was both a legal requirement, due to the government's wartime prohibition of long car journeys in the interests of petrol rationing, and a security boon, in that it prevented a taxi driver becoming suspicious of a group of strangers on a long journey. Arrangements were also made for accommodating the prisoners in Manchester. Collins had made plans for himself, Boland and Kelly to meet de Valera, McGarry and Milroy at the door leading from the exercise yard to the field surrounding the prison. Fearing a last-minute hitch, he arranged for Fintan Murphy to supply a rope ladder to scale the walls.[9]

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[6] BMHWS no. 370, Fintan Murphy, p. 1 (NAI); Fintan Murphy to Liam McMahon, 14 Apr. 1946, enclosing 'Escape of De Valera and others from Lincoln Jail in February, 1919. DRAFT NOTES BY FINTAN MURPHY'; typescript account by Eamon de Valera of his escape from Lincoln jail (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)

[7] Kathleen Talty to Eamon de Valera, 21 Mar. 1958 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620) ; Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 263-4; BMHWS no. 274, Liam McMahon, pp 4-8 (NAI); BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 1-3 (NAI)

[8] Typescript account by Eamon de Valera of his escape from Lincoln jail (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)

[9] 'Notes by Michael Collins', 30 Jan. 1919 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/615); Fintan Murphy to Liam McMahon, 14 Apr. 1946, enclosing 'Escape of De Valera and others from Lincoln Jail in February, 1919 ...' (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)

At around 7 p.m. on Sunday, 3 February, de Valera lit a bunch of matches and held them to his cell window. This was the signal to those outside that the escape was to commence, Boland, Collins and Kelly having cut through some wire entanglements separating the prison from the surrounding field. 'The key opened the doors beautifully', de Valera recollected, 'and I got from cell to corridor out into the enclosure and to the gate in the prison wall through which we intended to escape.' At the other side of the gate stood Boland and Collins, Kelly having got lost in the dark. However, when Boland tried to open the gate with his key, it broke in the lock. He suggested employing the rope-ladder to scale the wall. De Valera, however, put his key into the lock and succeeded in pushing out the broken key. He then opened the gate and slipped out with McGarry and Milroy. As the three escapees walked along the field with Boland and Collins, a group of soldiers and their girlfriends approached. De Valera feared capture and suggested that they flee the scene. However, Boland advised a different course. '[A]s they came near us, I started to joke with one of the girls about the kind of night and her soldier boy,' he later wrote, 'and as I went by I jogged her in a jocular way and all of them laughing passed us. I pretended to be drunk myself.' The five eventually reached the taxi that Boland had hired. It took them to Lincoln town centre.[10]

In Lincoln, Boland and Collins took the train to London, while the three fugitives travelled to Worksop by another taxi in the company of Paddy O'Donoghue. Fintan Murphy awaited their arrival in Worksop. Collins' plans had arranged for the escapees to reach the town around 8 p.m. Under the pretence of having to catch the train at Sheffield with some colleagues, Murphy had a taxi on standby to take them from Worksop to Sheffield station. Eight p.m. passed, however, without O'Donoghue and his precious cargo arriving, and Murphy began to worry about the success of the escape and the patience of his taxi-driver. Forty-five minutes late, the taxi finally arrived. So as to avoid arousing the suspicions of the taxi-driver, Murphy pretended that the party was going to have dinner in a nearby hotel. Once the taxi had driven out of sight, he escorted the fugitives to his waiting taxi. Despite the protestations of the driver that the lateness of the hour prevented their timely arrival in Sheffield to catch the train, Murphy insisted on the journey, although he himself did not go

[10] Typescript account by Eamon de Valera of his escape from Lincoln jail; 'Lincoln Escape', notes by Harry Boland (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620); Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 266-7

on the journey.[11] At Sheffield, the four changed to a taxi provided by Liam McMahon.[12] They reached their final destination, Manchester, just after midnight.[13]

Immediately, O'Donoghue escorted the trio to the residence of Fr. John O'Mahoney, chaplain to the Crumpsall workhouse. After a meal, McGarry and Milroy were taken to the house of another sympathiser, Mary Healy. The two were soon transferred to Liverpool, where the gunrunner Neil Kerr Snr first found them accommodation with a Mrs McCarthy and then arranged for their secret passage to Ireland on board a ship. After about a fortnight, the Manchester Irish received a warning from a friendly detective that the police suspected de Valera of residing in O'Mahoney's house. Wearing the uniform of a colonial soldier, he was transferred to Healy's house. About a week later, de Valera also went to Liverpool and returned to Ireland as a stowaway.[14]

The following month, in one of only two references in its pages to the IRA in Britain, *An t-Óglác* described the rescue of de Valera from Lincoln as 'a brilliant example of Volunteer courage, skill and efficiency'.[15]

Around 10 a.m. on 4 May 1921, a group of Volunteer officers met in a café on Glasgow's London St. There, the O/C informed them that an operation was to be mounted with the aim of rescuing from police custody Frank Carty, a Sligo IRA man who had been remanded on charges of having stolen a revolver in county Sligo and escaped from jails in Sligo and Derry. Carty was to be transported by van from the court house to Duke St. prison. The plan called for the van to be ambushed on its journey. The mobilised Volunteers, ten or twelve in number, were to be divided into three groups, each with a different task to perform. The first group was to be on lookout, warning their comrades of the van's approach. The second group was to attack the van and disable the police guards. The third group was to rescue Carty by smashing the van's back door.[16]

The men then journeyed to High St. and took up their positions according to the function they had been assigned. At about 12.30 p.m., the van appeared at the bottom of the street, which was on a hill. As it drew level with him, Volunteer Seamus Mooney, assigned to the group charged with disabling the police guards, stepped off the footpath and jumped onto

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[11] Fintan Murphy to Liam McMahon, 14 Apr. 1946, enclosing 'Escape of De Valera and others from Lincoln Jail in February, 1919 ...' (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)
[12] BMHWS no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 4-5 (NAI); ibid., no. 274, Liam McMahon, pp 8-9 (NAI)
[13] Kathleen Talty to Eamon de Valera, 21 Mar. 1958 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620)
[14] Ibid.; Liam McMahon to de Valera, 29 Sept. 1953; 'GENERAL NOTE', by Eamon de Valera, n.d.; 'Lincoln Escape', notes by Harry Boland (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/620); Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 268
[15] *An t-Óglác*, 27 Mar. 1919
[16] Seamus Mooney's statement on the 'Smashing of the Van' incident, n.d. (Mooney Papers, EMP/5/36)

the vehicle's running board. Brandishing his revolver, he opened the cabin door and ordered the driver to stop the van. The policemen in the cabin produced guns and a shoot-out ensued. 'The van was riddled with bullets,' reported *The Times*, 'some of which entered the radiator and stopped the engine.' While the driver attended to the engine in an attempt to re-start the marooned van, passers-by fled hither and thither in panic. Inspector Johnston was shot and toppled out the van's open door onto the street, taking Mooney with him. Detective Sergeant Streton jumped down from the cabin and attempted to shoot Mooney. Grazed by one of Mooney's bullets, however, he dropped his revolver and Mooney kicked it under the van. Despite the best efforts of the Volunteers, the van's steel door proved impregnable. Then the van started to roll slowly down the hill. Realising the futility of the situation, the O/C ordered a withdrawal and the Volunteers fled the scene. Streton gave chase. Upon sustaining a gunshot wound to the wrist, however, he returned to the prison van, commandeered another passing van, and transported the fatally wounded Johnston to the prison. There, he was soon joined by the prison van and its cargo – whom the police, reflecting on the reckless nature of the rescue attempt, were later to describe as 'an important Sinn Feiner'.[17]

Later that day, the police arrested twenty-one people in connection with the incident. The arrest of a Catholic priest on the grounds of a church led to the congregation of a hostile crowd numbering 'a few thousands'. Stones and bottles were thrown, policemen were assaulted, and nearby shops in the Gallowgate and Bellgrove St. districts were looted. Strengthened by reinforcements from the central police office, who themselves were replaced by a detachment of soldiers to guard the other prisoners, the police arrested a further twelve people.[18]

III

Britain emerged from the First World War as a victor. Its main rival for worldwide naval supremacy, Germany, was defeated. Moreover, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, the British Empire expanded in Africa and the Middle East. Yet, the war also unleashed powerful forces of disorder. The period 1919–22 saw a 'crisis of empire' as rebellions of varying

[17] Ibid.; Chief Constable of Glasgow to Under Secretary for Scotland, 4 May 1921 (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/63); *The Times*, 5 May 1921

[18] Chief Constable of Glasgow to Under Secretary for Scotland, 5 May 1921 (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/63); Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); *The Times*, 5 May 1921

intensity broke out in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, and Iraq, as well as in Ireland.[19] Nationalism was the main force in these rebellions. Some members of the establishment, however, discerned the involvement of a more sinister force, that of communism.

In the revolution of October 1917, the Bolsheviks, under Lenin, overthrew the Provisional Government and declared Russia the world's first communist state. Hoping for the outbreak of similar revolutions in other parts of Europe, the Russians quickly established the Communist International (Comintern) as a vehicle to foster such revolts. The Comintern's statutes of 1920 stated that 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' was 'the only means for the liberation of humanity from the horrors of capitalism'.[20] That same year, Grigory Zinoviev, chairman of the Comintern, declared that communist revolutions were imminent worldwide. The 'twilight of the gods of capitalism has set in,' he announced. Once the workers had revolted, a new world would be constructed 'on the basis of the Communist principles of brotherhood'.[21] A number of communist rebellions did indeed occur in Europe. In January 1919, German communists of the Spartacus league mounted a rebellion in Berlin. Three months later, a soviet republic was established in Bavaria, while in Hungary a similar regime existed under Bela Kun. All, however, proved transient. The Spartacist uprising was crushed by demobilised soldiers, while Kun's regime, after indulging in a reign of terror, was unseated by an invading Romanian army.[22] Basil Thomson, a British policeman, spoke for many establishment figures throughout Europe when he later noted the view, one with which he agreed, that Bolshevism was 'an infectious disease rather than a political creed – a disease which spreads like a cancer, eating away the tissue of society until the whole mass disintegrates and falls into corruption'.[23] Fear of communist revolution was one factor at play in the ferocious right-wing paramilitary violence that ravaged central and eastern Europe in the aftermath of the war.[24] It also partly motivated Western intervention in the Russian civil war of 1918–22.[25]

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[19] John Gallagher, 'Nationalisms and the crisis of empire, 1919–1922' in *Modern Asian Studies*, xv, no. 3 (1981), pp 355-68; John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: the rise and fall of global empires, 1400–2000* (London, 2007), pp 368-94

[20] 'Statutes of the Communist International, 4 August 1920' in Rex A. Wade (ed), *Documents of Soviet history, ii, triumph and retreat 1920–1922* (Gulf Breeze, Fl., 1993), pp 109-13

[21] 'Zinoviev on the world revolution: opening address to the second congress of the Comintern, 19 July 1920' in ibid., pp 96-101

[22] Zara Steiner, *The lights that failed: European international history 1913–1933* (Oxford, 2005), p. 10

[23] Basil Thomson, *My experiences at Scotland Yard* (New York, 1923), p. 328

[24] Robert Gerwarth, 'The Central European counter-revolution: paramilitary violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War' in *Past & Present*, no. 200 (2008), p. 182

[25] Steiner, *The lights that failed*, pp 131-52; Clifford Kinvig, *Churchill's crusade: the British invasion of Russia, 1918–1920* (London, 2006)

As well as inspiring rebellions, the Bolshevik revolution also partly stimulated the wave of industrial unrest which swept Europe in the aftermath of the war. In 1915, the three largest trade unions in Britain, those of transport workers, railwaymen and miners, formed a 'triple alliance'. Due to its ability to call a general strike, the alliance was viewed with suspicion by the government. At the end of the war, this distrust was only increased by the burgeoning unions' demands that workers be rewarded for their wartime sacrifices and that wages be increased to compensate for price inflation. In the event, a general strike was never called. Britain, nevertheless, did experience a large number of strikes, including those of railwaymen, policemen, and miners. Thirty-five million working days were lost through disputes in 1919. The following year, it declined to twenty-seven million. In 1921, however, it jumped to eighty-six million, while the following year saw twenty million. In 1923, with the end of the post-war economic boom and a large increase in unemployment, the figure had declined to 10.6 million.[26] Basil Thomson believed that the industrial unrest of early 1919 was the most revolutionary situation in Britain in almost ninety years.[27] Ireland also saw an upsurge in industrial unrest, especially among farm labourers.[28]

In all this worldwide upheaval, political, social and industrial, some commentators saw a deadly communist-inspired threat to order and civilisation. Such a threat was considered to be behind events in Ireland too.[29] In January 1920, the police intelligence service observed that Sinn Féin was 'inclined to become Bolshevist in tone' in order to attract support in British labour circles.[30] In March, land agitation in county Galway was condemned as 'purely Bolshevist'.[31] The following month, the industrial situation in Ireland was said to be tending towards Bolshevism.[32] In May 1922, it was reported that the Bolsheviks were hoping to use Ireland as 'the jumping off ground for a European revolution' by means of an agreement between the anti-treaty IRA and the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI).[33]

To some extent, the communist threat coloured the British government's view of republicanism in Ireland and Britain. In July 1919, the cabinet was informed that the ICA membership in Glasgow might use their positions in other labour bodies to foment industrial

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[26] Keith Jeffery and Peter Hennessey, *States of emergency: British governments and strikebreaking since 1919* (London, 1983), pp 1-75; Peter Clarke, *Hope and glory: Britain 1900–2000* (London, 2nd edn, 2004), p. 107
[27] Thomson, *My experiences at Scotland Yard*, p. 309
[28] Emmet O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland 1917–1923* (Cork, 1988)
[29] Richard Dawson, *Red terror and green* (London, 1920)
[30] RROUK, no. 36, 9 Jan. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/96)
[31] Ibid., no. 47, 25 Mar. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/101)
[32] Ibid., no. 49, 8 Apr. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/103)
[33] Ibid., no. 157, 25 May 1922 (TNA, CAB 24/136)

unrest for the purpose of aiding Ireland.[34] The following year, the Irish Chief Secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, told the House of Commons that the IRA had as its object the destruction of the British Empire.[35] 'It is interesting to note that there is a connection between Sinn Fein and our own revolutionaries,' the police intelligence service commented on a report that British and Irish socialists were scheduled to address a meeting of the Manchester and district United Socialist Club in November 1919.[36] The most 'awkward feature' of the activities of John Maclean, the Scottish Marxist, was held to be his 'association with the Sinn Fein movement'. A leaflet of his, entitled 'PROPOSED IRISH MASSACRE', called upon Scottish workers serving as soldiers in the British army in Ireland to refuse to 'murder the Irish race' and instead begin a general strike with their Irish and American brethren so as to cause the overthrow of capitalism in the United States.[37]

Concerns regarding Republican links with communism were not entirely misplaced, for they did indeed have some contact with socialists and communists. During the war of independence, the ICA, the workers' militia, performed a number of support services for the IRA, including supplying and hiding weapons. Upon the outbreak of the civil war, an estimated 143 ICA members joined the Volunteers in battling the Free State forces.[38]

Republicans also sought to get support from the Soviet Union. In 1917, the IRB appointed Patrick McCartan as its envoy to Russia. Three years later, Ireland and Russia drafted a treaty of mutual recognition, and the former loaned the latter $20,000.[39] In Moscow in 1921, McCartan asked the Soviets to supply the Volunteers with weapons. The Tipperary IRA made a similar request on another occasion. Although both requests were turned down, Moscow was, nevertheless, interested in events in Ireland. At its second congress, in mid-1920, the Comintern discerned communist potential in anti-colonial struggles, such as that in Ireland. Roddy Connolly, son of James Connolly and leader of the small Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI), attended the congress and promised to support the IRA in its liberation struggle. The following year, at the third congress, Connolly informed Lenin that the IRA's rank and file could be converted to communism. A few months later, the SPI, having changed its name to the CPI, condemned the treaty of December 1921 as a desperate attempt by the

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[34] Ibid., no. 11, 10 July 1919 (TNA, CAB 24/83)
[35] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxv, cols 505-07 (24 Nov. 1920)
[36] RROUK, no. 27, 30 Oct. 1919 (TNA, CAB 24/92)
[37] Report by Deputy Prosecutor Fiscal of Glasgow, on hostile propaganda, 20 Aug.; Under Secretary for Ireland to Under Secretary for Scotland, 30 July 1920, enclosing Maclean's leaflet, n.d. (NAS, First World War Files, HH31/34/20); John McHugh, 'Maclean, John (1879–1923)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, online edn, May 2006, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37721, on 13 Oct. 2010
[38] Hanley, 'The Irish Citizen Army after 1916', pp 37-8, 41
[39] *Intercourse between Bolshevism and Sinn Féin* [Cmd. 1326], H.C. 1921

British to shore up their disintegrating empire. It, therefore, supported the anti-treatyites, in the hope of persuading them to adopt radical social policies. In May 1922, the Comintern commended the CPI's stance, noting that the 'attitude of the proletarian majority' of the IRA demonstrated that the Irish communists were on 'the right path' and represented 'the will of the Irish working class'. However, the CPI found it difficult to influence the IRA, as most Volunteer leaders distained 'politics' in favour of the gun. The IRA did draw up an agrarian programme, calling for the re-distribution of land among tenants, but nothing practical came of it. When the civil war broke out, in June 1922, about twelve members of the CPI's small 'Red Guard', including Connolly, joined the IRA. Despite the Volunteers' rapid retreat in the face of Free State forces, the Comintern remained interested in securing an agreement with republicans. In August, representatives of Mikhail Borodin, the Comintern's agent in Britain, secured the IRA's provisional agreement to a programme which included such measures as state ownership of heavy industry, transport and banks, land re-distribution, and an eight-hour working day. In return, Moscow was to provide military, political and economic aid to the republicans. However, the disintegration of the IRA scuppered the deal. Volunteer leaders such as Ernie O'Malley and Liam Mellows then urged the adoption of a social programme in order to attract workers to the republican cause. Once again, however, such proposals proved desultory and fruitless.[40]

Republicans in Britain also had some contacts with communists, radical socialists and anti-colonial nationalists. Among Art O'Brien correspondents were Shapurji Saklatvala, an Indian-born communist who won a seat in the House of Commons in 1922, and Sylvia Pankhurst, head of the Workers' Socialist Federation, as well as Burmese and Egyptian nationalists in London.[41] During 1920, O'Brien was also in indirect contact with people associated with the Russian delegation.[42] According to David Neligan, an RIC detective who secretly worked for the IRA in Dublin during the war of independence, Michael Collins sought to liaise with the police trade union, which was agitating for a strike in Britain, in the

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[40] O'Connor, *Reds and the green*, pp 42-74; Emmet O'Connor, 'Communists, Russia, and the IRA, 1920–1923' in *Historical Journal*, xlvi, (2003), pp 115-31; Stephen White, 'Soviet Russia and the Irish Revolution' in *Irish Slavonic Studies*, v, (1984), pp 49-56; Stephen White, 'Ireland, Russia, Communism, Post-Communism' in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, viii, (1997), pp 155-61; Mike Milotte, *Communism in modern Ireland: the pursuit of the workers' republic since 1916* (Dublin, 1984), pp 54-63

[41] Mike Squires, 'Saklatvala, Shapurji (1874–1936)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, online edn, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35909, on 14 June 2010; June Hannam, 'Pankhurst, (Estelle) Sylvia (1882–1960)' in ibid., online edn, May 2007, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37833, on 14 June 2010; Kate O'Malley, *Ireland, India and empire: Indo-Irish radical connections, 1919-64* (Manchester, 2008), pp 23-9; Art O'Brien's correspondence with Saklatvala, Pankhurst and Burmese and Egyptian nationalists (NLI, Ó Briain Papers)

[42] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 29 July 1920 (NAI, DE 2/322)

hope of smashing the RIC in Ireland.[43] In a similar vein, Sean McLoughlin, a member of the Dublin Volunteers, claims that Collins and Cathal Brugha ordered him to Britain in 1919 to infiltrate the labour movement. The aim was to uncover possible sources of munitions, recruit people for the mounting of 'sabotage work', and 'to attend at public gatherings to produce a favourable atmosphere for the Irish cause'.[44] In Britain, McLoughlin addressed a number of meetings of the 'Hands off Ireland' campaign. Like the 'Hands off Russia' movement which British labour launched in 1919 in an attempt to frustrate Western intervention in the Russian civil war, the Irish campaign endeavoured to mobilise British public opinion against their government's policies in Ireland.[45]

Official concern at such fraternization, however, proved to be largely misplaced. Despite the radical rhetoric, sharing speaking platforms was largely the limit of Irish association with revolutionaries in Britain. Admittedly, communists did sometimes help republican gunrunners acquire weapons.[46] Also, we saw earlier that the O/C Britain, Rory O'Connor, believed that, in its terrorist campaign in Britain, IRA operations should facilitate 'direct action' by communists, among others.[47] He also made contact with communists in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[48] Moreover, during the truce, Cathal Brugha attempted to enlist support from the CPGB for a renewal of the IRA's campaign of terrorism in Britain in the event of the peace talks collapsing.[49] However, little came of these initiatives.

The British authorities, however, did not know that republican contacts with other radicals would prove so relatively fruitless. Rather, they took the view, enunciated in an intelligence report of October 1921, that Irish revolutionaries in Ireland and Britain were 'not only determined on getting complete independence [for Ireland] from England' but were possessed of such hatred of the British that 'they wish for and will work for the downfall of

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[43] Kenneth Griffiths and Timothy E. O'Grady, *Curious journey: an oral history of Ireland's unfinished revolution* (London, 1982), pp 163-5

[44] BMHWS no. 290, Sean McLoughlin, pp 46-7 (NAI); McLoughlin states that he began his mission in Britain in November 1920, but the police intelligence service noted his presence in Glasgow ten months earlier [RROUK, no. 36, 9 Jan. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/96)]

[45] RROUK, no. 32, 4 Dec. 1919; ibid., no. 36, 9 Jan.; ibid., no. 52, 29 Apr.; ibid., no. 61, 1 July; ibid., no. 65, 29 July; ibid., no. 66, 5 Aug. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/94–24/110); Charlie McGuire, 'An Irish revolutionary in Britain: Sean McLoughlin and the British socialist movement, 1920–22' in *Irish Studies Review*, xvi, no. 2 (2008), pp 143-57; L. J. Macfarlane, 'Hands off Russia: British labour and the Russo-Polish War, 1920' in *Past & Present*, no. 38 (1967), pp 126-52

[46] See p. 113 above

[47] See p. 166 above

[48] O/C Britain to C/S, 3 June 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19[16-20])

[49] See p. 148 above

the British Empire'.[50] It was against such a background that the British reacted to republican activity in Britain.

IV

Despite receiving intelligence reports on the matter, the highest echelons of the British government did not evince much concern regarding IRA gunrunning prior to the Volunteers' arson attack on Merseyside in November 1920. Indeed, thereafter, tackling the threat of terrorist outrages was their primary concern. This echoed the government's tardy response to the IRA's campaign in Ireland.[51] Nevertheless, some attempts were made to frustrate the IRA's access to munitions. On 12 April 1921, upon being warned that Irishmen were joining the armed forces with the intention of 'deserting with their arms', the cabinet resolved that the attention of all army commands and recruiting stations be brought to the problem.[52] The following day, the cabinet returned to the issue. It was noted that recruiting officers had no means of identifying 'Sinn Feiners or Communists' among new recruits. However, a careful watch was being kept and men in the ranks were reporting on suspect soldiers. The cabinet decided that the various army commanders should liaise with the police so as to gather information on recruits.[53]

The civil war saw former IRA men, now Provisional Government/Free State officials, liaising with their former pursuers in the British establishment in an attempt to frustrate the gunrunning activities of their late comrades, now anti-treaty Volunteers.

On 1 July, three days after the outbreak of the civil war, the Provisional Government, worried that the IRA in Munster and Connaught would become active once they had received munitions, perhaps from Britain, requested that the Royal Navy institute vigilant patrolling of the Irish Sea. Special attention was to be paid to 'small craft such as trawlers and fishing vessels' as they might be involved in the 'picking up of contraband [materiel] at sea'. Also, customs officials were requested to mount a careful examination of all vessels, but especially colliers and fishing boats, leaving Britain for southern Ireland.[54] It was imperative that the British do their utmost to assist the Irish authorities, wrote Lionel Curtis, the Colonial Secretary's adviser on Irish affairs, for the treaty specifically charged the British with

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[50] RROUK, no. 127, 14 Oct. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/129)
[51] Morgan, *Consensus and disunity,* pp 126-8
[52] Cabinet conclusions, 12 Apr. 1921, 7 p.m. meeting (TNA, CAB 23/25)
[53] Ibid., 13 Apr. 1921, 6 p.m. meeting (TNA, CAB 23/38)
[54] Telegram, Andy Cope to Lionel Curtis, 4.31 p.m., 1 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)

protecting Irish waters for a period of five years. Should they fail to do so, it may prove awkward when the issue was scheduled to be reviewed in 1926.[55] The British government, therefore, agreed to the request.

On 15 December 1922, the Colonial Secretary advised the Free State government that if it could be proven that republicans in Britain were acting in concert with the IRA in Ireland in order to aid the latter's rebellion against the Free State, then the British government would consider bringing a charge of seditious conspiracy against them. Upon the issue of the relevant warrants in Ireland, 'parties to such conspiracy who by their overt acts or speeches in England showed that they were acting in furtherance of the seditious or rebellious objects [of the IRA in Ireland] could be arrested here [in Britain] and conveyed to Ireland for trial,' a Home Office memorandum noted.[56]

The previous day, Diarmuid O'Hegarty, the Free State director of intelligence, had told Richard Mulcahy, former IRA C/S, now the Irish army's commander-in-chief, that there existed in British cities 'a considerable number of more or less prominent Irregulars who are engaged in the purchase of arms and explosives and who have possibly other designs for activity in England'. From the point of view of both the Irish and British governments, it was imperative, he stated, that their activities be stymied.[57]

Yet, the Executive Council declined the British government's offer.[58] In February 1923, however, prompted by reports of 'a marked increase' in republican activity in Britain, it reversed its position and requested that the British authorities apprehend republican activists in Britain and deport them to Ireland for internment.[59]

Translating the British government's decisions on tackling IRA gunrunning into actions was the duty of the police. In 1919, the police in England and Wales had a membership of 56,166, divided into 129 city or borough forces, fifty-eight county constabulary forces, and two forces for the city of London. Scotland, meanwhile, was divided

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[55] Lionel Curtis to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 Sept. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3); Alex May, 'Curtis, Lionel George (1872–1955)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, online edn, May 2006, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32678 on 12 Aug. 2010

[56] The Duke of Devonshire to the Irish Governor General, 15 Dec. 1922, enclosing Home Office memorandum etc. (NAI, Dept. of the Taoiseach [D/T] file, S1753)

[57] Director of Intelligence to Commander in Chief, Irish army, 14 Dec. 1922 (UCDA, O'Malley Papers, P17a/182)

[58] Executive Council minutes, 2 Jan. 1923 (NAI, Provisional Government/Executive Council Papers, G 2/1)

[59] Ibid., 13 Jan. 1923 (NAI, Provisional Government/Executive Council Papers, G 2/1); *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), clxi, col. 1044: Home Secretary Bridgeman (12 Mar. 1923); ibid., clxi, col. 1191: Attorney General Sir Douglas Hogg (12 Mar. 1923); ibid., clxi, col. 2248: Home Secretary Bridgeman (19 Mar. 1923)

into thirty-one county and twenty-nine city and burgh forces, and had a total of 6,124 policemen.[60]

Intelligence was part of the mix. In late April 1919, the British government established a directorate of intelligence under Basil Thomson, the assistant commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police. Thomson was charged with collecting intelligence relating to 'seditious meetings and conspiracies, threatened disturbances and revolutionary movements', along with 'labour unrest', both in Britain itself and abroad. Such intelligence was then to be supplied to the cabinet in regular reports.[61] On 30 April 1919, the cabinet received its first 'Report on revolutionary organisations in the United Kingdom' from the directorate. One of the sections in this report was entitled 'SINN FEIN IN WALES', in which it was stated that a branch of Count Plunkett's Liberty League at Merthyr had now joined the Sinn Féin organisation.[62] Such reports would continue to be produced into 1924, even after the abolition of the directorate following Thomson's controversial dismissal by Lloyd George in November 1921.[63] The activities of Irish republicans became a mainstay of these reports, the information they contained being gathered by means of the local police, interception of suspects' postal correspondence, and by informers.

The police tended to take a mainly reactive policy in tackling IRA gunrunning. Action on their part was precipitated either by an actual theft of munitions or by their receiving information regarding a gunrunning operation. Such action then took the form of shadowing suspects, raiding their homes in the hope of uncovering compromising evidence, and chasing leads.

The directorate of intelligence's first mention of gunrunning was in July 1919, when the smuggling activities of Jack Tanner, a revolutionary, and the ICA in Scotland were detailed. The latter reportedly had a scheme for the smuggling of explosives from the mines to Ireland via Wigtonshire. 'As it is impossible to check the amount of explosives actually used in the mines,' the report noted, 'considerable quantities may have been stolen.'[64] Thereafter, reports of gunrunning became a regular feature. By January 1920, there was 'a steady stream' of munitions being smuggled into Ireland. The following month, Art O'Brien

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[60] *Report of His Majesty's inspectors of constabulary for the year ended the 29th September 1919* H.C. 1920 (91), 6, 28; *Annual report of Lieutenant-Colonel A. G. Ferguson, His Majesty's inspector of constabulary for Scotland, for the year ended 31st December 1919* [Cmd. 971], H.C. 1920, 1

[61] Edward Troupe, Under Secretary of State, Home Office, to ?Chief Constables, 22 Apr.; Edward Troupe to Basil Thomson, 17 Apr. 1919 (TNA, HO 144/1590/380368)

[62] RROUK, no. 1, 30 Apr. 1919 (TNA, CAB 24/78)

[63] Christopher Andrew, *The defence of the realm: the authorized history of MI5* (London, 2009), pp 119-20

[64] RROUK, no. 10, 3 July; ibid., no. 11, 10 July 1919 (TNA, CAB 24/83)

was identified as being involved in such gunrunning in the capital.[65] In March, it was reported that munitions were being smuggled via Holyhead in passengers' luggage and by fishing trawler. In May, the directorate received information that small arms and explosives were being smuggled in small quantities into Ireland from Scotland.[66] Two months later, it was reported that £500 of the £3,000 subscribed to the Dáil loan in Glasgow had been used to purchase munitions for IRA members who intended to travel to Ireland during the forthcoming Glasgow Fair holidays. Around five hundred rifles were reported to be on hand, along with ample supplies of ammunition.[67] In September, the directorate warned that Volunteers had made a 'secret survey' of several Territorial Army drill halls in Glasgow, so as to draw up plans to raid for weapons in the event of Terence MacSwiney dying on hunger-strike in London. Arms raids on Maryhill and Hamilton military barracks were also considered possible.[68]

Information provided to the police by informers could prove valuable and sometimes led to successful prosecutions. It was one way of penetrating the secretive IRA organisation.[69] Republicans themselves were aware of such penetration. We have already seen the case of John Byrnes, the spy employed by British military intelligence, who infiltrated the IRA in London in an attempt to entrap Michael Collins.[70] In June 1921, Art O'Brien claimed that a number of female members of Irish organisations in London were 'in the pay of the enemy'.[71] Moreover, as we saw in chapter 2, the O/C London, Reginald Dunne, believed that the Robinson brothers betrayed fellow members of the capital's IRA.[72]

In late 1918, the police learned that London's Sean McGrath was purchasing munitions without a permit. On 11 January 1919, two policemen observed McGrath boarding a train at Euston Station. They boarded too and alighted at Rugby after McGrath did so. There, they observed him meeting a man named William Burrows. After McGrath handed him an envelope, Burrows gave him two packages. The police then intervened and arrested both men under the Defence of the Realm Regulations (DORR). Upon examination, the packages were found to contain twelve revolvers of .32 and .38 calibres, along with one thousand rounds of ammunition for each and 13.5 kg of gunpowder. Two revolvers, a

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[65] Ibid., no. 37, 15 Jan.; ibid., no. 43, 26 Feb. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/96, 24/99)
[66] Ibid., no. 47, 25 Mar.; ibid., no. 55, 20 May 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/101, 24/106)
[67] Ibid., no. 63, 15 July 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/109)
[68] Ibid., no. 73, 23 Sept.; ibid., no. 77, 21 Oct. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/111, 24/112)
[69] Chief Constable of Glasgow to Assistant Under-Secretary for Scotland, 25 Nov. 1920 (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/62)
[70] See pp 93-4 above
[71] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 30 June 1921 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8430/17)
[72] See p. 72 above

munitions price list, a list of expenses, and a Sinn Féin membership card were found on McGrath. The envelope contained £84 13*s* 6*d*. Meanwhile, police in London raided the two men's houses and found correspondence referring to munitions deals. Pursuing a reference in one of the documents found, the house of John Murphy in Bootle, Lancashire, was also raided. There, police found about seven thousand empty cartridge cases. The following month, both McGrath and Burrows were found guilty of contravening DORR and sentenced to six months' imprisonment each.[73]

Two years later, a tip-off also led to the apprehension of some Manchester Volunteers and one of their munitions dumps. In April 1921, a number of Volunteers were arrested in connection with arson attacks in the city centre. Charles Murphy, a former member of the Belfast Volunteers, had gone to the police station to confess his participation in the attacks. He did so because he objected to arson.[74] A photograph of one of the arrested Volunteers, O/C Manchester Paddy O'Donoghue, then appeared in the newspapers. O'Donoghue had rented a garage from a woman and she, recognising him, alerted the police. They visited the garage and found a large amount of materiel. They then decided set a trap and lay in wait until the owners came to collect their armaments. On 25 May 1921, Volunteers John McGallogly and Francis Breen were arrested as they were stock-taking at the garage. They, along with some comrades, were later imprisoned after being convicted of various explosives and firearms offences.[75]

The following year, the Birmingham police laid a similar trap. At about 6 p.m. on 29 April 1922, the police mobilised at the premises of the Premier Aluminium Company, having received intelligence that anti-treaty republicans intended to raid the business for ammunition. At about 9.30 p.m., noises were heard at the front gate. Investigating, the police found one half of the gate open and boxes and bags of munitions alongside it. Apprehended as they attempted to remove more munitions from the magazine, Volunteers James Cunningham and Henry Emery were taken into an office. At 10.15 and 10.30 p.m., more Volunteers entered the factory and were similarly apprehended.[76]

Another gunrunning operation which was uncovered by police due to a tip-off or a betrayal was that which involved Volunteers in Tyneside and South Wales. Using as a cover his position as an ISDL organiser, J. P. Connolly went about procuring munitions in south

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[73] *The Times*, 29 Jan., 7 Feb. 1919

[74] Trial Transcript, part 1, pp 20-22 (TNA, Assizes [ASSI] file 52/311)

[75] BMHWS no. 244, John McGallogly, p. 20; ibid., no. 847, Patrick O'Donoghue, pp 13-14 (NAI); *The Times*, 27 May, 16 July 1921; *Manchester Guardian*, 7 June, 9 July 1921

[76] Depositions of Det. Inspt. James McCardell, Det. Sgt. Samuel Price, P.C. Oliver Knee, pp 7-8, 16-18, 19-20, (TNA, ASSI 13/52/2)

Wales. He was aided by ISDL members Michael Donoghue, David and Kate Evans, and Thomas Tierney. The munitions so gathered were then transported to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, among other places, where the Tyneside IRA, led by Richard Purcell and Gilbert Barrington, despatched them to Ireland with armaments they themselves had acquired. In October 1921, after raiding a colliery magazine, the Newcastle IRA men dumped their munitions at the house of Arnold Margetts, a man who had previously supplied the Volunteers with armaments. However, Margetts' wife informed the police and a 'spying neighbour' corroborated her story. In an attempt to mitigate the case against himself and his wife, Arnold Margetts made a full confession, naming all those involved. A police search of the Cardiff lodgings of Connolly, Donoghue and Tierney uncovered munitions and explosives, along with incriminating documentation regarding gunrunning. All involved were later tried and, except for Mrs Margetts, convicted of conspiring to contravene the Explosives Act and of possessing explosives for unlawful purposes. They each received prison sentences of between one and fourteen years, some with hard labour.[77]

On other occasions, successful prosecutions for gunrunning involved the police being at the scene when the crime was being committed. On 28 October 1920, a policeman interrupted an IRA arms raid on a Territorial Army drill hall in Bothwell, Scotland, and was beaten and shot. Four months later, seven men were charged with attempting to murder the policeman. Four were found guilty and sentenced to between eight and ten years' imprisonment.[78] In June 1920, a policeman on the premises of the Linthorpe Ironworks came face-to-face with four members of the Middlesbrough IRA, including Michael McCann, raiding for explosives. He was shot in the ear by McCann. Fleeing the scene, McCann left a travel bag full of munitions but was quickly apprehended. Subsequently, the police traced the bag to William Whelan, another Volunteer. At York Assizes, Whelan and McCann pleaded guilty to illegal possession of gelignite and were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment.[79]

In a departure from policing tradition, the threat posed by armed IRA men, epitomised by the Bothwell incident, led to ordinary policemen being issued with arms. In July 1920, despite reports of Volunteers drilling in public and of their possessing weapons, the chief constable of Dunbartonshire stated that he did 'not take a very serious view' of the IRA's

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[77] BMHWS no. 773, Gilbert Francis Barrington, p. 13 (NAI); *The Times*, 15, 29 Oct., 11, 18 Nov. 1921

[78] Scottish Office, Whitehall, to Carew-Robinson, Home Office, 20 Nov. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); BMHWS no. 828, James Byrne, p. 5; ibid., no. 777, Patrick Mills, pp 4-5 (NAI); *Manchester Guardian*, 8, 9, 10 Feb. 1921; see p. 117 below

[79] BMHWS no. 369, William Whelan, pp 9-12 (NAI); *The Times*, 13 July 1921

activities.[80] Glasgow's Prosecutor Fiscal expressed similar sentiments the following month. Hitherto, 'no outbreak of disorder' had taken place in Glasgow, and he believed that this would remain so as long as the IRA was not 'interfered with'.[81] However, outraged by the Bothwell episode two months later, the chief constable of Lanarkshire argued that the police in the area needed to be armed in order to be able to defend themselves. Although realising the momentous nature of the suggestion, the joint standing committee of Lanark County Council agreed with the chief constable and asked the Secretary for Scotland to approve the measure.[82] Permission was duly granted for the Lanarkshire police to be armed for a six-month period. In May 1921, requesting that the permission be extended, the chief constable asked that, in a departure from instructions received, detective constables be allowed carry the weapons in their pockets and take them home with them. The current regulations governing the use of arms by police necessitated that the detective collect his weapon at the station in the morning before coming on duty and return it when he went off duty. Such regulations were onerous, the chief constable argued, especially in county districts where police stations were few and detectives did not enjoy fixed hours of duty. Allowing policemen to carry their weapons in their pockets and home with them was 'absolutely necessary,' he explained, 'as the Detectives in this Constabulary are almost daily engaged in dangerous duty in making inquiries and apprehensions in connection with Sinn Fein activities'. It was 'most hazardous work'.[83]

To frustrate IRA gunrunning, colliery owners in the Felling-on-Tyne police division in Durham were encouraged to ensure the security of their explosive supplies.[84] In April 1921, twenty-six members of the Royal Navy were billeted at Addison Colliery in order to protect the government bond stores, while soldiers of the Durham Light Infantry were posted on protection duty at the electric power station and flour mills in Dunston.[85] In May 1921, the explosives and detonators belonging to the majority of the collieries and magazines were hidden in the mines or safely secured elsewhere. In the case of two other businesses which made use of explosives in their work, the police took possession of the keys where the

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[80] Chief Constable of Dunbartonshire to the Under Secretary for Scotland, 5 July 1920 (NAS, First World War Files, HH31/34/19)
[81] Report by Deputy Prosecutor Fiscal of Glasgow, on hostile propaganda, 20 Aug. 1920 (NAS, First World War Files, HH31/34/20)
[82] County Clerk, County Council of Lanark, to Under-Secretary for Scotland, 8 Nov. 1920, enclosing Chief Constable's report and newspaper clipping (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/465)
[83] Chief Constable of Lanarkshire to Under Secretary for Scotland, 5, 11 May 1921 (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/465)
[84] Superintendent of Felling-on-Tyne to Chief Constable of Durham, 12, 27 Apr. 1921 (Tyne & Wear Archives [TWA], Police Records, T148/5[256, 301])
[85] Ibid., 17, 18 Apr. 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[262, 263, 268])

munitions were stored and arrangements were made for a sergeant to distribute the explosives when necessary.[86] Police also monitored retailers of chemicals with a view to uncovering orders by people from Ireland.[87] Following the arrest of J. P. Connolly in October 1921, 'diligent and discreet' inquiries were made in an effort to uncover IRA gunrunners in the area. Postmasters were asked to check their records to see if any communications had passed through their hands on the subject of gunrunning or munitions, but no such communications were uncovered.[88]

Police seizures of munitions during the post-treaty and civil war periods meant that only a fraction of the materiel which republicans procured in Britain actually reached their comrades in Ireland.[89] In February 1922, 304.8 kg of explosives was found hidden in the back courts and ashbins of Glasgow's East End.[90] The following December, on board a small steamer plying between Liverpool and Ireland, Merseyside police and customs uncovered twelve thousand rounds of ammunition hidden in putty kegs, along with chemicals used in the manufacture of explosives.[91] In April 1923, Glasgow police uncovered 50.9 kg of gelignite and 24.7 m of fuse hidden inside the Balgray railway tunnel.[92]

Of course, the police were not alone in trying to prevent IRA gunrunning. They were aided by customs officials at ports both in Britain and Ireland. On one occasion, the intervention of an official on Liverpool docks thwarted Paddy Daly's attempt to smuggle rifles aboard a ship bound for Ireland. In another incident, munitions were found in the room of James Creaney, another gunrunning seaman. On 29 November 1921, officials in Liverpool discovered ten Thompson sub-machine guns, fourteen box magazines, fourteen revolvers and automatics, and one Remington rifle on the *S.S. Baltic* out of New York.[93] In Ireland, customs officials were aided in their work by members of the RIC.[94] In October 1921, Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told the House of Commons that while the IRA had probably succeeded in smuggling arms into Ireland since 11 July, in contravention

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[86] Ibid., 18, 21 May, 9 Nov. 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[378, 385, 796, 798])
[87] Ibid., 2 Dec. 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[840])
[88] Ibid., 18 Oct. 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[762])
[89] C/S to O/C Britain, 30 Jan. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/3746)
[90] *The Times*, 21 Feb. 1922
[91] Ibid., 6 Dec. 1922
[92] Ibid., 10 Apr. 1923
[93] See pp 138-9 above
[94] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxlvii, cols 210-13 (20 Oct.); ibid., cols. 1314-16 (31 Oct.); ibid., cols 1904-07 (3 Nov. 1921)

of the terms of the truce, the work of customs officials ensured that it was not on a large scale.[95]

During the civil war, however, the performance of British customs came in for criticism. Andy Cope, the British government's liaison with the Free State government, instanced two cases where ships cleared by customs in Britain were found to have munitions hidden aboard upon arrival in Ireland. In Sligo, twenty-five rifles and a quantity of ammunition were found on the *S.S. Carrickfergus* from Liverpool. 'It is obvious that the conflict must end if the supplies are cut off and as the Irregulars still have good supplies the Customs must be missing the concealments,' he complained.[96] The War Office declared that the *Carrickfergus* incident constituted a 'grave irregularity' on the part of both the ship's captain and the Liverpool harbour authorities.[97]

Fearful of IRA men purloining munitions from their barracks, the British army also instituted counter-measures. In April 1921, the commanders of the Durham brigade group ordered that those who were applying for admission to the army were to be kept under close watch. Anyone whose behaviour aroused suspicion was to be discharged immediately and the police were to be notified.[98] The following day, a list of 'SINN FEIN RUSES' was drawn up in order to put soldiers on their guard against attempts by Irish republicans to illicitly gain entry to army barracks. 'All efforts or approaches by anyone should be looked upon with suspicion, whether dressed in uniform (Naval or Military) or plain clothes,' the circular stated, for 'Sinn Feiners are first class masqueraders.' Volunteers might assume a number of disguises, soldiers were warned, including that of an army officer, soldier, policeman, postman, telegraph messenger, civilian or military doctor, clergyman, Red Cross nurse, or someone delivering provisions. Bicyclists might be Volunteers on reconnaissance missions. Soldiers were also warned to be wary of people wearing soft hats, trench coats, 'anyone wearing a gilt ring about the size of a 6d piece in their button holes, or a combination of the colours green, white and yellow', along with people who had their hands in their pockets. They were enjoined to refuse all refreshments and food offered by persons unknown to them. Vehicles were to be approached with caution, as they could be used as sniping positions.[99]

As we have seen, in July 1922 the British government agreed to the a request from the Provisional Government that the Royal Navy patrol the Irish Sea so as to intercept vessels

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[95] Ibid., cxlvii, col. 1315 (31 Oct. 1921)
[96] Telegram, Andy Cope to Mark Sturgis, 3.53 p.m., 29 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[97] B. B. Cubbit to Secretary to the Admiralty, 17 Aug. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/11)
[98] Circular by Lieut. Colonel A. T. Brooke, 14 Apr. 1921 (Durham County Record Office [DCRO], Durham Light Infantry Papers, D/DLI2/6/549[8])
[99] 'SINN FEIN RUSES', 15 Apr. 1921 (DCRO, Durham Light Infantry Papers, D/DLI2/6/551)

supplying the IRA in Ireland with munitions from Britain.[100] By 25 July, Royal Navy patrols consisted of twenty-three ships: eleven destroyers, five mine-sweepers, four trawlers, and three light cruisers.[101] By the end of the month, patrols had stopped and searched ten larger ships and 'a large number' of fishing vessels.[102] Two months later, the force had been reduced to nine destroyers, five mine-sweepers, four trawlers and three light cruisers.[103] On one occasion, a mine-sweeper, the *Bodminton*, came under fire while it was patrolling four hundred yards off-shore at Lackeen, county Kerry. One sailor was wounded and the ship returned fire.[104]

The effectiveness of these patrols was doubted. The Admiralty repeatedly requested permission to reduce the number of ships on patrol, apparently in the belief that little gunrunning was actually taking place.[105] Seemingly, only three ships were found to be smuggling munitions.[106] The Provisional Government, on the other hand, believed that the patrols were 'not doing much good', for the IRA was still receiving munitions from Britain through southern ports.[107] Lionel Curtis agreed. He held that republican gunrunning did not involve ships cleared at recognised ports. Rather, he had 'no doubt' but that 'the munitions obtained by the rebels are introduced [into Ireland] in small craft and fishing boats landed at creeks', instancing the Volunteers' landing of weapons at Howth using Erskine Childers' yacht in July 1914. He, therefore, proposed that arrangements be put in place for the searching of such vessels for a period of one month.[108] Three months later, frustrated by the British navy's inability to halt IRA gunrunning, the Provisional Government proposed that they themselves might employ 'armed trawlers' to tackle the problem.[109]

In the summer of 1922, without informing the British authorities, the Provisional Government sent an agent, Arthur Nolan, to Glasgow to stymie IRA gunrunning. A certain amount of embarrassment ensued when an over-enthusiastic Nolan and an accomplice were found by British police on the Glasgow to Liverpool train having relieved republicans of ownership of a machine gun, twenty-seven automatic pistols, a revolver, and hundreds of

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[100] See pp 208-09 above
[101] Secretary to the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 25 July 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3)
[102] Telegram, Mark Sturgis to Andy Cope, 29 July 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3)
[103] Secretary to the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 16 Sept. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3)
[104] Telegram, Andy Cope to Winston Churchill, 3.58 p.m., 30 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[105] Secretary to the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 25 July, 2 Aug., 16 Sept.; Lionel Curtis to the Secretary of State, 21 Sept., 2 Oct. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3)
[106] Secretary to the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 25 July (TNA, CO 739/3); telegram, Andy Cope to Mark Sturgis, 3.53 p.m., 29 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[107] Telegram, Andy Cope to Mark Sturgis, 12.19 p.m., 31 July 1922 (TNA, CO 906/21)
[108] Lionel Curtis to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 Sept. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3)
[109] Admiralty to L. B. Freeston, Colonial Office, 2 Nov. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/3)

thousands of rounds of ammunition.[110] Subsequently, the Irish authorities co-operated with the British police in attempting to frustrate republican gunrunning. By early 1923, at least two Free State agents were in operating Liverpool, H. Conroy and H. Short, one in London, F. Saurin, and one in Glasgow, M. O'Callaghan.[111] Liaising with the local police, they shadowed republicans and attempted to uncover their involvement in munitions smuggling and other criminal activity. An agent in Liverpool informed Dublin that Catherine Furlong, a member of the city's Cumann na mBan, 'works in close association with the Irregulars in England and Ireland', was involved in the dissemination of anti-Free State propaganda, and aided the IRA in Ireland both financially and otherwise. In order to learn more, the agent persuaded a woman to join the Cumann na mBan and report back to him on its activities. He thereby ascertained that Furlong also worked as a 'clerk to the Gun-running Section'.[112] Margaret Leonard and Mary Finan were judged to have been 'extremely active' in getting the Liverpool Cumann na mBan to adopt a hostile attitude towards the Free State government and to co-operate with the anti-treaty IRA. Subsequently, during the civil war, Leonard was actively involved in gun-smuggling.[113] Maura Lively was also heavily concerned with gunrunning. 'It is well known that ammunition is collected in Liverpool for despatch to Ireland and that members of Cumann na mBan assist the men in transferring the parcels from dump to dump,' noted Diarmuid O'Hegarty.[114]

O'Hegarty stated that the arrest of 110 republicans throughout Britain on 11 March was ordered only after 'careful consideration' of the information relating to each individual. The intelligence gathered by agents in Britain and the documents seized from suspects upon being arrested provided 'abundant evidence of a widespread conspiracy to import munitions of war into Ireland'. The conspiracy had been successful in that 'thousands of rounds of ammunition, machine guns, revolvers, pistols, wireless apparatus and explosive materials in large quantities' were smuggled to the IRA in Ireland. In this work, the gunrunners were aided by the Cumann na mBan, by Art O'Brien's ISDL, and by Sinn Féin clubs. Such aid took the form of money to buy the munitions, facilities to store them, and people willing to carry them to Ireland.[115]

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[110] Telegram, Andy Cope to Mark Sturgis, 5.37 p.m., 11 Aug.; 'G.G.W.' to James Masterton Smith, 12 Aug. 1922 (TNA, CO 739/6)
[111] Director of Intelligence to Minister for External Affairs, 3 Apr. 1923 (NAI, Department of Foreign Affairs file: Provisional Govt./IFS: 141(3): section D5 no. 4)
[112] Diarmuid O'Hegarty to Colonel Carter, 10 Apr. 1923 (TNA, HO 144/2865)
[113] Ibid., 1 May 1923 (TNA, HO 144/2904)
[114] Ibid.
[115] Diarmuid O'Hegarty to President Cosgrave, 3 Apr. 1923 (NAI, D/T S2156)

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Of all the activities of the IRA in Britain, it was its mounting of terrorist outrages that most alarmed the British government. On 29 November, one day after the Merseyside arson attacks, the cabinet met to discuss the protection of government buildings. The attacks underlined the importance of the issue, for it demonstrated that 'the Sinn Feiners had definitely decided to carry their war of outrage into England ...'. The cabinet was told that Irishmen in Britain were manufacturing bombs and that thirty thousand detonators had been stolen from mines in Scotland during the recent miners' strike. Ministers concluded that the public galleries in the House of Commons should be closed.[116] On 6 December, it was resolved that special precautions were necessary to protect the principal government offices, especially the House of Commons. A committee under the Home Secretary was therefore appointed to make arrangements for such security measures as well as for the protection of ministers and of officials 'threatened by the present menacing attitude of the Sinn Feiners'.[117] In the meantime, the cabinet contemplated offering 'large rewards' for information from the public on 'Sinn Fein emissaries and activities' in Britain. It was felt that such information was 'more likely to be forthcoming now than after the Sinn Feiners might have established some degree of terror among timid people'.[118]

Prior to this, the cabinet had received periodic warnings of the likelihood of such terrorism from the directorate of intelligence. As early as June 1919, a report cautioned that arson attacks 'after the manner of militant suffragettes' were being planned by the Gaelic League.[119] In December, certain Irishmen were reportedly contemplating a campaign of 'armed outrage'.[120] 'It is thought that the Sinn Feiners in England may have resource to outrage before long,' the directorate reiterated in January 1920.[121] The following month, the organisation's Glasgow correspondent considered 'outrages' likely in the event of violence increasing in Ireland or a general strike being called Britain, for the republicans in the city were in a 'dangerous' mood.[122] In March, however, the prospect of a 'Sinn Fein rising' in Britain was thought unlikely as republicans would have little to gain by such an event.[123] Irish terrorism in Liverpool was also considered improbable due to the large number of

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[116] Cabinet conclusions, 29 Nov. 1920, 12 noon meeting (TNA, CAB 23/38)
[117] Ibid., 6 Dec. 1920, 5 p.m. meeting (TNA, CAB 23/23)
[118] Ibid., 1 Dec. 1920, 11.30 a.m. meeting (TNA, CAB 23/23)
[119] RROUK, no. 9, 26 June 1919 (TNA, CAB 24/82)
[120] Ibid., no. 32, 4 Dec. 1919 (TNA, CAB 24/94)
[121] Ibid., no. 36, 9 Jan. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/96)
[122] Ibid., no. 40, 5 Feb. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/97)
[123] Ibid., no. 47, 25 Mar. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/101)

Orangemen in the area.[124] Yet, in early November, it was reported that 'reprisals' were being threatened in revenge for the British government allowing Terence MacSwiney to die on hunger strike.[125] Two weeks later, the directorate argued that the seizure of IRA documents in Dublin detailing plans to attack the Liverpool docks and a Manchester power station 'may prove to be the death blow to the murder gang in Ireland'.[126] Three days later, however, the IRA set alight warehouses in Liverpool and Bootle and attempted to do the same in London, leading the intelligence service to note glumly that 'The week-end saw the beginning of what is apparently an attempt to carry out the Sinn Fein campaign of arson and murder in this country'.[127]

The government's main innovatory policy response to the terrorist threat was to deport suspect individuals to Ireland for internment without trial. While a number of suspected terrorists were brought to trial, a significant number were subject to deportation and internment. On 30 November 1920, fearful that Glasgow might soon experience an IRA terrorist attack akin to that which occurred on Merseyside a few days earlier, the city's Prosecutor Fiscal bemoaned the fact that although the police had 'authentic information' on Irish revolutionary activity, it was not of a standard sufficient to satisfy a court. Therefore, 'other means' would have to be found to deal with the threat. He proposed that the British government follow the lead of Dublin Castle in arresting and interning Irish leaders. Such 'Sinn Féiners' in Britain, 'equally with their Irish associates, are levying war against this country, and against the Executive Government of Ireland,' he noted.

> They are instigating the disorders in Ireland, supporting the Irish Republican Army with money, arms and ammunition, and I apprehend even supplying them with men. It is beyond all question that Republican troops are in this city with the avowed object of taking part in hostile operations, both in Ireland and here [in Scotland].

From the point of view of both the law-abiding British citizen who might fall victim to an IRA attack and the police in Ireland who were attempting to impose law and order, such a situation was 'intolerable'. The 'most active Sinn Feiners' in Glasgow, therefore, should be arrested, deported to Ireland and interned there. A similar policy was recommended for Liverpool, London, and Manchester. Such arrests would cow rank and file republicans and render harmless the whole outfit.[128] Basil Thomson agreed, stating that arrests on the basis of

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[124] Ibid., no. 50, 15 Apr. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/103)
[125] Ibid., no. 79, 6 Nov. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/114)
[126] Ibid., no. 81, 18 Nov. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/115); see p. 163 above
[127] RROUK, not numbered, 28 Nov.; ibid., no. 83, 2 Dec. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/115, 24/116)
[128] Report of the Prosecutor Fiscal of Glasgow, 'Operations of Sinn Fein Organisation within the City', 30 Nov. 1920 (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/69)

suspicion were justified in circumstances where definite evidence linking Irishmen with terrorist incidents was absent. The police already possessed the names and addresses of all the leading members of the ISDL, a body 'which has now definitely thrown in its lot with the extreme Sinn Fein movement'.[129]

The first such deportations occurred a few weeks later, in mid-December 1920, when a number of people were arrested on Merseyside in connection with the previous month's arson attacks. While the intelligence service was certain that the arrested men were responsible for the outrage, 'there is not sufficient evidence to convince a Court'. Therefore, 'As in the [world] war, internment appears to be the only solution'. Around twenty people were deported to Ireland and interned, a development which reportedly had 'a very sobering effect' upon republicans in Britain.[130] In February 1921, London's Sean McGrath suffered similar treatment. The directorate of intelligence had 'no doubt' that, with McGrath's approval or involvement, a section of the ISDL was communicating with the IRA in Ireland and mounting attacks in England. It later claimed that McGrath's internment also had the effect of disconcerting Irish agitators in Britain.[131] More arrests and deportations occurred on Merseyside the following month.[132] In April, Fintan Murphy, Art O'Brien's office manager, was deported. The following month, Murphy's successor as manager, C. B. Dutton, was one of at least six people deported to Ireland and interned. The others included the Carr brothers, the London gunrunners.[133] Around the same time, Liverpool's Edward Brady was interned in Dublin's Mountjoy prison.[134] On 7 July, the directorate claimed to have received information that the IRA in Britain had planned terrorist attacks to take place that week. However, the internment of Volunteers had upset such plans. Overall, such deportations had 'a very marked effect' on IRA terrorism in England, the intelligence service claimed.[135]

Deportation and internment was also employed against anti-treaty republicans during the civil war. On 11 March 1923, 110 people were arrested in a co-ordinated action in London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow.[136] Intelligence reported that these deportations had disrupted the IRA 'at a very critical moment', for they had been 'gathering together their

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[129] Director of Intelligence to the Home Secretary, 2 Dec. 1920 (TNA, HO 317/48)
[130] RROUK, no. 83, 2 Dec. 1920; ibid., no. 88, 13 Jan. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/116, 24/118); Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 33; BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 47-8 (NAI)
[131] RROUK, no. 90, 27 Jan.; ibid., no. 94, 24 Feb.; ibid., no. 96, 10 Mar. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/118, 24/120)
[132] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 43
[133] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 7 Apr., 19, 26 May 1921 (NAI, DE 2/329, 2/330); RROUK, no. 106, 19 May 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/123)
[134] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 122-3
[135] RROUK, no. 113, 7 July 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/126)
[136] *The Times*, 13 Mar. 1923

forces so as to put their full weight behind the blow to be struck against the Free State this Spring ...'.[137] The Home Secretary, meanwhile, declared that the authorities had evidence proving the existence in Britain of 'a quasi-military organisation' which intended 'in certain contingencies to resort to acts of violence in this country [i.e. Britain] in pursuance of their unlawful aims'.[138]

All these arrests and deportations were carried out under regulation 14b of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act 1920 (ROIA). The regulation stated that if, 'on the recommendation of a competent naval or military authority or of one of the Advisory Committees', the Home Secretary believed that 'the restoration or maintenance of order in Ireland' was being menaced by 'a person who is suspected of acting, or having acted, or being about to act, in a manner prejudicial to the restoration or maintenance of order in Ireland', then he 'may by order require that person forthwith or from time to time either to remain in or to proceed to and reside in such place as may be specified in the order and to comply with such directions as to reporting to the police, restriction of movement, and otherwise as may be specified in the order'.[139] In March 1923, Art O'Brien, interned in Mountjoy jail, applied to the Divisional Court in London for a writ of habeas corpus in order to challenge the legality of the deportations. Following the failure of two requests, he appealed to the Court of Appeal. The court ruled that the British government's powers under ROIA to intern people in the territory of the Free State had been implicitly repealed by the passage through Westminster of the Irish Free State Constitution Act, the legislation which officially established the Free State in December 1922. Therefore, the arrests, deportations, and internments of March 1923 were illegal. The Law Lords confirmed the judgement by declining to hear the British government's appeal against the ruling.[140] Released, the internees returned to Britain in mid-May.[141]

Prior to this, there had been some doubt about the advisability of the government employing ROIA to intern in Ireland people living in Britain. While he advocated such deportations as a means of breaking the IRA's terrorist campaign in England, Basil Thomson believed that special legislation would have to be drawn up to authorise internment under ROIA.[142] However, the government believed otherwise, with the Home Secretary stating that

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[137] RROUK, no. 198, 22 Mar. 1923 (TNA, CAB 24/159)
[138] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), clxi, col. 1044 (12 Mar. 1923)
[139] *The Times*, 10 May 1923; *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), clxi, col. 1189: Home Secretary Bridgeman (12 Mar. 1923)
[140] *The Times*, 24 Mar., 11 Apr., 10, 15 May 1923
[141] Ibid., 14, 18 May 1923
[142] Director of Intelligence to the Home Secretary, 2 Dec. 1920 (TNA, HO 317/48)

'existing powers', including those under the wartime Defence of the Realm Act, were 'sufficient' to deal with the IRA in Britain.[143] Nevertheless, in June 1921, the cabinet was advised that 'in the opinion of the law officers, regulation 14B of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Regulations is *ultra vires*, so far as it purports to authorize internment and treatment as prisoners of war outside Ireland'.[144] Despite these doubts, however, the British government continued to use ROIA to deport people from Britain.

In May 1923, in order to protect the Home Secretary from being personally sued by the released internees following the Court of Appeal's judgement, the government passed an indemnity act. The act also established an Irish Deportees Compensation Tribunal to compensate the internees for the indignity they had endured. By March 1924, those deported from England had between them received £37,041 17*s* 2*d* and those from Scotland £17,098 14*s* 10*d*, though costs had yet to be settled. Art O'Brien received £441, Sean McGrath £210 5*s*, Liam McMahon £836, and Joseph Robinson £415.[145]

Of course, the internment of suspected terrorists was based on police work. As in their reaction to IRA gunrunning, in dealing with the Volunteers' seven-and-a-half-month long campaign of terrorism, the police took an approach that had both proactive and reactive elements.

On 5 December 1920, a week after the IRA arson attacks in Liverpool, the superintendent of Felling-on-Tyne informed the chief constable of Durham of the arrangements he had taken to deal with the 'SINN FEIN MOVEMENT'. He had alerted his inspectors and sergeants to the possible threat. He ordered that they instruct the men under their command to take note of strangers in the area. Where unknown, their nationalities were to be ascertained. If such strangers acted suspiciously, they were to be shadowed. The superintendent was to be informed of the discovery of anything unusual. 'I have given instructions for strict attention to [be] paid, [sic] to all public buildings, warehouses & factories', he noted, 'and most especially to Motor Cars containing strangers who might be seen on their [i.e. the policemen's] respective beats.' Sergeants were to report daily to the superintendent on the issue.[146] The police were already monitoring labour unrest and radical political agitation, recording instances of 'seditious speech', 'revolutionary propaganda', and

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[143] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxxv, col. 1234 (1 Dec. 1920)
[144] Memo to cabinet, 'INTERNMENT OF IRISH REBELS', 25 June 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/125)
[145] G. Stewart King to H. R. Scott, Home Office, 5 Mar. 1924 (TNA, HO 144/7583)
[146] Superintendent of Felling-on-Tyne Division to Chief Constable of Durham, 5 Dec. 1920 (TWA, Police Records, T148/4[922])

various radical organisations.[147] Their reaction to the threat posed by Irish republicans, therefore, was of a part with their reaction to subversion in general.

Along with strangers, local residents of Irish nationality, who numbered around 3,500, were also kept under observation by the Felling-on-Tyne police.[148] In mounting such operations, 'care, discretion, and tact' were enjoined on the rank and file policemen.[149] On occasion, investigations were mounted into the movements of specific individuals, usually people associated with the ISDL.[150] In late May 1921, it was resolved to draw up a list of 'Sinn Féin' suspects. The homes of such suspects were to be put under surveillance, thus allowing the police to monitor their movements.[151]

In an attempt to prevent IRA terrorist attacks, likely targets were kept under observation, including railway stations, bridges, collieries, farms, and railway signal boxes.[152] The police discussed the threat of attacks with the managers of a number of business concerns, including shipbuilders, paint manufacturers, tool manufacturers, flour mills, electrical power stations, and collieries. Except for the collieries, all had a number of dedicated watchmen on their premises. The colliery managers stated that they had workmen on their premises at all times who effectively fulfilled the task of watchmen. Arrangements were made for the police to assist.[153] By July 1921, most collieries had put in place adequate security arrangements.[154] Other precautions taken included advising fuel stations that sales of petrol and benzole 'should be restricted to a minimum during the present emergency'.[155]

As we saw earlier, fear that the IRA might attempt to assassinate prominent politicians led the cabinet to authorise increased protection for public buildings.[156] Policemen were detailed to patrol inside twenty-eight government buildings in London. The patrols varied in strength according to the size of the building and the likelihood of attacks being mounted there. Thus, the Ministry of Finance building was patrolled by one police constable, the Foreign Office two, 10 Downing St. three, the Home Office four, and the Palace of Westminster by between two and 141. In March 1921, a total of 218 policemen were involved in such work. Some of the policemen were armed and wore plain clothes. As well as

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[147] Ibid., 15, 29 May 1921, 13 Mar. 1922 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[367, 413, 1000])
[148] Ibid., 7, 31 Dec. 1920 (TWA, Police Records, T148/4[924, 980])
[149] Ibid., 30 May, 23, 25 Nov. 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[415, 825, 830])
[150] Ibid., 10 Dec. 1920 (TWA, Police Records, T148/4[931])
[151] Ibid., 30 May 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[415])
[152] Ibid., 26 Dec. 1920, 18 Apr., 1, 29 June 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/4[966], T148/5[266, 425, 525])
[153] Ibid., 31 Dec. 1920, 11 May 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/4[980], T148/5[351])
[154] Ibid., 14 July 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[566-70])
[155] Ibid., 12 Apr. 1921 (TWA, Police Records, T148/5[243])
[156] See p. 219 above

patrolling, the policemen were charged with searching ministers' offices each morning after they had been cleaned. A telephone providing a direct connection to New Scotland Yard was installed in each ministry for use in emergencies .The patrols declined in strength during the truce, and were finally suspended in early 1922, following the Dáil's ratification of the treaty. The total cost of such protection was £51,887 8*s* 3*d*.[157] At the Palace of Westminster, in addition to such patrols, members of the public were excluded from the galleries and the outer lobby. 'Some very old frequenters of the House [of Commons] were at a loss to remember a precedent for so severe a measure of precaution,' reported *The Times*, but the arrangements were 'criticised by no one'. Also, preparations were made for the wooden barrier in front of the prime minister's residence to be replaced with an iron gate.[158]

The police were also charged with forming personal bodyguards for government ministers and other prominent politicians, including Sir Henry Wilson. As with the patrols of public buildings, these bodyguards were removed after the signing of the treaty. However, the assassination of Wilson in June 1922 led to their reinstitution. Special Branch protection was then extended to members of the Northern Ireland government and their associates while in Britain, along with visiting foreign dignitaries such as Marshal Foch and the King of Serbia.[159]

In the (mistaken) belief that the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Britain were recent arrivals from Ireland, it was periodically proposed that travel between the two countries be subject to greater scrutiny. In June 1921, strict passport controls were suggested. However, the Home Secretary stated that he did not have the power to institute such a system. Moreover, he believed that the availability of many means of travel between the two countries would render ineffective any attempt to establish strict control. However, he assured the House of Commons in June 1921 that 'special steps' were being taken 'to discover assassins and other undesirables coming from Ireland'.[160]

One year later, in the aftermath of Sir Henry Wilson's assassination, the chief constable of the London Metropolitan Police suggested that the police 'might make a scrutiny

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[157] Returns showing number of police employed inside government buildings, n.d.; Inspector Sriffen to ?Home Office, 5 Dec. 1920; Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 14 Mar.; ?CuwBalloward to Johnson, 27 July 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/298); 'Note dictated by the Home Secretary', n.d., but c. Aug. 1922 (Parliamentary Archives, House of Lords [PAHL], David Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/45/6/42)

[158] *The Times*, 30 Nov., 2 Dec. 1920

[159] Minutes of cabinet meeting, 11 a.m., 23 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255); A. F. Moslau to Commissioner of Police, 19 Oct. 1922 (TNA, MEPO 2/1974); 'Note dictated by the Home Secretary' (PAHL, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/45/6/42)

[160] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxliii, cols 581-2 (16 June 1921)

of the persons arriving by passenger or cargo boat'. He did not believe that such measures would uncover gunmen, but it might act as a deterrent on their attempting to make the journey. Moreover, it would calm the public.[161] Like their colleagues south of the border, the Scottish chief constables too believed that very few Irish gunmen were arriving in Britain from Ireland. Nevertheless, policemen stationed at landing places kept a close eye on new arrivals. 'In Glasgow and Greenock the republican organisations were well known', the chief constables held, 'so that any suspicious person arriving and joining them would easily be kept under watch.'[162]

Another proactive measure designed to frustrate the IRA's mounting of terrorist attacks in the London area involved the police organising road blocks. At a Home Office conference in June 1921, it was decided to construct special posts at the boundary where the roads leading out of the capital crossed into the Home Counties. Each post would consist of five or six policemen. By means of ropes or poles the road would be narrowed, thus forcing motorists to slow down. Between 9 and 10.30 p.m. each night, such a set-up would allow the police to monitor the traffic leaving London. After the latter time, the traffic in both directions would be affected: 'Cars will be stopped, their number taken and licences seen, and their business discretely ascertained'. Should the necessity of a pursuit arise, motor cycles could be used. So as to avoid too close proximity of posts, their locations would be co-ordinated by the various constabularies. Also, their locations would vary, so as to ensure an element of surprise for motorists. Moreover, it was suggested that police patrols might operate between the barriers.[163]

Arrangements for the erecting of the barriers were then made. Superintendent Brennan of Croydon division, Metropolitan Police, travelled to Guilford, Surrey. There, he was told that the number of roads radiating from the capital into Surrey and the small number of policemen available made the erection of such barriers impractical. However, Brennan noted that many of these roads converged in the London area, providing suitable locations for police barriers. Five such 'blocking points' were chosen, each to be manned by at least four armed and uniformed policemen. The Surrey police offered to patrol the roads on bicycles, keeping in contact with the London police, 'and that is as much as they could do'. The

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[161] Chief Constable of Greenock to John Lamb, 6 July 1922, enclosing report of meeting of chief constables of England on 28 June and report of meeting of chief constables of Scotland on 4 July 1922 (NAS, Police Services General Files, HH55/67)

[162] Ibid.

[163] 'Minutes of a Conference held at the Home Office at 11.0 a.m. on the 10th June, 1921, on the methods of dealing with Sinn Fein outrages' (TNA, HO 144/4645)

employment of special constables was not recommended, as they were judged hopeless for the task.[164]

In total, thirty-seven barriers, employing 149 policemen, were erected inside the Metropolitan area.[165] However, these security arrangements failed to prevent attacks on London's railway infrastructure in the latter half of June. This may have been due to motorists' habit of warning each other of the upcoming obstruction.[166] 'London is now getting a dose of Sinn Fein,' Sir Hamar Greenwood observed to the prime minister. 'In my opinion, it will get more, and modern police methods won't meet medieval sabotage.'[167] Nevertheless, the intelligence service held that such barriers had 'a very marked effect' on the IRA's terrorist plans.[168] On 12 July, the day after the truce came into effect, the barriers and patrols were suspended.[169]

As well as such proactive policies, the police also took a reactive approach in tackling terrorism. In response to the attacks of November 1920, police in Liverpool, London and Glasgow raided the addresses of people and organisations known or suspected of being connected with the republican movement. Offices of the ISDL and the INF were searched, as were private houses.[170] These raids uncovered documents which revealed that Art O'Brien had supplied money for the importation of weapons into Ireland from Germany.[171] Meanwhile, those in Glasgow led to the discovery a large batch of explosives in a car being driven from the city by two Volunteers, Henry Coyle and Charles McGinn. The consignment amounted to 152.4 kg of gelignite and samsonite explosives in cake form, three hundred detonators, two rifles, two bayonets, and three revolvers.[172] One of those arrested on Merseyside was Neil Kerr Snr. It was 'almost inevitable' that Kerr's house would be raided, John Pinkman later wrote, given that he was 'a well-known Sinn Féiner and one of the leading lights among Irish nationalists in Liverpool'. In the house, as well as uncovering incriminating documents linking Kerr to the arson attacks, including receipts for bolt-cutters used to break the warehouse locks, police also found a Volunteer named James McCaughey

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[164] Superintendent 'Z' Division, London Metropolitan Police, to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, 11 June 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/465)
[165] 'SUMMARY of Superintendents' reports showing the positions of barriers, and the number of men manning each ...', 13 June 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/465)
[166] Superintendent 'Y' Division, London Metropolitan Police, to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, 12 June 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/465)
[167] Sir Hamar Greenwood to David Lloyd George, 9 June 1921 (PAHL, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/19/5/1)
[168] RROUK, no. 113, 7 July 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/126)
[169] Telegram, 'A.C.A.' to Superintendents of 'A' to 'Z' Divisions, London Metropolitan Police, 12 July 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/465)
[170] *Irish Times*, 1 Dec.; *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Dec; *The Times*, 2, 3, 4 Dec. 1920
[171] RROUK, no. 85, 16 Dec. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/117)
[172] Ibid., no. 84, 9 Dec. 1920 (TNA, CAB 24/116)

wearing an IRA uniform. Both were arrested and, along with six others, charged initially with conspiracy to set fires.[173]

Raids such as these became the standard police response to an IRA attack. On 2 January, a policeman approached a group of men acting suspiciously near a granary in Salford. The party immediately dispersed, but the policeman soon caught up with two members hurrying towards the canal tow-path. The two agreed to accompany him to the station for questioning, but suddenly made to escape. When the constable grabbed the collar of one of the suspects, he was shot through the wrist and in the chest. 'The police had been aware for some time' that Patrick Flynn, a Wandsworth resident, was '... a member of the Republican Army', explained *The Times*. Searching Flynn's house, the police found bullets in the waistcoat pocket of one of the four men living there. They also uncovered a patrol tin and photographs of members of the IRA. All four were arrested and charged initially with acting in a manner prejudicial to public safety in contravention of DORR.[174]

On 2 April 1921, while making enquiries about the arson attacks which had taken place in Manchester city centre earlier that day, the police called at the Irish Club on Erskine St., Hulme, an obvious port of call. After exchanging shots with the occupants, causing the death of an IRA man, the police arrested sixteen people and uncovered a large haul of munitions, including revolvers, ammunition, gelignite, and over five thousand percussion caps.[175]

A few hours after Sir Henry Wilson's assassination on 22 June 1922, the cabinet was told that the police had about thirty 'dangerous Irishmen' under surveillance in London. Though these suspects were mainly engaged in propaganda work for the ISDL and seemed to be unconnected with the Volunteers, the cabinet authorised searches of their lodgings and arrests in the event of munitions or 'anything else specially suspicious' being uncovered. That night, the police raided houses in Brixton, Paddington and Bayswater, and uncovered a quantity of arms and incendiary fuses. Sixteen people were arrested.[176]

By facilitating the requisition of documents and arrest of suspects, such raids allowed the police to gather evidence on the republican movement in Britain. Due to his prominence, Art O'Brien's offices and lodgings were raided on a number of occasions. His stenographer described one such raid on 5 April 1921:

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[173] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 40-41; *The Times*, 30 Dec. 1920

[174] Chief Constable of Salford to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 18 Oct. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); *The Times*, 3, 4 Jan. 1921

[175] *The Times*, 4 Apr.; *Manchester Guardian*, 5 Apr. 1921; 'LIST OF AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES FOUND AT THE IRISH CLUB, ERSKINE STREET, HULME' (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[176] Cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255); *The Times*, 24 June 1922

> At about 11.15 a.m. six police officers called here and said they had come to pay us another visit. One of them, Inspector Cosgrave, read a long statement to [O'Brien's office manager] Mr. [Fintan] Murphy, which was an order for his detention for seven days, under some Emergency Act, and stating that, if at the end of seven days, it did not appear necessary to detain him, and that evidence had again been produced in his favour, he might again be released. When asked if there was any charge, he said that there was none. He asked if he might wait until the arrival of the clerk, in order not to leave me alone, but though they allowed him to wait some little time, they took him away before Liam's arrival. Two officers left with him, and the other four made a detailed search of the premises, leaving no stone unturned, in the hope, I believe, of finding something of a startling and incriminating nature. They seemed both surprised and disappointed at the result of their work. They even tried to look behind the gas fires. They were quite polite and not in any way offensive, but they were very determined and anxious to do their work thoroughly. Most of the files, which had been taken away before [i.e. in a previous raid], were this time left untouched. They made the entire lot [of other files] into three paper parcels and one of them went for a taxi in which they departed. They already knew my name but they asked Liam for his and took it down. I was not allowed to answer the telephone and they insisted on seeing all callers. ... I answered the telephone once while they were here, but it was a call from Scotland Yard and I was instructed that I was not to do so again.

Fintan Murphy was subsequently deported to Ireland and interned in county Down's Ballykinlar camp as the authorities associated him with recent IRA terrorism in the capital. The documents seized included letters from Sean T. O'Kelly, one of the Dáil's envoys in Europe, along with Dáil loan applications.[177]

As members of a secret revolutionary organisation, Volunteers were obviously wary of the police. One tactic they adopted in the event of police attention becoming unbearable was to go on the run. In April 1921, following the arrest of a large number of Manchester IRA men in connection with arson attacks in the city centre, many of the Volunteers still at liberty moved to London. There, they found accommodation in the homes of sympathisers.[178] The following month, brothers Eamonn and Seamus Mooney were forced to leave Glasgow in order to escape the police dragnet following the death of Inspector Johnston. Accompanied by a fellow Volunteer named Quinn, they spent a few nights with Mick Burke and his wife in Motherwell. At the house of a Mr. Downey and his wife in West Calder, they met another IRA man on the run, Peter Kilmurray. With the newspapers carrying descriptions of the two brothers, the four were forced to move elsewhere. To avert suspicion, they decided to split into two groups. Seamus Mooney and Kilmurray went to Broxburn, where they were accommodated by a Donegal man named Coll and his grown-up family, while Eamonn Mooney and Captain Quinn went elsewhere. Mooney and Kilmurray spent a number of

[177] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 7 Apr. 1921, enclosing Art O'Brien to 'P[resident de Valera]', 7 Apr. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/329); RROUK, no. 100, 7 Apr. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/122)

[178] BMHWS no. 1678, William O'Keeffe, p. 14 (NAI); Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18 Apr. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/5)

weeks at Coll's house before being arrested.[179] The following October, when police uncovered documents which implicated Liverpool's Paddy Daly in gunrunning, the IRB man changed his name to Murray and went on the run. 'I am unknown to the police,' he told Michael Collins, 'so I hope to remain so.'[180] In March 1923, after some of his Volunteer colleagues were arrested and deported to Ireland, Seamus Reader, the new O/C Scotland, also went on the run, in Glasgow.[181]

A similar means of escaping police attention was to go into hiding. By the time of the police raid on his office in April 1921, Art O'Brien had been in hiding since the previous November, when he had been warned of a police raid and received a threatening letter. At first, he was accommodated by friends. Later, he moved into a hotel. Throughout, however, he attempted to continue working as normal as the Dáil's representative in London.[182] This required elaborate security precautions. In March 1921, P. J. Little, an employee of the Dáil's publicity department, accidently related O'Brien's address to 'a most indiscreet and talkative woman'. O'Brien later had to distract her in conversation so as to make her forget it. The police 'are getting much keener on tracing me and any little indiscretion may put them on the track,' he warned Robert Brennan, head of Dáil publicity. Instead of directing visitors straight to him, O'Brien recommended that they be instructed to call at the ISDL office, where they would be re-directed to him.[183]

In February 1920, *An t-Óglác* reminded Volunteers that they were to refuse to answer questions asked of them by the police. Giving information, no matter how innocent, constituted 'a recognition of the enemy's authority on the part of Volunteers' and would be treated as a breach of discipline.[184] In September 1921, while on a tour of the various Volunteer centres during the truce, O'Connor, the O/C Britain, was asked by the O/C Sheffield what attitude IRA men should take towards the police in the event of their being arrested. The O/C himself felt that, as soldiers, Volunteers should refuse to defend or excuse their actions. The O/C Britain agreed.[185] Thus, the Volunteers in Britain were urged to emulate their colleagues in Ireland by adopting a defiant attitude in their dealings with the British police.

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[179] Seamus Mooney's statement on the 'Smashing of the Van' incident (Mooney Papers, EMP/5/36)
[180] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 18 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/7)
[181] O/C Britain to C/S, 29 Sept. 1923 (UCDA, Twomey Papers, P69/37[190-94])
[182] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 2 Dec. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/326)
[183] Ibid., 24 Mar. 1921, enclosing Art O'Brien to 'R.O.B[rennan]', 24 Mar. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/329)
[184] *An t-Óglác*, Feb. 1920
[185] O/C Britain to C/S, 15 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/29[264-73])

Many Volunteers did indeed take up this attitude. Arrested in June 1921 when he naively agreed to accompany a policeman to the Dale St. police station so as to discuss with the chief constable his roommates' alleged IRA activities, Edward Brady underwent weeks of interrogation both on Merseyside and at Scotland Yard in London. Determined to avoid giving his interrogators any useful information, he sometimes feigned ignorance of IRA activities or adopted a sarcastic attitude. 'I proved the despair of all my interrogators,' Brady later wrote.[186]

Not all Volunteers demonstrated such defiance, however. Apprehended by members of the public while attempting to escape from a farm fire operation in March 1921, John Pinkman and three other Volunteers were thrown into the waiting room of the Hall Road railway station. A railway policeman soon arrived and asked them their names. Mindful of the order prohibiting Volunteers from answering police questions, the IRA men remained silent. Suddenly, however, one divulged his name. Pinkman was shocked: 'O my God, I thought, the first one has cracked!' Then a second gave his name, followed by the third. Pinkman followed suit, but felt 'terribly ashamed' for having done so.[187]

Many Volunteers used subterfuge to escape police attention. This usually involved concocting an alibi or a biography for themselves so as to convince the police of their innocence. In the early hours of 30 April 1922, the Birmingham police questioned Liverpool's Paddy Daly and another Volunteer regarding their connection with the IRA's failed raid on the city's munitions surplus factory a few hours earlier. 'This was the first time I was questioned by the police and I was very nervous,' remembered Daly, who had 'foolishly' decided to spend the night in IRA man James Cunningham's lodgings after escaping the police dragnet at the factory.

> They questioned us about our business in Birmingham and about our occupations. I said that I was a labouring man and one of the detectives informed me that I did not look like one. In further explanation I said that my father was a well-to-do shopkeeper in the west of Ireland, that I had run away from home and labouring was the only work I could get. The detectives looked me all over and none of them was unpleasant but one of them said, "You are lucky you are not with your friend Jim tonight" (meaning Cunningham). So they allowed us to return to our rooms.

Eager to avoid further interrogation, Daly left Birmingham the following morning, just a few hours before the detectives called at the house a second time.[188]

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[186] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 105
[187] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 53
[188] BMHWS no. 814, Patrick Daly, p. 42 (NAI)

In their confrontations with members of the IRA, the police seem to have employed violence only when they came under violent attack. As we saw in chapter 4, Volunteers sometimes shot at police in order to escape the scene of terrorist attacks, while other times they opened fire seemingly with the deliberate intent of injuring policemen.[189] Fire-fights also took place away from the scenes of terrorist incidents. On 2 April 1921, police investigating arson attacks on Manchester city centre earlier that day called at the Irish Club in Hulme, headquarters of the no. 2 company Manchester IRA. Seeing two men who answered witnesses' descriptions of the arsonists, the police asked that they accompany them outside. The men agreed, but as they left the room they fled. The police then found themselves confronted with two men armed with revolvers. Shots were exchanged. One of the Volunteers, John Morgan, was fatally wounded. Police reinforcements arrived and rushed the building. A further shoot-out occurred on the narrow stairway leading to the club room. A second Volunteer was shot and three policemen were slightly wounded. Sixteen arrests were made at the club and an arsenal of munitions was uncovered. The violence was akin to that of 'an American film serial', wrote the *Manchester Guardian*.[190]

PC Charles Hall related the details of a gun-fight with Volunteers which took place just after midnight on 17 June 1921. On duty with PC Lewis, a plain clothes policeman, in Bromley, Hall saw a car approaching.

> I stepped out into the middle of the road and signalled to the driver to stop, by flashing my electric lamp which I had in my possession. The driver stopped the car and P.C. Lewis went to the near side door, I went to the off side door. I looked into the car which I saw was a taxi cab, and [in] it were four or five men; one of the men said "Alright", and I replied "No, It is not alright["]. I then walked round to the near side door where P.C. Lewis was; he had the door open by then. We both covered the men with our revolvers, I shouted to the driver to get down out of his seat which he did. P.C. [Lewis] asked the men inside the cab where they were going to [.] One of them replied "We have just come from Gove Park" [.] P.C. Lewis said "Who are you?". I had my light shining in their faces all the time; none of them replied to P.C. Lewis' questions. At that moment one of the men put his hand to his hip pocket. P.C. Lewis said "Take your hand away from your pocket["] and he did so. P.C. Lewis then asked them to get out of the cab one at a time; one of the men got out and I still covered him with my revolver. Another one of the men got out of the cab and P.C. Lewis said to me; ["]Search him", and thinking he meant to search the second man, I turned from the first man to search the second man, whereupon the first man shouted "Hand[s] up["]: and immediately I heard a shot fired and a bullet whizz by. I jumped aside and returned the fire, and another shot rang out. P.C. Lewis also fired his revolver at the man who was then running away, and the other prisoners had all rushed out of the cab and ran across the fields with the exception of "Affection" who was caught by P.C. Lewis, and I held the taxi driver.

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[189] See pp 175-6 above

[190] *The Times*, 4 Apr.; *Manchester Guardian*, 5 Apr., 16 July 1921; 'LIST OF AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES FOUND AT THE IRISH CLUB, ERSKINE STREET, HULME' (TNA, HO 144/4645)

Upon searching the taxi, the police found a loaded revolver, wire cutters and a bottle of paraffin. Later, a police search of William Affection's lodgings led to the arrest of two men, while another man was found behaving suspiciously on a road near where the shooting took place.[191]

Police sometimes used violence against suspects in custody. Matthew Fowler allegedly received 'very rough treatment' after being arrested at the scene of the Liverpool arson attacks on 27 November 1920.[192] Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan, the assassins of Sir Henry Wilson, were beaten up at the police station. Dunne claimed that he received 'a terrible hiding' because he 'always gave a bitter answer to their [i.e. the policemen's] taunts'. One policeman trod on Dunne's face and neck, while others beat O'Sullivan unconscious.[193]

At least one Volunteer sympathised with the plight of the police, if only momentarily. As he heard the noise of officers engaging in shooting practice at Scotland Yard, presumably in order to be able to defend themselves against the Volunteers, Edward Brady 'wondered how many restless hours, days and nights, the IRA had caused the police in Britain!'[194]

Sir Wyndham Childs, assistant commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police from December 1921, received 'a large number' of anonymous letters from his 'Sinn Fein friends' threatening his life. As a result, he became 'rather jumpy' at times:

> At one period of my jumpiness I was always glad when I had passed and got some distance away from any seedy-looking individual who chanced to be walking along with his hands in his pockets, for I always feared that the hand might be grasping an automatic and that the individual was one of those experts in shooting through his pockets without drawing his gun. I must confess, indeed, that when approaching such persons I would be doing precisely the same thing myself; and gently fingering my pistol in my right pocket.

Unexpected police checkpoints, hotel staff and beggars also unwittingly aroused Childs' suspicions, while back-firing cars and motor-bicycles caused him some alarm.[195]

Of 235 terrorist incidents – including arson attacks on farms, houses, manufacturing capacity and railway infrastructure, as well as wire-cutting incidents – attributed by British police and the press to Irish political motives in the period between 27 November 1920 and 11 July 1921, convictions were secured for only fifty-seven. Irish terrorists, therefore, enjoyed a 4:1 chance of escaping justice.

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[191] Statement of Charles Hall, 18 June; statement of Superintendent, Peckham Station, 19 June 1921 (TNA, MEPO 3/466)
[192] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 24-5, 35-6 (NAI)
[193] Reginald Dunne to new O/C London, n.d., but c. 9 Aug. 1922 (BMHCD no. 188/6/2, Frank Thornton [MAI])
[194] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 114-15
[195] Childs, *Episodes and reflections*, pp 218-20

Chart 13 examines the conviction rates for IRA terrorism by geographical area. Ninety-seven incidents occurred in Lancashire, with convictions being secured in relation to forty-two, or 43.3 per cent of cases. The London Metropolitan Area saw forty-six incidents, with convictions being secured in only three cases, 6.5 per cent. In neither area was anyone convicted of involvement in the May 1921 attacks on RIC men's relatives, one of which led to the death of a householder. Neither was a conviction secured in relation to the death of Vincent Fouvargue in London the previous month. Scotland could boast a seventy per cent success rate in securing convictions, though no one was brought to justice for the death of Inspector Johnston in May 1921.

Chart 13

Terrorist incidents ascribed Irish political motives by the police and press and convictions secured, 27 Nov. 1920–11 July 1921(according to constabulary area)[196]

AREA	TOTAL NO. OF INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM	NO. OF INCIDENTS FOR WHICH CONVICTIONS WERE SECURED
Lancashire	97	42
London Metropolitan Area	46	3
Durham	30	2
Northumberland	19	1
Cheshire	15	2
Kent	9	0
Yorkshire (North Riding)	6	0
Warwickshire	2	0
Essex	1	0
Scotland	10	7
TOTAL	235	57

The geographical variation in conviction rates is accounted for by a couple of factors. Of foremost importance was the nature of the targets attacked in each area. Due to the isolated nature of farms and railway and communications infrastructure, it was difficult for

[196] Figures compiled from returns to Home Office from constabularies, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

the police to apprehend Volunteers while they were engaged in attacking them. As the intelligence service predicted on learning that the IRA was planning attacks in rural areas where the police were 'not numerous': 'Such a campaign will be difficult to deal with, for nothing is easier [to do] than to fire a [hay] rick or cut a telephone wire'.[197] By the time the police arrived on the scene, the perpetrators had usually long fled. Arson paraphernalia was sometimes found at the site of the fires, but it was difficult to link such evidence with specific individuals. A 'quart oil can was found near the spot' where five hay and straw stacks were set alight at a farm in West Molesey, Surrey, on 5 February 1921, noted the police, but 'No arrests were made'.[198] '2 parts of fuse' were found at the scene of a farm fire in Cudham, Kent, on 3 April 1921, but again no arrests were made.[199] Similar was true of attacks on railway infrastructure. The Cheshire police believed that the sawing-through of two telegraph poles and the cutting of the wires attached in Birkenhead on 2 June 1921 was 'apparently the work of Sinn Fein agents from Liverpool, as certain tools, found close to the scene and used to commit the damage, were found on enquiry, to have been recently purchased in Liverpool'. Again, however, no one was ever convicted of these incidents, presumably due to the inability of the police to connect such evidence with specific individuals.[200]

Thus, while the police may have suspected the IRA of being responsible for the incidents of these types of terrorism, they lacked the evidence to prove it. The London Metropolitan area experienced eleven arson attacks on farms and eleven attacks on infrastructure between 26 March and 21 June 1921. The comment 'Certainly attributable to Irish agency' occurs twice in police reports on these incidents, and something similar appears with regard to two further attacks. In another sixteen cases, Irish involvement was considered probable, while the perpetrators of the remaining two attacks were 'Not Known'. No arrests were made in any of these cases and no convictions were secured.[201] It was the same in other parts of England. Yorkshire North Riding witnessed six farm fires, for which no convictions were secured.[202] Kent witnessed four farm fires and five attacks on railway and

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[197] RROUK, no. 94, 24 Feb. 1921 (TNA, CAB 24/120)
[198] Acting Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 18 Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)
[199] Assistant Chief Constables of Kent to Assistant Secretary of State, Home Office, 1 Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)
[200] Chief Constable of Cheshire to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 20 Oct. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)
[201] The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 18 Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)
[202] Chief Constable of the Yorkshire North Riding to the Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 16 Oct. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

communications infrastructure, and again no convictions were secured.[203] Lancashire saw twenty-one farm fires and nineteen attacks on infrastructure, for which convictions were secured in four and one case respectively.[204] Hence, in attacking farms and infrastructure, the IRA acted with virtual impunity.

Overall, as chart 14 demonstrates, there were 113 attacks on farms, for which convictions were secured in only fourteen cases, while only three convictions were secured in relation to the forty-three attacks on infrastructure.

Chart 14

Terrorist incidents ascribed Irish political motives by the police and press and convictions secured, 27 Nov. 1920–11 July 1921 (breakdown by type of incident)[205]

TYPE OF INCIDENT	NO. OF INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM OF THAT TYPE	NO. OF INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM OF THAT TYPE FOR WHICH CONVICTIONS WERE SECURED
Farm Fires	113	14
Attacks on railway and communications infrastructure	43	3
Warehouse Fires	30	24
Factory Fires	16	2
Timber Yard Fires	9	9
Attacks on private houses/individuals	9	0
Attacks on miscellaneous targets	15	5
TOTAL	235	57

[203] Assistant Chief Constables of Kent to Assistant Secretary of State, Home Office, 1 Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

[204] Chief Constable of Bootle to Assistant Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922; Assistant Chief Constable of Liverpool to Under Secretary of State, 11 Oct.; Chief Constable of Manchester to Under Secretary of State, 3 Nov.; Chief Constable of Rochdale to Under Secretary of State, 18 Oct.; Chief Constable of Salford to Assistant Secretary, 18 Oct. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to Under Secretary of State, 27 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[205] Figures compiled from returns to Home Office from constabularies, the London Metropolitan Police and the Scottish Office, Oct.–Nov. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589)

In general, the police found it easier to tackle IRA arson attacks on warehouses and factories. Due to the targets being located in urban areas, the police could quickly appear at the scene of such fires and on occasion apprehend the culprits. Matthew Fowler was arrested at the scene of the arson attacks in Liverpool on 27 November 1920. He was subsequently convicted of conspiring to commit arson and sentenced to two years' imprisonment.[206]

Sometimes, their larger number in urban compared with rural areas meant that police on patrol in the cities and towns chanced to walk by as a group of Volunteers prepared to mount an attack. On 15 January 1921, upon approaching a group of twelve men acting suspiciously in the vicinity of the Vacuum Oil Company in Wandsworth, three policemen found themselves at gunpoint. A struggle ensued, during which shots were fired but no one injured. The would-be arsonists fled, firing at the police, but one, Wilfred Kenny, was later apprehended at the scene in possession of a revolver, ammunition and documents relating to Sinn Féin. Twenty-five barrels had holes bored in them using steal bits, causing the oil to flow out and bottles of paraffin, wax tapers, cotton wool and other arson paraphernalia were found at the scene. Kenny, along with Thomas O'Sullivan and James Moran, were subsequently found guilty of conspiracy to commit arson, of possessing firearms and of maliciously attempting to set fire to barrels. They were sentenced to four and eight years' imprisonment, respectively.[207]

Lancashire witnessed the highest number of such attacks in urban areas, with twenty-nine warehouses, nine timber yards and eight factories being set alight. Convictions were later secured in twenty-four, nine and zero cases respectively.[208]

VI

Just as defiance characterised Volunteers official dealings with the police, so it was in relation to their attitude towards the courts.

Awaiting trial in February 1921, Neil Kerr Snr was reported to be 'in the best spirits imaginable, and absolutely defiant'.[209] Remembering his trial in April 1921, John Pinkman

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[206] *The Times*, 29 Nov., 1 Dec. 1920; *Irish Times*, 15 Feb. 1921

[207] Superintendent of Wandsworth Division, London Metropolitan Police, to Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); *The Times*, 17 Jan., 19 Feb. 1921

[208] Chief Constable of Bootle to Assistant Secretary of State, Home Office, 27 Oct. 1922; Assistant Chief Constable of Liverpool to Under Secretary of State, 11 Oct.; Chief Constable of Manchester to Under Secretary of State, 3 Nov.; Chief Constable of Rochdale to Under Secretary of State, 18 Oct.; Chief Constable of Salford to Assistant Secretary, 18 Oct. 1922 (NAI, FIN 1/1589); Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire to Under Secretary of State, 27 Oct. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[209] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 21 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

stated that he 'despised the pageantry of the courtroom because it seemed to me to have been designed to overawe and intimidate the prisoner'. When the judge announced the prison sentences on Pinkman and his four co-accused, the five laughed at him and shouted 'Up the rebels!' as they were led away to the cells.[210] Many prisoners performed such acts of defiance as they were led from the court. 'Long live the revolution!' shouted Sean McGrath after being convicted of unlawful possessions of munitions in February 1919.[211] Two years later, after being convicted of attempted arson at Wandsworth's Vacuum Oil Company, Thomas O'Sullivan, James Moran and Wilfred Kenny stood in the dock with arms folded while they were being sentenced. Kenny then sang a small part of 'The Soldier's Song', the Volunteers' anthem. As they were being led away, they waved to their friends in the gallery and shouted 'Ta Ta'.[212] After being convicted on a charge of shooting with intent to do grievous bodily harm and of being in possession of firearms, William Robinson and three other London IRA men shouted 'God save Ireland', the defiant declaration of the Manchester martyrs.[213] Robinson was outraged at the conviction of Jeremiah Minihane for the crime but had a difficult task persuading him to launch an appeal as 'He [i.e. Minihane] didn't care 2d' about it.[214]

As well as adopting a defiant attitude, Volunteers, like their comrades in Ireland, sometimes employed subterfuge to defend themselves. This mainly took the form of lying. As part of his application for a writ of Habeas Corpus, Edward Brady was required to swear an affidavit to the effect that he was a loyal and law-abiding subject of the British Crown. Initially, he hesitated to take the oath, mindful that he was a member of the IRB, an organisation which was dedicated to overthrowing British rule in Ireland. Still, he quickly came to the conclusion that the oath was a mere technicality and his swearing it in bad faith was justified on the grounds that he wanted to test the validity of ROIA.[215] During their conspiracy trial in June and July 1923, both Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath perjured themselves by denying that they had any association with the IRA during the war of independence. Despite his involvement with the London Volunteers and IRA gunrunning in the capital, O'Brien claimed that he had been concerned with 'Purely civil and diplomatic work – and consular work', and that he did not believe in the use of force. Even though he

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[210] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 59-60; *The Times*, 11 Apr. 1921
[211] *The Times*, 7 Feb. 1919
[212] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 Feb. 1921
[213] *The Times*, 4 July 1921
[214] William Robinson to ?, n.d., but c. mid-1921, reproduced in appendix i of cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255); *The Times*, 16 June, 4 July 1921
[215] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, pp 111-12

was a senior member of the London Volunteers and was involved in gunrunning activity in the capital to an even greater extent than O'Brien, McGrath denied any personal knowledge of the existence of the IRA in Britain.[216]

The defiant attitude was motivated by the belief that the British criminal justice system was prejudiced against the Irish. Such alleged prejudice took a number of forms, including the judge's admittance of questionable evidence, fabrication of evidence by the prosecution, and harsh sentencing.

During the trial of London Volunteer Michael O'Kelly Simington in November 1920, on a charge of illegally possessing plans of the Irish Office in contravention of the Official Secrets Act, the prosecution repeatedly emphasised the fact that the defendant was a member of the ISDL. Simington's barrister, having failed in his attempt to have such evidence refused admittance, complained that the Irish republican flag 'was waved before the faces of the jury, and such an air of treason was created that it was impossible to defend the prisoner'. The ISDL complained that the sentence handed down was 'extremely severe' given the defendant's 'very good character'.[217]

In the run-up to the trial of the Liverpool men charged with involvement in the arson attacks of November 1920, Michael Collins believed that the greatest obstacle to the defendants being found innocent would be 'prejudice'.[218] Art O'Brien agreed, writing that 'anti-Irish prejudice' might blind the authorities to the merits of the men's defence. Moreover, such a risk would be 'decidedly greater before certain judges than before others'.[219] When Neil Kerr Snr, Matthew Fowler and James McGaughey were indeed convicted of conspiracy to murder and to commit arson, Paddy Daly complained of 'prejudice', especially in the case of McGaughey, who was 'absolutely innocent' of the killing of the civilian William Ward. 'The judge was more of a prosecutor than a judge', he declared, 'and his summing up might well be taken as the final speech of the prosecution. He was sent, without doubt, to obtain a conviction.' Collins agreed.[220]

John Pinkman claims that the prosecution's case against him and his fellow would-be arsonists at the police court in April 1921 was based on 'a mass of fabricated evidence' given by the police. The only solid evidence presented by the prosecution was a religious medal

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[216] Trial transcript, Day 3, p. 87; Day 4, p. 261; Day 5, pp 395-6 (NLI, O'Mahony Papers, Ms 24,503)
[217] Trial Transcript (NLI, O'Briáin Papers, Ms 8443/10); Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, 13 Mar. 1922 (NAI, D/T S8037)
[218] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 5 Jan. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/326)
[219] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 10 Jan. 1921 (NAI, DE 2/327)
[220] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 15 Feb.; Michael Collins to Paddy Daly, 17 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

found at one of the farms targeted for attack, ownership of which was admitted by one of the defendants, it was claimed. The prosecution then maintained that Pinkman and another defendant wore similar medals. Convinced by the evidence, the magistrates ordered the defendants to be put on trial. Pinkman and his comrades were 'stunned' at having to stand trial for a crime which they 'hadn't been able to commit'. Pinkman noted that the judge at the subsequent trial, Rigby Swift, had been a Conservative MP and was appointed to the High Court by Lord Birkenhead, a politician who had opposed Irish home rule. Thus, he implied that his and his comrades' conviction of arson, conspiracy and unlawful possession of firearms was due to the political prejudices of the judge.[221]

The ISDL complained that the sentences handed down in the trial of J. P. Connolly and four others gunrunners, including husband and wife David and Kitty Evans, were 'extremely heavy', especially considering that Kitty Evans was in bad health. Moreover, Justice McCardie, who had also presided at the Simington trial, was 'extremely severe in his remarks and stated that Mrs. Evans was as bad if not worse than any of the others'. He also implied that the Evans' were not married and made some 'very disparaging remarks' in relation to Irish organisations in Britain.[222]

James Cunningham also complained of the police employing 'unscrupulous methods' to secure convictions in relation to the IRA's failed raid on the Birmingham munitions surplus factory in April 1922. He maintained that the chief superintendent perjured himself in an effort to disprove the defence's claim that one of the defendants had only driven a lorry into the factory yard by accident.[223]

Objectively, the role of prejudice in securing convictions of Volunteers in Britain is difficult to evaluate. The barrister David Foxton has argued that some judges did make questionable decisions. Justice McCardie's actions in the Simington trial were 'highly prejudicial but scarcely probative', he argues. Sir Alfred Tobin put before the jury 'a very weak case' of conspiracy to murder against Neil Kerr Snr, as did the judge in Jeremiah Minihane's trial. The Court of Criminal Appeal overturned Kerr's conviction but refused to hear Minihane's case. In the case of appeals against deportations, judges delivered adverse decisions 'on very technical and highly questionable grounds'. As Foxton notes, juries adopted a more sceptical attitude towards charges of murder or attempted murder than those related to property offences or conspiracy. 'To this extent,' he concludes, 'the presence of a

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[221] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 56-7, 59-60
[222] Sean McGrath to Michael Collins, 13 Mar. 1922 (NAI, D/T S8037)
[223] BMHWS no. 922, James Cunningham, pp 18-19 (NAI)

jury in England provided a check on capital convictions which was wholly absent in Ireland.'[224]

It would seem, therefore, that there may have been some substance to republicans' allegations that the criminal justice system in Britain was prejudiced against them. However, it is also likely that accusations of discrimination were a reaction to the adverse political climate in Britain. In Ireland, where the populace was becoming increasingly alienated from British rule, Volunteers used their trials to engage in anti-British propaganda. Such exercises were facilitated by sympathetic juries reluctant to convict and disseminated abroad through a largely well-disposed media. Volunteers in Britain, however, endured a harsher climate. It was one where, outside the environs of the sympathetic Irish population, the IRA was viewed as a criminal conspiracy terrorizing the loyal population of Ireland rather than as an army of liberation. The launching of its terrorist campaign in England in November 1920 only reinforced the public's sense of fear and revulsion. Such hostility manifested itself in the courtroom.

Judges refused to respect Volunteers' declarations that their actions were honourably motivated by a desire to draw attention to events in Ireland. Instead, they treated Volunteers as criminals. In February 1921, sentencing three Volunteers to terms of imprisonment in relation to an attempted arson attack at the Vacuum Oil Company premises in Wandsworth, Justice Lush said that there was 'legitimate' and 'criminal' means of alerting the British public to the actions of Crown forces in Ireland. By resolving to 'cause destruction of a vast amount of property ... [and] to expose a number of innocent persons to serious [economic] loss and undoubtedly to serious bodily danger', the defendants had chosen the criminal option and therefore deserved punishment.[225] At the trial of nineteen Manchester IRA men in July 1921 on charges related to arson attacks in the city three months earlier, Justice Swift noted that a number of the defendants claimed that they were members of an organisation which hoped 'to obtain by force some political aim'. He, however, refused to engage with that argument. 'All I have to do is to punish crimes which are committed in this country against the people of this country,' Swift stated.

> ... It is obvious that society could not exist if deeds such as you have been [found] guilty of were not within the grasp of the law, and if when they are proved to have been done there was

[224] David Foxton, *Revolutionary lawyers: Sinn Féin and crown courts in Ireland and Britain, 1916–1923* (Dublin, 2008), p. 334
[225] *The Times*, 19 Feb. 1921

> the slightest paltering or hesitation, on the part either of juries or judges, in putting down such offences.[226]

Justice McCardie's criticism of the defendants in the Evans trial – that they had repaid Welsh hospitality with treachery and crime and that their actions had tarnished the honour of Ireland – was probably motivated by a similar abhorrence of crime rather than by 'anti-Irish prejudice', for he was the son of an Irishman.[227]

At least one Volunteer conceded that their terrorist actions could only fuel the prejudice they allegedly experienced. In February 1921, following Neil Kerr Snr's conviction, Paddy Daly feared that the jury had been prejudiced by the 'Man[chester] operations', a reference to farm fires recently mounted by Volunteers.[228] Moreover, Joshua Casswell, a barrister who defended a number of IRA men, later argued that such terrorism was bound to effect a jury's attitude towards Volunteer defendants: 'with Irishmen committing bomb outrages [sic] over here [in Britain] almost every week purely legal arguments – however technically correct – were not likely to be extremely efficacious'.[229]

In contrast to their comrades in Ireland, therefore, there were limits to the defiance exhibited by Volunteers in Britain. As part of their campaign against the British administration, IRA men in Ireland adopted a passive aggressive attitude of 'non-recognition' while on trial so as to undermine the legitimacy of the British courts. Such an attitude consisted of a refusal to give a formal plea to the charge or consent to undertakings such as bail. Such defiance was possible in a climate where, out of fear of or admiration for the Volunteers, juries and sometimes judges often acquitted IRA men of the charges against them.[230] Britain, however, lacked such a climate of opinion and Volunteers recognised that an outright refusal to engage with the courts would do little to prevent their being convicted of the charges against them. Thus, James McCaughey, charged with attempted murder of a policeman during the Merseyside arson attacks of November 1920, told the court through his barrister that he initially intended 'to refuse to recognise the Court at all'. However, in the end he opted to produce an alibi.[231] Moreover, as Foxton notes, in contrast to the behaviour of their comrades in Ireland, Volunteers' verbal acts of defiance in British courts were

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[226] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 July 1921; J. E. Singleton, 'Swift, Sir Rigby Philip Watson (1874–1937)', rev. Alec Samuels, in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36388 on 19 May 2010

[227] *Irish Times*, *The Times*, 18 Nov. 1921; A. Lentin, 'McCardie, Sir Henry Alfred (1869–1933)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34677 on 17 May 2010

[228] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 16 Feb. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/4)

[229] Quoted in Foxton, *Revolutionary lawyers*, p. 334

[230] Ibid., pp 173-8

[231] *The Times*, 12 Feb. 1921

performed *after* they had been convicted.[232] In March 1921, for example, the gunrunner Henry Coyle told an Edinburgh court that 'he was a soldier of the IRA and he was proud of it'. However, this declaration was only made after he had been convicted of conspiracy. At the start of the trial, Coyle had, along with his fellow defendants, entered a plea of not guilty.[233]

In total, sixty-two people were convicted of gunrunning and related offences in Britain the period 1919–23, while forty-eight people were convicted of involvement in terrorist incidents.[234]

VII

John Pinkman remembered the uniform he and his Liverpool comrades were allocated upon their arrival at Dartmoor prison in 1921:

> First, we each got a pair of old boots – not new ones! – with quarter-inch iron studs nailed in the soles so as to form an arrowhead. Every time you walked on the ground you left a trail of arrows! We got a pair of heavy woollen stockings that came above our knees; they were black, patterned with one-inch thick red rings. Then we got a pair of khaki-coloured knickers which we fastened just below the knees with a button. Running up the front of the knickers were two rows of black arrows – each about two inches high – on each side. There was an arrow just above the knee, another one in the middle of the thigh, and a third just below the waist. Our tunics were the same colour as the knickers but had no seems: there was one breast pocket in the tunic. The tunic had two rows of arrowheads running up the front – one on each side – and one row up the middle of the back. They gave us each a handkerchief: a big blue one with black stripes. The last item we got was a wedge-shaped forage cap ... On the side of the cap was a number. Mine was 977.

A few days later, the prisoners received a coverall, which they were to wear while working. A 'big, loose jacket with red, white, and blue stripes running all the way round', it reminded Pinkman of a clown costume.[235]

Conditions in prison varied. The cells in Walton prison were infested with cockroaches, Pinkman remembered, their having entered the prison in the mailbags which the

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[232] Foxton, *Revolutionary lawyers*, p. 333

[233] Quoted in ibid., p. 312; *Irish Times*, 15 Mar. 1921

[234] *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Times*, 1919 – 1923; list of fifty-five prisoners granted remission on 11 Feb. 1922; list of fourteen prisoners granted remission on 1 Apr. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645); gunrunning is defined here as the contravention of either, some, or all of the following, sometimes in addition to other convictions: Explosives Act 1875, Explosive Substances Act 1883, and the Firearms Act 1920. Many of those convicted were found guilty of charges relating to both gunrunning and terrorism. I have excluded those convicted of involvement in the post office and bank raids in 1922–23: see p. 168 above

[235] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 63-4

prisoners were required to mend.[236] Michael O'Leary, one of eight Liverpool Volunteers deported to Ireland in December 1920, remembered that the conditions in the Bridewell, where they were first incarcerated, were 'appalling'. All eight shared a small, badly ventilated room. There was a toilet but its flushing mechanism was operated by a button located outside the room. O'Leary alleged that the spiteful policemen flushed it very infrequently. The prisoners slept on wooden planks placed on the ground, with dirty blankets and clothes as covering. Due to space constraints, the prisoners operated a rota system, whereby they slept in groups of four for four hours at a time. Compared with the Bridewell, Mountjoy, to where the Volunteers were transferred after about three weeks, was 'a hotel', O'Leary claimed: 'In it we had a bed (even though a prison one), exercise and the pleasure of meeting and speaking to (again even in jail) friends in arms.' Arbour Hill, their next port of call, was less impressive. The walls of the ground floor cell which O'Leary shared with a Dublin Volunteer seeped water. In the Curragh internment camp, the Liverpool deportees' final destination, the internees were accommodated in four rows of huts, labelled 'A' to 'D'. In the central space were a cookhouse and a dining hall. There were also a chapel, a hospital and a military store. The whole complex was surrounded by barbed wire and observation posts. The internees' huts were not inviting: 'The roofs were leaking, the floors draughty, the surroundings, especially in wet weather, sodden ...'.[237] Kathleen Brooks, one of the deportees interned in Mountjoy in 1923, complained that the hospital ward cell which she had to share with seven women for six weeks was 'absolutely filthy with dirt and dust'. The lavatories were in a similar state. Only after two-and-a-half weeks, following a hunger-strike, were the women supplied with beds. The other furniture was rudimentary.[238] 'I have never been in such a dirty place in my life,' Sean O'Mahony, another deportee, said of his basement cell. 'I had to sweep the cell with my handkerchief before I could lie down.'[239] In Wormwood Scrubs, Art O'Brien protested at the state of the toilets, the baths, the bed sheets and the clothing distributed to the prisoners.[240]

Pinkman found the food in Walton 'rotten', and wondered whether the illness contracted by him and his comrades a few days after their arrival in the prison was caused by

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[236] Ibid., p. 58
[237] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 47-70 (NAI)
[238] *The Star*, 15 Oct., (TNA, MEPO 38/111); *The Times*, 16 Oct. 1923
[239] *The Times*, 18 Jan. 1924
[240] 'CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ART O'BRIEN & OTHER IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE SERVING TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT IN 2ND DIVISION AT WORMWOOD SCRUBS', Sept. 1923 (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/41)

the food or the cockroaches.[241] Initially, the food in the Bridewell consisted of a piece of rough bread and a half-mug of cold coco twice a day. Soon, however, the prisoners were receiving a better diet as a result of the ministrations of Cumann na mBan, the Red Cross and some of the prisoners' relatives.[242] The official daily ration for internees in Ireland consisted of 450g of bread, 283g of potato, 113g of vegetables, 57g of rice, 57g of oatmeal, 43g of margarine or dripping, 14g of tea, 0.28 litres of milk, and 14g of sugar. Five days a week, the internees received 283g of meat. On the other two days, they were to get 227g of bacon, and 340g of fish. However, following the outbreak of what the Irish Chief Secretary called 'concerted insubordination' at the Curragh, such rations were reduced in order to restore discipline. O'Leary complained of insufficient quantities of food being supplied to the camp. The fish was sometimes putrid and the margarine rancid. Split peas were supplied instead of vegetables.[243] In Liverpool prison, a republican named Miss McGrane also found the food unpleasant. However, some of her fellow Irish prisoners managed to pass her hard boiled eggs and oxo beef cubes from time to time. Using the hot water allowed her for bathing purposes, she enjoyed oxo every night before going to sleep.[244] Kathleen Brooks complained that the diet in Mountjoy was such that the women contracted dysentery. The food at the North Dublin Union, to which they were subsequently transferred, was much better.[245] Unable to identify the food placed before him, Sean O'Mahony refused to eat it.[246] Art O'Brien complained that the food in Wormwood Scrubs was often dirty and inadequately cooked, particularly in the case of porridge and cheese. Moreover, the menu was not adhered to, with margarine or rice pudding often taking the place of meat.[247]

Each morning, the prisoners spent about forty minutes exercising in the yard. Such exercise usually consisted of walking around in a circle. The prisoners were forbidden to talk while exercising and warders patrolled the yard to ensure this. However, the convicts soon learned to talk inconspicuously, without moving their lips.[248]

The prison regime required that all prisoners engage in some form of work. At Pentonville prison in 1919, Sean McGrath worked as a gardener and tended the grave of Sir

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[241] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 58
[242] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 48-50 (NAI)
[243] Ibid., pp 56-70 (NAI); *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxlii, col. 2037 (9 June 1921); ibid., cxliii, col. 1107 (21 June 1921)
[244] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 15 July 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6)
[245] *The Star*, 15, 16 Oct. 1923 (TNA, MEPO 38/111)
[246] *The Times*, 18 Jan. 1924
[247] 'CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ART O'BRIEN & OTHER IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS ...' (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/41)
[248] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 65, 71; 'CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ART O'BRIEN & OTHER IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS ...' (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/41)

Roger Casement, executed in the prison in August 1916 for his involvement in the Easter Rising.[249] Pinkman worked in the Walton laundry.[250] After being convicted of conspiracy in July 1923, Art O'Brien, Sean McGrath and three other prisoners worked in Wormwood Scrubs at tailoring, basket-making and mail-bag making, as well as working in the mess and cookhouse.[251]

Pastimes which prisoners engaged in included reading, along with attending lectures and mass.[252] The Catholic chaplain at Walton prison was 'a living saint', according to Pinkman, while every other authority figure there was 'a swine'.[253] A few days after being transferred to Dartmoor, Pinkman was asked by the prison's Catholic chaplain, Fr. Finnegan, if he wished to serve mass. He was honoured to do so and thereafter served at the morning mass. On one occasion, a prisoner asked him to smuggle out a match from the sacristy so as to light his cigarette. Such a favour was risky, for warders often painstakingly searched prisoners for contraband material, such as matches and cigarettes. Nevertheless, Pinkman agreed to the request, hid the match in the seam of his tunic and smuggled it out of the sacristy. A few weeks later, he repeated the stunt and smoked the butt of a cigarette given him by the other prisoner. Ironically, Finnegan later wrongly accused Pinkman of stealing wine and refused to allow him to continue serving mass. Pinkman remembered that the priest, although an Irishman, did not evince much sympathy for the Irish prisoners. Indeed, the warders showed them more kindness than him.[254] Art O'Brien described the chaplain in Wormwood Scrubs as 'a tame official', unfriendly towards the Irish republican prisoners.[255]

The most senior ranking IRA officer was usually given command of the Volunteers in the prison. In Dartmoor in mid-1921, the O/C position was occupied by, successively, Manchester's Paddy O'Donoghue, Monaghan's Paddy McCarvill, and Sligo's Seamus Devins.[256] In the Curragh internment camp, the inmates elected their officers and the British

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[249] Sean McGrath interview (UCDA, O'Malley Notebooks, P17b/100)
[250] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 67
[251] 'CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ART O'BRIEN & OTHER IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS ...' (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/41)
[252] 'Ibid.; BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 56-70 (NAI)
[253] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 58
[254] Ibid., pp 66-8
[255] 'CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ART O'BRIEN & OTHER IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS ...' (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/41)
[256] BMHWS no. 369, William Whelan, p. 11; Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, p. 74; *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1922; Fearghal McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy: a self-made hero* (Oxford, 2005), p. 62

turned the running of the camp over to them.[257] In Dublin's Mountjoy during the civil war, each wing of the prison had its own council, which managed the prisoners' affairs.[258]

IRA prisoners from England were segregated from those from Ireland and were sometimes treated differently from them. When Pinkman arrived at Walton prison in mid-1921, he anticipated the authorities dealing with him more harshly than his comrades from Ireland: 'Word was passed along among the warders that I was born in England, and in their eyes this made me worse than the lads [from Ireland] I was arrested with.' However, he does not actually record having receiving any harsh treatment as a result of his being born in Britain.[259] In Maidstone prison, Kent, William Robinson, of the London IRA, complained that the authorities had granted prisoner of war status to Volunteers from Ireland but refused it to those arrested in Britain.[260] However, it was not only the prison authorities who treated Volunteers differently on the basis of their place of birth or arrest. Sometimes, IRA men themselves demanded separate treatment. In Mountjoy prison in 1923, the deportees from Britain demanded the right to run their own affairs separate from the council which the IRA had established to order the dealings of its members in that wing of the prison. The lack of such separate treatment was 'tending more and more to submerge the separate status and interests of the Deportees', Art O'Brien complained. With the reversal of such homogeneity being of 'considerable importance to the Republican movement', it was requested that the deportees' committee be formally recognise as part of the wing council. Moreover,

> ... whilst the Wing Council shall administer all matters effecting the general discipline and conduct of the wing, such as, parades, orderly duties, police officers, times of opening and closing cells, morning and evening etc – the Deportees Committee shall solely and directly control all matters effecting the Deportees; the matters referred to shall include, political activities, all correspondence and communications, including those with the Governor, Canteen orders, parcels, cell requisites, clothing, money, accounts, etc.[261]

'I expected, as indeed did everyone here, that these people [i.e. the deportees] would cause trouble,' the prison's I/O wrote on behalf of the prison council, an IRA body which was in overall charge of all the Volunteers in Mountjoy. The deportees did not know of the existence

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[257] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 56-70 (NAI)
[258] Director of Intelligence, Michael Carolan, to Eamon de Valera and Frank Aiken, 3 May 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1763)
[259] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 57-8
[260] William Robinson to ?, n.d., but c. mid-1921, reproduced in appendix i of cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255); 'LIST OF PRISONERS IN CUSTODY FOR OFFENCES CONNECTED WITH SINN FEIN MOVEMENT WHO WERE CONVICTED IN ENGLAND AND WALES', 19 Jan. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)
[261] Director of Intelligence, Michael Carolan, to Eamon de Valera and Frank Aiken, 3 May 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1763)

of the council, an indication of the distrust that existed between the leaders of the IRA men arrested in Ireland and those deported from Britain. Granting the deportees' request would undermine the wing council, the I/O wrote. Having two organisations operating on the same wing would be absurd. Moreover, such a situation would foment 'bad feeling' between the prisoners, tension which the prison authorities would try to exploit. In any event, the deportees had two representatives on the wing council, and the body did concern itself with their interests. Art O'Brien and the other deportees, 'being politicians of some note, ignore G.H.Q.', he wrote. He, therefore, suggested that the refusal of their demands should come from President de Valera himself. Noting that O'Brien, anticipating a negative response, was trying to secure his demands in the interim, he requested that the reply be sent as soon as possible.[262] De Valera recognised that the deportees did have 'certain separate interests'. However, his own experience of prison life taught him that 'unity of Control in the Wing is absolutely indispensible – To leave the way open for possible clash of rival authority would be madness'. He, therefore, encouraged the deportees to work through the wing council.[263]

If defiance characterised Volunteers' dealing with the police and the courts, it was at its most noticeable in their behaviour in prison. Many IRA men were familiar with accounts of the suffering endured by the Young Irelanders and the Fenians in English prisons in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The hardships of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in particular were the stuff of legend. Sentenced to life imprisonment in 1865 after being found guilty of plotting a rebellion in Ireland, he spent five years in various English prisons, where his defiant attitude saw him subjected to a variety of punishment including long periods of solitary confinement and having his hands manacled behind his back for thirty-five consecutive days. Indeed, the privations endured by O'Donovan Rossa and other Fenian prisoners gave rise to an amnesty campaign in Ireland which would later become the springboard for the home rule movement.[264] In the popular nationalist history which many Volunteers imbibed in their youth from family, friends and the radical press, the imprisoned Fenian was a heroic figure, a martyr for Ireland tormented by heartless jailors. Some Volunteers, therefore, entered prison infused with feelings of self-righteousness and noble martyrdom. 'A felon's hat is the noblest crown an Irish head can wear,' John Pinkman told

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[262] Ibid.
[263] Eamon de Valera to Art O'Brien, 5 May 1923 (UCDA, de Valera Papers, P150/1763)
[264] Sean McConville, *Irish political prisoners, 1848–1922: theatres of war* (London, 2003), pp 123-4, 168-201, 214-75

his mother before he was transported to Walton prison, slightly misquoting a line from Arthur Forrester's nationalistic poem 'The Felons of our Land'.[265]

As a result, relations between Irish prisoners and prison authorities varied. 'You could see the hatred he had for us by the look in his eyes,' wrote Pinkman of the doctor in Walton.[266] Sean McGrath railed against Irishmen being 'subjected to the whims of heartless gaolers, [and] cruelly punished for the slightest infraction of the iron code of rules concocted with scientific precision for the purpose of breaking the spirit of anyone subjected to them'.[267] However, in O'Leary's experience, the majority of the warders at Mountjoy and Arbour Hill were 'decent'. Indeed, some in the former institution aided the IRA. Meanwhile, the British authorities turned the daily running of the Curragh camp over to the officers elected by the Voluteer internees.[268] The governor of Dartmoor stated that in dealing with Irish prisoners he had carried out his orders 'strictly & I hope fairly'. In the summer of 1921, he had allowed the prisoners from Ireland to exercise together after receiving an undertaking from their leader, Paddy McCarvill, that 'no advantage would be taken of it and rules would be observed'.[269] Released in January 1922, IRA men nevertheless claimed that except for about six 'humane and even kindly men', all the warders in Dartmoor treated them brutally. The *Freeman's Journal* speculated that as a result of working in 'the most formidable of English convict prisons', the Dartmoor warder 'seems to lose all feeling', 'grows hard' and becomes 'a lion-tamer'.[270]

As a result of the split over the treaty, the civil war sometimes saw former comrades on opposite sides of the prison bars. Sorcha McDermott, a member of the London Cumann na mBan, was deported to Dublin in March 1923. Arriving in Mountjoy, she met a soldier whom she had visited while he was imprisoned in London before the truce. 'I know her; she is Sorcha McDermott,' she remembered him saying.

> I said "Oh, you do remember me". He said, "You want to die for Ireland". I answered, "There was a time when you did too and don't forget that you gave me your photograph with the words 'freedom or death' after twenty-three days hunger strike in Wormwood Scrubs [in 1920]", and he went as white as a sheet.[271]

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[265] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 60-1
[266] Ibid., p. 58
[267] *Irish Exile*, Feb. 1922 (New Series, no.4)
[268] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 50-70 (NAI)
[269] Directors of Dartmoor Prison to Home Secretary, 14 Feb. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/1734/376829)
[270] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1922
[271] BMHWS no. 945, Sorcha Nic Diarmada, pp 11-12

Kathleen Brooks, another deportee, remembered that the soldier-sentries at Mountjoy often fired shots at the women while they were in the exercise yard and at their cell windows. At least one woman was injured by such shooting. One night, the prison governor and a group of soldiers burst into the cell Brooks shared with seven other women. Drunk, he verbally abused the internees while the soldiers brandished their weapons.[272] On another occasion, all the deportees were threatened with a revolver. Art O'Brien stated that, on several occasions, he heard the soldiers being instructed to shoot the internees.[273]

'As soldiers of the Irish Republic I ask that we shall be treated as prisoners of war,' declared Charles Harding, O/C no. 2 company, Manchester IRA, after he and fifteen comrades were convicted of involvement in arson attacks on Manchester city centre in April 1921.[274] His request was declined. Refused political prisoner status, republicans were often categorised as ordinary criminals, a situation which Volunteers and their supporters outside found scandalous. In July 1921 Paddy Daly told Michael Collins that Miss McGrane was forced to associate with the ordinary criminals in Liverpool jail.[275] In December, the ISDL's *Irish Exile* newspaper complained that Irish prisoners were being treated not 'as prisoners of war, but as the worst of criminals' and forced to associate with 'the lowest type of criminals'.[276] The following month, the newspaper complained of Irishmen and women in English jails, over six hundred in number, being forced to wear 'convict dress' and associate with 'the lowest type of English criminals'.[277] The *Freeman's Journal* noted that in Dartmoor prison, Volunteers rubbed shoulders with 'the most hardened of criminals, thieves, forgers, and murderers of every nationality'.[278] In February 1922, Sean McGrath complained that Irish prisoners had been 'Herded with the criminal scum from the purlieus of English cities'.[279] Art O'Brien protested that prison regulations in Wormwood Scrubs did little to distinguish between the second division prisoners, the category to which he and his four comrades were assigned in 1923, and those of the third division and hard labour class.[280]

It was in their attempts to secure political prisoner status that imprisoned Volunteers were at their most defiant. In the summer of 1921, Dartmoor prison, surrounded by 'dreary

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[272] *The Star*, 15 Oct. (TNA, MEPO 38/111); *The Times*, 16 Oct.; *Manchester Guardian*, 16, 17 Oct. 1923
[273] *The Times*, 12 Feb. 1924
[274] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 July 1921
[275] Paddy Daly to Michael Collins, 15 July 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/6)
[276] *Irish Exile*, Dec. 1921 (New Series, no. 2)
[277] Ibid., Jan. 1922 (New Series, no. 3)
[278] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1922
[279] *Irish Exile*, Feb. 1922 (New Series, no. 4)
[280] 'CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ART O'BRIEN & OTHER IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS ...' (NLI, Ó Briain Papers, Ms 8427/41)

miles of gorse and heather-covered moorland' in Devon, witnessed a number of such attempts.[281] The first incident saw a number of IRA men refuse to perform their work duties. The protest soon collapsed. Those who participated in the strike were punished with a three-day bread and water diet. However, the punishment only strengthened the resolve of the strikers and embarrassed the recalcitrants. On 16 July, they launched a second work strike. According to the prison governor, the prisoners claimed that, by entering into peace talks with Sinn Féin, the British government had recognised the IRA 'as an army', and that they as 'soldiers' should, therefore, 'be treated as prisoners of war'.[282] Eighty-four Irish prisoners threw off their coveralls and refused to leave the exercise yard. The prisoners were then attacked by baton-wielding warders and removed to their cells. IRA men arrested in England were in a separate exercise yard and tried to join the disturbance. Pinkman saw the warders dragging a comrade of his towards the punishment cells, all the while beating him 'until he was a limp as a rag doll'. When he and Paddy Lowe made to intervene, however, they were attacked by the warders. Pinkman managed to escape and made to run into the prison to alert his comrades. However, the gate guard stepped into his path and aimed his rifle at him. Pinkman stopped and raised his hands. The warders then surrounded him and started to beat him with 'batons, boots, [and] fists'. They then trussed him up and dragged him to the punishments cells. 'Break his arms ... Break the son-of-a-bitch's arms!' shouted one of the warders. Inside the punishment block, Pinkman was pushed down a steep iron staircase. As he lay on the floor, he was beaten again. 'I tried to cover my head with my arms,' he remembered,

> but they kicked the shite out of me. When they finished with me I was nothing but blood from head to toe, and when they threw me in the cell I just lay on the floor thinking I was dying. I crawled close to one of the walls and made an act of contrition.[283]

Joseph Kelly, another prisoner, stated that he was kicked and beaten by the warders while being dragged to his cell. 'At the cell door they [i.e. the warders] amused themselves by shoving me in [to the cell] and dragging me back [out] again, beating me all the time,' he remembered. Eventually, he was hurled into the cell and lay on the floor semi-conscious until he was removed to hospital. Later, the warders removed the prisoners' leaders from their cells and beat them. One, Layng, claimed that he was flung down an iron staircase. He was then forced to run the gauntlet between two lines of warders who beat him with batons. Thrown

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[281] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1922
[282] Governor of Dartmoor to E. Troup, 27 July 1921 (PAHL, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/45/6/38)
[283] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1922; Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 76-7

down a further flight of stairs, all the time being beaten, he collapsed unconscious near the Church of England chapel. He woke up in a punishment cell 'in a pool of blood'. Removed to the hospital, his head, legs, arms and shoulders were bandaged. He was then sentenced to three months' solitary confinement and fifteen days on a bread and water diet. It was also alleged that John Doyle had his arm broken by the warders.[284]

While admitting that a 'disturbance' had occurred in the prison on 16 July, the governor of Dartmoor claimed that the prisoners' allegations of violence were 'grossly exaggerated and in many points utterly untrue'. When the warders attempted to remove them to the cells, a small number of prisoners reacted violently. Most, however, 'went quietly but had to be pushed along as they showed passive resistance'. Neither during this operation nor during the removal of the prisoners' leaders to other cells did the governor see the warders employ their batons. Over the course of the following week, the Volunteer leaders received visits from the prison directors and on no occasion did they make any complaint regarding their treatment on 16 July, though they did protest the government's refusal to treat them as prisoners of war generally. The governor admitted that six prisoners, including Kelly, Layng, Lowe, and Pinkman, were admitted to the hospital, but he also noted that some warders had sustained injuries too. The allegation that warders broke John Doyle's arm was 'utterly untrue'. Indeed, the directors believed that the warders exhibited 'most commendable self-restraint' in dealing with the incident.[285] The peace talks between the British government and Sinn Féin had led to 'a very dangerous spirit' manifesting itself among the Irish inmates, the governor noted on another occasion. The prison authorities believed that republicans incarcerated in relation to incidents in Ireland and Britain, numbering three hundred in total, would take advantage of whatever opportunities arose to mount more protests. To deal with the situation, they had decided to confine the prisoners to cellular labour, with exercise in the yard only in small groups. This, however, was only a stop-gap measure. Due to its isolated location, it was futile for Dartmoor to summon aid once an emergency had arisen. Proper preparations had, therefore, to be made in order to deal with an outbreak of violence. Dartmoor had already asked Portland prison to transfer to it any warders it could spare. They would then be issued with unloaded carbines. The governor also requested that the Home Office supply a military guard of fifty men for use daily between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.[286]

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[284] *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1922
[285] Directors of Dartmoor Prison to Home Secretary, 14 Feb. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/1734/376829)
[286] Governor of Dartmoor to E. Troup, 27 July 1921 (PAHL, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/45/6/38)

After the second work strike collapsed, the prisoners decided to mount a hunger-strike. Hunger-striking held particular resonance in both the pagan and Catholic religions. The hunger-strike as a means of protesting a grievance originated in pre-Christian Ireland where, according to the Brehon Laws, an individual who felt himself ill-treated by another could undertake a hunger-strike near the offender's residence with the aim of shaming him into reaching some mutually agreeable settlement. With the arrival of Christianity, the hunger-strike became a symbolic fast from food in imitation of Christ. Yet, the 'devotional revolution', the post-famine reform in religious practise which saw an increase in the power, prestige, and influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland, accompanied by the late nineteenth century cultural revival, resulted in the virtual fusion of religious and national identity, creating an Irish Catholicism replete with themes of heroic self-sacrifice and stoic self-abnegation.[287] In the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, the hunger-strike became the weapon of choice of incarcerated nationalists. The death of IRB president Thomas Ashe through botched force-feeding in September 1917 was a significant event in the ascendancy of advanced nationalism in Ireland. Three years later, Lord Mayor of Cork Terence MacSwiney's death after a seventy-four day hunger-strike in London's Brixton prison attested to the grim struggle which raged between the British government and the republican movement for control of Ireland. The moral force of the protest was compelling. By subjecting himself to 'all the horrors of hunger and the dangers of a self-inflicted death', the hunger-striker excited the humane instincts of even implacable foes and wrong footed the authorities.[288]

During his trial, Manchester's Charles Harding had hinted at his intention to commence a hunger-strike if his demand for prisoner-of-war status was declined.[289] Now, refusing to eat their meals, except for bread and water, the hunger-striking prisoners in Dartmoor, including John Pinkman, stayed in their cells. About twelve days into the strike, a visiting priest persuaded the men to end their protest. Having eaten bread and water for a week and no food at all for the last four days, the prisoners were 'as weak as kittens'. A certain amount of bitterness was caused by the fact that some Volunteers failed to participate in these protests. For some time afterwards, Pinkman refused to speak to such recalcitrants. Eventually, however, he forgave them: 'I came to realise that you can't blame a man if he hasn't got the courage to go through with something like that. Some men are made of steel,

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[287] George Sweeney, 'Irish hunger strikes and the cult of self-sacrifice' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, xxviii, no. 3 (1993), pp 421-37, at pp 421-3

[288] *Hansard 5* (*Commons*), cxxvii, cols 1538-45: T. P. O'Connor (13 Apr. 1920)

[289] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 July 1921

others are made of brass – and you can't expect a piece of brass to act like steel.' Others refused to grant such forgiveness.[290]

A similar hunger-strike occurred in Maidstone prison in Kent. Volunteers from Ireland had been given prisoner of war treatment by the prison authorities. Refused similar treatment, the Volunteers from Britain, including Charles Harding, went on hunger strike. 'I am O.K. now in hospital,' William Robinson, one of the participants, wrote, 'but the others are having a rough time.' He asked that J. H. MacDonnell, the Dáil's solicitor in Britain, be sent to meet the prisoners and that London's Irish societies publicize their protest.[291]

Edward Brady remembered that, in their campaign for political prisoner status, IRA men in Mountjoy 'openly and flagrantly' disobeyed the prison rules.[292] As a protest against the prison authorities changing the rules in relation to prisoners receiving parcels and letters from outside, they too began a hunger-strike. 'Never till then did I realise the pangs of real hunger,' Brady later wrote.

> The third day the sensation of it is hellish – no one but those who have suffered it can possibly conceive what it is like. Then a general weakness supervenes, and the craving subsides. Even the mind suffers intolerably for a while, until one becomes quite unconscious of everything – even of the pain.

After six days, the strike was concluded and the prisoners had their privileges reinstated.[293]

'Escape was the topic of the day, always in the minds of the Volunteers interned [in the Curragh] ...,' O'Leary relates.[294] Indeed, it was the topic foremost on the minds of IRA men incarcerated anywhere in Ireland and Britain. Successful break-outs constituted propaganda coups for the Irish cause and occasioned acute embarrassment on the part of the British authorities. The first successful escape of Volunteers from a prison in Britain occurred at Usk in Monmouthshire, Wales, on 24 January 1919. Four Sinn Féin leaders, including two TDs, climbed over the wall of the prison using a rope ladder fashioned from towels and firewood. They then walked to Newport, where they took the train to Liverpool. There, they were given refuge by Irish nationalists.[295]

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[290] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 70-74

[291] William Robinson to ?, n.d., but c. mid-1921, reproduced in appendix i of cabinet conclusions, 5 p.m. meeting, 22 June 1922 (TNA, CAB 21/255); 'LIST OF PRISONERS IN CUSTODY FOR OFFENCES CONNECTED WITH SINN FEIN MOVEMENT WHO WERE CONVICTED IN ENGLAND AND WALES', 19 Jan. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[292] Brady, *Ireland's secret service in England*, p. 128

[293] Ibid., p. 143

[294] BMHWS no. 797, Micheal Ó Laoghaire, pp 50-70 (NAI)

[295] *The Times*, 25 Jan. 1919; Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 265-66

Michael Collins was alarmed by the Usk escape. He feared that the authorities would react by increasing security at all prisons and thereby frustrate the planned rescue of Eamon de Valera and others from Lincoln jail. In the event, however, as we have already seen, this rescue was successfully mounted.[296]

On 25 October, another escape occurred, this time at Strangeways prison in Manchester. The six escapees were Austin Stack, TD for West Kerry, John Boland, Cornelius Connolly, Patrick McCarthy, Piaras Béaslaí, TD for East Kerry and editor of *An t-Óglác*, and Daniel Walsh, appointed chief gunrunner in Scotland in 1921. The former four had been transferred to Manchester from Belfast, while Béaslaí and Walsh were previously in isolation in Birmingham and Leeds prisons respectively.[297] Béaslaí later wrote that the planning of escape attempts consumed most of his time since his arrest the previous May for making a seditious speech. From the day of his arrival at Strangeways, he began thinking of ways to emulate the successful escape of twenty prisoners from Mountjoy prison in Dublin on 29 March 1919. Escaping from Strangeways would prove a tough task, he conceded: '[W]e were in an English city in the midst of a hostile population; but a captive lives on hope'.[298]

The rescue from Strangeways was 'a feat of which Volunteers may well be proud', declared *An t-Óglác*.

> The affair was planned with a thoroughness and an attention to detail which caused the proceedings to work with the utmost smoothness and success. Needless to say, the most elaborate planning and observations were required to ensure the success of such a daring scheme. The little band of Irishmen who formed the rescue party showed no less cool heroism than that other little band who, in 1867, rescued two Fenian leaders from a prison van in the streets of Manchester. Fortunately, in this case no sacrifice of life resulted, but every man who went into the work of the rescue knew he was taking his life in his hands. The work both inside and outside the prison was carried out to a finish with the utmost precision and promptitude.[299]

A number of other escapes were mooted but never carried out. In February 1920, Robert Barton, Sinn Féin TD for West Wicklow, was found guilty of seditious acts. Sentenced to three years' imprisonment, he was deported to Portsmouth prison. Michael Collins raised the possibility of organising a rescue attempt, but Art O'Brien threw cold water on the idea. However, in July 1920, O'Brien stated that he was now open to the possibility.[300] In mid-September, Collins recommended that J. H. MacDonnell, the Dáil's solicitor in Britain, tell

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[296] Beaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 266; see pp 197-201 above
[297] *The Times*, 31 Mar., 27 Oct. 1919; Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 360-72;
[298] Béaslaí, *Michael Collins*, i, 360-61
[299] *An t-Óglác*, 15 Dec. 1919
[300] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 19 July 1920 (NAI, DE 2/322); *Irish Times*, 23 Feb. 1920, 2 July 1921

Barton to apply to the prison authorities for permission to receive a visit from a party of three named people. These names would be fictitious, thereby affording three IRA men, possibly including O'Connor, the O/C Britain, an opportunity to reconnoitre the prison. If the trio were satisfied that a rescue was feasible, having seen Barton's cell and ascertained the temperament of the warders, and assuming Barton himself agreed to a rescue attempt, then the planning would proceed onto the next stage. Collins described prison rescues as 'a risky business', but he felt that this attempt enjoyed 'a sporting chance' of success.[301] However, plans to rescue Barton were interrupted by police raids on republicans occasioned by the IRA's arson attacks of November 1920. Moreover, documents making references to Barton had already been seized by Crown forces in Dublin.[302] On 30 December, convinced that the capture of documents in Dublin had led to the Portsmouth prison authorities taking precautions to prevent any rescue of Barton, Collins advised against action.[303] Barton was later transferred to Dartmoor, where he was released during the truce.[304]

In June 1922, plans were made to rescue Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan while they were on trial for the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson. The anti-treaty IRA executive sent Michael Cremen to London to make the arrangements. There, he 'found that the organisation of a rescue of the prisoners presented great difficulties'. Unimpressed with the competence of the London IRA, Cremen turned to two Liverpool Volunteers for assistance, Paddy Fleming and a man named O'Malley, possibly Tom O'Malley, the anti-treaty Volunteer who had attempted to disarm John Pinkman a few months earlier.[305] Through Art O'Brien, Cremen learned from J. H. MacDonnell, the prisoners' solicitor, the times at which Dunne and O'Sullivan were going to be transported from Brixton prison to the Old Bailey courthouse. However, he then discovered that the pro-treatyites had sent Tom Cullen to London to mount a rescue attempt too. Cremen believed that Cullen's attempt would have a greater chance of success than his own. Cullen had greater access to munitions, he noted. Moreover, Sam Maguire, the head of the London IRB, supported the treaty, and therefore would presumably lend greater assistance to a rescue attempt mounted by the pro-treatyites. Added to this, Cremen was sceptical of the ability of the London Volunteers to

[301] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 17 Sept. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/324)
[302] Art O'Brien to Michael Collins, 16 Dec. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/326)
[303] Michael Collins to Art O'Brien, 30 Dec. 1920 (NAI, DE 2/326)
[304] Governor of Dartmoor to E. Troup, 27 July 1921 (PAHL, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/45/6/38)
[305] See pp 75-7 above

successfully mount such an operation. He, therefore, sent Fleming and O'Malley to aid Cullen in his rescue attempt and returned to Dublin.[306]

The British authorities, however, anticipating an attempt to rescue such high-profile prisoners, greatly increased security at the prison, the courthouse, and on the journey between the two.[307] Probably as a result of these security measures, no rescue attempt was actually mounted by Cullen. Found guilty of Wilson's assassination, Dunne and O'Sullivan were sentenced to death and executed at Wandsworth prison on 10 August.[308]

A month after the signing of the treaty, the British government announced an amnesty of all prisoners convicted of offences committed prior to the truce.[309] This amnesty applied only to those convicted of offences in Ireland and incarcerated there. However, following representations from the Provisional Government, the British extended the reprieve to 'prisoners now in custody for offences committed prior to the truce in Great Britain from Irish political motives'.[310] Further representations by the Provisional Government ensured that the remission was extended to those, like the gunrunner J. P. Connolly and his associates, who were convicted of offences which occurred between the truce and the signing of the treaty.[311] IRA men convicted in the post-treaty and civil war periods in Britain were granted no such amnesty. Some were still serving sentences in 1925, mainly in connection with arms offences.[312]

The prisoners in Dartmoor indulged in one last act of defiance before being released on 14 February 1922. In the exercise yard, one of their number gave the order for the Volunteers to fall in. They 'lined up in three ranks,' remembered Pinkman.

> Someone shouted, 'Quick march!' and we marched – yes, *marched* – to the gates saying, 'We came here as soldiers of the IRA, and by God we'll leave as soldiers of the IRA! We'll show these bastards!' The bloody warders just looked at us; they didn't know what to make of us, I'm sure.

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[306] BMHWS no. 903, Michael Cremen, pp 1-3

[307] M. Wall to Sir William Horwood, 28 June; Sir William Horwood to Wall, 29 June; 'E.B.' to Sir John Anderson, 1 July 1922 (TNA, Prison Commission & Home Office Prison Department [PCOM] file 3/367); Childs, *Episodes and reflections*, pp 188-9

[308] *The Times*, 11 Aug. 1922

[309] Ibid., 13 Jan. 1922

[310] Ibid.; correspondence between Home Secretary and Masterton Smith, 11 Feb. 1922; list of fifty-five prisoners granted remission on 11 Feb. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[311] List of fourteen prisoners granted remission on 1 Apr. 1922 (TNA, HO 144/4645)

[312] Pamphlet, *List of Irish prisoners of war and political prisoners in English, Scotch, and Irish Free State jails – 1st August, 1925* (UCDA, Twomey Papers, P69/253)

Pinkman and his comrades then took the train home to Liverpool, where they were greeted by a pipe band and their O/C Tom Kerr, himself recently released from internment in Ireland. Then, with a mixture of excitement and relief, they proceeded to enjoy a feast.[313]

VIII

It was only with the launching of the IRA's terrorist campaign in November 1920 that the activities of republicans in Britain really entered the political and public consciousness. Prior to this, the authorities were aware of gunrunning activities in Britain but did not view its interruption as a priority. Republican links with social agitators had also been noted, and some members of the establishment feared a communist revolution in Britain and Ireland to match that in Russia and which was threatening elsewhere in post-war Europe. Again, however, such links did not lead to action on the part of the authorities. Yet, from late 1920 onwards, the disruption of the republican movement in Britain became a priority of the forces of law and order. The police were an ever-present danger to republicans. Arrests, trials and convictions removed some valuable people from gunrunning and terrorist activities. 'Enemy activity is getting to be rather [a] nuisance here,' the O/C of no. 4 London company complained in October 1921.[314] The Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police stated that the 'extension of Sinn Fein activities to the Metropolitan area', along with unemployment and other social troubles, had presented the police with a problem 'of more than ordinary difficulty to deal with'. However, with the employment of 'much tact and discretion', the force had discharged its duties 'firmly and judiciously', and thus achieved 'satisfactory results' in maintaining the peace.[315] In fact, however, the actual number republicans convicted in relation to gunrunning and terrorist activities was low. With republican activity continuing despite the arrests, Michael Collins' ruling that 'the enemy must not be allowed to break up our organisation, no matter whom he takes' was upheld.[316] The treatment which republicans received from the criminal justice system in Britain was reasonable. Unlike their comrades in Ireland, they were not subject to courts martial. Some did, however, suffer internment without trial in Ireland. Convinced of the righteousness of their cause, republicans adopted a defiant attitude towards the police, the courts and the prison authorities. Viewing themselves as soldiers rather than criminals, they used hunger-

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[313] Pinkman, *In the legion of the vanguard*, pp 79-81; original emphasis
[314] 'R. Ua D, O/C No. 4 London' to O/C Britain, 24 Oct. 1921 (UCDA, Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/27[49-50])
[315] *Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for the year 1921* [Cmd. 1699] H.C., 1922, pp 11-12
[316] See p. 86 above

and work-strikes in their demand for political prisoner status, sometimes successfully. During the civil war, the authorities in Britain proved much more successful in disrupting the activities of the anti-treaty IRA. This was often due to intelligence received from their former enemies in the Free State government. The mass arrest and deportation of March 1923 represented the culmination of this relationship.

6

Conclusion

In June 1921, Michael Collins wrote that, 'in a manner of speaking, our people in England are only the auxiliaries of our attacking forces'.[1] It has been the argument of this thesis that Collins' observation was correct. The republican movement in Britain was part of a network of support which the IRA in Ireland required in order to operate successfully.

The re-establishment of the republican movement in Britain in the post-Rising period only began in earnest in 1919, some two years after re-organisation had commenced in Ireland. Such work focused mainly on the founding of IRA companies, but IRB circles and Cumann na mBan branches were also established, along with a few troops of the Na Fianna Éireann. The efforts were led by a varied group of people. Some, such as Joe Vize in Glasgow, Sean McGrath in London, and the Kerr family in Liverpool, were republican stalwarts who worked closely with GHQ in Dublin. Others, including Paddy O'Donoghue in Manchester, Gilbert Barrington on Tyneside, and James Cunningham in Birmingham, had little previous connection with physical force nationalism and operated initially on their own initiative. Such organisation work occurred in a congenial Irish environment, the result of mass emigration from Ireland over the previous century. Imbued with a belief in the righteousness of Ireland's cause, members were recruited from among acquaintances and open nationalist organisations such as the ISDL and Sinn Féin. Second-generation Irish born in Britain constituted a significant proportion of the membership, as did recent migrants from Ireland. During the truce, Volunteer membership throughout Britain stood somewhere between 2,200 and 2,700, with an unknown number in the IRB, Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna. Once Volunteer companies were established and operating, they sometimes suffered the same problems as their comrades in Ireland, such as those resulting from bad leadership and inadequate organisation. The intimacy of their relationship with GHQ depended on the

[1] See p. 4 above

extent to which they were involved in gunrunning and terrorist activities, with those more active enjoying closer relations.

According to Manchester's Liam McMahon, on the day after signing the treaty, Michael Collins declared that the republican movement in Britain would have to be dismantled, as its continued existence would prove a 'hindrance' to the new Irish state.[2] Collins' wish was largely achieved, though not through any planned demobilisation. Rather, unemployment and the treaty split ensured the decline of the Volunteers, the IRB, Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna. The anti-treaty republican movement in Britain during the civil war attempted to hinder the nascent Free State, but it was never able match the vitality it possessed before the treaty. The mass arrest and deportation of republicans to Ireland in March 1923 paralysed the movement.

Gunrunning was the most important activity of republicans in Britain throughout the 1919–23 period. It was here that they most obviously served as 'auxiliaries' to the IRA in Ireland, for the lack of munitions was a perennial problem for the latter. During the initial stages of the war of independence, gunrunning was operated by a small number of IRB members. As the Volunteer organisation spread to new cities and towns, however, IRA men also became involved in the procurement and smuggling of materiel. Due to Liverpool's proximity to Ireland and in order to avoid the increasingly strict security arrangements at other major ports, from mid-1920 onwards Merseyside began to serve as the main port from which munitions were smuggled to Ireland. The extant sources indicate that tens of machine guns and rifles, hundreds of handguns, along with tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition, and hundreds of kilograms of explosives were smuggled through Liverpool during the period 1919–23. This, however, did not represent the sum total of materiel procured in Britain, for representatives of munitions-starved IRA units in Ireland also engaged in gunrunning activities of their own, much to the irritation of GHQ. In the event, the IRA in Ireland did not defeat the British. However, it did succeed in forcing a stalemate in hostilities. Volunteer attacks on police stations and army barracks, using munitions sourced in Ireland itself, as well as in Britain, along with smaller quantities shipped from New York, Antwerp, Buenos Aires and elsewhere, disrupted British administration in Ireland and created space for the emergence of the Dáil's revolutionary government. This, along with the British government's fear of international disapproval should it adopt more harsh measures to defeat the Irish rebellion, led to the truce of July 1921. Five months later, peace negotiations

[2] BMHWS no. 274, Liam McMahon, p. 20 (NAI)

concluded with the British government offering dominion status to twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties, a generous offer in light of the terms of the home rule bills of 1914 and 1920. During the civil war, both the Irish army and the anti-treaty IRA continued to procure armaments in Britain. The former received crucial help from the British government. Republicans, on the other hand, continued with the traditional clandestine methods, but such gunrunning was disrupted by the mass arrest and deportation of March 1923.

In November 1920, the IRA launched a terrorist campaign in Britain. The aim was to wreck revenge for the terrorist activities of Crown forces in Ireland, especially those of 'Black and Tan' and Auxiliary policemen. It was also hoped that a frightened British populace would pressurise its government into adopting a less war-like attitude towards Ireland's demand for independence. GHQ had a major role in the planning of attacks. It laid down the parameters of the campaign, insisting that attacks likely to cause civilian casualties and unemployment among Irish workers be avoided as much as possible. Moreover, attacks were to be confined to England, in the rather romantic belief that the Scottish and the Welsh were fellow 'Celtic' victims of English imperialism. (In the event, a small number of attacks were mounted in Scotland.) Over the course of seven-and-a-half months, Volunteers in England attacked such property as warehouses, factories, farms, and communications and railway infrastructure. An estimated £674,000 worth of damage was caused. People were also attacked, especially the relatives of policemen in Ireland. Liverpool's Paddy Daly acknowledged that setting fire to hay stacks and cutting telegraph lines may have amounted to little more than 'pin pricks'.[3] However, such 'pin pricks' exceeded the level of IRA activity in some parts of Ireland. The efficacy of the campaign in Britain is difficult to state. While it garnered a lot of publicity in the press, its role in bringing the British government to the negotiating table in July 1921 is moot. No politician ever confessed to having been influenced by it. Nevertheless, Volunteers who participated in the campaign believed that their activities had at least some significance. Paddy Daly was satisfied that the campaign was 'a thorn in the side of the authorities'.[4] In that respect, it served as an auxiliary to the IRA's campaign of terrorism in Ireland. The assassination of Sir Henry Wilson by two members of the London IRA in June 1922, the most well-known act of Volunteer terrorism in Britain in the 1919–23 period, contributed to the rift among republicans caused by the treaty of December 1921 and hastened the outbreak of the civil war. Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan had hoped that Wilson's assassination would provoke the British government into

[3] See p. 165 above
[4] See p. 194 above

revoking the treaty and thereby re-uniting pro- and anti-treatyites in the face of the traditional enemy. A similar hope also motivated IRA plans for terrorist attacks in Britain during the civil war itself. However, such schemes were ruined by the deportation of March 1923. In any event, Patrick Murray, the O/C Britain during the civil war, had found GHQ's plans highly unrealistic.

In common with its response to the IRA in Ireland, the British government was slow to react to the threat posed by the republican movement in Britain. It was only with the terrorist attack on Merseyside in November 1920 that the cabinet began to take the issue seriously. Prior to this, the police had been monitoring republicans, but they too were spurned to greater efforts by the launching of the IRA's terrorist campaign. Faced with the fact that most police investigations into Volunteer gunrunning and terrorist activities uncovered insufficient evidence to satisfy a court of law, the government was forced to rely on the policy of deporting suspected terrorists to Ireland and interning them there without trial. During the war of independence, the republican movement survived the deportations, as new people emerged to step into the vacant positions. The mass arrest and deportation of March 1923, however, destroyed the anti-treaty movement and demonstrate the seriousness with which the Free State government viewed anti-treaty activity in Britain. By the time the deportation was declared illegal and the internees released, the civil war had ended. As the war of independence continued, the police and customs officials proved ever more successful at disrupting gunrunning activities, but convictions were secured for only about twenty-five per cent of the IRA's terrorist attacks. Despite the contemptuous attitude which many Volunteers adopted while on trial, most received fair hearings, especially when compared with the treatment some of their comrades received in Ireland. In prison, their defiant attitude manifested itself in demands for political-prisoner status, and hunger- and work-strikes when they were refused it. Official concerns regarding republican fraternisation with communists and other social agitators in Britain proved largely misplaced.

Overall, republican activities in Britain led to the deaths of eleven people. Five Volunteers were killed. Two, Neil Kerr Jnr in September 1920 and Michael McInerney in July 1921, died accidently while handling munitions. One, John Morgan, was killed by the police in a shoot-out April 1921. The remaining two, Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan, were executed by the British authorities in August 1922 after being found guilty of the murder of Sir Henry Wilson. In turn, the IRA claimed the lives of six people. Three were civilians, William Ward in November 1920, Horace MacNeill in May 1921, and post office clerk Thomas Lovelady in June 1923. The remaining three consisted of the spy Vincent

Fouvargue in April 1921, the policeman Robert Johnston the following month, and the MP Sir Henry Wilson in June 1922.

As we have seen, Irish nationalism has not been confined to the inhabitants of Ireland. The nineteenth century saw attempts by the proponents of both violent and constitutional nationalism to make use of the Irish outside of Ireland in the furtherance of their goals. Fenianism in particular was heavily influenced by the millions who emigrated from Ireland from the time of the Great Famine onwards. It was on the initiative of emigrant nationalists in America that the organisation was founded in Ireland. A majority of its membership, both at leadership and rank-and-file levels, was composed of emigrants. Its most spectacular activities – bombing campaigns, prison-breaks etc – occurred outside of Ireland. The war of independence and civil war saw Irish nationalism returning home, in the sense that it was nationalists in Ireland who were in the vanguard deciding Ireland's fate. Nevertheless, nationalists outside of Ireland once again responded to the call to aid the struggle. Like many members of the Irish 'diaspora', the British-born members of the republican movement in Britain during the 1919–23 period evinced a nationalism shot through with Anglophobia. The theme of 'exile' was predominant; the emigration of ancestors from Ireland was ascribed to the malevolence of British rule. This outlook, passed on from one generation to the next within the family, enabled some Irish immigrants to handle the difficulties, socio-economic and otherwise, which they encountered in Britain. In conjunction with other contingent factors, such as the influence of friends, the experience of sectarianism, and the consumption of nationalist media, it led a small number of second generation Irishmen to join republican organisations and participate in violent acts. Ó Catháin argues that the events of the war of independence and civil war in Ireland 'embedded in the psyche' of the Irish in Scotland and, by extension, those in England and Wales too, a remembrance of their past: 'that they were immigrants, formed in another country and a different tradition whose unsettled and incomplete state was a perpetual reminder of their origin and exile'. This remained 'a sentimental but serious anchor' in the decades after the Irish revolution, even as the Irish in Scotland 'drifted into a Scottish and/or Catholic identity'.[5]

How, then, does the republican movement in Britain compared with that in Ireland? They differed on a number of interrelated criteria. Firstly, republicans in Britain enjoyed much less support from the population at large than did their comrades across the Irish Sea. As the government and large sections of the British press portrayed republicans in Ireland as

[5] Ó Catháin, 'A winnowing spirit', p. 123

a 'murder gang', it is unsurprising that the majority of the British populace was unsympathetic to republican activity on its own doorstep. Secondly, although Britain was in general a more hostile territory for republicans than was Ireland, the formal forces of opposition were actually less in number. To combat the IRA in Ireland, the British government employed the British army and expanded the RIC with heavily armed ex-soldiers. It also resorted to martial law in places. In Britain, in contrast, the authorities attempted to use the normal forces of law and order, the civilian police and the courts, to tackle republican activity. True, about 160 republicans were arrested in Britain and deported for internment without trial in Ireland in the course of the war of independence and civil war. Nevertheless, these actions were subject to greater scrutiny in Britain than they were in Ireland, and were declared illegal in May 1923. Thirdly, in terms of the terrorist campaigns mounted in Ireland and Britain by the IRA, the former was much more destructive both in quantity and intensity. At first sight, this may seem strange. After all, enemy persons and property were more vulnerable in Britain than they were in Ireland. Moreover, the constraints under which Volunteers operated in Britain were weaker than those which affected the IRA in Ireland. While the latter was at times constrained in the types of attacks it could mount by the intervention of the local populace, as well as by fears that Crown forces might retaliate through attacks on local civilians, the IRA in Britain was hampered only to the extent that GHQ decreed that operations be such as to avoid taking life and causing unemployment amongst the Irish population. The sources indicate that Volunteers in Britain, including those born and raised in the country, were largely oblivious to the possibility of a hostile populace wreaking retribution on the Irish population in its midst. However, it has to be remembered that greater terrorist activity on the part of the IRA in Britain would only have had the effect of increasing police attention on the republican movement, with the possible consequence of disrupting the acquisition and smuggling of weapons to Ireland – the most important activity of republicans in Britain from GHQ's point of view. It was not the force of circumstances in Britain that forced the republican movement there to act as an 'auxiliary' to that in Ireland; rather, it was the design of GHQ that it should be so.

Much remains to be explored in regard to the activities of republicans in Britain during the Irish revolution. The imminent release of previously unseen veterans' memoirs by the Bureau of Military History might afford a greater insight into the mentalities of IRA, IRB, Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Éireann members in Britain and might reveal activities which have gone unrecorded in the sources currently at our disposal. In any event, it is the

hope of the author that this thesis will contribute to the furtherance of knowledge on the subject.

In the introduction, we saw that Iain Patterson accused some of having exaggerated the role which republicans in Scotland and, by implication, in England and Wales, played in the war of independence. Patterson might be correct, but his counter-argument that their contribution to the IRA's victory was 'slight' is an over-reaction.[6] The war of independence and the civil war were ultimately won and lost by the actions of actors in Ireland, but republicans in Britain played a noteworthy role in the drama.

[6] See p. 4 above

Appendix 1

Senior office holders in the IRA, IRB, Cumann na mBan and Na Fianna Éireann mentioned in the text

OFFICE	OCCUPANT	PERIOD OF OCCUPANCY
IRA Chief of Staff	Cathal Brugha	October 1917 – March 1918
	Richard Mulcahy (took the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War)	March 1918 – August 1922
	Liam Lynch (anti-Treaty)	March 1922 – April 1923
	Frank Aiken (anti-Treaty)	April 1923 – 1925
IRA Quartermaster General	Sean McMahon (took the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War)	1919 – 1922
IRA Director of Purchases	Joseph Vize	July – November 1920
	Liam Mellows	November 1920 – c. February 1922
	Michael Cremins (anti-Treaty)	1922 – 1923
IRA O/C Britain	Rory O'Connor (took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War)	August 1920 – c. July 1922
	Joseph Vize (pro-Treaty)	c. Spring 1922 ono
	Patrick Murray (anti-Treaty)	September 1922 – c. May 1923
IRA O/C Birmingham	Patrick O'Neill (took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War)	c. Spring 1920 – April 1922

IRA O/C Liverpool (i.e. O/C Liverpool city company IRA)	Thomas Craven	1917/1918 – September 1920
	Michael O'Leary	September – October 1920
	Tom Kerr	October – December 1920
	Peter Roland	December 1920
	Hugh Early	December 1920 – May 1921
	Edward Brady	May – June 1921
	Denis Fleming (took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War)	June 1921 – c. March 1923
IRA O/C London	Reginald Dunne	c. September 1919 – June 1922
	Dennis Kelleher (pro-Treaty)	c. June – July 1922
	William Aherne (anti-Treaty)	c. July 1922 ono
IRA O/C Manchester	Paddy O'Donoghue	c. Spring/summer 1919 – April 1921
	O'Mara/Matthew Lawless	c. April 1921 – ?
IRA O/C Tyneside	Richard Purcell	Spring/summer 1920 – October 1921
	Anthony Mularkey (anti-Treaty)	? – March 1923
IRA O/C Scotland	Joseph Vize	January 1919 – July 1920
	Joseph Furlong	July 1920 – c. Spring 1921
	Daniel Walsh	c. Spring 1921 – c. December 1921
	Joseph Robinson (anti-Treaty)	Spring 1922 – March 1923
	Seamus Reader (anti-Treaty)	March – c. October 1923
President of the IRB Supreme Council	Harry Boland	c. Summer 1918 – c. Summer 1919
	Michael Collins	c. Summer 1919 – ?
O/C London IRB (and South of England representative on the IRB Supreme Council)	Sam Maguire	c. ?1916 – 1922
O/C Liverpool IRB (and North of England representative on the IRB Supreme Council)	Neil Kerr Snr	c. ?1916 – December 1920
	Paddy Daly	c. December 1920 – c. January 1922

O/C Glasgow IRB (and Scotland's representative on the IRB Supreme Council)	John Mulholland ?Daniel Branniff	1915 – 1916 ?1921
President of Cumann na mBan	Constance Markievicz	?1916 – 1923
Chief of Na Fianna Éireann	Constance Markievicz	1911–1921

Appendix 2

The following tables give the data and, where appropriate, the methodology used to create the charts in the text.

Chart 1

From newspaper reports, a sample of 110 suspected republicans was created.[1] Of these 110, the ages of 70 were ascertained. The age distribution was thus:

AGE	FREQUENCY (i.e. number of people of that age)
17	3
18	3
19	7
20	11
21	5
22	6
23	3
24	5
25	6
27	6
28	4
29	1
30	1
31	1
32	1
33	1
34	1
38	1

[1] I attempted to gathered data on the suspects' ages from the Irish and British census of 1911 as well. Unfortunately, many of the suspects' names which I gathered from newspaper reports were so generic that, lacking information relating to their families, addresses etc, it was impossible to match them to specific census profiles.

43	1
51	1
57	1
64	1

13, or 18.571 per cent, of the sample are under 20 years old.

47 (67.142 per cent) are aged 20-29 years old.

6 (8.571 per cent) are aged 30-39 years old.

1 (1.428 per cent) is in his forties.

2 (2.857 per cent) are in their fifties.

1 (1.428 per cent) is in his sixties.

The average age is the sum of the ages divided by the number of ages = $\frac{1750}{70} = 25$

Chart 2

From newspaper reports, a sample of 110 suspected republicans was created.[2] Of these 110, the occupations of 68 were ascertained. The distribution was thus:

OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF DEFENDANTS WITH THAT OCCUPATION
Boot-maker	1
Broker	1
Brass Worker	1
Cable Operator	1
Carpenter	1
Cleaner	1
Clerk	7
Collier	1
Dealer	1
Engineer	6
Motor Mechanic (motorman etc.)	4
Farmer	1
Fitter's Labourer	1
Grocer	3
Joiner	4
Joiner's Improver	1
Kitchen worker	1
Labourer (including dock labourer, workman)	13
Messenger	1
Millwright	1
Miner	2
Painter	1
Scaffolder	1
Ship worker (including firemen)	3
Shop assistant	1
Stevedore	1
Student	3
Tailor	1
Teacher	2
Turner's Improver	1
Waiter (in a pub)	1

[2] I attempted to gathered data on the suspects' occupations from the Irish and British census of 1911 as well. Unfortunately, many of the suspects' names which I gathered from newspaper reports were so generic that, lacking information relating to their families, addresses etc, it was impossible to match them to specific census profiles.

I then divided them into different categories according to the type of work they pursued:

WORK CATEGORY	OCCUPATIONS IN THAT CATEGORY AND FREQUENCY THEREOF
MANUAL WORKERS	Boot-maker – 1 Cleaner – 1 Collier – 1 Kitchen worker – 1 Labourers - 13 Messenger – 1 Miners – 2 Scaffolder – 1 Ship workers – 3 Waiter (in a pub) – 1 **Total – 25 (36.765 per cent of the sample)**
TRADESMEN	Brass Worker – 1 Carpenter – 1 Joiners – 4 Millwright – 1 Painter – 1 **Total – 8 (11.764 per cent)**
SEMI-SKILLED	Cable Operator - 1 Clerks – 7 Fitter's Labourer – 1 Joiner's Improver – 1 Engineer - 6 Motor mechanic – 4 Stevedore – 1 Turner's Improver – 1 **Total – 22 (31.429 per cent)**
SKILLED	Broker - 1 Student - 3 Teacher – 2 Tailor – 1 **Total – 7 (10.294 per cent)**
FARMING	Farmer – **1 (1.471 per cent)**
RETAIL	Dealer - 1 Grocer – 3 Shop assistant – 1 **Total – 5 (7.353 per cent)**

Chart 3

MONTH	QUANTITY OF FIREARMS DESPATCHED THAT MONTH
Aug. 1919	7
Sept.	2
Oct.	
Nov.	
Dec.	
Jan. 1920	
Feb.	
Mar.	32
Apr.	15
May	6
June	
July	
Aug.	
Sept.	
Oct.	3
Nov.	8
Dec.	27
Jan. 1921	21
Feb.	10
Mar.	25
Apr.	11
May	48
June	52
July	69 (52 by 11 July)
Aug.	86
Sept.	75
Oct.	3
Nov.	
Dec.	
TOTAL	**500**

(Note that data is unavailable for the months Oct. 1919–Feb. 1920, June–Sept. 1920, and Nov.–Dec. 1921.)

Chart 4

MONTH	QUANTITY OF AMMUNITION DESPATCHED THAT MONTH (in rounds)
June 1919	70
July	100
Aug	2,252
Sept.	46
Oct.	
Nov.	
Dec.	
Jan. 1920	
Feb.	
Mar.	1,677
Apr.	
May	450
June	
July	
Aug.	
Sept.	
Oct.	600
Nov.	
Dec.	1,590
Jan. 1921	2,467
Feb.	607
Mar.	1,102
Apr.	1,517
May	4,031
June	3,672
July	4,749
Aug.	4,230
Sept.	7,478
Oct.	
Nov.	
Dec.	
TOTAL	**36,638**

(Note that data is unavailable for the months Oct. 1919–Feb. 1920, Apr. 1920, June–Sept. 1920, Nov. 1920, and Nov.–Dec. 1921.)

Chart 5

MONTH	QUANTITY OF EXPLOSIVES DESPATCHED THAT MONTH (in Kgs)
Jan. 1921	115.9
Feb.	36.9
Mar.	146.3
Apr.	62.1
May	122.4
June	
July	0.2
Aug.	34.7
Sept.	67.5
Oct.	
Nov.	
Dec.	
TOTAL	**586**

(Note that data is unavailable for the months of June, Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1921. Kg figures have been rounded to the first decimal place.)

Chart 6

AREA	NO. OF INCIDENTS	AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCIDENTS
Lancashire	97	41.3
London Metropolitan Area	46	19.6
Durham	30	12.8
Northumberland	19	8.1
Cheshire	15	6.4
Kent	9	3.8
Yorkshire (North Riding)	6	2.6
Warwickshire	2	0.9
Essex County	1	0.4
Scotland	10	4.3
TOTAL	**235**	**100**

(Percentages have been rounded to the first decimal place.)

Chart 7

TARGET OF ATTACK	FREQUENCY OF SUCH ATTACKS	AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ATTACKS
Farms	113	48.1
Communications and railway infrastructure	43	18.3
Warehouses	30	12.8
Factories	16	6.8
Timber Yards	9	3.8
Private Houses/Individuals	9	3.8
Miscellaneous	15	6.4
TOTAL	**235**	**100**

(Percentages have been rounded to the first decimal place.)

Chart 8

TARGET OF ATTACKS/ CONSTABULARY AREA	**Farms**	**Timber Yards**	**Warehouses**	**Factories/ Business Premises**	**Communications and Railway Infrastructure**	**Houses of RIC men**	**Miscellaneous Targets**	**TOTAL**
Lancashire	21	9	29	8	19	4	7	**97**
London Metropolitan Area	25	0	1	2	10	5	3	**46**
Durham	21	0	0	4	3	0	2	**30**
Northumberland	16	0	0	1	1	0	1	**19**
Cheshire	10	0	0	1	4	0	0	**15**
Kent	4	0	0	0	5	0	0	**9**
Yorkshire (North Riding)	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	**6**
Warwickshire	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Essex County	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
Scotland	8	0	0	0	0	0	2	**10**
TOTAL	**113**	**9**	**30**	**16**	**43**	**9**	**15**	**235**

Chart 9

MONTH	NO. OF INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM THAT MONTH
Nov. 1920	35
Dec.	3
Jan. 1921	6
Feb.	18
Mar.	62
Apr.	29
May	40
June	40
July	2
TOTAL	**235**

Chart 10

TARGETS OF ATTACK/ MONTH	**Farms**	**Timber Yards**	**Warehouses**	**Factories/ Business Premises**	**Communication & Railway Infrastructure**	**Houses of RIC men**	**Miscellaneous targets**	**TOTAL**
November 1920	0	9	25	1	0	0	0	**35**
December	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	**3**
January 1921	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	**6**
February	14	0	0	4	0	0	0	**18**
March	56	0	0	1	1	0	4	**62**
April	20	0	2	0	2	0	5	**29**
May	21	0	0	6	1	9	3	**40**
June	0	0	0	0	39	0	1	**40**
July	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	**2**
TOTAL	**113**	**9**	**30**	**16**	**43**	**9**	**15**	**235**

Chart 11

CONSTABULARY AREA/ MONTH	Lancashire	London Metropolitan Area	Durham	Northumberland	Cheshire	Kent	Yorkshire (North Riding)	Warwickshire	Essex	Scotland	**TOTAL**
November 1920	34	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**35**
December	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
January 1921	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**6**
February	10	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	**18**
March	16	15	15	7	5	1	2	1	0	0	**62**
April	6	8	1	7	0	3	4	0	0	0	**29**
May	6	6	14	5	0	0	0	0	0	9	**40**
June	19	10	0	0	4	5	0	0	1	1	**40**
July	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
TOTAL	**97**	**46**	**30**	**19**	**15**	**9**	**6**	**2**	**1**	**10**	**235**

Chart 12

According to the police, IRA terrorism in the period 27 November 1920–11 July 1921 inflicted damage to the value of £674,002 5*s* 11*d*. The monetary damage according to constabulary areas was as follows:

AREA	MONETARY DAMAGE CAUSED BY TERRORIST INCIDENTS (£)	AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MONETARY DAMAGE CAUSED
Lancashire	586,193	87
Durham	40,155	6
Northumberland	15,473	2.3
London Metropolitan Area	12,494	1.9
Cheshire	9,424	1.4
Kent	4,097	0.6
Yorkshire (North Riding)	1,613	0.2
Warwickshire	597	0.1
Essex County	3	0
Scotland	3,791	0.6
TOTAL	**673,840**	**100**

(Note: Due to the difficulties of dealing with shillings and pence, I have rounded the figures for each area to the nearest pound. Hence, the difference between the total figure in the table and that recorded by the police. Percentages have been rounded to the first decimal place.)

All data for Charts 13 and 14 appear in those charts.

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