

# "Irish Blood, English Heart": Gender, Modernity, and "Third Way" Republicanism in the Formation of the Irish Republic

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“IRISH BLOOD, ENGLISH HEART”:  
GENDER, MODERNITY, AND “THIRD-WAY” REPUBLICANISM IN THE  
FORMATION OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

By

Kenneth L. Shonk, Jr., B.A., M.A., M.A.T.

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ABSTRACT  
“IRISH BLOOD, ENGLISH HEART”:  
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Led by noted Irish statesman Eamon de Valera, a cadre of former members of the militaristic republican organization Sinn Féin split to form Fianna Fáil with the intent to reconstitute Irish republicanism so as to fit within the democratic frameworks of the Irish Free State. Beginning with its formation in 1926, up through the passage of a republican constitution in 1937 that was recognized by Great Britain the following year, Fianna Fáil had successfully rescued the seemingly moribund republican movement from complete marginalization. Using gendered language to forge a nexus between primordial cultural nationalism and modernity, Fianna Fáil’s nationalist project was tantamount to efforts anti-hegemonic as well as hegemonic. At the same time that the party sought to dissolve both the Free State and remnants of British Colonialism, it made concerted efforts to construct a new nation along republican lines.

Responding to a feminized *même* by its political opposition, Fianna Fáil established political legitimacy by forging a delayed-Enlightenment aesthetic that triumphed reason, democratic values, and pacifistic insurrection. Faced with the challenges of fierce opposition as well as those associated with the creation of a new nation, Fianna Fáil offered a corrective by clearly delineating that which was acceptable in terms of both tradition and modernity, political agency, as well as constructs of femininity and masculinity. In contrast to the public revolutionary feminist, Fianna Fáil established clear frameworks of appropriate womanhood commensurate with its republican ideology. The party offered a varied level of political agency to women as they were to be both consumers and physical embodiments of a Fianna Fáil-based republic. In contrast, yet symbiotically related, de Valera’s party confronted the economic challenges of the era by creating a socio-economic aesthetic that heralded the party’s masculine, activist economic policy. Having established what was acceptable, the party made a concerted effort to other, or queer, that which did not fit within its nationalistic aims by highlighting their opponents’ inability to fit within the party’s heteronormative binary.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kenneth L. Shonk, Jr., B.A., M.A., M.A.T.

“Real names be proof.”

-Minutemen<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Minutemen, “History Lesson, Part 2,” *Double Nickels on the Dime*, SST Records 028, 1984.

Any work of history is only as good as its sources, and therefore I am grateful to the library staff at Marquette University, California State University, Fullerton, the University of Wisconsin at Madison and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. In Ireland, Lisa Collins and Kate Manning at University College, Dublin Archives, Mary Broderick of the National Library of Ireland's Ephemerae Collection, Liam Cullen, Head of Research for the Fianna Fáil party, Bertie Ahern for offering to expedite the process with Fianna Fáil, and all the staff at the National Archives of Ireland have my eternal gratitude.

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## LIST OF TERMS IN IRISH

- A Chara** (*aw har-uh*): “My Friend.” A common greeting used between known acquaintances or friends.
- Ard Fheis** (*ord esh*): “National Convention.” A meeting or gathering of a political or social organization. For example, the annual meeting of Fianna Fáil is referred to as the “Annual Ard Fheis of Fianna Fáil.”
- Bean na hÉireann** (*bawn naw hair-un*): “Women of Ireland.” Republican feminist journal that featured the writings of Constance Markievicz.
- Bean Tighe** (*bawn ti-huh*): “House Lady.” The term is often used to refer to a housemaid.
- Béarla** (*bare-luh*): “English.” This term refers specifically to the English language.
- Bunreacht na hÉireann** (*bun-re-awkt naw hair-unn*): “The Constitution of Ireland.” The constitution was approved by the Irish people in 1937, and remains the basis of the modern Irish Republic.
- Cailíní**: (*cay-lee-knee*): “Girls.” The plural form of Cailín.
- Camógaíocht** (*cuh-mo-ghee-oh*): A version of hurling adapted specifically for women.
- Camogie** (*cuh-mo-ghee*): Shortened, colloquial version of Camógaíocht.
- Craobh** (*creev*): “Branch.” Often used to signify a particular branch of a larger organization, i.e., Dublin City Craobh of Fianna Fáil.
- Cumann na mBan** (*cum-on naw mawn*): “The League of Women.” An association of radical feminists created in 1914, and remained active in political and social affairs up through the 1930s.
- Cumann na nGaedheal** (*cum-on naw ghell*): “Party of the Irish.” Founded in 1922 and launched in 1923, the party was comprised of former members of Sinn Féin who supported the treaty that ended the Anglo-Irish War.
- Dáil Éireann** (*doyle air-unn*): “Parliament of Ireland.” The Dáil had a number of incarnations, including the first Dáil which existed between 1919 and 1922; a second Dáil created, and later dissolved, in 1922; and the Free State Dáil created in 1922, which continued to exist after the ratification of 1937 constitution.
- Éire** (*air-uh*): “Ireland.” The official name of Ireland, as proscribed in the 1937 Constitution.
- Fianna Fáil** (*fee-uh-nuh foyle*; alternatively, *fee-nuh fawl*): “Warriors of Destiny.” Alternatively, “Soldiers of Ireland.” Irish republican party created in 1926 by former members of Sinn Féin. The party remains in existence and is a vital part of contemporary Ireland.
- Fine Gael** (*fin-uh goyle*; alternatively, *fin gayle*): “Party of the Irish.” Alternatively, “United Ireland Party.” Founded in 1933 as a response to the electoral victories of Fianna Fáil, the party was comprised of former members of Cumann na nGaedheal, as well as members of the National Centre Party and the National Guard, also known as the Blueshirts. The party is still an important alternative to Fianna Fáil in modern Ireland.

**Gaeilge** (*goy-guh*): “Gaelic.” Specifically, the Irish form of Gaelic, as opposed to Gaeilge na hAlban, which is the term for Scottish Gaelic, for example.

**Inghinidhe na Éireann** (*in-hin-nuh-duh naw hair-unn*): “Daughters of Ireland.” Feminist organization founded by Maud Gonno in 1900.

**Mná na hEireann** (*muh-naw nuh hair-unn*): “Women of Ireland.” Republican feminist organization from the 1930s.

**Mná na Poblachta** (*muh-naw nuh po-block-tuh*): “Women of the Republic.” Republican feminist organization from the 1930s.

**Poblacht na hÉireann** (*po-bloch nuh hair-unn*): “Republic of Ireland.”

**Saor Éire** (*see-ur air-uh*): “Free Ireland.” A socialist party with republican sympathies created in 1931.

**Saorstát Éireann** (*see-ur-stat air-unn*): “Irish Free State.”

**Shan Van Vocht** (*shan van vawkt*): “The Poor Old Woman.” The title of a feminist republican journal published between the years 1896 and 1899. The journal’s title was a phonetic spelling of the Irish phrase “sean bhean bhocht.”

**Sinn Féin** (*shin feign*): Literally, “Ourselves.” Alternatively, “Ourselves Alone.” Irish republican party founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith and Bulmer Hobson. Since its inception, the organization had undergone numerous ideological changes.

**Taoiseach** (*tee-shock*): “Prime Minister.” Literally, “leader” or “chief.” The head of the Irish government as proscribed in the 1937 Constitution.

**Teachta Dála** (*tack-tuh doll-uh*): “Deputy of the Dáil.” Abbreviated as “TD,” the term refers to members of the Dáil.

**Teachtaí Dála** (*tack-tee doll-uh*): “Deputies of the Dáil.” Plural form of Teachta Dála.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**NAI:** National Archives of Ireland

**NLI:** National Library of Ireland

**NLI EC:** National Library of Ireland, Ephemerae Collection

**NLI LO:** National Library of Ireland, Librarian's Own Collection

**NLI MS:** National Library of Ireland, Manuscripts Collection

**UCDA:** University College, Dublin Archives

## Chapter One Irish Blood, English Heart

I don't care if the fascists have to win.  
I don't care democracy's being fucked.  
I don't care socialism's full of sin.  
The unbeatable system engenders rot.  
What is exciting is the triumph of the new nation.  
-Stereolab<sup>1</sup>

On 10 March 1926 party president Eamon de Valera announced his resignation from Sinn Féin, a republican party that had operated on the fringes of Irish politics since the end of the Irish Civil War as the party adamantly refused to participate in the recently created Free State Dáil.<sup>2</sup> De Valera's resignation was from Sinn Féin not from Irish politics, for his departure marked the beginning of a new party to be named Fianna Fáil, which chose to abandon Sinn Féin's policy of abstention from the legally recognized Free State.<sup>3</sup> Justifying his resignation, de Valera wrote: "Somebody has to enter into the conflict. This is the opportune time,

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<sup>1</sup> Stereolab, "Jenny Ondioline," *Transient Random-Noise Bursts With Announcements*, Elektra Records 61536-2, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> The term Dáil refers to the parliamentary body of both the Free State governments, as well as the modern Irish Republic. The first Dáil was created in January 1919 and was comprised of the members of Sinn Féin who chose to abstain from taking their seats in the British Parliament, thereby forming a separatist government. The second Dáil was created in August of 1921 and was dissolved by the creation of the Free State Dáil in June of 1922. Many members of Sinn Féin chose to not recognize the Free State Dáil, choosing instead to claim legitimacy for the second Dáil. For a concise study on the political development of Ireland, see Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule, An Irish History, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) and Tom Garvin, *1922: The Birth of Irish Democracy* (London: Gill and Macmillan, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Literally, the term Fianna Fáil means "warriors/soldiers of Ireland," alternatively "Warriors of Destiny." Explaining why the name was chose, de Valera stated: "The name FIANNA FAIL [sic] has been chosen to symbolise a banding together of the people for national service, with a standard of personal honour for all who join, as high as that which characterised the ancient Fianna Eireann, and a spirit of devotion equal to that of the Irish Volunteers from 1913 to 1921." *Statement on the aims of Fianna Fáil, 17 April 1926*, Eamon de Valera Collection UCDA, P150/2011. See John Coakley "The foundations of statehood," in *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, eds. John Coakley and Michael Gallgher (London: Routledge, 1999), 1-31. Recollections of the early years of the party can be found in Kevin Boland, *The Rise and Decline of Fianna Fáil* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1982). For a concise contextualization of the party's early history, see J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 150-57.

and I realise that the coming general election is the time...if [Cumann na nGaedheal representatives] get firmly fixed and you get the economic interests of Ireland fixed, there will be no place in Ireland for a national political party. These are the reasons that prompted me.”<sup>4</sup> For de Valera and his followers this so-called “new departure” came at a time when the seemingly moribund Irish republican cause was becoming less vital in the wake of the relative success of the early Free State. Not only was the viability and effectiveness of the republican movement in question, but so too was the reputation of the former Sinn Féin leader, prompting a letter to *The Westminster Gazette*, which read: “Most people in Great Britain had begun to forget that Mr de Valera still exists, and now perhaps we may all forget, since he has since resigned.”<sup>5</sup> Considering that the republican cause sought to create more than just an independent Irish state free from the interference of Great Britain, this question regarding the presence of de Valera seemed all the more damning to the status of Irish republicanism in 1926.

Indeed, the formation and eventual successes of Fianna Fáil were no doubt remarkable, yet most unlikely was the survival of republicanism following the tenuous decade that had preceded the party’s creation.<sup>6</sup> David Fitzpatrick has written that “in the process of Ireland’s political transformation between 1913 and 1921 every

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<sup>4</sup> Eamon de Valera, in *Speeches and Statements By Eamon de Valera, 1917-1973*, ed. Maurice Moynihan (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), 130. Moynihan notes that this particular passage was found amongst de Valera’s papers and remained unpublished. Despite this, it nonetheless gives an insight into reasons for de Valera’s “new departure.” Ibid., 129. Cumann na nGaedheal emerged from the Treaty debates as the most influential and important political party in 1920s Ireland. The party would reconstitute itself in 1933 following the dominance of Fianna Fáil in the 1930s.

<sup>5</sup> Anonymous quote from *The Westminster Gazette*, in Moynihan, 129.

<sup>6</sup> The republicanism that Fianna Fáil advocated was quite simply the desire to establish an independent Irish republic. There have been a number of republican movements including the Fenians—a movement with which Fianna Fáil shares an etymological lineage—up through the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Sinn Féin. The means by which to attain the republic proved to be the distinguishing characteristic between the myriad movements.

Irishman was to some extent both actor and observer.”<sup>7</sup> As such, the events of this time scarred the population, resulting in a generation cognizant of the tropes and rhetoric associated with radical change. For some, the revolution remained unfinished and further violence was needed, yet for most, violent insurgency as the means best suited to gain a free nation was most distasteful. This most unique period—which should be extended to 1923 to include the formation of the Free State and its immediate aftermath—witnessed violent upheaval twice against Britain, a traumatic debate about the treaty that ended the Anglo-Irish conflict, and a civil war that that resulted. Peter Hart effectively summarizes these events, writing:

In the aftermath of the Easter Rising of 1916, however, radicals did achieve radical change: a Sinn Féin majority in Ireland in the 1918 general election; an avowedly separatist parliament, Dáil Éireann, in 1919; republican local governments, police, and courts in 1920; the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921; and ultimately, in 1922, an independent Free State separate from both Great Britain and Northern Ireland.<sup>8</sup>

These seminal movements were largely the result of activist bands of rebels that utilized both violence and diplomacy in the attempt to dissolve—or at least weaken—colonial ties to Great Britain, thereby forming a semblance of independence for Ireland. Despite these efforts, as Hart points out, “the whole of Ireland did not participate equally in this change.”<sup>9</sup> While the population of Ireland bore witness to the events that occurred in this era, the dealings that created the Free State were handled in such a manner that the population writ-large were simply observers.

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<sup>7</sup> David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921, Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), 281.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at War 1916-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 30. For deeper examinations of the Civil War and its immediate aftermath, see Bill Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michael Hopkinson, *Green Against Green, The Irish Civil War* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988, 2004). For the Treaty debate, see Jason K. Knirck *Imagining Ireland's Independence, The Debates Over the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Frank Pakenham, *Peace by Ordeal: An Account, from first-hand sources, of the Negotiation and Signature of the Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1951).

<sup>9</sup> Hart, *I.R.A. at War*, 31.

Fianna Fáil, on the other hand, would seek to change that by constructing a renewed dedication to a nationalist cause through the reconstitution of Irish republicanism.

Shortly after his resignation from Sinn Féin, de Valera and his cadre of supporters launched Fianna Fáil, presenting the party's aims to the public in April of 1926.<sup>10</sup> The new party would immediately reject the abstentionism of Sinn Féin, instead opting to enter the Free State Dáil upon the assumption that party members would be elected into office the following year. Or, as de Valera told an audience the following month, republicans “must do their part to secure common action by getting into position along the most likely line of the nation's advance.”<sup>11</sup> His newfound willingness to participate within the Free State government—a government that he and his followers viewed as essentially a British creation managed by Irish politicians—was tantamount to an effort to most efficiently affect change in Ireland, keeping in mind the ultimate goal of an independent state. Arguably, within a decade, Fianna Fáil did succeed in their aims, first by attaining political legitimacy in the Dáil, then by securing the popular ratification of a “republican” constitution in 1937.

As time passes and circumstances change, politicians unyielding to adaptation run the risk of insignificance and marginalization. The same can be said about political movements, as time, circumstance, and public perception invalidate a group so as to make them passé. However, it would be hyperbole to say that Eamon de Valera and Sinn Féin were completely removed from the political landscape in the years before the formation of Fianna Fáil. Indeed, the marginalization of Sinn Féin

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<sup>10</sup> Eamon de Valera, “Aims of Fianna Fáil, Press Statement, 17 April 1926” in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 131-2. Moynihan notes that this statement was based on “an interview with a representative of the United Press. Ibid., 131. The fact that this statement was released before the actual creation of the organization further solidifies the notion that de Valera was indeed *the* central figure of the Fianna Fáil movement.

<sup>11</sup> Eamon de Valera, “A National Policy,” in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 134. This particular speech was given at the first meeting of Fianna Fáil, which was held at the La Scala Theatre in Dublin on 16 May 1926.

had as much to do with their policy of abstention as the relative successes of the Saorstát. This self-imposed exile from the Dáil sparked an intellectual civil war within the hard-line republican movement that would result in the formation of Fianna Fáil by de Valera and his followers in 1926. In other words, as Ireland had moved on, Sinn Féin's platform seemed increasingly irrelevant and unfeasible, thus necessitating a reconstitution of republicanism that was politically suitable to operate through the democratic institutions of the Free State. Within a period of eleven years, the leader once deemed as seeing his time past would not only lead a renascent republicanism to multiple electoral victories, but succeed in forging a new constitution—so glibly accepted by London—and eventually gain recognition as an independent state in 1949.<sup>12</sup> This scenario was arguably one of the great political “comebacks” of modern political history.

The question remains: how did the Fianna Fáil movement rescue Irish republican aspirations from irrelevance in the wake of losses in the Treaty Debate and Civil War to such a degree that the party redefined Ireland's socio-economic and political narrative in its own image. First, it is vital to understand that Fianna Fáil engaged with the democratic Free State, and therefore, it is of great importance to understand how the party validated and justified its actions within that system. By rejecting abstention and opting to enter the Free State's political fray, Fianna Fáil positioned itself as a republican alternative to Cumann na nGaedheal, offering Irish voters a chance to re-engage with the republican spectacle in a manner suitable to the era's sensibilities. The party was revolutionary but not overtly militant; it maintained

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<sup>12</sup> Although the people of Ireland would ratify a republican constitution in 1937, full independence from Britain resulted from the Republic of Ireland Act passed on 21 December 1948 under a Fine Gael-led coalition government—and went into effect on 18 April the following year—and was formally recognized by the British Parliament via the Ireland Act passed on 2 June 1949. Dáil Éireann, *The Republic of Ireland Bill, 1948—Committee (Resumed) Díospóireachtaí Parlaiminte* Volume 113, (2 December 1948). Op. Cit.



the charismatic leadership so essential to Irish nationalist movements; it cloaked itself in a brand of popular nationalism that was free from single-cause, dogmatic ideologies; and more than anything, it offered an electable brand of republicanism. Yet to say, in essence, that Fianna Fáil was a democratic party encouraging participation offers little context or understanding as to how the party succeeded. For the party envisioned itself as more than a political machine; rather it operated upon the assumption that it was a *national* movement that not only sought to forge a new government, but also to redefine all aspects of Irish society to fit within the party's vision.

Further, it would be faulty to assume that Fianna Fáil operated in a socio-political vacuum removed from economic and political currents that affected much of the world in the years that preceded the Second World War. Brian Girvin contends that “the republicanisation of Ireland had three components: political, constitutional, and diplomatic.”<sup>13</sup> Through these three categorizations Girvin traces the manner in which Fianna Fáil utilized party policy to legislate itself, first into legitimacy and secondly into political domination. Further, Girvin stated—with little evidence—that Fianna Fáil “had republicanised domestic policy and created an institutional framework where the requirements of the Irish state and of its citizens would take priority over all other considerations.”<sup>14</sup> One of the more remarkable aspects of Fianna Fáil was their ability to reconcile Irish republicanism with both Free State dynamics, and also with its geopolitical troubles specific to the onset of modernity. As such, the fundamental assumption of this work is that the most complete portrait of interwar Ireland must be based on the axiom that Fianna Fáil was both a party true to

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<sup>13</sup> Brian Girvin, “The Republicanisation of Irish Society, 1932-48,” in *A New History of Ireland, Volume VII: Ireland, 1921-84*, ed. J.R. Hill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 136.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

its cultural and historical lineage, but also one that was undoubtedly concerned with contemporary issues beyond Ireland's shores. Thus, Fianna Fáil was a product of its time, interacting with the realities of the era. This was a moment that necessitated the party's full participation in the Free State Dáil—an entity that Fianna Fáil sought to destroy.

The ratification of the Fianna Fáil constitution by the people of Ireland in 1937 and the passage of the Éire Confirmation Bill one year later stand as testaments to the transformative moment forged by Fianna Fáil in the years between its formation in 1926 and the eventual creation of a truly independent Irish State in 1949. In the early years of their intertwined existence, Cumann na nGaedheal and the Free State government it controlled—not to mention the continual marginalization of Sinn Féin—were the featured foundational aspects of Ireland of the time period. The creation, and eventual success of Fianna Fáil represented a watershed moment in Irish history, for nearly all aspects of Ireland's subsequent political and cultural life were—and are—directly connected to this particular moment. Justifying its existence as the *true* harbinger of the Gaelic-Irish national tradition, Fianna Fáil quickly and effectively disarmed the Anglo-Free State binary from within. In the wake of Fianna Fáil successes, the once-victorious Treatyite party, Cumann na nGaedheal, had lost its validity, joining with the self-professed fascist Blueshirts to form the reactionary Fine Gael—a party whose origins were rooted in its opposition to Fianna Fáil policy. This was in direct contrast to its precursor that had been forged in the wake the Treaty debates. Further, the Constitution of 1937—also called “de Valera's Constitution,” alternatively the “Fianna Fáil Constitution”—legislated the party's socio-political

vision.<sup>15</sup> This, what I have dubbed the Formative Era of the Irish Republic, comprises the years when the advancement of Fianna Fáil’s nationalistic vision advanced from political rhetoric into the most foundational aspects of the modern Irish nation-state. The purpose here is to not to retell the legislative narrative of the party, but rather to demonstrate *how* Fianna Fáil attempted to forge a nation based on its renascent republican discourse.

Indeed, the party reconstituted republicanism to operate within the frameworks of the Irish Free State in contrast to the militant dogmatism of Sinn Féin. As Eunan O’Halpin writes, “Whatever his complaints about the treaty, the constitution, external relations, or economic policy, de Valera in power was content to operate the administrative system fashioned by his opponents.”<sup>16</sup> With the creation of Fianna Fáil, de Valera and his followers sought to displace a government still connected to London, and to reconstruct Ireland’s socio-economic narrative in the hopes of attaining a level of independence that transcended mere political freedom. As such the party perceived itself as offering a corrective to the legacy of British colonialism—a legacy that the party explicitly claimed to have been perpetuated via the Free State and Cumann na nGaedheal. Far more implicit was the corrective to the colonial discourse that Fianna Fáil offered in terms of negotiating the unfinished, or at least unfocused, path to independence.

To present Fianna Fáil as just a political movement with socio-cultural inclinations, therefore fails to represent what the party sought to do in the Formative Era. The party envisioned itself as a *national movement* and thereby advanced affectations of a large-scale, all-encompassing faction for which electoral triumph was

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<sup>15</sup> Ronan Fanning, “Mr de Valera Drafts a Constituion,” in *De Valera’s Constitution and Ours*, ed. Brian Farrell (Dublin: Radio Telefís Éireann & Gill and Macmillan, 1988), 33-45.

<sup>16</sup> Eunan O’Halpin, “Politics and the State, 1922-32,” in Hill, *New History*, 112.

merely part of a larger effort to replace the Anglo-Free State discourse with a new republican narrative. Freed by its disassociation from Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil sought to advance a nation-wide movement—at least in the southern twenty-six counties—intent on constructing a new nation from within. Fianna Fáil represented itself as an effort to instill a command over means—a distillation of nationalistic efforts into the everyday, and it transcended class and history: it was not encumbered by Marxian trappings, nor was it beholden to upholding a liberal-capitalist lineage. Rather, its immediate concerns centered on problems not solvable by nineteenth century ideologies. The party was concerned with the infinitely Irish problem of reconciling traditionalism—however imagined—with the realities of modernity. Compounded by the historical challenges of the inter-war period, the problem of Ireland’s colonial heritage engendered a nationalist project that advanced an approach unique to the twentieth century. Fianna Fáil, therefore, offered a corrective to these problems by clearly delineating that which was acceptable in terms of tradition, modernity, and political agency, as well as constructs of femininity and masculinity. Fianna Fáil’s nationalist project was tantamount to anti-hegemonic as well as hegemonic efforts—in other words, at the same time that the party sought to dissolve both the Free State and remnants of British colonialism, it made concerted efforts to construct a new nation along republican lines.

In the Formative Era, of course, the party was actively involved in the daily legislation of the Free State, often supporting policy that was in direct contrast to its nationalistic aims. This duality does much to explain the party’s blatant contradictions. One such example regards the treatment of women. For example, the *Bunreacht na hÉireann*—in English, the “Constitution of Éire—declares “the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support

without which the common good cannot be achieved.”<sup>17</sup> This passage from “de Valera’s Constitution” is often used to signify the paternalism and misogynistic tone of Fianna Fáil in its advocacy of the primacy of the female domestic. Yet, as will be shown in chapter three, the nationalistic thrust of Fianna Fáil encouraged women to dress in appropriately modern clothing, and even to engage in party-sanctioned vocations. As will become clear throughout this work, the division of gender-appropriate aesthetics into a masculine/feminine binary was done to suit the party’s efforts to destroy what it considered to be the remaining vestiges of British colonialism, as well as to form the basis of a modern state. As such, it is my aim to focus on these nationalistic aims, which at times contradicted the party’s legislative machinations. In sum, on the one hand Fianna Fáil was one of a small number of political parties working in the Free State Dáil, engaged in a very typical political dialectic, and on the other, they were a nationalist party working toward destroying the very entity in which they served.

This approach speaks to Joost Augusteijn’s assertion that “the history of independent Ireland and in particular the somewhat shadowy period of the interwar years has so far mainly been dealt with in a general manner.”<sup>18</sup> I would add that the histories of this period tend to focus on the trajectory of the impact of Fianna Fáil and the independence of Ireland into the 1940s and beyond, namely to focus on the dour economic and social conditions in Ireland. However, as Augusteijn argues, “the Free State was not just the insular self-obsessed and culturally barren society it has often

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<sup>17</sup> *Bunreacht na hÉireann/Constitution of Ireland*, art. 1, § 1, cl. 1. (Dublin: Government Publications Sales Office, 1937, 2003), 158. In Irish, the quotation is as follows: “Admhaíonn an Stát go dtugann an bhean don Stát, trína saol sa teaghlach, cúnamh nach bhféadfí leas an phobail a ghnóthú dá éagmais.” Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Joost Augusteijn, *Ireland in the 1930s, New Perspectives*, ed. Joost Augusteijn (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 7. See also, Brian Fallon, *An Age of Innocence; Irish Culture, 1930-1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), and Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002* (London: Harper Collins, 2004).

been portrayed as.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Elizabeth Russell argues that the Irish were rather voracious in their reading habits—although not exactly readers of the great Western Canon—adding, “their content was uniform: ‘guns and roses’; shoot-outs at corrals and then happy-ever-after tales, and, when home-produced, an extra large smattering of soft-nationalism and a nod in the direction of the Vatican were added in for good measure.”<sup>20</sup> The fact that Ireland was indeed a literate society, savvy to the clues and subtexts in such literature, adds to the importance of Fianna Fáil’s nationalist aesthetic that was presented in tropes familiar to even the most casual Irish reader. This coalesced with the party’s labors to appeal to as many people as possible from myriad backgrounds—cosmopolitan urbanites, farmers, children, as well as adolescents looking for advice as to how they might fit within a utopian Ireland. In the years leading up to the ratification of the 1937 constitution, the effort by which Fianna Fáil sought to appeal to as many people as possible through its nationalist, participatory aesthetic—so as to widen their electoral appeal, but also to garner support for new republican frameworks—must be differentiated from its efforts in the Dáil.



One of the major stumbling blocks when it comes to understanding the nature of Fianna Fáil is that of its revolutionary efforts. John M. Regan claims that the party “was built upon a revolutionary trajectory established in 1912.”<sup>21</sup> While it is true that Fianna Fáil owed its existence to the efforts of its nationalist predecessors, the ability to distinguish itself from the political fray that marked the era prior to its creation lay not in its self-alignment on this trajectory, but rather in its ability to seize and redirect

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<sup>19</sup> Sugustejn, *Ireland in the 1930s*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Russell, “Holy Crosses, Guns and Roses: Themes in Popular Reading Material,” in Augustejn, ed. *Ireland*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> “John M. Regan, *The Irish Counter-Revolution, 1921-1936. Treatyite Politics and Settlement in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, Ltd., 1999), xvi.

Irish republican discourse. Further, it will be demonstrated below how Fianna Fáil actively distanced itself from this trajectory to which Regan refers. Speaking in 1927 at the Second Annual Ard Fheis of Fianna Fáil, de Valera stated: “When circumstances change, methods must change; but the thing that has not changed is the aim, and that aim is to secure the complete freedom of this country; and we know that, no matter how they might alight it as a mere form, the form in which that aim will express itself is that of an independent Republic.”<sup>22</sup> This subtle, but sharp, rebuke of Sinn Féin is essential in understanding the motivations for Fianna Fáil. The notion that circumstances had changed, therefore necessitating a change in methodology, freed de Valera and his followers from maintaining the hard-line Sinn Féin dogma that had been largely rejected by voters and marginalized by its political opponents. Further, the gendered critique of Sinn Féin by Cumann na nGaedheal essentially atomized the republicans, reducing them to mere individuals seen as ardent reactionaries threatening the stability of the state.<sup>23</sup> As such, the reconstitution of the republican cause sought to reverse this trend through the advancement of a larger, national cause.

A party that was simply Sinn Féin with a new name could not and would not have succeeded in the Free State, especially with a population savvy to, and largely disgusted with, the tropes of violent upheaval. The new party was distinctive and offered a new republican vision better suited to combat Cumann na nGaedheal. To what did the party owe its success? Alvin Jackson contends that Cumann na nGaedheal had failed to create an “exclusive constituency” apart from ex-Unionists and “those

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<sup>22</sup> Eamon de Valera, *Statement by Eamon de Valera, T.D., at 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ard Fheis of Fianna Fail, as President of that Organisation*, Eamon de Valera Collection, UCDA, P155/2048. The term Ard Fheis refers to an annual conference or congress of any organization that is usually political in scope.

<sup>23</sup> Jason Knirck, *Women of the Dáil—Gender, Republicanism and the Anglo-Irish Treaty* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).

who profited from commercial ties with Britain.”<sup>24</sup> In contrast, he notes that Fianna Fáil “was able to tap an electoral core which was unreconciled to the Free State: it was rather that the party was able to reconstruct the political chemistry of Parnellism by combining nationalist fundamentalism with a carefully tailored social and economic appeal.”<sup>25</sup> The implication is that the Irish public’s support for republicanism was largely dormant, and that Fianna Fáil’s aims served as a proper alternative to the stop-gap element of the Free State and its party of government. As such, Jackson portrays Fianna Fáil as offering a political pastiche in which the party’s rhetoric was simply a rehashing of seemingly mordant ideologies. Further, Jackson contends that Fianna Fáil’s success was due in large part to Cumann na nGaedheal’s failings in dealing with Europe’s changing socio-economic landscape.

Richard Dunphy, meanwhile, attributes a more aggressive and activist stance to Fianna Fáil: “The party did not simply enjoy an electoral superiority, but succeeded in establishing its intellectual, moral, and cultural leadership.”<sup>26</sup> Dunphy asserts that Fianna Fáil succeeded in part because of its ability to balance a new economic and social policy on top of pre-existing notions of republicanism within Ireland. In this sense, he does not differ much from Jackson, apart from the fact that he contends that the party was far more progressive in its vision of Ireland’s future. An important element of Dunphy’s work is his contention that the emergence of de Valera’s new republican party to prominence completely restructured Ireland’s political landscape. Joe Lee similarly notes that de Valera’s party “succeeded in capturing the market for the emotional resentment of the excluded underdog, who felt that the political

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<sup>24</sup> Alvin Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998—Politics and War* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1999), 282.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 283.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Dunphy, *The Making of Fianna Fáil Power in Ireland, 1923-1948* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), viii.



‘system’ was fixed against them...[and] Fianna Fáil satisfied the demand for pageantry, and for vicarious participation, among the politically emotive.”<sup>27</sup> This brief selection offers insight into Fianna Fáil’s direct approach to affecting political change within Ireland, and in the case of Lee, how that in turn fed a cultural need. As such, these scholars describe the party as dispensers of a continuous string of mandates, likening it to a dictatorial puppet-master guiding the people to suit its own needs. These works present Fianna Fáil politics as clearly distinct from Irish culture, yet seeking to mandate the latter’s progress. Conversely, my goal is to demonstrate the machinations of a party that attempted—successfully in the short term, at least—to forge a nexus between society and economy, culture and nationalist aesthetics, and gender and power. As such, the Irish nation, the Irish people, and aspects of their daily life were meant to be daily affirmations of Fianna Fáil republicanism.

Charisma and opportunism are two of the most commonly cited elements associated with the reemergence of republicanism under the guise of Fianna Fáil. For instance, Dunphy argues that de Valera’s charismatic leadership was vital to the party’s rise to power, and that “what the organisation developed was not simply a cult of de Valera, but a structurally anchored cult of leadership, which has been one of its most consistent features.”<sup>28</sup> Bryan Fanning extends this analysis, seeing de Valera as part of a long line of prior leaders: “In the history of Ireland, Irish revolutionaries have united strongly behind the strong leader (Tone, Parnell, Collins, Pearse, etc.). In life and in death the ability of a single person to capture the hearts and minds of the Irish resolve to attain independence. Therefore, the stage was set for de Valera to

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<sup>27</sup> Lee, *Ireland*, 182.

<sup>28</sup> Dunphy, *Making*, 76.

seize the reins amidst the economic strife of the early 1920s.”<sup>29</sup> Or, as one Kerry boatman explained the reasons for Fianna Fáil’s triumph: “Poor people always vote for them and now there are more poor people that [sic] ever before.”<sup>30</sup>

Indeed the imagined link between social reform and the party was strong. Peter Mair writes “Once the Fianna Fáil programme had become legitimised, however, and particularly given that the Fianna Fáil programme also contained many of the more radical social and welfarist policies which were favoured by Labour, little potential remained for the smaller party to play an independent role. Indeed, when Fianna Fáil first took office in 1932, it did so in a minority government with Labour’s support.”<sup>31</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh notes, “In the late 1920s and into the early 1930s, de Valera and Fianna Fáil represented a force of promise or of menace, not only for different sections of the people of the Irish State but for Unionists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland, and for others including the British government.”<sup>32</sup> Dermot Keogh, meanwhile, writes that “de Valera was not the revolutionary die-hard depicted in Free State and British propaganda of the time. He was a politician, who, during the early months of 1922, continued to believe in his ability to rekindle the spirit of national unity fostered during the War of Independence.”<sup>33</sup> In the souvenir program that marked Fianna Fáil’s fiftieth anniversary, the party described its founder as a man of the people: “Because the man who founded Fianna Fáil was so closely identified with

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<sup>29</sup> Bryan Fanning, *Racism and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 76.

<sup>30</sup> Kevin Boland, *The Rise and Decline of Fianna Fáil* (Dublin: Mercier Press, Ltd., 1982), 54.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Mair, “Party Competition and The Changing Party System,” in *Politics in the Republic of Ireland*, eds. John Coakley and Michael Gallagher (London: Routledge, 1999), 133.

<sup>32</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, “The Age of de Valera and the Newsreel,” in *Nationalisms Visions and Revisions*, ed. Luke Dodd (Dublin: Film Institute of Ireland, 1999), 26.

<sup>33</sup> Dermot Keogh, “Eamon de Valera and the Civil War in Ireland, 1922-1932,” in *De Valera’s Irelands* ed. Dermot Keogh (Cork: Mercier Press, 2003), 72.

the fight of the Irish people for independence and sovereignty, the tendency has been to dilate and dwell on his stature as a soldier, or as a master of the art of politics, or as an international statesman...but he was also...an earnest social reformer.”<sup>34</sup> Less subtle was the declaration “Magnetic as a leader, de Valera exercised a special influence and authority over public opinion...his were the words that were listened to by the greatest number of voters.”<sup>35</sup>

Despite these myriad views on the iconic nature of Eamon de Valera, the purpose here is not to judge the man or his party in one way or the other. This project seeks to look at the nationalistic aims of Fianna Fáil in the decade prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. At the heart of this study lies the transformation by Fianna Fáil of the Irish Free State into Éire, the precursor to the Irish Republic, and my focus will remain on the period prior to passage of the Éire Confirmation Bill of 1938. My goal is to demonstrate the means by which Fianna Fáil successfully distinguished itself from the marginalized Sinn Féin party that had emerged from the Treaty Debate and Civil War, as well as to describe the steps taken by de Valera’s party to destroy the vestiges of the British/Free State dialectic from within the system itself. Further, and perhaps most important, I will explore the means by which Fianna Fáil sought to incorporate all aspects of Irish life and society into one nationalist endeavor. As such, the most important aspect of this work is the contextualization of Fianna Fáil within the interwar *zeitgeist*, in a manner free from character study or the platform of party legislation beyond the Formative Era.




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<sup>34</sup> *Ubhaile Órga Fianna Fáil—The Republican Party, Concert Souvenir Programme* (Dublin: Fianna Fáil, 1976), 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

George Mosse asserts that people increasingly looked toward the nation in their search for stability after the Great War, as well as to assuage anxieties about the impact of modernity.<sup>36</sup> Michael Mays argues that uncertainties regarding modernity shaped nationalist movements, as they were “beset by processes of modernization that it could barely comprehend, and against which they was necessary to concoct defensive strategies. Moreover, that modernity seemed—and the travesties of the War and the worldwide economic collapse appeared to dispel any lingering doubts about the matter—to be careening out of control.”<sup>37</sup> Mays adds that “insecure in that identity and unstable in its infancy, with relatively few indigenous resources, and burdened by a tremendous debt, the dilemma of a new Irish state intent upon establishing an Irish nation worthy of the long imagined and fought-over ideal explains much about the conservatism, the self-protectionism, and the insularity which are the facts, and not simply the crude stereotypes of the period.”<sup>38</sup> In the effort to situate the nascent nation amidst the trappings of modernity, Fianna Fáil—like other nationalist movements of the period—latched on to symbols to justify a presence in modern politics.

Much has been written regarding the propensity of Fianna Fáil to emphasize the so-called backward gaze, but it is faulty to assume that this was the only direction in which the party was willing to look. Mays notes that in the years after the Great War

Every nation would be forced to fashion its own image, to forge its own presumptively distinctive style, to weigh its circumstances, needs and desires, in order to determine its appropriate form, and to assess the conditions that would make one style preferable to another. If for a moment a revolutionary nationalism capable of embracing an indeterminate future had seemed a

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<sup>36</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).

<sup>37</sup> Michael Mays, *Nation States, The Cultures of Irish Nationalism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007), 92.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

possibility, after the Great War, and even more dramatically, after the economic collapse, nationalism would in the end, for all intents and purposes, retreat into the immutability of a serviceable past, refashioning itself in the process in the image of the newly dominant bourgeois class whose values and interests it would come to reproduce. Yet in Ireland—where national self-definition had taken shape...that project was all the more pressing. And that beloved image of Ireland—rural, Gaelic, anti-materialist, retaining an ancient pastoral distinctiveness and simplicity—could only be maintained by turning a blind eye to the difficult realities then in the process of transforming the Irish landscape.<sup>39</sup>

Yet Fianna Fáil did not turn a blind eye to the problems of modernity, nor did it seek to excise all aspects of modernity from their envisioned republic. Indeed, the party placed the pastoral as the goal, but as their nationalist aesthetic demonstrates, the party was willing to accept aspects of modernity so long as they fit within proper frameworks that did not challenge the idyllic republican vision.

Representations of Fianna Fáil in the Formative Era tend to emphasize the party's pastoralist vision, citing de Valera's famous call for a frugal and rural Ireland populated by industrious—not industrial—men and “comely maidens.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, sentiments such as this are largely representative of what has correctly been called a rather oppressive society, especially for women, or what James Smith called Ireland's “containment culture.”<sup>41</sup> However, a deeper look at the nationalist aesthetic advanced by Fianna Fáil in the years preceding the drafting of the constitution shows a party much more interested in and open to incorporating elements of modernity into the national fold. Granted, some saw this as evidence of a continuation of British-style capitalization of Irish society, but the party's propaganda regarding economic nationalism, as well as the role of women within a “de Valerian” state, show that

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 95-6.

<sup>40</sup> Eamon de Valera, “The Ireland That We Dreamed Of, Radio broadcast, 17 March 1943,” in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 466.

<sup>41</sup> James M. Smith, “The Politics of Sexual Knowledge: The Origins of Ireland's Containment Culture and the Carrigan Report (1931),” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13, no. 2 (April 2004), 209.

Ireland was not the culturally regressive state that it once was. This, however, is not to say that the rhetoric regarding the inclusion of modernity was seamlessly woven into Irish society—much to the contrary. Rather, the point here is that Fianna Fáil worked to produce a republican narrative through the incorporation of a dualistic national rhetoric that fulfilled the need to reconcile—if not intermesh—the backward and forward gazes.

In describing the downfall of Sinn Féin republicanism, Jason Knirck has made special note of the rhetorical dialectic between the supporters of the Treaty—Cumann na nGaedheal—and de Valera’s party. Central to this was Cumann na nGaedheal’s ability to portray Sinn Féiners as feminine and reactionary, and therefore a threat to the peaceful order established by the Free State. According to Knirck, “pro-Treatyites used gendered arguments and stereotypes to bring republicanism into disrepute. As a result, republicanism became ‘feminized,’ tarred with the brush of hysteria, irrationality and undue emotion.”<sup>42</sup> Knirck adds that “Pro-Treatyites also used images of the irrational, emotional, feminized political figure to castigate women and urge their exclusion from politics. They linked women and republicanism, and much of their seemingly misogynistic policy was also directed against radical republicans.”<sup>43</sup> Notions of sacrifice, emotionalism, and reverence for Irish martyrs were a unifying force for the modern republican movement and were central to Sinn Féin’s *raison d’être*. Further, these tropes highlighted by Knirck meshed well with British sentimentalities that “were perfectly happy to find the Irish just the sort of bucklepping, gallivanting rebels they had always proclaimed them to be, the rebel

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<sup>42</sup> Knirck, *Women*, 2. See also Louise Ryan, “‘Drunken Tans’: Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921),” *Feminist Review* 66, Political Currents (Autumn 2000): 73-94; Elizabeth Frances Martin, “Painting the Irish West: Nationalism and the Representation of Women,” *New Hibernia Review/Irish Éireannach Nua* 7, no. 1 (Spring/Earrach 2003): 31-44.

<sup>43</sup> Knirck, *Women*, 15.

being one reassuringly familiar kind of Irishman whom the liberal, book-buying English had taken fatally to their hearts.”<sup>44</sup> This rhetorical endeavor to delegitimize the republican cause was taken up by Fianna Fáil and served as the basis for de Valera’s party’s gendered rhetoric that sought to correct the male/female binary within Ireland. In regards to women, the Fianna Fáil corrective involved the defining of a proper role for women within an envisioned Irish republic; for men, this meant the situating of the Irish man as an active participant in a progressive, industrious Irish-based system of manufacture that moved Ireland closer to independence.

Central to Fianna Fáil’s corrective discourse was the promotion of a participatory ethos, where participation might mean any number of things including serving in political office, making expressions of militancy, or engaging in public protest. This was a clear departure from Sinn Féin. In the years following 1916, Sinn Féin had become a party of destruction, focused solely on ardent and adamant methods to affect change to Ireland in the hopes of dissolving the vestiges of colonial ties to Britain. Therefore, to participate in Sinn Féin meant to be actively involved in a course of destruction. Granted, there had existed the Second Dáil, but this was a tool of Sinn Féin that lacked a national mandate, and thus had little grounding in public sentiment. As such, Sinn Féin was advancing a rhetoric that asked the people of Ireland to support change—sometimes through violent means—to put a body into power that based its justification in revolutionary, not democratic acts. In this sense, post-independence Sinn Féin was still asking the people of Ireland to take a leap of faith, assuming that—if victorious—the party would be able to construct a stable and

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<sup>44</sup> Declan Kiberd, “From Nationalism to Liberation,” in *Representing Ireland—Gender, Class, Nationality*, ed. Susan Shaw Sailer (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997), 20.

peaceful Republic. In light of the stability already on offer through the Free State government, this was much to ask indeed.

Conversely, Fianna Fáil added the element of popular participation from the outset. At the same time that it was actively seeking to destroy the Free State as well as British ties, Fianna Fáil was actively constructing a new socio-economic narrative that included all aspects of Irish society. In other words, Fianna Fáil was seeking to create a new Ireland in its own image. Central to this was the party's effort to define what was acceptable and what was not; what was appropriate to the new nation and what was a threat; it was a corrective to the nation's past troubles, as well as being representative of a new discourse. Fianna Fáil defined and trumpeted acceptable visions of Ireland's Gaelic past at the same time that it pushed for the nation-wide acceptance of modern industry as both a means of reifying independence and isolation, but also of instilling patriotism. Such an effort was akin to Roger Griffin's description of Italy where the Fascists "sought to bring about [that which] was not 'anti-modern', but part of the attempt to create an alternative modernity to rescue society from decline and decadence, an aspiration which in turn gave Fascism's bid for the renewal of civilization a deep affinity with modernism itself."<sup>45</sup> The effort to construct a truly independent Éire was not simply the result of the party's legislative agenda; rather, Fianna Fáil constructed its new republican rhetoric through the inclusion of people within gendered frameworks, or what Foucault noted as the "way in which sex is put into discourse."<sup>46</sup>

The emphases in the party's aesthetic contained themes of tradition (Gaelicism, the glorification of a time before the "invasion," the primacy of Ireland's

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<sup>45</sup> Roger Griffin, "The Reclamation of Fascist Culture," *European History Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2001), 610.

<sup>46</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans., Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978, 1990), 11.



Catholicity), and modernity (glorification of growth and industry, the cult of progress), and they have much in common with nationalist parties that emerged in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. Regarding nationalist movements of that era, Mosse has asserted the “ideal of classical beauty was co-opted by nationalism, just as nationalism would annex many other political movements and philosophies over the years... The visual self-representation of the nation was just as important as the much cited literature of nationalism.”<sup>47</sup> In the course of its rise to power, Fianna Fáil would establish an inclusive republican aesthetic that created a definitive vision of a new, modern state. According to Foucault such a modern state characterized both “individual and totalizing form[s] of power” and was built upon “a very sophisticated structure, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form and submitted to a set of very specific patterns.”<sup>48</sup> Unlike Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil constructed a nationalist movement that sought to unify the nation through party-sanctioned individual behaviors. More specifically, as is contended below, the party constructed sanctioned norms along a female/male binary that offered both a corrective to past difficulties, as well as a basis for building this new state. As such, the people of Ireland were not asked to submit their will and efforts to a mass mobilization of the people à la the Bolsheviks or Chartists, but rather through the inculcation of republican ideology into all aspects of their daily life which enabled the party to alter “the world by reinterpreting it.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 16.

<sup>48</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981), 782-83.

<sup>49</sup> Lutz P. Koepnick, “Fascist Aesthetics Revisited,” *Modernism/modernity* 6, no. 1 (January 1999), 56.

In 1932 Benito Mussolini declared that “politics is the highest of the arts, the art of arts, the most godly amongst the arts, because it sculpts the most difficult, living material: man.”<sup>50</sup> In this brief statement Mussolini captured the essence of what Roger Griffith defined as palingenetic ultra-nationalism,<sup>51</sup> or what Mark Antliff described as a glorification of “both a mystic past and a technological future in a manner that seems highly contradictory.”<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Mosse has noted that “it was both traditional in its forms and dynamic in its movement, fascist aesthetic reflected fascism itself which, as we have mentioned, meant, at one and the same time, to uphold tradition and symbolize a revolutionary dynamic which was supposed to lead to a better future.”<sup>53</sup> Citing the glorification of man, Mussolini reduced the power of the individual to its most basic and god-granted form, yet at the same time celebrating the progressive and modernizing form of man—the backward and forward gaze, in a word, Janus-faced. Antliff argues that fascistic political projects emerged from concerns regarding the dehumanization of industrialization, the “globalization of capitalism,” as well as Marxian socialism, which sought to remove individualistic expression in the exchange for the greater whole.<sup>54</sup> Building upon Antliff’s assertions that fascistic movements emerged not from a vile, destructive ideology—as many would later become—Fianna Fáil constructed its nationalist efforts at a time when there was a general dissatisfaction with the liberal/Marxian binary, as well as an

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<sup>50</sup> Benito Mussolini, quoted in Ulrich Schmid, “Style versus Ideology: Towards a Conceptualisation of Fascist Aesthetics,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no. 1 (June 2005), 128.

<sup>51</sup> Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Antliff, “Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 1 (March 2002), 148.

<sup>53</sup> George L. Mosse, “Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2, Special Issue: The Aesthetics of Fascism (April 1996), 251.

<sup>54</sup> Antliff, “Fascism, Modernism, and Modernity,” 148.

appreciation of the need for corrective frameworks. For Germany, Italy, and Spain, this “third-way” alternative to liberal capitalism and Marxian socialism was a means to destroy the remnants of the *ancien regime*, or to assuage anxieties regarding industrialization and the emasculation that followed the Great War.<sup>55</sup>

A study of Fianna Fáil’s nationalist rhetoric and aesthetic nationalism finds much in common with movements on the continent. In the case of Ireland, such an approach offered a corrective to the emasculation of colonization, as well as a framework for Fianna Fáil’s plan for a modern state. Further, the party offered a participatory model that Lee contends “succeeded in capturing the market for the emotional resentment of the excluded underdog, who felt that the political ‘system’ was fixed against them...[a]nd Fianna Fáil satisfied the demand for pageantry, and for vicarious participation, among the politically emotive.”<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Lee contends that Fianna Fáil was most successful in “exploiting the fascistic rhetoric of nationalism.”<sup>57</sup>

Walter Benjamin asserted “the logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life.”<sup>58</sup> I would add that the aestheticization of politics was not necessarily unique to fascist states, but instead was a means to cope with anxieties that resulted from the progression of modernity. Lutz Koepnick argues that politics

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<sup>55</sup> The phrase “third-way” comes from Ruth Ben-Ghiat who argued that fascistic impulses were driven by a need to not only find an alternative to the liberal/Marxian binary, but “formed part of a larger attempt to reconceptualize ‘modernity’ as a condition that would allow for the retention of specificity at both the personal and national level.” Ruth Ben-Ghiat, “Italian Fascism and the Aesthetics of the ‘ThirdWay,’” *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (April 1996), 293. Ruth Ben-Ghiat adds that this “third-way” was manifest in European fascisms as an “attempt to fashion a doctrine that would correct the ‘materialism’ of both liberalism and socialism.” *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>56</sup> Lee, *Ireland*, 183. Lee also referred to interwar Ireland as “Gaelic Weimar.” *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>58</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 241.

“becomes aesthetic in fascism because fascism explicitly utilizes the charismatic promise of Great Politics into a viable consumer good, a carefully designed and marketed product that appeals to dormant desires of modern consumers and window shoppers.”<sup>59</sup> Koepnick adds that a political aesthetic of this sort was a “historically unique endeavor of breaking older bonds of solidarity while simultaneously rendering modern consumerism, including the consumption of charismatic politics, a privileged ticket to national rebirth.”<sup>60</sup> While both Benjamin and Koepnick discuss the inclusion of militancy in the aesthetic of Germany and Italy, the fact that this was not seen in Fianna Fáil’s rhetoric speaks volumes about the fact that the party was not fascist. Yet the inclusion of the aesthetic of national rebirth and “consumption” of the new nation—or in the case of Fianna Fáil, the renascent republican rhetoric—was fascistic, for Irish politics functioned within the same geo-political *zeitgeist* as Germany and Italy, and each was informed by similar anxieties.

This is not to say, however, that Fianna Fáil was a fascist party. After all, the party actively sought to weaken and destroy the overtly fascist Blueshirt movement led by General Eoin O’Duffy.<sup>61</sup> Whereas the Blueshirts captured the militaristic element of fascism, the party failed to grasp the *zeitgeist* that informed and shaped the intellectual aspects of third-way movements. As will be seen below, Fianna Fáil was

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<sup>59</sup> Koepnick, “Fascist,” 55.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Mike Cronin has done considerable research on the Blueshirts, and his works on the movement continue to be the definitive works on the subject. Cronin argues that the Blueshirts had certain fascist traits—they declared themselves to be as much—yet, they “were not instinctively anti-democratic and that the only result of such posturing was to enable Fianna Fáil to present themselves as the saviours of democracy.” Mike Cronin, *The Blueshirts and Irish Politics* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 39. Cronin contends that the Blueshirts “should be seen as a popular organisation which attempted to challenge the changes which de Valera envisaged for Ireland. More importantly the Blueshirts galvanized the opposition to form a single block to combat Fianna Fáil.” *Ibid.*, 197. See also Fearghal McGarry, “General O’Duffy, the National Corporate Party and the Irish Brigade,” in Augusteijn, *Ireland in the 1930s*, 117-42, and R.M. Douglas, *Architects of the Resurrection, Ailtirí na hAiséirghe and the Fascist ‘New Order’ in Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

adamant in its rejection of violence as a means to an end; rather the party was fascistic in the sense that it utilized similar means to advance its nationalist movements.

Further, the purpose of this project is not to advance any theory regarding the secretive desire to construct a totalitarian, fascistic state. Rather, the inclusion of fascistic theory and historiography offers an insightful lens through which a greater understanding of Fianna Fáil's machinations can be gleaned. Further, the usage of such works affords greater contextualization to Fianna Fáil as not only an Irish cause, but a movement specific to the interwar era.<sup>62</sup>

Aside from the rejection of outward, aggressive militancy, another point of departure between Fianna Fáil and the fascists on the Continent was that de Valera's party was not inherently anti-democratic. Despite assertions that de Valera was a "unique" dictator, Fianna Fáil was decidedly democratic as evidenced by its entry into the Free State Dáil.<sup>63</sup> Further, as Lee notes, the appearance of the Blueshirts "permitted Fianna Fáil to pose as, and even to become, constitutionalists, defenders of law, order and majority rule against a militaristic threat. It thus enabled Fianna Fáil to

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<sup>62</sup> Despite the rejection of the most negative aspects of fascism, there were indeed connections between Ireland and Germany and Italy—after all, Ireland was an island, but not an *island*. Further, de Valera's status as president of the League of Nations afforded him a greater presence in interwar diplomacy. There is evidence that de Valera not only travelled to Fascist Italy, but also met with Il Duce himself. In May of 1933 de Valera travelled to Rome, where he visited the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista*—the Fascist gallery of Italian art, and on the night 29 May, dined with Mussolini. Eamon de Valera, "Handwritten notes by Eamon de Valera on his trip to Rome, 27 May 1922," in *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Volume IV—1932-1936*, eds. Catrina Crowe, et al. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2004), 252-53. See also Borden W. Painter, Jr. *Mussolini's Rome—Rebuilding the Eternal City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 27-29. Further, Adolf Hitler's famous response to Franklin Roosevelt's plea to the Nazi leader not to invade European nations—including Ireland—mentions de Valera by name. Hitler stated, "I have just read a speech of the Irish Prime Minister De Valera, in which—strange as it may seem—unlike Mr. Roosevelt he does not accuse Germany of oppressing Ireland, but makes the charge against England that Ireland has to suffer under her continuous aggression." Adolf Hitler, quoted in Charles Bewley, "Confidential report from Charles Bewley to Joseph P. Walshe (Dublin), 29 April 1939," in *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Volume V—1937-1939*, eds. Catrina Crowe, et al. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2006), 452.

<sup>63</sup> Desmond Ryan, *Unique Dictator: A Study of Eamon de Valera* (London : Barker, 1936).

unobtrusively make the difficult subjective transition from rule by divine right to rule by majority right.”<sup>64</sup> He adds, “had Fianna Fáil lost the 1932 election, however, it is not inconceivable that some of its constituent elements might have been tempted to lurch in a fascist direction.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, it can readily be assumed that Fianna Fáil displayed fascistic tendencies in regard to its efforts to reconcile primitivist cultural nationalism with aspects of modernity, including industry and urbanization, as well as to deal with Ireland’s colonial heritage.

The aesthetic aspect to fascism—the art of the political—became the physical manifestation of the intersection between the modern and the ancient. In this sense, Fianna Fáil justified its existence through an electoral rhetoric couched in such traditional flourishes as promotion of the Irish language, evocations of past heroism, the elevation of a domestic virtue, and the advancement of Gaelic sport and literature. Like Germany and Italy, this embracement of an imagined past was emblematic of an effort to bridge a collective trauma—in the cases of Germany and Italy, it was the Great War, along with the internal strife that resulted from the nationalist movements of the late nineteenth century. For Ireland, it too had the trauma of the violence following Easter of 1916, not to mention the fact that a number of Irish citizens perished in the Great War. Such policy was not completely unique to Fianna Fáil, for Cumann na nGaedheal also advanced a rhetoric that promoted the Irish language and underwrote legislation that advocated growth and industry. Yet in “Gaelic Weimar,” mere legislation was not effective in the context of a global depression and offered little to combat the all-encompassing nationalistic juggernaut that was Fianna Fáil. Put

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<sup>64</sup> Lee, *Ireland*, 180.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

simply, Fianna Fáil recognized and sought to rectify the “problems” of interwar Ireland.

Mosse notes that “analyzing the relationship between nationalism and respectability involves tracing the development of some of the most important norms that have informed our society: ideals of manliness...and their effect on the place of women; and insiders who accepted the norms, as compared to the outsiders.”<sup>66</sup> His work underscores the importance placed upon the construction of appropriate gendered tropes by nationalist projects so as to advance the cause of the nation. Further, the ability to reconcile gender and modernity was a key component of forging an acceptable aesthetic. Mosse adds, “the dynamic of modern nationalism was built upon the ideal of manliness. Nationalism also put forward a feminine ideal, but it was largely passive, symbolizing the immutable forces which the nation reflected.”<sup>67</sup> By providing “symbols with which the people could identify,” nationalist projects such as the one advanced by Fianna Fáil could harness the immense power of the nation’s collective.<sup>68</sup> The gendered corrective was key to Fianna Fáil’s success, for the party’s electoral dialectic with Cumann na nGaedheal began with the latter’s assertions of feminized republicanism, forcing de Valera’s party to counter by advancing a masculine rhetoric in order to neutralize the gendered charges by its opponents. As Mosse notes, “Masculinity provided the norm for society; its symbol had to send out clear and unambiguous signals.”<sup>69</sup> Joan Scott identifies the significance of gender as a signifier in the “perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way

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<sup>66</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism*, 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

of signifying relationships of power.”<sup>70</sup> And, for Fianna Fáil, there were two signifiers of power that needed correction: first, the aforementioned dialectic between itself and Cumann na nGaedheal, and secondly, Ireland’s colonial relationship to Britain.

Philippa Levine notes that such gendered representations of the colonized as “frail men” was “more than descriptive; it became a hierarchical ordering of quality, skill, and usefulness.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, to undo this central aspect of colonialism, as well to build up a nation amidst anxieties regarding modernity, it became necessary to construct a new gendered binary that clearly defined aspects of society in a manner suitable to the nation-building efforts of Fianna Fáil.

The use of fascist theory and historiography as a prism through which to study Fianna Fáil not only grants greater insight into the machinations of a party seeking alternatives to nineteenth century modalities, but it also demonstrates the means by which the party sought to assuage anxieties with its own troubled past. In the case of Ireland, much was needed to be done to “correct” its colonial legacies and the problems associated with its relationship to Britain. Fundamentally, Fianna Fáil offered an anti-hegemonic rhetoric both more subtle and more capable of dealing with the realities of the Irish Free State than had Sinn Féin. In its most essential manifestation, Fianna Fáil was a party making concerted efforts to *remake* Ireland in its own image, thereby correcting and altering the historical trajectories with which the nation was associated.



This project is constructed in four body chapters as well as a concluding chapter. The first of these chapters focuses on the formation of Fianna Fáil and its

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<sup>70</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” in *Feminism and History*, ed. Joan Wallach Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 167.

<sup>71</sup> Philippa Levine, “Introduction: Why Gender and Empire?” in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7.



efforts to recuse itself from the associations with the militant Sinn Féin—an effort rooted in the gendered labels placed upon the republican effort by Cumann na nGaedheal. As Fianna Fáil chose to enter the Dáil, it willingly entered into a political contest with Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal and in turn were forced to reconcile their past connections with the Irish Republican Army and the general wave of violence that had marked the period following the Easter Rising of 1916. In the period between 1926 and its first election triumph in 1932, therefore Fianna Fáil made a concerted effort to couch its political efforts in a rhetoric that was rooted in a delayed Enlightenment approach—that is they espoused reason and democracy as the hallmarks of a reconstituted Irish republicanism. Such was the effort to distinguish the party from the feminized irrationality of Sinn Féin. Further, the party took this approach to disassociate themselves from the “shadow of the gunmen” by advancing a rhetoric espousing pacifism and legislative reform. Through the use of such sources as correspondence between Eamon de Valera and Sinn Féin leader Mary MacSwiney, election ephemerae from both Fianna Fáil and Cumann na nGaedheal, and party manifestos, I will demonstrate: how Fianna Fáil situated itself within the frameworks of the Irish Free State in such a manner that allowed it both to operate successfully and to rescue the seemingly moribund republican cause. In turn, Fianna Fáil became the standard-bearers for a new republicanism grounded not in physical-force insurgency, but in rhetoric awash with themes meant to assuage an electorate with a clear disdain for rebellion.

Having validated itself as a legitimate party within the Free State Dáil, Fianna Fáil undertook efforts to construct an Irish republican masternarrative commensurate with its own aspirations. As the next three chapters will demonstrate, Fianna Fáil was actively concerned with defining what was acceptable and what was not acceptable as

an aspirational behavior for Irish republicans. At the same time, Fianna Fáil was both anti-hegemonic (British colonialism/Free State) and hegemonic (gendered nationalism). As such, the party sought to direct the energies of Irish women, enveloping them into the party's republican vision. After decades in which women had often been the public face of physical force insurgency—not to mention the very public spokespersons against the treaty—Fianna Fáil would attempt to refocus and shift the gaze of women in Ireland. Using examples from the women's page of the Fianna Fáil organ *The Irish Press*, chapter three examines the changing nature of what the party deemed to be acceptable behavior for Irish women. In a period of seven years between the paper's founding in 1931 and the ratification of the Constitution in 1937, Fianna Fáil made a concerted effort to situate women within frameworks that did not reawaken the distasteful associations between republicanism and militant feminism. As such, the party envisioned women as the harbingers of the new nationalist ideal: domestic, old-fashioned, self-sufficient, and of the mindset where a free Éire was at the fore. Despite the continuous theme of a female-based primitivism, room was nevertheless granted to women to engage with such elements of modernity as modern fashions and party-sanctioned careers. Further, as the Economic War with Britain came to fruition, women were encouraged to participate—and thereby be afforded a sense of political agency—through a “buy-Irish” campaign where women were to fashion themselves and their homes with Irish products, thereby becoming the physical embodiments of Fianna Fáil's nationalist aesthetic.

At the same time, Fianna Fáil used the economic conflict with Britain as a central *cause belle*, in order to define notions of masculinity through its glorification of the vocational male and of Irish manufacturing. In its earliest days, Fianna Fáil had made a concerted effort to de-gender itself as a means to remove the feminine—and

thereby negative—connotations associated with the republican movement in the 1920s. Having succeeded, evidenced by its dual electoral victories in 1932, the party sought to cloak itself in rhetoric awash in a manly aesthetic that teemed with allusions to growth, active participation, insemination, and protection against the British other. Irish (republican) men were to follow the party's example and actively participate in the cause of forging an economically—and by virtue of inclusion, politically—free Ireland. This aggressive “war” with Britain represented Fianna Fáil's most ardent anti-hegemonic efforts, as well as its most hegemonic. This can be seen using dialogue between Seán MacEntee and Eamon de Valera during the Ottawa Economic Conference in 1932, election ephemerae, public rhetoric, and party propaganda utilized in such documents as the economically-tinged *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*. Whereas the party's views regarding the inclusion of women within the party's nationalist spectacle was about passive-aggressive support of Fianna Fáil's nationalist aims, it sought to situate men in the traditional gendered dialectic of the active male in the hopes of destroying the remaining vestiges of Ireland's colonial ties to Britain as well as the Anglo-inspired Free State.

Having constructed a nationalist rhetoric that clearly defined acceptable tropes of femininity and masculinity, Fianna Fáil further defined that which did not fit within its masculine/feminine active/passive dialectic. At its essence, these efforts to distinguish what was unacceptable were tantamount to a queering of all things deemed unsavory, namely things most readily identified with Britain. By examining the depiction of political opponents as less than manly, the Eucharistic Congress of 1932, and its relationship with Irish sport, the picture regarding Fianna Fáil's efforts to reconstitute the Irish nation become still clearer. The final chapter then concludes the dissertation and is centered upon an interesting dialogue between Fianna Fáil

ministers and representatives of Pathé films regarding celluloid evidence of notable party members and their involvement in the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War. The effort to suppress the material was tantamount to the party's efforts to both distance themselves from past connections to violence as well as to propell the nationalist republican movement forward.



The success of Fianna Fáil's efforts to dissolve the vestiges of British political hegemony can be found in the British Parliamentary debates regarding the passage of the Éire Confirmation Bill in the spring of 1938.<sup>72</sup> In the debate, it was clear that— with few notable exceptions—Parliament was no longer concerned with forcing Ireland's hand regarding the custodianship of the Irish Free State. On 4 May 1938, Secretary of State for the Dominions Malcolm MacDonald quoted King George VI's response to the name change that was central to the bill:

His Majesty's government in the United Kingdom takes note of Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the new Constitution. They cannot recognise that the adoption of the name Éire or Ireland, or any other provisions of those Articles, involves any right to territory or jurisdiction over territory forming part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, or affects in any way the position of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They therefore regard the use of the name Éire or Ireland in this connection as relating only to that area, which has hitherto been known as the Irish Free State.<sup>73</sup>

But, in his response to the eventual passage of the bill, the ardently outspoken opponent of Eamon de Valera, Winston Churchill, made the following plea regarding the bill:

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<sup>72</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 335, (May 1938), cols. 899-900.

<sup>73</sup> MacDonald, Speech to the House of Commons, 5 May 1938, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 335 (1938), cols. 1071-185. Serving the constituencies of Bassetlaw (1929-1935) and Ross and Cromarty (1936-1945), Macdonald was the Secretary of State for the Dominions from 1938 to 1940, a term that was followed by a stint as Minister of Health which lasted from 1940-1941, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-malcolm-macdonald>, accessed on 28 February 2010.

An Irish Parliament, freely assembled, accepted the Treaty by a majority. That Treaty has been kept in the letter and the spirit by Great Britain, but the Treaty has been violated and repudiated in every detail by Mr. de Valera, quite consistently, because he had already rebelled against his colleagues who had made the Treaty in his despite. He has repudiated, practically for all purposes, the Crown. He has repudiated appeal to the Privy Council. He has repudiated the financial agreement. He claims to have set up an independent sovereign Republic for Ireland, and he avows his determination to have all Ireland subject to that independent Republic.<sup>74</sup>

To which William Gallacher replied: “Good luck to him.”<sup>75</sup> Such was evidence of Britain’s attitude regarding the attempts by Ireland—via Fianna Fáil—to establish a state independent of British rule. The most interesting element of Churchill’s tirade—apart from its obvious vitriol—was the repeated acknowledgement that the current state of Ireland was the result of de Valera’s actions. Granted, this might be indicative of Churchill’s personal feelings toward de Valera, but the fact was irrefutable that Fianna Fáil had dramatically shifted Anglo-Irish discourse regarding the formation of an Irish republic. Was the Economic War won because of Fianna Fáil’s mobilization of female consumers, or by its ability to best cloak itself in the rhetoric of manly, active, economic progressivism? Perhaps not. Yet, there is no question regarding the ability of the party to mobilize an electoral majority of the Irish nation to support its republican hegemonic efforts.

Further proof of Fianna Fáil’s “moment” is best exemplified by the actual events surrounding the declaration of the Irish Republic in 1949. Conversations regarding the possibility of creating an official day of commemoration marking the formation of the Republic revealed just how much Ireland’s political discourse had

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<sup>74</sup> Churchill, Speech to the House of Commons, 5 May 1938, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 335, cols. 1071-1185. At the time of the debate, the future Prime Minister served the Epping constituency and had no ministerial duties, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-winston-churchill>, accessed 16 March 2010.

<sup>75</sup> Gallacher, Speech to the House of Commons, 5 May 1938, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., vol. 335, cols. 1071-1185. Gallacher was an MP for Fife Western and served from November 1935 to February 1950, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-william-gallacher>, accessed 28 February 2010.

been defined by Fianna Fáil during the Formative Era.<sup>76</sup> Fianna Fáil ministers argued in favor of basing the date of remembrance on the passage of the 1937 constitution, which in turn, became the constitution of the Republic.<sup>77</sup> The debate then descended into a dialogue on a rash of gun violence during the Emergency—Éire’s descriptive term for the Second World War—as well as discussions on the Civil War. Further, de Valera cited the Éire Confirmation Bill as confirmation of the 1937 Constitution’s status as the true origin date of independence.<sup>78</sup> The primacy of the Constitution, and in turn, the origins of the Irish nation was upheld in a rather incredible statement by the Fine Gael Taoiseach, John Costello<sup>79</sup>:

When this Constitution was passed 12 years ago Deputy de Valera in a tour throughout the country asked everybody to read it, to study it and to learn it by heart. I venture to assert that that appeal fell on completely deaf ears. I want now the co-operation of every section of the community and of every political Party. What I want is the co-operation of every section of the community, every Party, so that that Constitution of which he is the author, if you like, or the sponsor, will be revered by our young people and that it will be the

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<sup>76</sup> Dáil Éireann, *The Republic of Ireland Bill, 1948—Committee (Resumed)* *Díospóireachtaí Parlaiminte*, Volume 113, (2 December 1948).

<sup>77</sup> For example, Aiken commented: “I object to the day on which this Bill comes into operation being called Independence Day. This Bill makes no fundamental change in our status of independence. The independence which we have here to-day will not be altered or improved in any way by the passing of this Bill. When this nation becomes united, and when the writ of the republic, which has been in existence for the last 11 years, runs over the whole Thirty-Two Counties, it will be appropriate for the Dáil at that time to name an Independence Day.” *Ibid.*, 911.

<sup>78</sup> De Valera, in one such example, declared: “We had no such thing in our practice. Our practice was simply, since 1937 or so, that five or six letters of credence were signed, of which the last I saw was in Irish, an Irish text signed by the King of Great Britain and Canada in his capacity as our agent and as a mark of our association with those States. That was the only practical thing that was done and as he was doing that as an agent he was in no sense a King of our country.” *Ibid.*, 928-29.

<sup>79</sup> John Costello (1891-1976) began his professional career as a lawyer—an endeavor that led to his appointment as Attorney General by the Cumann na nGaedheal government in 1926. He was elected to the Dáil as a Fine Gael TD serving the south of Dublin. In 1948 Fine Gael earned enough seats—rather, Fianna Fáil lost a number of seats due to a republican rival—to form a coalition government, thus affording Fine Gael the chance to name a Taoiseach. Costello was the favored candidate amongst Fine Gael and Labour TDs, and was officially appointed Taoiseach on 18 February 1948, and served until 1951. Costello would again serve as Taoiseach between 1954 and 1957. Charles Lysaght, “John Aloysius Costello,” *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 886-895.

Constitution of a State in which they can have pride and around which they can rally without the poisonous bitteresses [sic] infused into this debate by Deputy Aiken and his colleagues.<sup>80</sup>

In essence, Costello was attempting to have Fine Gael take credit for the actual declaration of the Republic—a far cry from the party’s anti-republican origins, not to mention the fact that Costello had vehemently opposed the bill to remove the king from the constitution. The mere fact that the declaration was created under the leadership of Fine Gael was demonstrative of just how much the nation’s socio-political frameworks had shifted during the Formative Era, as Fianna Fáil’s became the central ideology on which Ireland operated. The rest of the project at hand seeks to demonstrate how Ireland reached this point through the machinations of Fianna Fáil between 1926 and 1938.

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<sup>80</sup> Costello, *Republic of Ireland Bill*, 1025-26.

## Chapter Two

### “An Act of Apostacy,” The Formation of Fianna Fáil and the Renaissance of Republican Rhetoric, 1926-31

To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the Independence of my country—these were my objects.

To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissentions.....these were my means.

-Theobald Wolfe Tone<sup>1</sup>

At the 1927 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, Mary MacSwiney denounced the “new departure” of Fianna Fáil, as having splintered from the rest of the republican cause. MacSwiney, once a close associate of Eamon de Valera and many other key figures of the new party, would soon come to embody the old vanguard of revolutionary republicanism. MacSwiney stated:

Within the past twelve months certain of our colleagues inaugurated a new departure which would involve letting the Republic remain in abeyance for an unspecified time, while on certain conditions, the Free State Parliament is to be worked in the hope of giving that ‘Irish interpretation’ to its acts, and winning the people back step by step to their true allegiance.

But we have seen where steps and stepping stones have led already. In 1922 when a way to peace was being explored Republicans refused to accept any agreement based on the acceptance of the Treaty position. Why should that be right in 1926 which was wrong in 1922? Yet that is what the new policy involves.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, quoted in *Pamphlet # 2*, NLI EC.

<sup>2</sup> Mary MacSwiney, “Letter from Mhaire Nic Shuibhne” c. 1927, Mary MacSwiney Papers (hereafter MacSwiney Papers), UCDA, P48a/42 (50). MacSwiney (1872-1942) was arguably the most important and influential feminist republican activists of the twentieth century. She was active in Cumann na mBan and Sinn Féin, serving as an outspoken critic of the Treaty. Following de Valera’s departure to create Fianna Fáil, MacSwiney became the figurehead of Sinn Féin, working tirelessly to resuscitate their republican vision. Brian Murphy, “Mary MacSwiney,” *Dictionary of Irish Biography, Volume 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 192-94. In the wide swath of sources, Mary MacSwiney’s name is spelled in a number of variations in both English in Irish. For the sake of simplicity, I will utilize the spelling utilized by University College, Dublin for labeling their collection of MacSwiney’s papers. However, when citing sources directly, the original will be used.



Indeed, what was sacrosanct in 1922 for mainstream republicans was becoming increasingly negotiable in the wake of this so-called new departure. MacSwiney was rather prescient in her understanding of the meaning of Fianna Fáil's renegotiation of Irish republican discourse. In other words, she implicitly acknowledged the beginnings of a new phase in Irish politics during the postcolonial era. It was during this transitional phase from colony to independent republic that a new socio-political dialectic would emerge between Cumann na nGaedheal—the victors of the Treaty debate and civil war, as well as the party of government in the Free State until 1932—and the re-imagined republicanism under the guise of de Valera's new party.

Beginning with its formation in 1926, Fianna Fáil found itself engaged in a two-front battle: on one side, they grappled with Cumann na nGaedheal as the major parties within the Irish Free State; on the other, de Valera's party was enmeshed in an ideological confrontation with its former comrades as part of a larger effort to distinguish the new republicanism as a vital and sustainable cause within the democratic frameworks of the Free State. Complicating this latter facet was the fact that Fianna Fáil's electoral success was contingent upon its ability to distance itself from its revolutionary past. For Fianna Fáil, the period between 1926 and 1932 was one in which the party found itself engaged in a public battle to legitimate its existence by continually demonstrating its innovative—at least in Irish terms—approach to republicanism. De Valera and his followers were in fact forced into a situation in which they had to rethink the very tenets of republicanism if they were to succeed in their ultimate goal of creating an independent state. Within the relatively popular Free State, this new departure played into Fianna Fáil's favor, as the party was, Eunan O'Halpin's words, “unencumbered by impolitic absolutes, [and was] a party of reality in place of a party of dreams, one in which aspirational rhetoric would

complement rather than prevent participation in practical politics.”<sup>3</sup> It is this “aspirational rhetoric” that will serve as the basis of the chapter at hand.

Following the defeat of revolutionary republicanism—namely Sinn Féin, the IRA, and such cognate organizations as Cumann na mBan<sup>4</sup>—militancy had become distasteful and increasingly anachronistic within the Irish Free State. Bill Kissane writes:

The transformation of the defeated opposition in the civil war into a respectable party of government that was the Fianna Fail [sic] of the late 1930s is one of the most remarkable events in Irish political history. Not only did defeat in the civil war see the moderate section of the anti-treatyites enter the Third Dail [sic] on 11 August 1927, after coming to power in 1932, the leadership of the party embraced the very principle they had opposed in the civil war, majority rule.<sup>5</sup>

The question remains as to why Fianna Fáil advocated democratic rule as they further distinguished themselves from their militant heritage.<sup>6</sup> Further, how the party aligned itself with previous nationalist endeavors at the same time that it avoided the landmines that made those movements distasteful to the populace at large, stands as a considerable point of contention. Simply put, how was Fianna Fáil able, within a decade of what was seemingly a decisive defeat, to garner enough support for a republican renaissance, so that a republican state was inevitable rather than a high-minded endeavor?

Knirck advances a thesis that early in the Free State’s existence Cumann na nGaedheal was able to de-legitimize the republican movement by promoting a male/female dialectic in which the republican opposition was presented as irrational, emotional, and violent. He notes that Cumann na nGaedheal made much of Irish

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<sup>3</sup> O’Halpin, “Politics,” 109.

<sup>4</sup> Karen Steele, *Women, Press, and Politics During the Irish Revival* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Kissane, *Politics*, 177.

<sup>6</sup> O’Halpin, “Politics,” 99.

women's "increasingly high profile within nationalist politics and were thus seen as critical cogs in the developing revolutionary machines."<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Knirck adds that "Cumann na nGaedheal politicians struggled to create a Free State/republican opposition and then blurred it with the more recognizable and resonant male/female opposition. In their quest to define a politics that excluded and delegitimized republicans, Cumann na nGaedheal defined a politics that excluded and delegitimized women."<sup>8</sup> The growing success of Cumann na nGaedheal and, in turn, the Irish Free State represented a victory for that party's gendered discourse. Concurrent with this was the decrease in interest in revolutionary rhetoric, which led to Sinn Féin being further marginalized in the political constructs of the Free State. While later chapters will explore Fianna Fáil's relationship with republican women, as well as the party's notions of masculinity, the present chapter will examine the methods by which Fianna Fáil sought to rethink and reintroduce republicanism to the Irish socio-political landscape.

By distancing itself from what R.V. Comerford refers to as "physical force insurgency,"<sup>9</sup> as well as the feminized Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil in turn embraced a delayed-Enlightenment approach to democratic republicanism where logic, the rule of law, and a general espousal of legislative insurrection became the means to both distinguish itself from previous incarnations of republicanism, and to engage more effectively in a socio-political dialectic with Cumann na nGaedheal. Such was the reality for a party revolting "against the tyranny of the dead."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in the minds

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<sup>7</sup> Knirck, *Women*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> R.V. Comerford, "Republicans and Democracy in Modern Irish Politics," in *Republicanism in Modern Ireland*, ed., Fearghal McGarry (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 538.

of Fianna Fáil leaders, they, like the French and American revolutionaries, justified rebellion in terms of undoing a royalist tyranny that stood as a roadblock to the historical inevitability of freedom. As such, the period between 1926 and 1932 featured Fianna Fáil promoting a party rhetoric which promoted a backward gaze, drawing upon elements of past nationalist movements in order to justify advancing Irish independence beyond the Anglo-inclined Free State. Fundamentally, Fianna Fáil attained legitimacy through its public rejection of the previous decade's militancy, clarifying its distinctiveness from Sinn Féin, and assuaging fears that a Fianna Fáil government would mean further bloodshed—despite Cumann na nGaedheal claims otherwise. The party further legitimated itself by advancing a socio-political discourse that advocated reform through legislative practice rather than militant revolution. This approach resulted in the renewed relevancy of republican discourse that would provide the foundations for an independent Irish Republic.

The advancement of a delayed-Enlightenment approach served not only to combat the party's gendered associations; it also created a distinct break from the revolutionary-republican approach of the IRA and Sinn Féin. Given the Irish public's distaste for further bloodshed, there was *de facto* support for the institutions of the Irish Free State. Additionally, Fianna Fáil found it necessary to abandon its top-down authoritarian approach toward attaining a republic, in favor of a more inclusive, participatory movement suitable for operation within an Ireland transitioning to relative autonomy. As Kissane notes, “after the civil war de Valera did not directly shift from an undemocratic position to a democratic one—he shifted from authoritarianism to ambiguity, and then to democracy.”<sup>11</sup> Further, the entrance of Fianna Fáil into the political fray created a new two-party system which further

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<sup>11</sup> Kissane, *Politics*, 189.

democratized the Irish populace, at least in terms of attracting potential voters to the electoral dialectic. However, as will be shown in later chapters, Fianna Fáil went much further, constructing a nationalist project, which, unlike Cumann na nGaedheal's policies, was not interested in maintaining the Free State's status quo. Instead, Fianna Fáil adopted a discourse that aligned the Irish populace into gendered roles, making them active agents advancing the republican cause.

Fianna Fáil was born less from the politics of the civil war than from the failings of Sinn Féin republicanism to adapt to the relatively democratic constructs on offer in the 1920s. De Valera's new approach proved effective because the Anglo-Irish trappings of the Free State enabled Fianna Fáil to present its republicanism as a movement of reform and program of reconstruction as a legislative, rather than militaristic, movement. What we find, therefore, in a study of Fianna Fáil's rhetoric in its first half-decade was that the party actively engaged Cumann na nGaedheal in a democratic dialectic, in direct contrast to Sinn Féin's guerilla-style of republicanism that sought reform from without. The most intriguing aspect of Fianna Fáil's reclamation of republican discourse lay within its efforts to recognize and adapt to the changing nature of Irish politics, thereby eschewing its disdainful connections to past militancy. Thus, one of the aims of this chapter is to demonstrate how de Valera and his party sought to advance a nationalist republican project from a position of socio-political and economic anti-Anglo-Irish hegemony, as opposed to the anti-colonial militancy of pre-Free State republicanism.

Following the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, republicanism was associated with war and violence, not to mention quixotic notions of external

association<sup>12</sup> and, ultimately, complete independence from Great Britain. Specifically, Cumann na nGaedheal employed accusatory rhetoric to stoke public fear that a republican thrust meant further violence. Thus, de Valera and Fianna Fáil had not only to combat the albatross of militarism, but also the connections to an era from which the people of Ireland sought to escape. As such, Fianna Fáil was to spend the initial portion of the Formative Era demonstrating that it was *not* Sinn Féin—that it was not irrational, emotional, and most importantly not harbingers of a new *belle Gaelge*. Ultimately, because of its ability to reconstitute republicanism as being logical, pacifistic, and democratic, Fianna Fáil emerged from the shadow of the gunmen to fully engage in the political dialectic of the Saorstát.

#### **“An Appreciation of the Position”—Fianna Fáil’s Trend toward the Pacific**

Freedom from tyranny in the guise of monarchism, elevation of the cult of the electorate, rule of law, and an embrace of human reason as a progressive force are some of the hallmarks of Enlightenment thought. Phillip Pettit writes:

Freedom as non-domination, as the French [Enlightenment] tradition spelled it out, required equality and indeed fraternity. It called for a scenario in which each could walk tall, secure in the knowledge that no one could lord it over them. Each could count on the support of others against any would-be dominating power. And so each could look others in the eye, seeing a fellow-citizen there, and not anyone possessed of special privileges. No one had to live at the mercy of another, no one had to hang on the grace and favour of a lord...[Republicans] thought of freedom as the supreme political value and they equated freedom with not being stood over by anyone, even a benevolent and protective master. To enjoy republican freedom was to be able to hold your head on high, to look others squarely in the eye, and to relate to your fellows without fear or deference.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Document No. 2* was Eamon de Valera’s alternative to the Treaty that ended the Anglo-Irish War. The document can be distilled to the phrase “external association,” which proposed that Ireland become independent from Britain yet retain an association not unlike that of a dominion.

<sup>13</sup> Phillip Pettit, “From Republican Theory to Public Policy,” in *The Republic: Essays from RTÉ Radio’s The Thomas Davis Lecture Series*, ed. Mary Jones (Cork: Mercier Press, 2005), 136-7.

By the 1920s, Enlightenment thought had permeated into the larger European masternarrative as the means to attain freedom, as well as the foundational aspects of the socio-economic discourse of many nations. In a word, these ideas were, without a doubt, legitimate. What distinguished Fianna Fáil from its republican predecessors was the appreciation of Enlightenment ideology as a means to an end, as opposed to its being a construct to be put forth after the attainment of freedom. This difference speaks to the fundamental transformation within Ireland after the formation of the Free State—that is, between its, colonial and post-colonial condition. Credit must be given to those of the late 1910s and 1920s who succeeded in breaking many of the colonial ties between England and Ireland, thus enabling what was at least a marginally free Irish state. Such a situation opened the way for Fianna Fáil to evolve Irish republicanism from a revolutionary to a national policy. As such, an explicit and unwavering public discourse cloaked in Enlightenment notions of logic, freedom, and the advocacy of the will of the people was a key factor in allowing Fianna Fáil republicanism to reset the gendered albatross of its previous incarnation as Sinn Féin. In other words, it became the ideological foundation upon which the new party could most successfully combat the pro-Treaty—but not necessarily un-republican—rhetoric of Cumann na nGaedheal and the Irish Free State.

The ability to present a clear vision of what an Irish Republic would entail was a key factor in determining the success of Fianna Fáil. While combating associations with the so-called “gunmen” was vital to granting peace of mind to those concerned about a renewal of bloodshed, de Valera’s party was also clear in its intentions to achieve what they defined as an independent state through political means. Viewed through the prism of gendered discourse, the presentation of a new republicanism free

from the specter of revolutionary means represented an overall effort to reset the socio-political narrative of the Free State.

In justifying its existence, then, Fianna Fáil borrowed much from the rhetoric and ideologies of Enlightenment-era thinkers and movements, finding validation in promoting the will of the people, the rule of law, and the virtues of Logic and Reason. It was in this sense that Fianna Fáil sought to expand the political debate in Ireland beyond the Treaty/anti-Treaty dialectic, and create something larger, and indeed, more participatory. Indeed, the ideologies of the *philosophes* provided Fianna Fáil with its *raison d'être*; however, they did not necessarily guide the party in establishing its socio-political and economic platforms. As will be shown in later chapters, Fianna Fáil embraced a much more modern approach to widening its appeal—an approach distinct from the nineteenth-century liberal/radical axiom, and more in tune with the newer ideologies specific to the early twentieth century. The concern here, however, relates to how de Valera and his followers wedged themselves into the Free State's political dialectic.

Speaking to the inaugural meeting of Fianna Fáil at Dublin's La Scala Theatre on 16 May 1926, de Valera outlined the party's aims in a speech entitled "A National Policy." In the early portion of the speech there appeared a section with the subheading "Appreciation of the position [sic]," in which de Valera was most clearly announced the party's new departure. He stated:

We must not allow ourselves to be hypnotised by our own prejudices and feelings on the one hand or by our opponents' propaganda on the other. To underestimate our strength is even a worse fault than to overestimate it. We must not let our opponents dissuade us from attempting a task that is well within our power by suggesting that it is impossible... We must, if we really want to succeed, endeavour to judge the situation *just as it is*, measure our own strength against it, lay our plans, and then act with courage and tenacity.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Eamon de Valera, "A National Policy," in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 133.



Judging the situation “as it was” enabled de Valera and his followers to construct a policy that abandoned romantic revolutionary pretenses, instead advancing a national project that was most suited to the realities of the era. This meant that the party would need to actively confront such issues as the Oath of Allegiance, the victory of the Treatyites, and in turn to concede that the Civil War was a thing of the past. For Fianna Fáil, fighting tyranny was something far more complex than positioning oneself against the British bogeyman; rather one had to confront the Cumann na nGaedheal/ Free State hegemony and all of its connections to England—real and perceived. This recognition of the situation “as it was,” as opposed to what it should be was one of the key differences between the pragmatism of Fianna Fáil and the idealism of Sinn Féin.

### **MacSwiney, de Valera and the end of Independence-era Sinn Féin**

For Fianna Fáil, to publicly break from Sinn Féin meant the disavowal of militancy. However, there occurred a more private and far more personal effort to justify and legitimate the break from Sinn Féin. In essence, Fianna Fáil found itself fighting a discursive battle on two fronts—on the one hand they were challenging the authority and legitimacy of the political frameworks of the Saorstát and its party of government; on the other, they found it necessary to distance themselves from the radical Sinn Féin and the organizations with which the latter was associated.

The formation of Fianna Fáil signaled the end of Sinn Féin in its Independence-era incarnation, and the ensuing decade would find de Valera’s former party struggling to remain relevant. Indeed, de Valera envisioned the party as having ceased to exist in its original intent after 1921. Still, in this early phase of its history, Fianna Fáil engaged with Sinn Féin in a pitched battle over who could legitimately lay

claim to the republican moniker. Whereas in 1922 Sinn Féin could claim itself to be the republican party of Ireland, by 1932 Fianna Fáil had so successfully co-opted the movement that all of its printed matter proclaimed: “Fianna Fáil—The Republican Party.” My purpose here then is to detail what was essentially a rhetorical and ideological civil war between Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin—a war that marked the triumph of de Valeran republicanism and secured its socio-political thrust as *the* foundation for the future of Irish republican discourse.

A study of the struggle between old and new republicans reveals much about the distinctions between the two ideologies and makes clear the approach taken by Fianna Fáil. The largest point of contention between the two parties involved Fianna Fáil’s entrance into the Dáil. More than anything else, the new departure polarized the two camps, with each arguing for the legitimacy of rival Dáils: that of the Irish Free State, and that of the Second Dáil which had drawn legitimacy from events transpiring before the treaty which ended the Anglo-Irish War. It is fair to say that the political platform espoused by Fianna Fáil was best suited to succeed within the democratic frameworks of the Free State. As such, by juxtaposing the republican movements, one can get a clearer picture of the wider scope put forth by Fianna Fáil.

In 1927, in a letter cited above, Mary MacSwiney challenged the new approach:

We fully appreciate the work which Eamon de Valera has done for Ireland and the place which he has won for himself in the hearts of his countrymen. That makes his new policy all the more disappointing, but not even his personality can commend this compromise to us...

For it is the proclamation of the Republic in 1916 and its constitutional establishment [in] 1919, that makes the new departure a matter of principle and a step backward.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Mhaire Nic Shuibhne, undated letter, MacSwiney Papers, UCDA, P48a/41 (50). Although undated, this letter was likely written in 1927 (“Within the last twelve months...”). Ibid.

The irony of MacSwiney's letter is that it spoke of moving forward while anchored to the Republic of 1916/1919. Indeed, she was correct in asserting that the formation of Fianna Fáil represented a new departure, but in stating that the party was taking a step backward, MacSwiney's argument embodied the myopia shown by those who remained aligned to Sinn Féin policy.

Writing to fellow Sinn Féiner Michael O'Donnell in 1927, MacSwiney suggested a renewed commitment to the militant anti-Britishness that had long marked Sinn Féin's policy. In a letter dated 25 April, she wrote:

I believe that united action could be taken and that a majority could thereby be secured, provided that the Republican position can be safeguarded... In effect, Mr. de Valera is asking the people of Ireland and especially Republicans, to do now what we consistently refused to do in 1922, that is to 'accept the Treaty position, but not the Treaty.' That is impossible for those who really believe in the Republic. Could not F.F. [sic] be brought to give up that part of their policy which makes united action impossible? [...]

Though I had no idea of it at the time Mr. de Valera was already discussing the Fianna Fail policy, so nothing was done.<sup>16</sup>

The last portion of this statement is of the most interest, for it alludes to the fact that de Valera was already engaged in an ideological split from Sinn Féin as far back as 1922. Indeed, de Valera's rhetoric and decidedly non-military positioning dated back to at least 1919 when he toured the country advancing ideas that he would incorporate into *Document #2*. Further, as MacSwiney's words highlight, Fianna Fáil's greatest challenge among republicans was to justify its entrance into the Dáil in such a manner that it would not appear that the party was acting the supplicant. In other words, Fianna Fáil could not appear as being weak and having accepted defeat, nor could they appear to be angry radicals bringing chaos and disruption to the Free State Dáil.

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<sup>16</sup> Mary MacSwiney, Letter to Micheal [sic] Ua Domhnaill, Castlegregory, 25 April 1927, MacSwiney Papers, UCDA, P48a/43 (31).

In the months prior to the 1927 election, de Valera travelled to the United States in order to raise funds for what he hoped would be a Fianna Fáil-based newspaper and to raise awareness of and support for his new party. At the same time, MacSwiney worried that de Valera's turn in America had "muddled thinking," by making speeches that were "out and out Republican. That and the name—[Fianna Fáil the] Republican Party—have deceived many."<sup>17</sup> Thus the political campaign for Fianna Fáil against Sinn Féin in the United States was conducted on two fronts—first being the money-raising effort, and second being the effort to encourage Irish-Americans to embrace the party's new nationalist project. In other words, the move from Sinn Féin went deeper than just a political shift: it was intent on stealing away the right to be called *the* Irish Republican Party.

Splitting from Sinn Féin and choosing to enter the Dáil assured that Fianna Fáil initially would lack the numbers to win any majority in future elections. Fianna Fáil would, at times, find it necessary to form coalition governments in the 1930s and beyond, but they would be formed on evanescent partnerships with myriad minor parties such as Labour, or the Farmer's Party. Despite the republican kinship, Fianna Fáil would never form a coalition with Sinn Féin. This fact demonstrated the adamant stance de Valera took in refusing to be associated with the militant republicans, but it also sheds light on how Fianna Fáil was intent to be seen as a different kind of republicanism. So adamant were they—as seen below—that the party refused to consider any coalition with Sinn Féin, thus eschewing any possibility of forming a majority in the Dáil.

This latter point may strike one as being rather anachronistic, for Sinn Féin was seemingly intransigent regarding its own policy of abstention from the Dáil.

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<sup>17</sup> Máire Nic Shuibnie, Letter to unnamed 'Professor,' 16 May 1929, MacSwiney Papers, UCDA, P48a/45 (4).

However, a confidential letter written to de Valera by MacSwiney reveals that gestures had been made to reconcile the two parties to put forth a united, republican effort. Less than three weeks after her letter to O'Donnell, MacSwiney wrote:

A Chara<sup>18</sup>:-

During your absence [in America] there has been, as I have no doubt you know, a great deal of talk, unofficial of course, about a possible understanding between your people and Sinn Féin. I have been approached on the matter and I have said, and I think most of my colleagues agree with me, *that I see no reason why we could not join together and make a big effort, which I believe would be most successful, or a majority*. The difficult is the minority position for which directly or indirectly I for one would not stand. It has been suggested that a majority is almost a certainty; that we could negotiate for that and make no stipulation about the minority; *that if afterwards the minority resulted, and your people did things we could not stand by, we would not be responsible*.<sup>19</sup>

Two lines from this excerpt are particularly striking. The first is the aforementioned suggestion that Sinn Féin was willing to retreat from its policy of abstention and enter the Dáil, and second is the last line in which MacSwiney conceded the differences between the two parties by suggesting that the parties would be united as a majority, but divided in minority. It appears as if MacSwiney was suggesting taking this ideological ‘civil war’ between the republican parties to the level of the Dáil and having the voters decide which of the two they preferred. Conversely, her plan could be seen as a political rehashing of the Irish Civil War, in which a united republican cause—however tentative—could destroy the Free State Dáil from within thereby securing an independent state. Further, MacSwiney suggested that a minority coalition

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<sup>18</sup> Translated as “Dear Friend,” this is a common Irish greeting in letters, and is considered a sign of great respect. I have chosen to include these greetings when citing these letters, for as the dialogue between de Valera and MacSwiney wore on, the greetings became colder and more distant. A remarkable fact considering that the two were once close allies in the republican cause. Further, the growing distance between them is indicative of the growing distance between the movements as a whole.

<sup>19</sup> MacSwiney to de Valera, 11 May 1927, MacSwiney Papers, P48a/43 (49). University of College, Dublin. The emphases are my own.

between Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin should retain abstention, but in majority, the two would violate their stance on the Oath.

MacSwiney continued in the same letter, but with a completely different tone, writing:

That is what I call a Pontius Pilate attitude, and I will have nothing to do with it any how. You have declared that there will be no going into the Parliament unless the oath will be removed. There is not one chance in a thousand that the oath will be removed if you only get a minority. Would it not be worth while telling that to the people, and promising not to use the minority position this time in order that we might join together and rouse the enthusiasm of the people, which seems from all I hear possible to do at this juncture. That is why I write to you...[others] may not approve of my writing, but, I feel bound not to lose what seems an excellent chance for lack of this appeal to you.

I have been told that your party are pledged to the minority position, I don't think that argument holds good in view of the situation with which we are faced, and you will forgive me if I say that the argument reminds me very much of Cosgrave's notion of his honour which binds him to keep word faithfully to England though he may break it with impunity to his own fellow countrymen.<sup>20</sup>

The rhetorical flourish of calling de Valera Pilate is in line with the propensity by members of Sinn Féin to position themselves as martyrs. In this case, de Valera, like Pilate, was sentencing a visionary to an unfair death, thus demonstrating an ignorance of the True Word. Name-calling aside, it appears that in the second half of the letter MacSwiney rescinds her offer of a coalition, noting that a minority position would do nothing but destroy the republican cause, in turn giving greater strength to Cosgrave and the perception that he and his party sought to maintain ties to Great Britain.

De Valera responded with a pithy, terse letter four days later. He wrote:

A Chara:-

I received your letter on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. I am not going to give a complete reply because I have explained my position so often before.

*What you call the 'minority' position of FIANNA FAIL [sic] is an essential part of the whole program, and to give it up would be to cripple the policy as a*

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

*whole*. Knowing your attitude on this question, and being as convinced that I am right as you are that you are right, I feel that we can only agree to differ.

I do not know what SINN FEIN [sic] will do in the matter of preference votes in the coming elections, but we at any rate are determined to see that no Republican votes on our side are lost. It is a pity Sinn Fein cannot see eye to eye with us on our policy as a whole, for I believe that together on that program we would be almost certain of success.

Do Chara,  
Éamon de Valéra.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most striking elements of de Valera's letter is that he promotes the idea of Fianna Fáil as having a larger, more comprehensive movement that transcended the singular issue of the entering into the Dáil. Whereas Sinn Féin was most successful and vital in the chaotic years between Easter 1916 and the Treaty debates, its approach had become outdated the moment the Irish Free State was established. Militancy would not succeed in a country tired of war. The creation of a 32-county Republic would not succeed in a country where Unionists dominated in Ulster. A reactionary political discourse would not succeed in a country stabilized by the relative successes of the Saorstát government. De Valera understood this and knew that the only way to establish a republic was through larger, institutional changes. That is, republicans needed to do more than break the symbolic chains of British authority; they needed to destroy and rebuild the entirety of Irish socio-political and economic masternarratives. Operating outside of the Free State, using reactionary methods, could not work within the system accepted by the Irish public. Further, the final two lines of de Valera's letter suggest that he would only reconcile with Sinn Féinners if they would switch over to his perspective. Nevertheless, in the years that followed this exchange, Sinn Féin hardened its militant stance, repeating calls for an

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<sup>21</sup> De Valera, letter to MacSwiney, 15 May 1927, MacSwiney Papers, UCDA, P48a/43 (50). The different spelling of MacSwiney and de Valera's names are reflective of the original text. It should be noted here that over the years, de Valera was wildly inconsistent in the spelling of his own name. The emphases are my own.

armed uprising against the Free State and the British, essentially ensuring its spot in the political wilderness.

### **From Document #2 to Pamphlet #2**

In contrast, Fianna Fáil's most explicit expression of delayed Enlightenment ideology can be found in a pamphlet penned by Frank Gallagher under the rather unimaginative title, *Fianna Fáil, Pamphlet #2*.<sup>22</sup> Throughout, Gallagher decried England's nebulous relationship to constitutionality, in turn connecting such vagueness to the Constitution of the Irish Free State. Citing constitutionalism as a prerequisite for order and progress, Gallagher wrote:

A nation may enjoy prosperity and be at peace without international alliances; men can be happy and free without being members of a party or an organisation. But to the people making up a nation agreement is indispensable as to the rules under which their joint life is to be lived. Before they can have national or corporate existence they must decide upon the fundamental principles by which their common affairs will be directed, their common progress and safety assured, and their common ideals realised. If such agreement is lacking a nation slips back into tribalism.<sup>23</sup>

In this particular statement, Gallagher called into question the validity of a nation derived from an imposed tradition, as opposed to one that emerges from the will of the people, essentially challenging the very authority and legitimacy of the Free State. Further, Gallagher was clearly advancing the Fianna Fáil party line that sought to

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<sup>22</sup> Frank Gallagher (1893-1962) was a veteran of both the War of Independence (Anglo-Irish War) and Civil War, and served time in prison following the latter. Upon release, Gallagher served as editor for the anti-Treaty papers, *Irish Bulletin* and the *Nation*, later serving as a key figure in creating propaganda for Fianna Fáil. Gallagher served as editor in chief of the *Irish Press* upon its creation in 1931, and upon leaving the paper, undertook the post of deputy director of Radio Éireann (RTÉ). Diarmid Ferriter, "Frank Gallagher," *Dictionary, Volume 4*, 8-9. See also, Graham Walker, "'The Irish Dr Goebbels': Frank Gallagher and Irish Republican Propaganda," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27, no. 1 (January 1992): 149-65.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Gallagher, *Fianna Fáil, Pamphlet #2* (Dublin: Wood Printing Works, Ltd., c. 1927), 2. Hereafter, cited as *Pamphlet #2*.



establish a discursive and distasteful Free State/Cumann na nGaedheal-British axis which in turn invalidated all that had been created in the wake of the Treaty.

The calculated, logical attack on the legitimacy of the Free State continued with Gallagher's assertion that, without a citizenry-derived constitution, a nation would degenerate into "a mob at loggerheads with itself."<sup>24</sup> "Where a people have by alien force been denied the exercise of their liberties," he continued, "this unwritten Constitution has a more vivid reality, a more persistent influence. Because the so-called Constitution under which such a people are governed is not the expression of their genius, their individuality, or their ideals, the unwritten Constitution more than ever dominates the national mind."<sup>25</sup> The struggle against a government derived from an imagined or coerced tradition was one of the hallmarks of Enlightenment-era thought.

The whiggish notion of human progress was a fundamental thrust of Enlightenment-era revolutionaries—an ideal that presented them as at the vanguard of human inevitability. In turn, Gallagher noted:

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, when feudal systems and absolute monarchies began to topple in Europe and America, the peoples had learned their lesson in much bitterness. They had learned that there must be one law that was fundamental, a declaration of rights with which all laws must conform, some infrangible [sic] decree safeguarding humanity of tyranny and absolutism. The need was so apparent that long before Louis goes to the guillotine, the popularly chosen Constituent Assembly of France has adopted the Constitution; long before Britain is driven out of America the Declaration of Independence, which is also a declaration of rights, is adopted at Philadelphia long before the guerrilla war reaches its full vigour and scope...in Ireland the first Dail Eireann has declared the freedom of the Irish people and its democratic rights (January 21<sup>st</sup> 1919).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gallagher, *Pamphlet #2*, 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

Apart from the direct connection to the American and French revolutions, there was an implicit notion that a genuine Irish constitution should be the inevitable result of the people's movement that began in January 1919. It is also worth noting that Gallagher chose 1919 as the watershed for Irish independence, as opposed to Easter 1916. He added: "The freed peoples, having been made wise by long suffering, see into the future and know that the first act of a liberated democracy must be to lay securely the foundations of a free national life. The laying of these foundations is completed when a Constitution is drafted."<sup>27</sup> But who are these people, and to which nation do they belong? Using these arguments, the constitution created in the wake of the Treaty and enforced by Cumann na nGaedheal could arguably suffice; therefore, Gallagher found it necessary to make the case for a more purely *Irish* constitution. He based such arguments in what he called "The Force of National Tradition." In order to stave off a return to tribalism or the continuance of Free State/English tyranny, he suggested a new constitution be created in the wake of an increasingly, powerful Irish National Tradition, something most assuredly not done by Cumann na nGaedheal. Gallagher wrote: "To devise a basic law for an old nation and in it to ignore the national tradition is folly. But to endeavour to impose a basic law, a Constitution, in flagrant conflict with this tradition is insanity. And so it is proving in Ireland today."<sup>28</sup>

Toward the end of the pamphlet Gallagher also made a clear distinction between the republicanism of Sinn Féin and that of Fianna Fáil. For the former, Gallagher implied that they lacked the imagination to mount a successful campaign for a new Irish constitution that did not stem from revolution or rely on an

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 4.

abstentionist, and thus divisive, policy. Further, when placed in the context of a national trend toward a truly Irish constitution, the matter of the oath was nothing but a mere tyrannical blockade against the tide of progress. In a section entitled “An Act of Apostacy, [sic]” Gallagher stated:

In face of this analysis it is clear that nobody who believes in Ireland’s right to nationhood can take this oath, and that its taking is tantamount to a public act of apostacy [sic] to the whole national faith. It is not only an acceptance of, but a most solemn promise to preserve, the instruments forged by Britain for the destruction of that faith. Both ‘Treat’ [sic] and Constitution, violate the national tradition and, consequently, cannot lead to peace in Ireland. Yet unless the representatives of the people abjure that tradition and swear to preserve these fomenters of war they are to be excluded from the Free State Parliament. They have no choice, therefore, but to stay out. But as long as they are forced to stay out the [sic] Free State Parliament can be nothing but the headquarters of an alien domination holding Ireland for its own profit. History teaches us that such a situation inevitably breeds war. Let the Free State Constitution stand as it now is; let the oath remain. Then the Irish people’s only alternative is another national uprising.<sup>29</sup>

Of great interest is the call for the Free State to remain intact. If one were to stop reading at this point, it might seem as if Fianna Fáil was calling for a new revolution led by the new republican party. However, in the next paragraph, Gallagher begins a new section entitled “Unite and End This Chaos!”<sup>30</sup>

For Gallagher, the act of apostasy was not necessarily the renunciation of the Free State Dáil, but rather a clean break from Sinn Féin’s policy of revolution from without. To rebel again would destroy and alienate the “National Tradition.” As such, Gallagher wrote:

But all doors are happily not yet closed to the people. There is a way out besides the devastating way of the sword. That way is the drafting of a truly Irish Constitution and, as the first step towards the creation of an assembly capable of doing that, the abolition of the oath. These things can be accomplished under the pressure of public opinion... And if the Irish people united to end the imposition of disgraceful oath and false Constitution [the Free State] would fall as Jericho fell before the clamour of an unanimous

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

action. If the deputies were themselves in the name of the people to uphold an imposed Constitution what force could compel them to act otherwise? None. And the deputies elected by the people are the servants of the people and can be made obey [sic] the orders of the people.<sup>31</sup>

Advancing the Fianna Fáil party line that the Free State was a British creation cloaked in Irish clothing, he wrote: “The Free State Constitution, like the ‘Treaty,’ was made in London and was imposed from London. Documents having such an origin cannot and do not bind the Irish nation. Their origin and their nature are proof that the first duty of Irish nationalists [is] to get rid of them for the nation’s sake.”<sup>32</sup> Lest anyone think that he and Fianna Fáil were advocating war, Gallagher made a clear push for future struggles to be fought within the legal and peaceful confines of the Free State Dáil. The push for a legislative thrust that transcended both the oath and the Free State was neatly supported by Gallagher’s claim that “Without a genuine Irish Constitution Ireland must live perpetually wasted by dissension.”<sup>33</sup>

*Pamphlet #2* provided a basis for Fianna Fáil’s public disavowal of Sinn Féin’s physical force insurgency, while justifying intellectually the new party’s anti-hegemonic stance. More than about any other material from the period, *Pamphlet #2* did more to distinguish Fianna Fáil from the other republican movements of the early twentieth century in that it placed the party in a position that its ideology was realistic and rooted in the nature of things; a party advancing such a position was, in a word, electable.

Ideology and willingness to accept the trappings of the Free State and the requisite oath were simply not enough to gain votes, nor does the pamphlet on its own explain Fianna Fáil’s success in the 1930s. Still, in light of the gendered environment

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

of the 1920s, this pamphlet—representative as it was of Fianna Fáil’s electoral rhetoric—did much to shed those elements of republicanism denounced by Free Staters as “feminized.” Absent from this manifesto were the call to arms; the arguments rooted in emotion; the commemoration of the “martyrs” of 1916; the pedantic conceit of holding the key to Irish freedom. Instead we find Fianna Fáil aligning itself with the liberal revolutionaries of France and the United States, where constitutionalism and national identity were manifest in the welling up of public motion. Granted, there is neither mention of heads on pikes nor of raids on British camps, yet the importance of aligning the Fianna Fáil movement to those of France and America was in that it gave the party relevance and legitimacy amidst the socio-political atmosphere of Free State Ireland. Put simply, the pamphlet established Fianna Fáil’s *raison d’être* as pushing for an Irish constitution to replace the nebulous Free State/England constitution.

In his address to the second Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, de Valera was most clear in his embracement of Enlightenment-style notions of logic, rule by law, democratic constructs, and progress. Early in the speech, de Valera defined the justifications for his party’s envisioned republicanism, couching it in terms of national progress and destiny—no doubt a nod to the party’s moniker as the soldiers of destiny. De Valera intoned: “I have often said that behind the State always is the people and the Nation, and if ever you want to build up a real lasting national movement it must be based on the welfare of the people...[and] if the Irish people get the right to choose their own governmental institutions without interference, that the choice they would make would be that of a Republic.”<sup>34</sup> This statement represents a marked change from Sinn Féin rhetoric, where a republic was something to be earned through revolutionary

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<sup>34</sup> Eamon de Valera, Statement by Eamon de Valera, T.D., at 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ard Fheis of Fianna Fail, as President of That Organisation, de Valera Collection, UCDA, P155/2048.

action, in turn being handed over to the people of Ireland. As such, this break from militancy as a means to an end was better suited for success within the already democratic Free State, not to mention more appealing to a populace ready to move beyond the violence of the recent past. This latter point was made all the more clearly when in the same address, de Valera stated that in order to attain a free republic, Fianna Fáil and its followers “must get a national agreement above that [Free State] constitution as long as it lasts, and the national agreement is an agreement amongst all parties that the representatives of the people, freely elected, free to meet without any political Tests of any kind, may decide by majority rule the national policy for the moment. I see no other way. It is either that way or the appeal to force.”<sup>35</sup> Another interesting aspect of this speech was how de Valera positioned both the Constitution and Cumann na nGaedheal as having a basis in British authority, like Gallgher noting both explicitly and implicitly that neither were of true Irish origin. Further, the rhetoric placed the will of the people as being of the utmost authority—a power that transcended colonial ties or party affiliation.

### **“The Last Straw”—Fianna Fáil v. the Oath**

In the first national election held after the formation of the party, Fianna Fáil won forty-four seats in the Dáil, which forced the party’s hand regarding its views of the Free State Dáil. The stumbling block was the requisite Oath, which, as we have seen, remained as the basis for Sinn Féin’s policy of abstention. At the time many viewed Fianna Fáil’s entry into the Dáil as an act treasonous to the republican cause, or at least an example of how de Valera and his party had betrayed the movement. Yet, a brief study of how Fianna Fáil justified its entrance into the Dáil gave the party

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

its first major opportunity to distinguish itself from Sinn Féin, especially in the way that it responded to gendered attacks. When the dust had settled, Fianna Fáil had demonstrated its willingness to operate within the frameworks of the Saorstát. Whereas earlier policy might have resulted in republicans threatening force as a way to combat the Oath, the new republicanism of Fianna Fáil grounded its contentions in legal proceedings and critiques of such a requirement.

In response to the killing of key Cumann na nGaedheal party member Kevin O'Higgins on 10 July 1927, which, although unsolved was blamed on radical republicans, with some implicating members of Fianna Fáil. Dunphy notes that “Although de Valera strongly condemned the murder, Cumann na nGaedheal, apparently convinced that Fianna Fáil’s parliamentary abstention contributed to an atmosphere in which such murders took place, coupled a new Public Safety Act against the IRA...with an Electoral Amendment Bill aimed at Fianna Fáil.”<sup>36</sup> One such bill required members of the Dáil to take an oath of office, and provided an early test to Fianna Fáil, namely its willingness to abandon Sinn Féin’s policy of abstention. O’Halpin notes that “de Valera had to choose between being consistent and being constitutional. The decision he made transformed the politics of independent Ireland.”<sup>37</sup> In essence, the acts that resulted from O’Higgins’ murder forced the hand of Fianna Fáil and their approach to the Oath, as the party would be compelled to address the issue if it were to enter the Dáil legally. As a means to publicly combat the actions of Cosgrave and Cumann na nGaedheal, Fianna Fáil printed the first issue of the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin* on 25 July 1927, in order to claim the actions unconscionable, and perhaps, illegal. Under the headline “War Upon the People’s

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<sup>36</sup> Dunphy, *Making*, 131.

<sup>37</sup> O’Halpin, “Politics,” 121.

Peace,” the paper read “By illegal exclusion of 45 Republican deputies, debarred by police and military force from taking their seats, the Cumann na nGaedheal Party manoeuvred themselves back into office despite the people’s emphatic vote. They have now proclaimed war on the public peace.”<sup>38</sup> The same editorial also claimed that these actions had invalidated the Free State Constitution of 1923. Under the subheading “The Last Straw,” the author(s) referred to Cumann na nGaedheal and their “revising” of the constitution as tyrannical actions, stating that the “Free State Constitution [can] now be declared to be less fundamental than a [illegible insertion] Emergency Bill but deputies who in the future swear to the Constitution swear in addition to the English King to Partition and to this latest most ferocious [action].”<sup>39</sup> The attacks on tyranny may seem more suited to a previous era, but they were vital to Fianna Fáil’s claims to legitimacy. By presenting the party of the state in such terms, Fianna Fáil was able to appear as the more rational and less reactionary of the two parties. Further, by appealing to the will of the people, they added a greater sense of legitimacy for their cries of tyranny. Despite this, Fianna Fáil would eventually abandon their legal attacks against the Oath, instead choosing to rhetorically side-step the issue and address it from within the Dáil itself.

In essence, de Valera’s party shunned, even marginalized, the significance of the Oath as they chose to enter the Dáil, labeling it an “empty formula.”<sup>40</sup> In an untitled draft of a letter written by de Valera, the Fianna Fáil “chief” laid out the reasons for their change in policy. On behalf of the Fianna Fáil Deputies, he wrote: “They recognise that this legislation may imperil the general peace, that it disfranchises and precludes from engaging in any peaceful movement all Irish

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<sup>38</sup> *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, 25 July 1927, de Valera Collection, UCDA, P150/2038.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Dunphy, *Making*, 132.



Republicans who will not acknowledge that they owe allegiance to the British Crown.”<sup>41</sup> Herein lay two assertions: first, that Fianna Fáil was placing the will of the people above that of party conviction, and second, that they had indeed abandoned the policy of abstention. In the closing refrain, de Valera wrote:

Thus, if the signing of a meaningless political formula [i.e., the Oath] is sufficient to secure for them admission to their seats, the Fianna Fail Deputies feel it in their duty [sic] in this crisis to comply with the formality. On the other hand, they feel it is equally their duty to accept the consequences of continued exclusion if entry can only be obtained at the price of the transfer of their allegiance from the Irish Nation to the English King. They feel confident that their constituents, and all Republicans, will support them in their refusal to commit as public representatives what they *must* regard as an act of national apostacy [sic].”<sup>42</sup>

The act of apostasy referred to by de Valera and Gallagher was the abandonment of Sinn Féin’s hard-line stance toward abstention, as well as the latter’s principled stance on the revolutionary republican Dáil which Sinn Féin had sought to legitimize. It appears that Fianna Fáil was more concerned with the public’s distaste for militancy than any perceived contradictions of its representatives entering the Free State Dáil. In short, Fianna Fáil went to great lengths to assure the Irish people that they were in no way connected to the violence that continued in parts of Ireland.

### **“Devvy’s Circus”—Fianna Fáil v. Cumann na nGaedheal and the Public Struggle Over the Gunmen**

From its establishment in 1926 Fianna Fáil continually struggled to remove itself from such associations, a struggle that was manifested in a very public political battle throughout the following decade. As the party of government from the

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<sup>41</sup> Eamon de Valera, untitled letter, 10 August 1927, de Valera Collection, UCDA, P155/2042. Below the text, de Valera wrote “Draft which I laid before meeting of the Fianna Fáil deputies on day on which decision to try to enter Dail [sic] taken.” The finalized version of this declaration was signed by 41 of 42 Fianna Fáil deputies at midnight on 10 August 1927. Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

formation of the Free State up through a narrow loss in 1932, Cumann na nGaedheal took the tactical approach of attempting to weaken support for Fianna Fáil by drawing connections between the latter and the reviled “gunmen” of the Irish Republican Army. The connotation was that Fianna Fáil was a party of godless murderers intent on dragging Ireland into another civil war, or worse, a protracted confrontation with Great Britain. A study of the election material used by Cosgrave’s party during this era shows that Cumann na nGaedheal continued to portray Fianna Fáil along gendered lines as irrational, emotional, militant, and thus feminized agents of disorder. Conversely, a study of Fianna Fáil’s election material reveals a party making every effort to extricate themselves from this feminized label, in turn resetting the gendered discourse.

Underlying Cumann na nGaedheal’s message was the perceived threat that Fianna Fáil posed to the Free State’s sense of law and order. In a continuation from their rhetoric levied against Sinn Féin in the early 1920s, Cumann na nGaedheal positioned themselves as the manly custodians of the security and lawfulness of the Irish Free State. This theme continued up through the demise of Cumann na nGaedheal and served as the basis for the party’s dialectic with Fianna Fáil. Such themes were evident in two electoral posters from the 1927 and 1932 elections. The first and most recognizable is a poster depicting a shadowy gunman looming menacingly over an unassuming, quaint rural Irish home. The words “The Shadow of the Gunman. Keep it from your home. Vote for Cumann na nGaedheal” implied that the party was all that stood between security and the feared gunmen.<sup>43</sup> (Figure 2.1) Another example of Cumann na nGaedheal’s effort to draw explicit connections between Fianna Fáil and the feared gunmen can be found in a poster centered upon a

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<sup>43</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *Shadow of the Gunman*, University College Cork Digital Archives, <http://multitext.ucc.ie/viewgallery/1332>, accessed 17 November 2009.

drawing depicting card game and three figures sitting at a table, including de Valera, an upright and decidedly non-threatening “Saorstat Citizen,” and a shadowy figure labeled Saor Éire—Ireland’s socialist party—and IRA.<sup>44</sup> The most striking feature of the cartoon is the long leg of de Valera featuring the words “Fianna Fail” stretched out under the table passing a card labeled “the Joker” to the shadowy IRA/Saor Éire figure. Beneath the drawing are the phrases “Fianna Fail’s Game. Don’t let them cheat you! Vote for Cumann na nGaedheal.”<sup>45</sup> Again we find a continuation of the theme that de Valera worked in concert with the militant gunmen that, according to Cumann na nGaedheal, were running rampant through the countryside. Further, the image was meant to show that de Valera and his party were working to undermine the purity of the Free State citizen. It is also worth noting the emphasis of the Irish citizen as being that of the Free State rather than of Ireland, connoting that the Free State, was the apex of Irish citizenry. This latter point is something that would be seized upon by Fianna Fáil in its own rhetoric, as the party would reify the notion of Ireland and its citizenry, thus negating any connections to Britain such as was seen in reference to the Free State.

One of the more recognizable images from this era was an election poster for Cumann na nGaedheal emblazoned with the headline “HIS Master’s Voice.” The phrase was a replica of the famous advertisement utilized in England and Ireland by the Gramophone Company (later HMV) and RCA/Victor in the United States beginning in 1909 and featured Nipper the dog reacting to a realistic recording of his master.<sup>46</sup> Beneath this was a drawing of a particularly effeminate-looking de Valera,

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<sup>44</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *The Joker*, c. 1932, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> The image utilized by the Gramophone Company was based on an 1898 painting by British painter Mark Barraud’s “Dog Looking at and Listening to a Phonograph.” Charles Bernstein notes that Barraud’s painting “is iconic of the uncanniness [sic] of the human voice

with a Fianna Fáil card hanging from his hand, being held up by a shadowy gunman armed with two guns, each labeled “IRA” and “Saor Éire.” The connotation was that de Valera was a passive agent, indeed puppet, of the militant and radical elements of Irish politics. Given the connection with the Victor ad, a more vulgar interpretation can be ascertained, notably that de Valera was the IRA’s and Saor Éire’s “poodle.” Further, the phrase “HIS Master’s Voice” suggests that de Valera and his party had been hijacked by extremists, but also that he and his party were really militant extremists hiding under the cloak of a thinly veiled neo-republicanism. Spanned across the bottom was the phrase “Make YOUR voice heard by voting for Cumann na nGaedheal.”<sup>47</sup> This latter statement represented a fear tactic employed by Cumann na nGaedheal where it is implied that a Fianna Fáil government would somehow mean the end of democracy and the return of the perceived lawlessness of the previous era.

The propaganda published by Cumann na nGaedheal also offered more complex characterizations of Fianna Fáil than mere accusations of violence and disorder. In many cases, references to specific elements of de Valera’s actions and republican events were included. One such example was a Cumann na nGaedheal electoral poster that depicted de Valera—“Fianna Fail” is emblazoned across his long arms—opening a door labeled “Constitution Amendment Act,” allowing the ever-present IRA and Saor Éire gunmen access to a munitions dump containing “Dumped Arms,” “Mines,” and “High Explosives.”<sup>48</sup> The poster simply reads, “Don’t let this

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emanating from a machine unattached to a human body. Dogs, beloved by their owners for their ability to distinguish specific human voices from other sounds in the environment, are the adequate symbol of transhuman voice recognition. . .[and] one of the most striking features of the image is Nipper gazing affectionately into the Victrola’s large horn, sometimes imagined to be an ear but which more pertinently can be imagined as a mechanical throat and mouth.” Charles Bernstein, “Making Audio Visible: The Lessons of Visual Language for the Textualization of Sound,” *Text* 16 (2006), 279.

<sup>47</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *HIS Master’s Voice*, c. 1927, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

<sup>48</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *Don’t Let This Happen*, c. 1927, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

happen. Vote for Cumann na nGaedheal.”<sup>49</sup> Unique to this particular poster was what was dangling from the Fianna Fáil leader’s coat pocket; a paper entitled “Document no.2,” a clear reference to de Valera’s failed alternative to the Anglo-Irish Treaty<sup>50</sup> The connotation here is that the Free State under the leadership of Cumann na nGaedheal was a bulwark on behalf of safety and peace, as opposed to what Fianna Fáil would unleash in Ireland.

Perhaps the most striking depictions by Cumann na nGaedheal of de Valera as the harbinger of violence came in the form of two posters portraying the republican leader as the orchestrator of the death and destruction wrought by the Civil War. The first was entitled “Presented by the Artist to the Nation,” and depicts de Valera as the artist pondering a work of his own—entitled “Civil War by E. De Valera”—and features images of war and a city ablaze. (Figure 2.2) Dangling from the painting was a price tag with the figure “£33,000,000,” the estimated cost of damages from the prior conflict.<sup>51</sup> Similar in theme, but more striking in its accusation of human cost, was a poster with the title “The dead who died for an ‘empty formula’. Was it worth it? Vote for Cumann na nGaedheal.”<sup>52</sup> (Figure 2.3) Above was a striking line drawing of a classic image of Erin, dressed in traditional Irish gowns, holding de Valera by the arm while pointing to a series of crosses—an image not unlike what was seen in the wake of the Great War—and featuring the names of prominent Irish nationalists who had lost their lives in the Civil War. De Valera has a look of shock and surprise, as well as an effeminate posture. Erin was his complete opposite, looking fierce and

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *Presented by the Artist to the Nation*, c. 1927, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

<sup>52</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *The Dead Who Died For An ‘Empty Formula’. Was it Worth It? Vote for Cumann na nGaedheal*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

stern. The names on the crosses are as follows: Liam Mellows, Erskine Childers, Seamus Dwyer, Sean Hales, Emmet McGarry, Cathal Brugha, Rory O'Connor, and Michael Collins.<sup>53</sup> It is somewhat ironic—if not anachronistic—that de Valera was labeled with the death of these men despite the fact that some were executed by the Free State government.<sup>54</sup> The implication, however, was that the ultimate blame for their demise lay at the feet of their political leader.

In a similar vein, a Cumann na nGaedheal poster entitled “Oh Dry Those Tears!” depicted a weeping de Valera as having the body of a crocodile, eliciting misguided emotion over the destruction brought by the Civil War. (Figure 2.4) The subtitle “The cost of an empty formula” was common in Cumann na nGaedheal propaganda, and was a clear signifier of Fianna Fáil’s militant lineage. In what is clearly a feminized depiction, through “crocodile tears,” de Valera apologized to a manly Irish laborer about the destruction wrought by the Civil War. But in an interesting twist, the worker, wearing an apron labeled “Irish Industry,” complained war had crippled Irish industry. As £33 million went up in smoke, the hobbled worker shook an angry fist at de Valera.<sup>55</sup> The message was clear that emotion and ideology had been the great enemies of industry and manly Irish industriousness. Both posters demonstrate one facet of the larger battle Fianna Fáil would have to fight to attain legitimacy with the Free State electorate. It would have been disingenuous for the members of Fianna Fáil to simply state that they were not at fault for the Civil War.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Two examples include: Liam Mellows (1892-1922), a socialist, was executed by firing squad in December 1922 by order of the Free State government in retribution for the assassination of Treatyite Seán Hayes. Marie Coleman and William Murphy, “William Joseph (‘Liam’) Mellows” *Dictionary Volume 6*, 477-79. Erskine Childers (1870-1922), a close associate of de Valera, was executed by the Free State Government on 24 November 1922 following his conviction on a firearms possession charged. M. A. Hopkinson, “Erskine (Robert) Childers,” *Dictionary, Volume 2*, 498-501.

<sup>55</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *The Dead*.

More than anything, Fianna Fáil had to put to bed any notion that its new manifestation of republicanism would in any way rekindle the passions of 1921-22.

Although exaggerated in their claims, these posters were clearly meant to establish unease among the Irish populace about Fianna Fáil's militant past. The Cumann na nGaedheal posters depicting de Valera as the harbinger of death and destruction—both corporal and financial—were intended to draw a clear line from the Civil War to what the Treatyite party saw as a renamed manifestation of Sinn Féin and the IRA. In essence, the past was used to cause unease about the very presence of de Valera on the public scene. But, what would a Fianna Fáil state look like according to Cumann na nGaedheal? One vision was presented in a poster that declared: “No Goods Taken From Window! Supplies from Goods Stores Only.”<sup>56</sup> (Figure 2.5) Situated above this declaration was an image of de Valera dressed as a shopkeeper, offering key Fianna Fáil policies disguised as “goods,” such as “No Oaths Taken,” “High Tariffs,” “Land Annuities” and “De-Rating Schemes.”<sup>57</sup> To the side of de Valera, standing in a side door was a masked gunman watching over a store of arms including rifles and “bombs for jurymen.”<sup>58</sup> In this case, Cumann na nGaedheal was making a literal case that Fianna Fáil was a front for violent revolutionaries intent on bringing violence and disorder to Ireland.

As seen above, Cumann na nGaedheal sought to position itself as a law and order party, one that maintained peace and accord not only within Ireland, but with England as well. Herein lay Cumann na nGaedheal's second point of attack against Fianna Fáil—they were the same old revolutionaries as 1916 and 1921, and their

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<sup>56</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *No Goods Taken From Window!*, c. 1927, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

election into government would result in a renewed conflict with Britain. Moving from connotations of past connections with the civil war, Cumann na nGaedheal sought to portray Fianna Fáil as a political branch of the IRA. Considering the connections between Sinn Féin and the IRA—not to mention Fianna Fáil’s still ambivalent relationship with the IRA—Cumann na nGaedheal needed little effort to depict de Valera and his followers as revolutionaries launching a new directive against the Free State and England. In this sense, Fianna Fáil had to free itself from the stigma of the gunmen.

Another election poster, likely from 1932, sought to incite the fear that Fianna Fáil was a party that lacked the seriousness and integrity to warrant election into power. (Figure 2.6) The very large poster was a mock-up of the type of poster used to promote a travelling circus, in this instance “Devvy’s Circus.” In an unambiguous reference to de Valera’s mixed ancestry—his mother was Irish-born and his father was a Spaniard she met in the United States—the words “Senor De Valera [sic]” were in very large print, clearly meant to catch the eye of the passerby, followed in smaller type with a description of him as a “World Famous Illusionist, Oath Swallower, and escapologist. See his renowned Act: ‘Escaping from the Strait Jacket of the Republic’ Everyone Mystified!!”<sup>59</sup> Above this is included a series of phrases, reading: “Absolutely the Greatest Road Show in Ireland To-Day!” “57-Star Performers-57” “Will visit this town any time between now and the General Election!”<sup>60</sup> To the reader, the seriousness of Fianna Fáil was being brought into question. Most telling was the phrase “Escaping from the Strait Jacket of the Republic,” which connotes that

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<sup>59</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *Senor De Valera*, c. 1927, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Fifty-seven is a reference to the number of Fianna Fáil candidates returned in the 1927 General Election. John Coakley and Michael Gallagher, eds., *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (London: Routledge, 2003), 368.



de Valera was somehow utilizing circus tricks—a type of chicanery not described in the poster—to escape from his past as a key figure in the 1916 Rising, and the subtle reference to the destruction which followed; an anachronistic claim considering that many of the key members of Cumann na nGaedheal were sympathetic—if not actively involved—with the declaration of the 1916 Republic. Adding to the notion that Fianna Fáil was a party comprised of men willing to change on a whim, thereby proving to be unstable was the listing of “circus” performers, who were all members of the party. For example: “Frank Aiken: The fearsome FIRE-EATER. See him Make Faces at the British Lion!”<sup>61</sup> “Johnny Magintee: Fresh from the Gold Rush. In ‘On Again! Off Again! Gone Again! Done Again!’”<sup>62</sup> “Monsieur Sean Lemass: Famous tight rope performer. See him cross from the Treaty to the Republic on the tight-rope every night. Marvellous [sic] performance.”<sup>63</sup> The poster concludes with call of “Performing Frogs Champion Croakers!” “Marvellous [sic] trained sheep!” “By

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<sup>61</sup> Frank Aiken (1898-1983), became active in the republican movement following the Easter Rising, and in 1923 won election as a Sinn Féin candidate for the constituency of Louth. Aiken’s loyalty remained with de Valera upon the formation of Fianna Fáil, serving as Minister of Defence after the party’s 1932 electoral triumph. He was known as having a particularly anti-British disposition, and was “the most anglophobic [sic] of de Valera’s ministers.” Ronan Fanning, “Francis Thomas (‘Frank’) Aiken, *Dictionary, Volume 1*, 52-56. This tendency toward Anglophobia is likely responsible for the claim that he would sneer at the British Lion. *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Apart from de Valera, Seán MacEntee, (1889-1984) had one of the oldest republican lineages, dating back to his involvement with the Volunteers in 1914, to his participation in the Easter Rising, up through his service in the Volunteer executive. Although a member of Sinn Féin, MacEntee was never elected to the Dáil. This changed when he was elected to the Dáil as a Fianna Fáil candidate for County Dublin in 1927. After the 1932 Fianna Fáil victory, MacEntee served as Minister for Finance, and played a vital role in the passage of the External Relations Act. “Sean (John) Francis MacEntee,” *Dictionary, Volume 5*, 995-98. The reference to “Johnny Magintee” and his effervescence was certainly meant to call into question his political stability.

<sup>63</sup> The comparison of Seán Lemass (1899-1971) to a tightrope performer is likely due to the fact that he was slow to speak out against the Treaty in 1922. In 1924, Lemass’s republican credentials would be solidified as he was elected to the Dáil as a Sinn Féin candidate for Dublin South. He is also credited with urging de Valera to form Fianna Fáil, reputedly talking the leader out of possible retirement from politics. As such, Lemass was a founding member of the party, and served as Minister of Industry and Commerce after 1932, and was instrumental in the passage of the Control of Manufactures Acts (1932 and 1934). He would serve as Taoiseach from 1959 to 1956. Ronan Fanning, “Seán Lemass,” *ibid.*, 433-44.

special request the Senor will try his fifth chance at the Greasered Poll.”<sup>64</sup> Taken as a whole, this poster exemplified the effort by Cumann na nGaedheal to portray key figures of Fianna Fáil as irrationally and foolishly anti-British, with a history of vacillating between a pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty stances, or as failures making numerous attempts to awe their followers with deceit and conceit. Most telling, however, was the presentation of followers of the party as thoughtless sheep blinded by the spectacle of Fianna Fáil. Like a circus, Fianna Fáil was being portrayed as mindless, evanescent entertainment, and thus untrustworthy and dishonest.

Another Cumann na nGaedheal election poster from September of 1927 continued the theme of portraying Fianna Fáil as harbingers of an empty rhetoric that would ultimately yield no results. The sparse poster depicted a large chicken with a stereotypical rendering of de Valera—stern, large nose, glasses—looking sadly upon a cracked and empty eggshell, across which was written: “The Empty Formula.”<sup>65</sup> (Figure 2.7) Below the egg were the words “The hen that took 5 years to lay an egg, and then it was empty. Vote for Cumann na nGaedheal.” In light of the assertion that Cumann na nGaedheal exerted great effort to feminize the republican cause, there are two notable facets about this particular poster. The first advanced the themes of de Valera and his party as the unpleasant and illogical choice, depicting a hen—a female chicken—who was, moreover, infertile. The second notion was that Fianna Fáil’s platform, borne of the Treaty debate and Civil War, was as empty in 1927 as it had been in 1922. The conclusion made for the Irish voter was that de Valera and his “hatched” republicanism was as hollow as it had been five years prior, but most importantly, as there was no “chick,” Fianna Fáil’s ideals would never mature—

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid. This is a reference to the British notion that to become head of government, one must successfully climb a greased pole/poll.

<sup>65</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *The Empty Formula*, c. 1927, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

indeed, they had never truly existed in the first place. Additionally, the depiction of de Valera as a hen brings to mind Angela Bourke's assertion that "In storytelling, and in written reminiscences of rural life, we also find a recurring analogy between resistance to the keeping of hens and resistance [by men] to women's speech. That hens make too much noise, and that women talk too much, is a familiar theme in men's traditional storytelling."<sup>66</sup>

Although they were in power, the level of vitriol expounded by Cumann na nGaedheal suggests that Cosgrave's party deemed Fianna Fáil to be a serious electoral threat. Even in the early days of the party, the presence of Fianna Fáil became a lightning rod in which all aspects of the political debate revolved around the republicans' rhetoric. In other words, the republican movement, whether it was Sinn Féin or Fianna Fáil, remained a powerful force throughout the life of the Irish Free State. Furthermore, the issue of republicanism's fate was indeed the central element directing Irish political debate. Yet, in the years leading up to its electoral triumphs in 1932, 1933, and 1937, Fianna Fáil had to constantly weather severe attacks that were geared along gendered lines. Accused of being irrational, violent, treasonous, and equivocating, the party embraced a public discourse that incessantly distanced itself from the type of republicanism that had been made irrelevant by historical events, and, by extension, undermined the propaganda and rhetoric of the pro-Treaty Cumann na nGaedheal.

In its first five years of existence, Fianna Fáil could not equal Cumann na nGaedheal's aesthetic attack. It would take roughly four years before Fianna Fáil was able to equal the types of images explored above, but when it responded, Fianna Fáil engaged with these charges of violence and irrationality. A cartoon from the 15

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<sup>66</sup> Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 44.

February 1932 edition of the *Irish Press* demonstrates the manner in which Fianna Fáil would not only mock Cumann na nGaedheal's accusations, but also weaken the affect of such posters as "Devvy's Circus," and the "Shadow of the Gunmen," which appear in the cartoon. (Figure 2.8) The artist "Bee" depicted an "Ex-Unionist" standing before a room filled with well-fed, monocle, and formally dressed males, as saying: "Mr. Cosgrave has not been returned, but our money has been well spent. As you will see, it has been employed by Cumann na nGaedheal to defame the natives far better than we used to do it."<sup>67</sup> Simply put, the broadsides studied above had little impact on Fianna Fáil, other than to shape the party's rhetoric and to form a foundation from which they could launch their own attacks on Cumann na nGaedheal.

#### **"Unscrupulous Propaganda"—Fianna Fáil's Reasoned Reply**

As shown above, Cumann na nGaedheal utilized a particularly pointed aesthetic attack on the electability of Fianna Fáil. Initially, Fianna Fáil deflected these accusations by responding with speeches and pamphlets—such as *Pamphlet #2*—relying mostly on public events and print media reports on these events to engage Cumann na nGaedheal. To be sure, Cumann na nGaedheal's efforts to associate Fianna Fáil and the "gunmen" had achieved some success, as evidenced by the direct references to these themes within Fianna Fáil's own election propaganda. One such case was a poster with the title "Unscrupulous Propaganda," with the subtitle "Here is a copy of a leaflet issued by Cumann na nGaedheal during the elections."<sup>68</sup> Centered on the poster is a copy of a Cumann na nGaedheal leaflet, which is bookended by the words "You Know the Facts." The text of the Cumann na nGaedheal piece reads:

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<sup>67</sup> Bee, "Ex-Unionist," *Irish Press* 15 February 1932, 1. Bee's noting of Cosgrave's not being returned was a reference to Cumann na nGaedheal's loss to Fianna Fáil in the 1932 general election.

<sup>68</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Unscrupulous Propaganda*, c. 1927, NLI, EC.

“Shot dead. A Cumann na nGaedheal Candidate and a Detective Officer were on Sunday in Leitrim. Shot Dead. While canvassing for support. You can rout the gunmen by supporting Cosgrave & Redmond and voting Blythe Brady.”<sup>69</sup> The bottom of the poster read: “Do you think a party that would stoop to such methods is worthy of your support? Vote for the Fianna Fáil candidates.”<sup>70</sup> Although there are similar examples of Fianna Fáil repudiating the claims of its opponents, de Valera and his party utilized a much more public, perhaps more cerebral, approach in responding to the claims of Cosgrave’s party.

For instance, at the party’s first Ard Fheis in November of 1926, Eamon de Valera stated:

I have never said, and am not going to say now, that force is not a legitimate weapon for a nation to use in striving to win its freedom. I know that in history it is seldom that foreign tyrants have ever yielded to any other. I have believed and still believe, that if a nation held in subjection by a foreign power were to exclude altogether the idea of using physical force to free itself, it would in effect be handing itself over as a bound slave without hope of redemption. It is a long wait they destine themselves to who rely on their tyrants spontaneously suffering a change of heart.

But a nation within itself ought to be able to settle its polity so that all occasion of civil conflict between its members may be obviated, and NO NATION WHICH EVEN PRETENDS TO FREEDOM WILL SUFFER A FOREIGN POWER TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS WHICH MAKE THE ADOPTION OF SUCH A POLITY IMPOSSIBLE.<sup>71</sup>

In this short passage, de Valera is able to construct a rhetorical distinction between the republicanism of Sinn Féin and that of his own party. By acknowledging the legitimacy of force as a means of escaping foreign tyranny, he lauded the efforts of

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Eamon de Valera, “Mr De Valera’s Introductory Speech at the Opening of the Ard Fheis of Fianna Fáil, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1926,” de Valera Collection, UCDA, P155/2047. The highlighted elements reflect the original document. The highlighting is significant as this is the paper from which de Valera delivered his address.

previous revolutionaries, yet at the same time he is clear in noting that this was effective in the past, but had no place in Fianna Fáil's vision for Ireland's present. In the next paragraph de Valera firmly stated that force had no place in Ireland, thus acknowledging the belief that he and his party viewed the nation as being in a transitional phase between colony and complete independence. The significance of such a position was that it allowed Fianna Fáil to develop a socio-political and economic discourse that would operate within the frameworks of the Irish Free State, thereby abandoning the abstentionism and militancy of Sinn Féin and other hardline republican offshoots.

Returning to *Pamphlet #2*, we find another rejection of violence as a tenable option for establishing an Irish republic. With the Civil War still fresh in the public's mind—not to mention being incessantly resuscitated by Cumann na nGaedheal and republican militant groups—Fianna Fáil had to clarify its role in the causation and fighting of the war. Gallagher contended that the root cause of the Civil War was not militant republicanism, but rather that the Treaty that “had already filled the nation with dissension.”<sup>72</sup> He further asserted that the Treaty “outraged the national tradition by destroying Ireland's age-old nationhood and substituting for it that which has for centuries been most loathsome to Irish nationalism—the domination of the British monarchy.”<sup>73</sup> In a clever twist that played into the anti-British rhetoric of Fianna Fáil's nationalism, Gallagher did not blame Cumann na nGaedheal for orchestrating the civil war, but rather claimed that they were duped by the duplicity of Prime Minister Lloyd George. Under a heading entitled “A Constitution Based on Civil War,” Gallagher wrote:

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<sup>72</sup> Gallagher, *Pamphlet #2*, 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

Had Prime Minister Pitt sat in Mr. Lloyd George's place when the Constitution was under revision in London in 1922 he could not, in the circumstances of the time, have produced a document better calculated to divide our people. The Articles of Agreement for a Treaty which in the Preamble are made the real Free State Constitution had already proved their power not to unite the nation but so completely and thoroughly to divide it as to make Civil War possible after six months. How better could any British statesman secure the permanent weakening of Ireland by internal disunion than by declaring that to be the fundamental law which had already cast the whole nation in conflict and confusion [?]<sup>74</sup>

What Gallagher did, in essence, was to establish a causal link between Britain and the Civil War, implicitly questioning the courage and wisdom of those Irishmen responsible for the Treaty and the resultant constitution. Further, Gallagher's assertions undermined the logic of all things associated with the Free State constitution as being inherently divisive, thereby enabling Fianna Fáil to interact with an entity that held no validity. Indeed, the most significant element of this passage was tantamount to Fianna Fáil's attempt to establish a very public disconnect between their party and the outbreak of the war.

From its inception, Fianna Fáil sought to foster a new socio-political and economic dialectic that moved beyond the militancy of the previous decade. As such, the formation of the party could be presented as the beginning of a new era in Irish history; thus the time between 1926 and 1937 served as a transition from the Civil War era to that of a fully independent state. In many ways, Cumann na nGaedheal represented an Ireland that was born of the Civil War and Treaty Debate—not to mention retaining some connections to Britain—whereas Fianna Fáil advanced a movement that sought to break from this narrative, in turn creating a new republican masternarrative. De Valera's closing speech from Fianna Fáil's first Ard Fheis made this break explicit. Speaking of a leaderette in the *Irish Independent* from that morning which accused of Fianna Fáil of representing a shadow of the once-bloody

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 7.

fight, de Valera responded: “I ask who is responsible for its remaining? I simply point to it as an objective fact... Those who complain that the ‘shadow of the bloody fight’ remains must point their accusation elsewhere. It remains because human nature is what it is, because national aspirations are natural to men. I have done nothing but point out the facts.”<sup>75</sup> While justified at certain times—even in Ireland’s past—force was a means to an end, but in de Valera’s view, the Free State precluded the need for further bloodshed. Militancy and force—in the figurative, rather than literal sense—was something that was not without place in the rhetoric of Fianna Fáil. Indeed, militaristic organization and activist rhetoric were to be key elements for de Valera’s party as it advanced its nationalistic republican cause throughout the decade. In referring to the renaissance of the republican movement, de Valera stated: “We have rallied ourselves and have already made wonderful progress in rallying the whole of the national forces. These forces were scattered, but they were not annihilated. In a short time they will be as stout an army as ever, and every success will increase their morals.”<sup>76</sup>

Still, in relation to its political dialectic with Cumann na nGaedheal, Fianna Fáil republicanism needed to be made distinct from Sinn Féin republicanism. Although the rhetoric of the party aligned Fianna Fáil along a continuum of nationalist heroes, it had to tread carefully its problematic associations with Sinn Féin and the more recent past. Whereas Cumann na nGaedheal sought to draw an unequivocal line connecting Fianna Fáil to Sinn Féin, de Valera and his party sought to add greater nuance to the past. Building on his speech from the first Ard Fheis, de Valera made a much more explicit statement regarding the connections—or lack

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<sup>75</sup> De Valera, “Eamon de Valera’s Closing Speech at the Ard Fheis of FIANNA FÁIL, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1926,” de Valera Collection, UCDA, P155/2048.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.



thereof—between Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin in 1927. Speaking at the party’s second Ard Fheis, de Valera stated:

To free a country that has been in the oppressive grip of a big Empire for seven centuries is not a light task. It can only [be] performed if we are firm and conscientious and if we feel that we can start again and build up from the foundations. We are building up solidly from the foundations, and we have built up and established to-day—and I hope it will prove to be an organisation of destiny—and an organisation which is a fitting *successor* to the great Sinn Féin Organisation which existed from 1917 to 1921.<sup>77</sup>

The last sentence of this quotation is rather curious, considering the fact that de Valera was president of Sinn Féin *after* 1921, yet it is more understandable if we view the statement through the prism of his vision for Fianna Fáil. In essence, de Valera is claiming that Sinn Féin had ceased to be vital after 1921 with the formation of the Irish Free State, for the militancy that created it was no longer vital to the greater cause of creating an independent republic. Therefore, Sinn Féin was no longer a viable entity within the frameworks of the Irish Free State. Yet, it was on this incarnation of Sinn Féin the united revolutionary entity that had opposed the foreigner, and not that of the abstentionist/militant Sinn Féin of the mid-1920s, that de Valera sought to lay as his party’s historical foundation. At the very heart of this speech was the notion that Fianna Fáil marked a new departure for the republican movement, as well as an implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the Saorstát.

The acceptance of the Free State as a real and functioning state provided the starting point for Fianna Fáil in its efforts to operate as a “slightly constitutional party,” for the very machinations of the organization were rooted in the plan to form a majority within the Free State Dáil and then destroy it from within, thereby creating a new Irish state. As such, Fianna Fáil—from its inception—wrapped itself in the cloak of innovation, a truly new departure for the Ireland of the 1920s and beyond. In the

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<sup>77</sup> Eamon de Valera, “Statement by Eamon de Valera, T.D.” de Valera Collection, UCDA, P155/2048 (2). The emphasis is my own.

same speech given in 1927, de Valera was explicit in his claims that the party was formed with an eye toward the future:

The circumstances, however, in which this organisation has to perform its task, are not the same circumstances as those in which we had to fight then, and if we are going to succeed it will be using at each particular moment, as I have often said, the methods which seem best at that moment for the success of our task. When circumstances change, methods much change; but the thing that has not changed is the aim, and that aim is to secure the complete freedom of this country; and we know that, no matter how they might alight it as a mere form, the form in which that aim will express itself is that of an independent republic.<sup>78</sup>

The themes of rebirth and renewal are essential to understanding the nature of Fianna Fáil's nascent republicanism in the Formative Era. Party leaders envisioned their new project as the beginning of a socio-political and economic trajectory headed toward establishing a state independent of both the long *durée* of the British conquest and also the short *durée* of the Irish Free State. Thus, Fianna Fáil would concern itself with constructing an innovative and expedient party discourse suitable for the exigencies of both the Irish Free State and interwar Europe.

The examples above make it clear that Fianna Fáil was cognizant of how they were cast as irrational militants by Cumann na nGaedheal. As such, de Valera's party was explicit in its effort to distinguish themselves from the militant republican past. As Knirck has demonstrated, Cumann na nGaedheal did much to build strength within the Free State by casting the republican movement in feminine terms—a trend continued through the image of Fianna Fáil as the harbingers of a renewed commitment to the policy of the gunmen. As has been shown, Fianna Fáil went to great lengths to distance itself from this association. Another aspect of the party's discourse can be found in their promotion of a logical, delayed-Enlightenment approach to such controversial issues as its entrance into the Dáil and the ensuing

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

battle over the Oath of Allegiance. From one perspective, this can be seen as a gender neutralization of sorts, in which the party sought to dissolve any feminine connotations at the same time it embraced a more active, reasoned masculine cloaking.

### **CODA**

On 9 November 1932, de Valera addressed the sixth Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis—the first since the party had attained a coalition government in the Free State Dáil. The speech reflected the entrenchment of the party’s republican approach, but it also foreshadowed its embracement of a policy of action and rhetoric of institutional change. De Valera stated:

This organisation of FIANNA FAIL was founded primarily to provide a path to peace and to the ultimate victory for which a common understanding and an agreed national policy is the first essential. The pillars on which the policy of the organisation rest are: the acceptance of the vote of the majority of the people’s elected representatives as deciding national policy, and the abolition of the oath which at present prevents a section of our people from having representation in the representative assembly.

Recent elections have shown that the people have come to appreciate the fact that we are really the Party of peace, and that our programme is the one which promises the most satisfactory solution of the national problems with which we are confronted. It is not improbable that before the next Ard Fheis assemble the representatives of this organisation will have placed upon them the responsibility of guiding the nation and governing that portion of it included in the twenty-six counties.<sup>79</sup>

In essence, this speech serves as a rhetorical transition from the period of the 1927 to 1932 when Fianna Fáil was fighting for legitimacy in its dialectic with Cumann na nGaedheal. Further, the speech established that the notion of republicanism and the will of the people—an Irish Enlightenment of sorts—had become an indisputable fact. By looking backward, Fianna Fáil was successful in its bid to rightly align itself

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<sup>79</sup> Eamon de Valera, “Statement from the 1932 Fianna Fail Ard Fheis, 9 November 1932,” de Valera Collection, UCDA, P150/2053.

among the pantheon of Irish nationalist efforts, at the same time avoiding the pitfalls of the unpopular and distasteful associations with militant republicanism. Put simply, Fianna Fáil had succeeded in creating a political discourse suitable for operation within the Irish Free State. However, as de Valera alludes, the problems of governing in 1932, as well as the overall goal of attaining an independent state necessitated that Fianna Fáil adopt innovative measures to attain such a lofty ideal.

The threat of gunmen and the gendered discourse of Cumann na nGaedheal had been effectively neutralized by the machinations of Fianna Fáil in the period between its formation and its election—as a coalition—into government in 1932. This was in large part due to the ability of the party to effectively deflect the attempts made by Cumann na nGaedheal to construct a direct link between the two republican movements. Indeed, the positions taken above are meant to explain how Fianna Fáil was able to withstand the slings and arrows of Cosgrave's party in such a manner that they were able to attain electoral legitimacy within the Irish Free State. However, this alone does little explain the *appeal* of Fianna Fáil as an alternative for the Irish voter. Lest one thinks that Fianna Fáil was solely whiggish in its intent, one need only examine the party's policy during its initial period as head of a Free State coalition government. Notions of logic, reason, and constitutionalism served largely as agitprop so that the party could carve itself a niche within the Free State's political realm. This backward embrace of eighteenth-century ideology represented only a portion of the party's larger discourse. Much of the material covered in this chapter depicts the party's more generalized and nebulous ideologies, with little indicating actual practice. Further, the call-back of Enlightenment-tinged rhetoric offers precious little insight into how the party would or could deal with the specific problems affecting Ireland in the interwar years. Yet as the party moved toward greater relevance, Fianna

Fáil began to espouse innovative socio-economic and political approaches free from the nineteenth-century liberal/conservative/radical triad. Attempting to place the party within this model fails to recognize the interwar zeitgeist that informed Fianna Fáil, not to mention offering the party great opportunities to succeed. By eschewing the politics of external association, revolutionary separatism, or bastardized commonwealthism, Fianna Fáil manufactured a reconstituted nationalist project that sought to envelop all aspects of Irish life in an active, newly-gendered movement.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER TWO



Figure 2.1: Cumann na nGaedheal, *Shadow of the Gunman*, University College Cork Digital Archives, <http://multitext.ucc.ie/viewgallery/1332>, accessed 17 November 2009.




PRESENTED BY THE ARTIST TO THE NATION

**De Valera is now working  
on another Canvas(s), but  
what about the Price?**

**VOTE FOR  
CUMANN NA  
nGAEDHEAL.**

Issued by Cumann na nGaedheal and Printed by McConnell's Advertising Service, 10 Pearse Street, Dublin.

Figure 2.2: Cumann na nGaedheal, *Don't Let This Happen*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.



**The dead who died for  
An "EMPTY FORMULA"  
WAS IT WORTH IT?  
VOTE FOR  
CUMANN NA  
nGAEDHEAL.**

Issued by Cumann na nGaedheal and Printed by McConnell's Advertising Service, 10 Pearsse Street, Dublin.

Figure 2.3: Cumann na nGaedheal, *An Empty Formula*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.



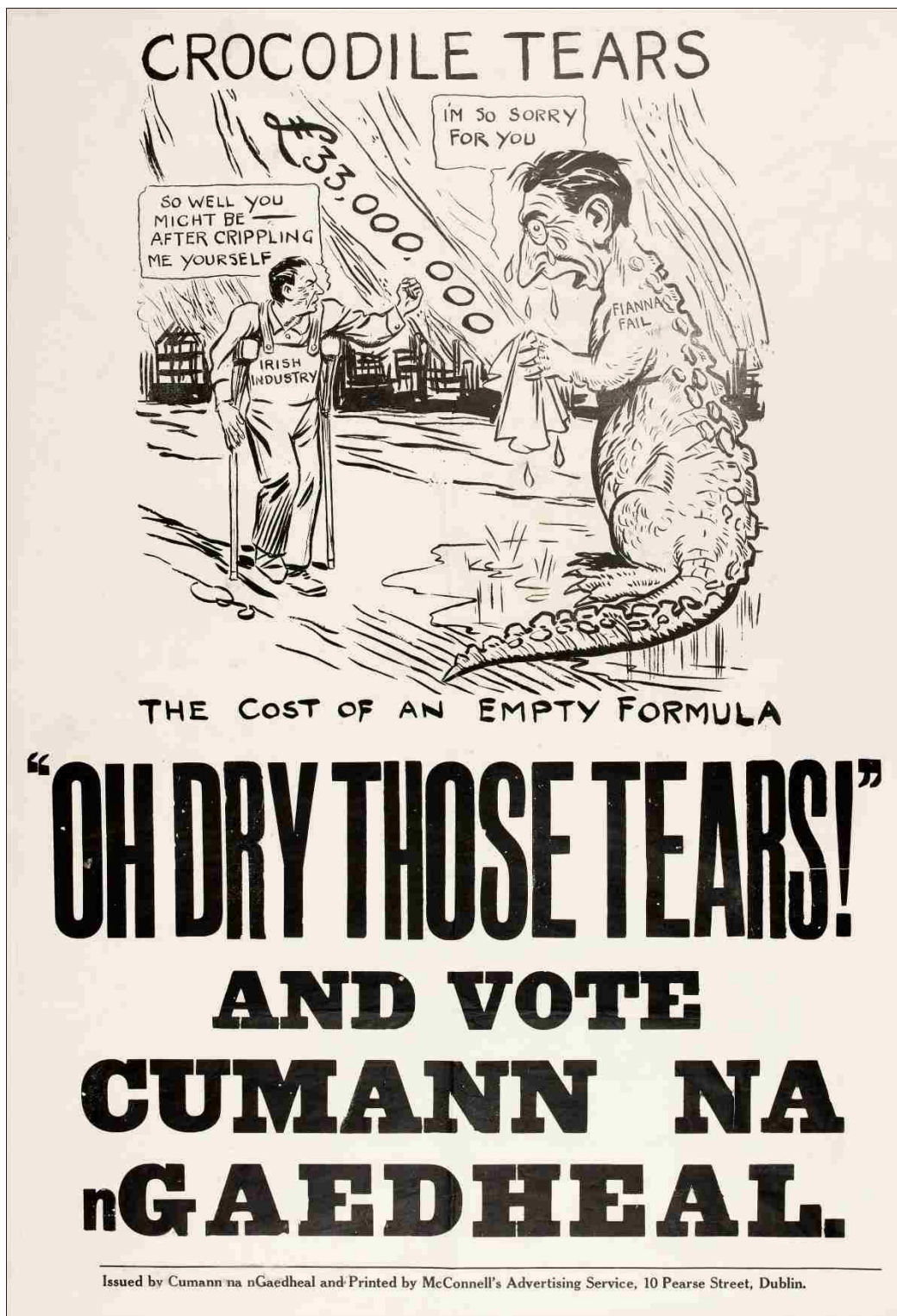


Figure 2.4: Cumann na nGaedheal, *The Cost of an Empty Formula*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.



Figure 2.5: Cumann na nGaedheal, *No Goods Taken From Window!*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

**DEVVY'S  
CIRCUS**

ABSOLUTELY  
THE GREATEST  
ROAD SHOW IN  
IRELAND TO-DAY!

**57—Star Performers—57**

Will Visit this Town any time between  
now and the GENERAL ELECTION!

**SEÑOR  
DE VALERA**

World-famous Illusionist, Oath Swallower and Escapologist. See his renowned Act:  
"Escaping from the Straight Jacket of the Republic." Everyone Mystified!!

**JIFFY** | **FRANK**  
**GEOHEGAN** | **F-AIKEN**

Champion Quick-change Artist! — Watch him  
transforming himself from Toft to Hard-boiled Egg!

THE FEARSOME FIRE-EATER.  
See him Make Faces at the British Lion!

**JOHNNY MAGINTEE**

Fresh from the Gold Rush. In "On Again! Off Again! Gone Again!  
'DONE' AGAIN!"

**THE GREAT** | **SHAUNTY**  
**HUGO** | **O'KELLY**

The Mystery Man. Who is he?  
MISFORTUNES TOLD.

(Who has appeared in every Capital in Europe)  
'The Man in Dress Clothes!'

STUPENDOUS ATTRACTION!  
**MONSIEUR**  
**LEMASS**

FAMOUS TIGHT-ROPE PERFORMER.  
See him cross from the Treaty to the Republic on the tight-rope every night.  
MARVELLOUS PERFORMANCE!

PERFORMING FROGS  
CHAMPION CROAKERS!  
MARVELLOUS TRAINED SHEEP!

By Special Request the Senor will try his fifth chance at the Greasered Poll.  
**LUCKY DIP**  
(IF IT COMES OFF).

Published by Cumann na nGaedheal, 5 Parnell Square, Dublin. Printed by the Temple Press, Temple Bar, Dublin.

Figure 2.6: Cumann na nGaedheal, *Devvy's Circus*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.

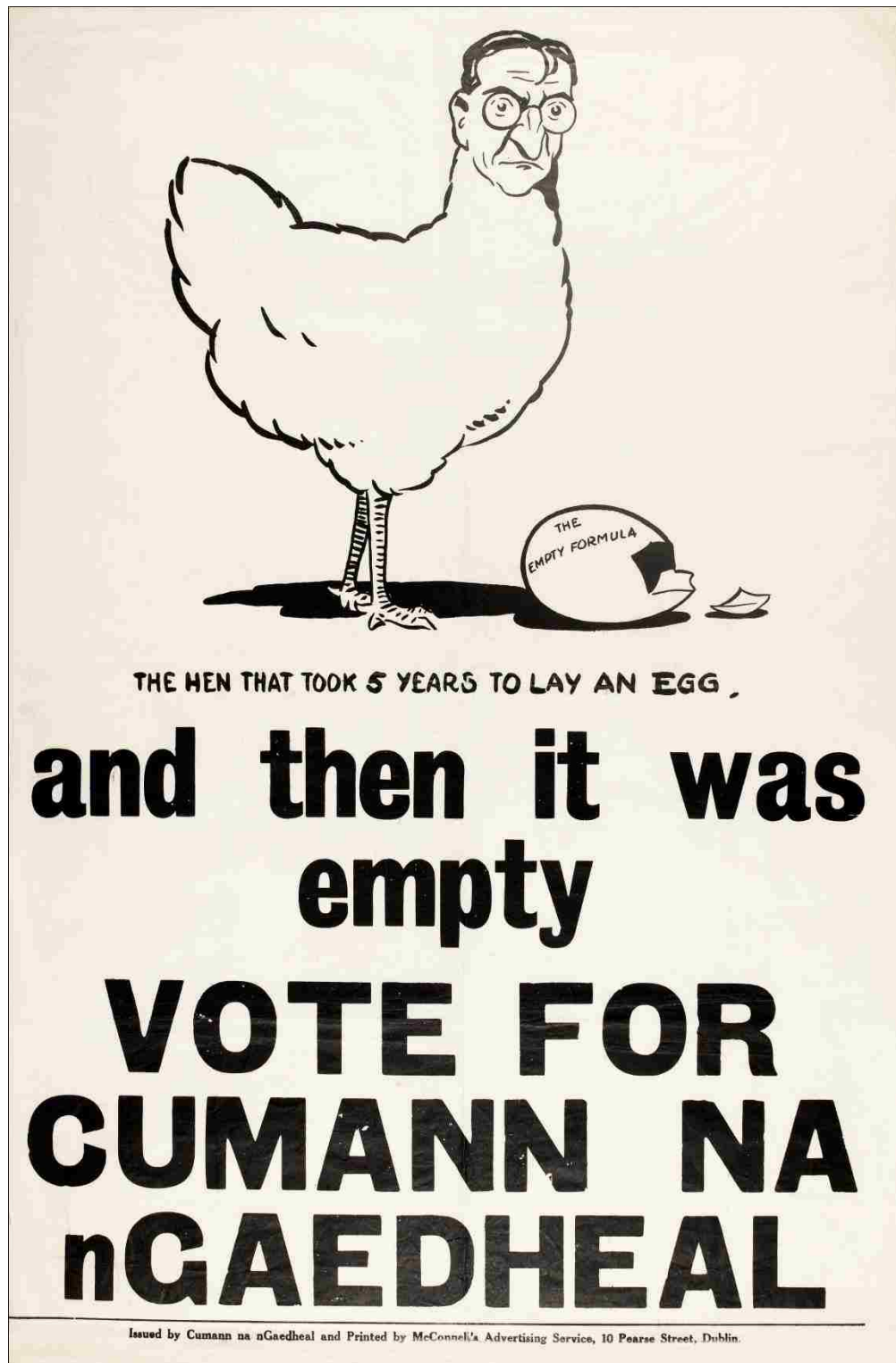


Figure 2.7: Cumann na nGaedheal, *The Hen That Took 5 Years to Lay An Egg*, NLI, EC POL/1930-40/6.



Figure 2.8: Bee, "Ex-Unionist," Irish Press, 15 February 1932, 1.

**Chapter Three**  
**“Bright Days Are Coming! In Quaker Gray.” Fianna Fáil and the Reconstitution of Irish (Republican) Women, 1931-1937.**

“Never met a wise man,  
 If so, it’s a woman.”  
 -Nirvana<sup>1</sup>

“The Spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it *as separate*.”  
 -Guy Debord<sup>2</sup>

In the 7 June 1933 edition of the *Irish Press*, on the page of the paper dedicated solely to women, there appeared a column that blurred the lines between advertisement, political rhetoric, and nationalism. Further obfuscating the lines between journalism and business, the ad was printed in a font indistinguishable from the rest of the newspaper. The first in a serial feature, the editorially-tinged advertisement was entitled “Morning in the All-Irish Home,” and asked: “Is yours a real Irish Home? Are you doing everything a patriotic Irish man or woman should do to support the industry of your own country? We shall show how you can have a real 100% Irish home not only without entailing any sacrifice, but with immediate advantage to yourself in the matter of quality and price.”<sup>3</sup> (Figure 3.16) This advertisement for Dromona Soaps constituted some of the most acceptable republican proscribed behavior presented to Irish women within the “Fianna Fáil organ, the *Irish Press*.”<sup>4</sup>

As the previous chapter demonstrated, Fianna Fáil had succeeded in its attempts to refocus the republican gaze by removing its most openly militaristic elements, thereby

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<sup>1</sup> Kurt Cobain/Dave Grohl/Nirvana/Krist Novoselic, “Territorial Pissings.” *Nevermind*. DGC Compact Disc 24425, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983), 29.

<sup>3</sup> “Morning in the Irish Home,” *Irish Press*, 7 June 1933, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Ó Hógartaigh, *Kathleen Lynn: Irishwoman, Patriot, Doctor* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), 110.

exorcising the aspects of republicanism that were repulsive to so many. In essence, Fianna Fáil rejected the dogmatic approach of the earlier republican movement, so that it could appear distinct from the politics created in the wake of the Treaty debates. While militancy had contributed in part to the formation of the Irish Free State, Fianna Fáil's ability to transform the republican cause allowed the party to address the changed socio-political conditions of the Irish Free State, unencumbered by the trappings of the dogmatic republicanism of Sinn Féin. A central aspect of this new strategy, Fianna Fáil's efforts to construct a domestic discourse for women—when placed in its socio-political and economic contexts—exposes a rhetoric rooted not in simple misogyny or repression. Rather it was a concentrated effort to distance the party, as well as the cause of republicanism, from their ties to Sinn Féin, Cumann mBan, and associations with emotion and the irrational. Fianna Fáil would maintain that the ultimate goal of republicans never changed, but that the means used to attain it had changed radically, which in turn drastically affected its relationship with the republican women of Ireland. The questions then remain: To what level were women included in the republicanism of Fianna Fáil? And to what extent did this all fit within the party's larger nationalistic narrative?

The historiographical trend regarding women in 1930s Ireland has tended to depict Fianna Fáil as instituting an anti-woman, if not misogynistic, policy. Others have emphasized de Valera's call for a primordial femininity as depicted in his "Comely Maidens" speech.<sup>5</sup> This Manichean dialectic regarding the relationship between women

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<sup>5</sup> Eamon de Valera, "The Ireland That We Dreamed Of," in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 466. The full reference to "comely maidens" in de Valera's radio broadcast from 17 March 1943 read as follows: "That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued

and policy in 1930s Ireland clouds the historical context within which Fianna Fáil reconstituted itself. Indeed, Cumann na nGaedheal instituted policies that can be construed as repressive of women, but the distancing of Fianna Fáil from its feminist-friendly Sinn Féin roots is certainly striking. Yet, as Nancy Curtin has written of the generation of the United Irishmen, “Republicanism...was a manly calling...But women could also exert themselves as heroines exemplifying republican virtue, reflecting as a redefinition of femininity that complimented and supported new ideals of masculinity.”<sup>6</sup> What I would like to suggest, however, is that Fianna Fáil’s socio-cultural discourse regarding gender was rooted more in political and economic expediency than in an overarching need to set the course of women backward two hundred years. Considering its origins, and the curbing of “attacks on women’s citizenship and employment after 1937,”<sup>7</sup> Fianna Fáil’s vision for women in Ireland was informed more by its desire to widen the party’s influence and power. Granted, it can be argued that after 1937 there were precious few rights that could have been stripped from Irish women, but it is difficult to imagine that the party suddenly developed a misogynist streak upon its inception that altered their political platform in the years leading up to the passage of the 1937 Constitution.

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material wealth only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit—a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths and the laughter of comely maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age.” Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Nancy J. Curtin, “A Nation of Abortive Men: Gendered Citizenship and Early Irish Republicanism,” in *Reclaiming Gender: Transgressive Identities in Modern Ireland* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Caitriona Clear. *Women of the House: Women’s Household Work in Ireland, 1926-1961* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 7.



In her contribution to *Gender and Power in Irish History*, Maryann Valiulis writes

Women were critical to the Free State's definition of itself as a pure and virtuous nation. The important question was, what role would women play in the new State? In the struggle for independence, women played a vital role in organizations such as Inghinidhe na hÉireann and Cumann na mBan. They ran guns, sheltered IRA men on the run, churned out propaganda, served as judges in the new established Dáil courts, and in general, did what needed to be done.

However, with the establishment of peace—at least in the twenty-six counties—in the eyes of both Irish political and ecclesiastical leaders, Irish women needed to be returned to the home. The need was to re-establish a traditional gender ideology which sees the hearth and home as women's rightful sphere. Their citizenship, their participation in the State, would be directly related to the home.<sup>8</sup>

There is much truth to Valiulis's argument, but one must add a level of nuance to such claims. She further contends that motherhood was elevated to a level of primary significance, as it afforded a “political status”<sup>9</sup> and “according to the dominant discourse of the period, women did not have a public identity, nor did they belong in the public sphere.”<sup>10</sup> This perspective largely reflects what has been commonplace in the historiography of women in de Valera's Ireland, or, as Caitriona Clear writes, that the words “de Valera's Ireland...convey an oppressive, stagnant, uncomfortable social environment for women.”<sup>11</sup>

Unlike men, however, Irish women were envisioned bearing a double burden. On the one hand they were to be the pure vessels of the Gaelic-Catholic-Irish triumvirate,

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<sup>8</sup> Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, “Virtuous Mothers and Dutiful Wives: The Politics of Sexuality in the Irish Free State,” in *Gender and Power in Irish History*, ed., Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 101.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>11</sup> Caitriona Clear, “Women in de Valera's Ireland 1932-48: a Reappraisal,” in *De Valera's Irelands*, eds., Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (Cork: Mercier Press, 2003).

thus assuaging the conservative wing of the nationalist effort. At the same time they were to be radical consumers, purchasers of fetishized Irish products, thus creating a domestic, republican aesthetic in which all manners of life were meant to progress and reiterate expressions of Fianna Fáil, cum, Irish Republicanism. Through the fetishization of Irish products and the attempted categorization of female work, Fianna Fáil was able to construct a feminine discourse suitable for its gendered nationalistic framework.

There is little question that there was a plethora of legislation enacted that sought to create what James M. Smith calls Ireland's "containment culture."<sup>12</sup> Smith, like others, sees policy regarding women continuing in an unbroken manner from the Carrigan Committee, through the Legitimacy Act, and Criminal Law Amendment Act, to "protect" women through repressive government action. Similarly, Tom Inglis notes "although women played a crucial role in the struggle for independence, once this was gained, the new Free State began to pass legislation that helped confine women to the home."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, there is little need to argue with any contention that there was a culture of repression in Ireland, Fianna Fáil also operated outside public policy frameworks to reify, or even dictate, gendered tropes regarding the appropriate behavior of Irish women in the domestic, and to a lesser extent, public, sphere. In other words, at the same time that de Valera and his colleagues were publicly praising the silent, Irish domestic, their party was constructing another, more active, supportive role for Irish women.

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<sup>12</sup> James M. Smith, "The Politics of Sexual Knowledge: The Origins of Ireland's Containment Culture and the Carrigan Report (1931)," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13, no. 2 (April 2004): 209.

<sup>13</sup> Tom Inglis, "Origins and Legacies of Irish Prudery: Sexuality and Social Control in Modern Ireland," *Éire-Ireland* 40, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 2005): 20.

These sentiments may have been the reality for women under the guise of Fianna Fáil, yet a deeper analysis of the party's propaganda elicits a much different intention for the party in the years between 1932 and 1937. Women were indeed politicized by the party, but in an untraditional manner more in line with the types of feminized politicization seen on the European continent. Moreover, as Clear writes, "it is inaccurate—to say the least—to depict de Valera's Ireland as a graveyard of women's rights... The very fact that women's rights were constantly being debated, defined and defended indicates that they were very much alive."<sup>14</sup>

As will be demonstrated in this chapter and the two that follow, Fianna Fáil instigated a public conversation that sought to envelop all aspects of society into its republican efforts, including its envisioned role for women as the physical and economic embodiments of the Irish nation. In other words, women were indeed proscribed a political role within the party's nascent republicanism, and in turn the germinal that was the Irish Republic. To be sure, women were neither as influential nor as visible in Fianna Fáil as they were in Sinn Féin and its related movements. This reality, in and of itself, was rather repressive and paternalistic in its own way, but it is faulty to claim that Fianna Fáil offered—at least in its electoral rhetoric and cultural envisioning of Ireland—nothing but a place in the home for Irish women.

One of the more remarkable aspects of Irish politics and society in the years bracketing the 1916 Easter Rising was the very public position that women played in forming the intellectual bases for the republican movement. The works of Karen Steele and Nadia Clare Smith, for instance, illustrate the active role that women played in

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 104.

shaping the intellectual origins of the Irish Republic. Steele has examined what she refers to as the “advanced nationalist press,” which had a journalistic energy that combated “the figure of Ireland as a woman, pervasive and long-standing image...an ideological construct of a femininity commonly understood to be modest, passive, obedient, and submissive.”<sup>15</sup> In addition to the public sphere in which women produced such journals as the *Shan Van Vocht*, Smith notes that women were also increasing their political awareness and visibility through the publication of works of history. Smith writes that “Irish female historians could gain access to political power in a new state through both their own political activism and the writing of histories with a political dimension.”<sup>16</sup> Many of these same women were key figures in the republican movement, from Sinn Féin up through the formation of Fianna Fáil, yet as the previous chapter demonstrated, associations with women and feminized discourse were increasingly distasteful to de Valera’s nascent party. The purpose of the chapter at hand is to examine the manner in which de Valera and his party sought to harness and refocus the energies of all Irish women—both republican and non-republican—in a manner that both served and posed little challenge to the party’s socio-economic and political aims.

Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward write that “Anti-colonial nationalist movements have frequently employed gendered ideologies that position women in ‘traditional’ roles within the domestic sphere.”<sup>17</sup> Yet the manner in which Fianna Fáil envisioned women was not as simplistic as their mere relegation to the home. Instead Fianna Fáil advanced a

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<sup>15</sup> Steele, *Women*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Nadia Clare Smith, *A ‘Manly Study’? Irish Women Historians, 1868-1949* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2006), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward, eds., *Irish Women and Nationalism—Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hags* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), 2.

rhetoric that offered women what they saw as a crucial role in their cause, in turn refocusing the energies of republican-minded women toward actions that were more acceptable to the party's aims. This was done by encouraging female participation via expressions of everyday living in the city and on the farm through their outward appearance and consumer habits. Such aims were reflective of a much more nuanced relationship with women that was part and parcel of an overarching effort to redefine the republican movement. Ryan and Ward further note, "women have been a continual part of nationalism, not just occasional players who can be easily summoned and dismissed."<sup>18</sup> I wish to add to this by noting the tentative, if not completely guarded, political agency offered to women by Fianna Fáil in the years leading up to the drafting and eventual institutionalizing of the *Bunreacht na hÉireann*—the constitution drafted by de Valera in 1937. Although not the complete repression or degradation claimed by some, this vision was an effort to politicize the women of Ireland in a manner consistent with the nationalistic aims of the party. Indeed, the Constitution of 1937 did codify the domestic role of women, giving credence to Clear's depiction of what it meant to be a woman in de Valera's Ireland. But when contextualized within the time period and juxtaposed with the masculine image on which Fianna Fáil sought to base its economic policies, it is more accurate to say that women were *envisioned* as being vital to the construction of an independent Irish state. What is striking, however, is that while the hallmarks of paternalism and repression were evident in the party's rhetoric, there was for at least a brief period of time, the perception that women could embrace elements of modernity while serving the Irish state.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

To relegate women to an apolitical home would have been counterproductive to Fianna Fáil's nationalistic thrust, for the party viewed women as key producers and consumers both in, and of, a republican Éire. As was the case in much of Europe during the 1930s, nationalism and politics intermeshed to become indistinguishable, and the party worked to position women in roles suitable for their gender, so that they could participate in the republican spectacle made possible in the democratic Free State. Valiulis writes "Focusing on men and the gender legislations of the 1920s and 1930s demonstrates the need for a more complex understanding of this period, because what was happening in Ireland was not simply a turning away from the modern world but rather was also part of a more universal trend in Western countries."<sup>19</sup> Koepnick described that broader trend: "As it conceals the allegorical thrust and reason of the commodity form, modern consumer society engenders modes of mass cultural entertainment in which repression and wish-fulfillment, fantasy and symbolic containment, join together in the unity of a single mechanism."<sup>20</sup> Thus, women—like men—were neatly defined and placed within a socio-economic and political narrative.

As it was with Fianna Fáil's renascent republicanism, the party operated within a dualistic framework in which elements of modernity blended with the primitivist elements of cultural nationalism. It was within these rhetorical frameworks that Fianna Fáil afforded a vision for Irish women that allowed for certain freedom regarding modern—if not bourgeois—fashion inspired by the latest trends in France, as well as

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<sup>19</sup> Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, "Engendering Citizenship: Women's Relationship to the State in Ireland & the United States in the Post-Suffrage Period," in *Women & Irish History. Essays in Honour of Margaret Maccurtain* eds., Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O'Dowds (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, Ltd., 1997), 159.

<sup>20</sup> Koepnick, "Fascist," 58.

encouraging them to embrace and purchase modern manufacture made in Ireland. The projected role for Irish women was not nearly as backward as previously believed when contextualized with the party's advancing of a masculine discourse that glorified manly action and domestic growth. Indeed, de Valera once said that "everyone knows there is little chance of having a home in the real sense if there is no woman in it, the woman is really the home-maker."<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Francis Martin writes "Like the mothers of the American and French Revolutions before her, the Irish woman was idealized as the vessel of the race, and her fulfillment would come from the realization of her children's dreams and achievements, not her own."<sup>22</sup> But what was that envisioned role, and to what extent did it advance and support the party's efforts for a new republic?

### **Women and the *Irish Press***

The *Irish Press*, from the onset of publication in 1931, included a page dedicated to the interests of women. The idea of a woman's page was not exclusive to the *Irish Press*, and as it had been employed by the *Dundalk Examiner/An Scrúduightheoir* which began publication on 20 September 1930 under the direction of Frank Aiken.<sup>23</sup> In the

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<sup>21</sup> Eamon de Valera, quoted in Valiulis, "Engendering Citizenship," 174.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Frances Martin, "Painting the Irish West: Nationalism and the Representation of Women," in *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua* 7, no. 1 (Spring/Earrach 2003): 32.

<sup>23</sup> *Dundalk Examiner/An Scrúduightheoir* 20 September 1930, 6. *An Scrúduightheoir* is Irish for "The Examiner." The paper was actually purchased by a group led by Aiken and re-launched in 1930. The *Examiner* was certainly a model for the *Irish Press* in that it had a similar layout and similar aims, and its intended goals included the advocacy of "The Unity and Independence of Ireland," "The restoration of the Irish Language [sic] as the spoken language of the people," "The development of a distinctive National life in accordance with Irish tradition and ideals," "The making of Ireland self-supporting and self-contained economically," and "The making of the financial and material resources of the country subservient to the needs and welfare of the people." Ibid. In addition to the cultural aspects that precipitated the *Irish Press*, the *Dundalk Examiner* had an agro-economic bent that aligned to Fianna Fáil's platform, but one that

fourteen months prior to the launch of the *Irish Press* each edition of the *Dundalk Examiner* included a daily page concerned with “Matters Feminine.” The bulk of the articles with bylines were written by an author credited solely as “Maire” [sic] and were surrounded by recipes, serial stories, and advertisements geared toward women.<sup>24</sup> The articles were very similar to those that would later appear on the woman’s pages in the *Irish Press* in that they tended to focus on women’s fashion and domestic advice. One distinction lay in the *Examiner’s* implicit advocacy of Irish tweed and its importance in the fashions of Irish women—at least in the sense that such clothing was vital to the development of home industries. Such suggestions foreshadowed the types of articles that would later appear in the *Irish Press* where connections between consumerism and patriotism were made.

There are a number of elements observable in the woman’s pages in the *Irish Press* from its inception up through the ratification of the Constitution in 1937, all of which point to a discourse which trended toward a clear depiction of the acceptable republican female. Of particular emphasis in the pages of the *Irish Press* were matters related to contemporary fashions, the domestic woman as wife and busy homemaker, and, as the Economic War raged—that of a republican consumer. The shift from activist revolutionary to subtle republican fits within the paternalistic, logical, and rational nationalism of Fianna Fáil in the 1930s. Female readers of the *Irish Press* were

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also served its readership in the largely agricultural region of County Louth. In this sense, the *Dundalk Examiner* also foreshadowed the economic ideas advanced in the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*.

<sup>24</sup> Although not credited specifically as an editor, the constant presence of “Maire”—as well as her relationship with Frank Aiken—suggests that this was in fact Máire Comerford who would later become an editor at the *Irish Press*. Mark O’Brien, *De Valera, Fianna Fáil and the Irish Press, The Truth in the News?* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2001), 32. Additionally, Máire would be a regular contributor to the *Press*, whose articles would be of a similar vein to those from the *Dundalk Examiner*.



encouraged to be frugal—except when purchasing Irish products; modern yet traditional; subdued yet fashionable; patriotic and unquestioning. Indeed, there was room for women inside Fianna Fáil’s vision for Ireland, and according to the *Irish Press*, compliance—or manufactured consent—meant following the party line regarding fashion, occupation, domesticity, and consumerism.

If one were to question the importance of the *Irish Press* in advocating Fianna Fáil’s nascent republicanism, one need only to take into consideration Sean MacEntee’s declaration that the paper “was established in order to put the Republican position before the people, in order to keep the Republican flag flying, in order to put a Republican Government in the Dáil and in order to give a Republican Constitution to the people of Ireland.”<sup>25</sup> O’Brien notes that “Cumann na nGaedheal severely under-emphasised the cultural identity of the Irish people, and it was this omission that later allowed Fianna Fáil via the *Irish Press* to exploit the hunger for cultural cohesiveness.”<sup>26</sup> It should be added that the *Irish Press* served as the means by which Fianna Fáil sought to define the national narrative through focusing their readers’ gaze through the message of the paper. Regarding women, “The paper made a special emphasis to recruit female writers and was the first newspaper in Ireland to appoint a woman’s page editor.”<sup>27</sup> Yet, the question remains as to what this relationship between Fianna Fáil, the *Irish Press*, and the readers of the woman’s page was, and how it related to the republicans’ vision for women in the Free State. While general themes remained consistent up to the passage of the 1937 Constitution, the emphases of the woman’s page underwent noticeable changes that

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<sup>25</sup> Seán MacEntee, quoted in O’Brien, *De Valera*, 56.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

largely reflected the dictates of Fianna Fáil policy. In this short period, the page became increasingly political, offering Irish women a more prescribed framework of approved behaviors and avocations. As such, the woman's page in the *Irish Press* offers a clear indication of Fianna Fáil's emerging definition of both the private and public norms for women.

### ***I'm Glad I'm Not Beautiful!*—Redirecting the Energies of Irish Republican Women**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the party exerted much effort in the cause of distancing itself from the militant iconography of Sinn Féin. Such a position demanded that de Valera and his followers break any public ties with the agents of the advanced nationalist press. As a result Fianna Fáil had to construct its own nationalist narrative that reconfigured its relationship to past and potential republican women. Whereas in the time of Sinn Féin's greatest prominence, female nationalists had a great amount of influence on republicanism, Fianna Fáil set out to channel and refocus their energies. Eve Morrison writes that despite being home to an influential feminist movement "Ireland was just one of several European countries to prioritize the return of women to their traditional domestic roles as a means of restoring order and normalcy in the inter-war period."<sup>28</sup> This was particularly apparent in the *Irish Press*' daily page devoted to the interests of women. Especially in the early years of the *Press*, the clear narrative thread that heralded the intelligence of women also sought to refocus their energies away from the public sphere. For example, in the 15 September 1931 issue—printed in the paper's first month of

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<sup>28</sup> Eve Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-23," in Valiulis, *Gender*, 64-65.

publication—there appeared a brief article entitled “Women Are Clever!” that was written by “An Admiring Man.”<sup>29</sup> In part it read:

Women are too clever for words!

Think of having to prepare food, look after three or more children, rush out to admire a man’s handiwork in a garden, dust a house, make beds, dole out tea and cakes at eleven o’clock, lay a table, and serve a dinner—ALL IN ONE MORNING!...

Think of taking a new length of cloth, and CUTTING it to make a dress that can be worn without shame in the broad light of day!

Think of boiling gallons and gallons of milk every year, without ONCE letting it boil over.

Think of making money last a week without a reserve upon which to draw should you over-spend one day!

Think of lighting a fire EVERY day for the best part of eight months!

Think of these things, oh ye men, and then say that women aren’t clever IF YOU DARE!<sup>30</sup>

On the surface this article would appear to be another example of Fianna Fáil’s efforts to confine women to the home and reinforce women’s domestic “duty.” Indeed, such an assertion is certainly valid, yet when contextualized with the party’s overarching republican rhetoric, sentiments such as the contention that women were in fact clever became understandable as part of an all-encompassing change through the reification of gendered tropes. Further, there was the insinuation that women could channel their energies and individuality into important domestic work. The role of women in the home—as clever as it could be—coalesced with the party’s economic and political policy in a manner that invigorated and supported Irish industry. Through the construction of

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<sup>29</sup> “Women Are Clever!” *Irish Press*, 15 September 1931, 3.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

domestic harmony, Irish women would play a key role in both refocusing feminine—if not feminist—energies to serve as the kinetic energy that sped the wheels of the Irish economy.

On 14 September 1931 an article written by “A Plain Girl” appeared on the woman’s page of the *Irish Press* with the following headline: “I’m Glad I’m Not Beautiful.”<sup>31</sup> Defending her non-beauty, the author wrote:

There’d be so much to lose for one thing...

It’s such a nuisance being beautiful, and I’m naturally lazy. And it’s expensive, too. I have never to ‘bury’ my face in the cold cream jar or lie like a statue for hours with sticky stuff spread all over my neck and features. While Kitty, my beautiful sister, spends two hours every night ironing out her face and chasing imaginary wrinkles round her nose. *I hop into bed and sleep soundly. My face costs me nothing but a cake of soap and a dab of powder....*

The happiest day of my life was when Michael whispered, ‘I love you,’ If I had been beautiful perhaps I should have wondered...Golden hair and eyes like two big stars can act like magic in the moonlight, but a snub nose and a big mouth can’t be camouflaged. Michael saw what he was getting, anyhow. So I married him.<sup>32</sup>

Extrapolating the sentiments of this article as reflective of Fianna Fáil’s envisioned *Cailíní*, then one would be forced to conclude that the ideal woman was one who was modern, fashionably grounded, and self-sufficient.

The woman’s page in the *Press* was not without its contradictions. Although at times women were encouraged to add Irish flourishes to the latest fashions—as will be shown below—in its earliest incarnation, the *Press* intoned that women embrace elements of the past: the backward gaze. On the same page as the “Plain Girl’s” declaration about

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<sup>31</sup> “I’m Glad I’m Not Beautiful,” *Irish Press*, 14 September 1931, 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

the joy of not being beautiful, there appeared an article entitled “Shall We? A Quintet that Shows HOW the WIND Blows,” where women were told, “styles are, at any rate, a definite return to the ‘good old days.’...The modern girl’s clothes will be grandmother’s clothes and so exempt from criticism, and that will be that.”<sup>33</sup> Further, the piece declared that “hand embroidery, the hall-mark of the womanly woman, will be used in taffetas and faille on the bustle frocks and the designs will be of the rosebud and forget-me-not school, not the futuristic!”<sup>34</sup> Clearly an exhortation to avoid the excesses and vanity of the styles of the day, it recommended subtly that women should not be overly concerned with the trivialities of the fluidity of contemporary fashions. An exemplar of this traditionalist trend can be seen in the 1 October 1931 edition of the *Press*. (Figure 3.1)

The glorification of the trends of the past was not limited to fashion and cosmetic flourishes. An article in the 21 October 1931 edition of the *Irish Press* implored women to add “Old-Time Touches in new Decorative Schemes.”<sup>35</sup> In part, the article read: “The back-to-our-grandmothers trend in fashions is naturally reflected in home decoration, and to be thoroughly up-to-date you must introduce old-time accessories into your furnishing schemes.”<sup>36</sup> The article further suggested that women use inherited objects to decorate their houses, and if they were not fortunate enough to have received such articles, then they should “haunt auctions or [to] search in antique shops for attractive specimens which are rare enough to take quite a lot of finding and make the hunt the more exciting.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “Shall We? A Quintet That Shows How the Wind Blows.” *Irish Press*, 14 September 1931, 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> “Old-Time Touches in new Decorative Schemes,” *Irish Press*, 21 October 1931, 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

There is little doubt that the women were being encouraged to embrace elements of the previous decades so as to avoid showiness, in turn embracing simplicity rather than conspicuousness.

Another common theme refocused the gaze of readers to an era that predated the age of the militant female revolutionary. Missing from these articles were the topics found in the advanced nationalist press—with its ever-present calls for militaristic action and revolutionary tomes. Instead, they were filled with directions to become domesticated harbingers of Irish primitivism, that is, to be the direct connection to an imagined Irish past. Such was the intention of an article that advanced the “Vogue of the Demure.”<sup>38</sup> This effort to reconstruct the appropriate role of women was commensurate with Fianna Fáil’s initial concern to bridge the problematic associations with the militarism that Cumann na nGaedheal had pinned upon Sinn Féin. Thus, it is not surprising to find the party—at least before the 1932 election—still advancing rhetoric overly concerned with a backward gaze. After its election into government, however, Fianna Fáil became far more concerned with the embracement of modernity. Nevertheless, the recurring themes—albeit fraught with contradictions—of a sense of “old-fashionedness” certainly suited a party so obviously anxious about its past associations and the means by which they could incorporate women into the national movement.

In the earliest editions of the *Irish Press*, numerous articles glorified the pastoral and the harmony of the home and garden. For instance, in an article appearing on 22 September 1931, author Emily Dowling wrote:

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<sup>38</sup> “The Vogue of the Demure,” *Irish Press* 24 October 1931, 3.

Life is not easy in the country any more than in the town, but in the country sorrow and death are eased. We live closer to the earth, we sink more quietly into its arms.

It is the consciousness of this, perhaps, that makes our homing imaginations fly, not to a building made of bricks and mortar, cut to State measurements and equipped with telephones and lifts, but to some little house softly-moulded of red earth, with a hood of brown thatch and a floor of beaten clay.

In its friendly shelter we hope to find the healing of peace.<sup>39</sup>

Inherent in this passage was the anti-government tone against mandated building regulations, well as a seeming distaste for the trappings of modernity. As such, Dowling glorified the country as a place of idyllic Elysium where one could breathe a “freedom which is not to be found in cities.”<sup>40</sup> Sentiments such as this were frequently expressed throughout the first three years of the *Press*, and they were contrasted only by ponderings on modern fashion that had an air of “if you must.” For Dowling, the joys of city-dwelling were attributed to the whims of youth, yet she wrote that “in the hearts of the most of us there is a secret yearning for the country, for some remote land of our dreams.”<sup>41</sup> Further, Dowling noted that “it is a pity the young who leave it so callously do not realise this. It is a pity they are not taught to appreciate more fully the blessing of being country-born, to see more clearly the delights with which they are surrounded.”<sup>42</sup> Dowling clearly insinuated that it should be the burden of the older generation to educate younger women about the joys of pastoral living.

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<sup>39</sup> Emily Dowling, “‘At Home in the Country.’ A Town-Dweller Looks Back,” *Irish Press* 22 September 1931, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

Although explicit elements of Irish nationalism are absent from this passage, the message was clear that the people of Ireland needed to return to their primeval heritage via the elevation of the Irish sod. In gendered terms, it was Irish women who were to focus their energies toward the beauty of the Irish landscape, distancing themselves from the unpleasantness of the cities and all their associations, including political activism. In the early days of the *Press*, it was beyond question that women were to be apolitical, leaving such business to the men emblazoned and lionized on the front pages of the paper.

There was also no doubt that the writers of the *Press* were intent on reintroducing Irish women to the joys of domesticity and the inherent tranquility that it provided. A series entitled “Modern Furniture in the Home” was somewhat anachronistically titled as it had less to do with incorporating modern furniture trends, but rather was more about modern in the chronological sense. For instance, in an article written by a “Home Specialist” about the dining room, readers were told, “The room where we eat our meals should have dignity as well as conviviality. There should, therefore, be harmony in furniture and atmosphere.”<sup>43</sup> In regards to the bedroom, the health of the family’s wage-earners “depend[s] to a great extent on their comfort and even health.”<sup>44</sup> Readers were guided by the advice that “overcrowding with furniture is worse in a bedroom than anywhere, for it destroys that atmosphere of rest and contentment that should mark a bedroom. Decide first then what furniture you MUST have, and then decide WHERE

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<sup>43</sup> “Modern Furniture in the Home,” *Irish Press* 25 September 1931, 3.

<sup>44</sup> “Modern Furniture in the Home. Your Bedroom,” *Irish Press*, 2 October 1931, 3. The emphasis in this passage reflects the original text.



each piece should go.”<sup>45</sup> As for the kitchen, the same advice regarding spacing of furniture and practicality applied, yet the opening sentence neatly summarized the message: “The kitchen is really the housewife’s workshop.”<sup>46</sup> After decades of feminist discord where political activity was a matter of public spectacle—not to mention the connotations this had for Fianna Fáil—the allegory of domestic harmony fell in line with the party’s efforts to re-establish traditional gender ideologies.

Citing the work of Constance Markievicz’s “Woman with a Garden” in the journal *Bean na hÉireann*, Steele claims that the columns sought to “reclaim the garden’s political potential for both women and nationalists by composing features that allegorically described how readers could resist domesticity *and* imperialism through the most visible icon of the Ascendancy class, the garden.”<sup>47</sup> Twenty years later, Fianna Fáil would once again utilize the garden to shift the gaze of Irish women, albeit in a fashion much different than what Markievicz had intended. Throughout its early run the *Irish Press* featured a regular column entitled “The Woman Gardener” that offered sage and practical advice meant to improve the lives of the Irish family. Far from being the allegory on rebellion and resistance, these articles instead encouraged women to create a garden that established calm and tranquility, as well as serving as the practical purpose of

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> “Modern Furniture in the Home. Your Kitchen—Bathroom—Hall,” *Irish Press*, 9 October 1931, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Steele, *Women*, 117. Constance Markievicz (1868-1927) was a key figure in the Irish theatre, as well as serving a prominent role in Sinn Féin and such feminist organizations as Inghinidhe na hÉireann, Bean na hÉireann, and later Cumann na mBan. Markievicz served in the Easter Rising and remained active in the republican cause, most notably as a founding member of Fianna Fáil. Senia Pasetta, “Constance Georgine Markievicz,” *Dictionary, Volume 6*, 361-63.

decorating their traditional homes.<sup>48</sup> One such example came from a 5 January 1932 article entitled “Harmony Between House and Garden,” which warned the reader that a “seeming unimportant point which many house-owners overlook when they lay out their gardens is that of harmony between the building and its plot of land. There should be some tangible relationship between the layout and materials of the garden and the size and composition of the dwelling.”<sup>49</sup> By “avoiding the incongruous” and planting a “garden that ‘belongs’”<sup>50</sup> the garden and the entire house would exude “pleasing sympathy and unostentatious charm.”<sup>51</sup> Another purpose of the garden was that of practicality and general improvement of the Irish diet, as evidenced in an article subtitled “Grow Your Own Vegetables.” It claimed “the housewife who studies food values, sets a high standard of health for her family, and at the same time practises sound domestic economy.”<sup>52</sup> More than just being economical, the article claimed that “as a people, we do not eat enough vegetables, and those we do eat have little variety. Potatoes and cabbage seem to exhaust our imagination.”<sup>53</sup> Additionally, women were encouraged to accept “the Virtues of Herbs.”<sup>54</sup> Apart from improving the diet of the people of Ireland,

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<sup>48</sup> There did appear one article in September of 1931 in which readers were encouraged to “Go to Irish Nurseries for Roses of Distinction.” The reasoning for this was not about promoting Irish industry, but rather because of the unmatched beauty and global acclaim of Irish roses, as growers shipped “rose trees all over the world and some of them are at present flowering as far away as Argentine.” “The Woman Gardener—Go to Irish Nurseries for Roses of Distinction,” *Irish Press*, 30 September 1931, 3.

<sup>49</sup> “The Woman Gardener—Harmony Between House and Garden,” *Irish Press*, 5 January 1932, 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> “The Woman Gardener—Grow Your Own Vegetables,” *Irish Press*, 30 March 1932, 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> “The Virtues of Herbs—Old Fashioned Recipes,” *Irish Press*, 8 July 1932, 3.

the purpose of the garden—according to the *Irish Press*—was to occupy the minds of women year round. For example, in an article entitled “Still Much to be Done,” women were warned, “when everything in the garden looks lovely, when plants are gay and full of promise, the gardener is apt to ‘sit back’ and feel that she may call half for a time. But there is still much to be done,” whether it be fertilization of Chrysanthemums or planning for “Next Year’s Strawberries.”<sup>55</sup> Two weeks later, on 18 August 1932, readers were given even more specific instructions on how to busy themselves by constant pruning, tidying up borders, and being mindful of the removal of pests.<sup>56</sup> From planning for autumn planting in June<sup>57</sup> or of “Jobs for July,”<sup>58</sup> the remaking of the home was an occupational concern for the women—a far cry from the allegorical means of anticolonial resistance.

In September 1933 an article penned by C. O’R. [sic] waxed poetically about the inherent beauty and value of “An Irish Home in Adrigole,” a home that represented “the backbone of the Irish nation [and] will move every reader with its beauty and its truth.”<sup>59</sup> At the time, Fianna Fáil was trumpeting its efforts to construct new housing for Ireland’s rural population. The article described the home as being in disrepair, cared for by the embodiment of the party’s traditional ideal who wished to emigrate to America, but who remained in Ireland because “she has an ailment which will not pass the emigration

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<sup>55</sup> “The Women Gardener—Still Much to be Done,” *Irish Press*, 1 August, 1932 3.

<sup>56</sup> “The Woman Gardener—Work to do Now,” *Irish Press*, 18 August, 1932, 3.

<sup>57</sup> “The Woman Gardener—Thinking Ahead,” *Irish Press*, 17 June 1932, 3.

<sup>58</sup> “The Woman Gardener—Jobs for July,” *Irish Press*, 4 July 1932, 3.

<sup>59</sup> C. O’R. “An Irish Home in Adrigole,” *Irish Press*, 7 September 1933, 5.

authorities.”<sup>60</sup> This woman and her children “expect little out of life, and consequently are not easily disappointed.”<sup>61</sup> Despite the hardships the reader was told “there is a wonderful faith in these people that supports them like a breastplate. *Bíodh sagla ort agus ní baoghal duit*. That is how they walk, in fear and righteousness.”<sup>62</sup>

Through the *Irish Press* it appeared that Fianna Fáil became more resigned to relegating home and garden advice as merely that—advice. More important, however, was the overarching theme of confining and defining the energies of Irish women. Even at this early stage women were still seen as the harbingers of the primitivist Gaelic ideal fashioning home and garden as well as their bodies in a manner that reflected and reinforced the party’s feminine ideal: domestic, cognizant of the beauty of the Irish past, demure, and passive. Most important, however, she was to embody that approved Irish ideal.

### ***Your Uniform—Fashioning Janus***

It would, nonetheless, be faulty to assume that Fianna Fáil’s sole vision of women was one of the muted domestic. In consecutive issues printed in October of 1931, two articles appeared where fashion was the primary concern for women of distinct vocations. On 17 October a short entitled “Fashions in Irish Tweed” could be found, accompanied by a photographic example. In part, the article declared “Tailored modes for the Business Girl. Suits of the jumper persuasion fashioned in fine weave Irish tweeds are decidedly the vogue. They are, too, definitely practical propositions for the business girl.”<sup>63</sup> This

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. In English, “Be fearful and you are not in danger.” Translation is my own.

<sup>63</sup> “Fashions in Irish Tweed,” *Irish Press* 17 October 1931, 3.

recognition of professional and public women was careful to ensure that such fashion was subdued and “neutral” in color, namely blacks and whites.<sup>64</sup> This is but one example of a trend in which nearly all articles that discussed clothing for public wear promoted the use of muted colors and modest tailoring. High fashion for the visible woman—whether it was in daily business or in society—was meant to be of “midnight bloue [sic],”<sup>65</sup> ensembles in “Three shades of brown,”<sup>66</sup> long wraps of “White and Nile blue,”<sup>67</sup> or “Coats with a Military Air...[or while] Brown and its Near Relations Still Dominate Day and Evening Wear.”<sup>68</sup>

In fact, a cursory examination of the numerous small articles on modern fashion reveals that Fianna Fáil advocated acceptance of fashionable clothing inspired by designers in Paris and New York. Many of these highlighted articles were filled with such adjectives as “smart,” “distinctive” or “original,” and the clothes were often noted for their unique and noticeable flair. An advertisement from 6 April 1934, for instance, cements the notion that both the *Press*, and by association Fianna Fáil, were willing to concede to women the luxuries of wearing the latest fashions. This advertisement was unique in the sense that it trumpeted the paper’s fashion advice, noting “Fashions to please/every purse are advertised/in *The Irish Press*. Whether you need—tailored suits, frocks, evening dresses, lingerie, silk stockings, smart shoes, a chic hat or gloves. *The*

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> “Vogue,” 3.

<sup>66</sup> “Two Brown Ensembles,” *Irish Press*, 7 November 1931, 3.

<sup>67</sup> “The Longer Wrap,” *Irish Press*, 11 November 1931, 3.

<sup>68</sup> “Coats With a Military Air,” *Irish Press*, 18 November 1931, 3. Of particular interest is the advertisement for Swan Pens, located to the right of this article that implored readers to “Buy British”. Ibid.

*Irish Press* will tell you WHERE to buy them. HOW much they cost. And, for your convenience, you can order by post.”<sup>69</sup> (Figure 3.2) Indeed, the party—via the *Irish Press*—was advocating modern fashions, but in this process there was also an underlying sense of direction and prescription in the advertisements. While the fashions were of the *vogue*, clear guidelines regarding coloring, fabric, and design were evident throughout. (Figures 3.3-3.10)<sup>70</sup>

Steele noted in Constance Markievicz’s series “The Women of ‘98” a recurrent theme of “what to wear in the revolution.”<sup>71</sup> The heralded clothing of past feminine revolutionaries was something to be envied and perhaps emulated by Irish republicans in the 1910s and 1920s. Steele adds that such clothing “suggest that Markievicz’s own Easter Rising uniform, a green Irish Citizen Army coat and a hat with the ostrich plume feather, was selected not merely to express her ‘theatrical flair,’ ...but also to establish a connection with earlier militant women fighting for Ireland.”<sup>72</sup> Such ostentatious displays of feminist rebellion were duly shunned by Fianna Fáil as evidenced in a January 1932 article from the *Irish Press* in which women were given the following advice: “As regards colours, the following may be worn with safety: navy blue, black, brown, rich wine red, dark green...[and] can be introduced by suitable trimmings. The colours to be avoided are light blues, vivid reds, yellow, pale green, white.”<sup>73</sup> Later that year, readers

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<sup>69</sup> “Fashions to Please,” *Irish Press* 6 April 1934, 5.

<sup>70</sup> The examples given are meant to be representative.

<sup>71</sup> Steele, *Women*, 130.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 130-32.

<sup>73</sup> E.R.C., “Dress Hints for the ‘Sturdy’ Woman,” *Irish Press*, 30 January 1932, 3.

were told “Bright Days Are Coming!...in Quaker grey.”<sup>74</sup> (Figure 3.11) Indeed, while this may have been reflective of fashionable trends of the period, the recommendation to wear conspicuously dark clothing—referred to once as “Your Uniform”<sup>75</sup>—was repeated over and over again. Conversely, in a foreshadowing of the Economic War, women were encouraged to accessorize their dark clothing with such things as yellow frocks made of Irish tweed. In other words, colorful plumage was encouraged so long as it was produced in Ireland.

The attempt to damper notions of aggressive femininity through outward fashions and behaviors and domestic tranquility continued throughout the early run of the *Press*, yet there appeared a distinct, if not explicit, change in tone. Added to these sentiments was a greater embracement of a muted *couture moderne* marked by nativist Irish flourishes. As such, to the “vogue of the demure” was added the vogue of the Gael. In a slight change of nuance, women were encouraged to be less coy regarding their patriotic aesthetic. Whereas the concern of Fianna Fáil in the period between 1927 and 1932 was about justifying the party’s *raison d’être*, the party’s *cause belle*—namely the economic conflict with Britain that began in 1932, as well as the push for a formal break from colonial ties—instead guided the period that followed. This shift was slowly reflected in the manner in which the readers of the woman’s page of the *Irish Press* were encouraged to dress. By early 1933, women were depicted as the physical and aesthetic representations of Fianna Fáil’s reconstituted republicanism. Perhaps this shift indicated the party’s newfound sense of legitimacy, fueled by its electoral “triumph” in 1932,

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<sup>74</sup> “Bright Days are Coming!” *Irish Press* 10 March 1932, 3.

<sup>75</sup> “Your Uniform” *Irish Press*, 28 March 1932, 3.

which essentially signaled the end of the need for the party to remain concerned with distancing itself from the shadow of the gunmen. In essence, the encouragement of women to outwardly embrace Irish republicanism served as a transition between the time of the demure and the following period in which women were promoted as consumers of the coming Irish republic.

In contrast to the muted if modish clothing of the public female, the domestic woman was encouraged to wear practical clothing that meant “easy work.”<sup>76</sup> Whereas the articles on *la mode* were small asides, those geared toward housewives were far more substantive. In this case, the article read:

Everybody else has an outfit—it is taken for granted that the baby, the school-child, the sports-girl, the bride and all the others must have ‘special’ clothes. But nobody seems to suggest a sane practical outfit to ease life for the woman who does her own housework.

The maidless housewife smiles ruefully over the articles in the magazines imploring her to be dainty at all times! How is she going to slip into fragile be-ribboned underclothes at seven o’clock on a cold morning when she rises to make the family’s breakfast? Besides, after a morning’s housework, the fragile things would be fit only for the wash-tub and the work-basket.

The housewife’s main need is something she can get into quickly; something durable, for she has plenty of mending without having perishable lingerie of her own to add to it; and something neat in appearance.

The solution? A cretonne frock free of “ribbons and lace” that allowed for unencumbered housework. These two contrasts—the muted businesswoman/socialite and eager and energetic housewife—served as *the* two models for appropriate behavior for Irish women per the *Irish Press*.

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<sup>76</sup> “The Houswives Outfit,” *Irish Press*, 19 October 1931, 3.



Embedded in the fashion ideals promoted by Fianna Fáil was a duality that appeared consistently in the party's gendered rhetoric, where conceptions of femininity (and masculinity) were defined by primordial *and* modernist tropes. Though Fianna Fáil tended to promote the muted domestic as the norm, there was a certain level of acceptance of such aspects of modernity as the professional woman as well as modern fashions. Such double vision was a common trend amongst nationalist parties that sought to operate outside the capitalistic/socialistic dialectic, instead opting for a third way—unencumbered by nineteenth-century dogmatism—that allowed for the intersection between past and modern.

***Win the Economic War By Planning! Women as Patriot Consumers during the Economic War***

The politicization of women became much more apparent in the *Irish Press* during 1933 when the once innocuous articles on fashion and domesticity became imbued with calls for direct participation in Fianna Fáil's Economic War. In an article published on 9 June 1933 entitled "Does Beauty Mean Nothing to You?" the authors queried the reader: "Life is poorer for us and our children because we wear badly designed *cotton* fabrics, use badly balanced cretonnes in our homes and put terrible wall papers on our walls."<sup>77</sup> The article continued and encouraged Irish women to strip their walls bare of foreign-produced wall papers, replacing it with Irish-made paint, as well as accentuating their windows—always open to the beauty of the Irish nation—with fine Irish lace. Additionally, the emphasis on "badly designed cotton fabrics" was a clear condemnation

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<sup>77</sup> "Does Beauty Mean Nothing to You?" *Irish Press*, 9 June 1933, 6.

of British-imported cotton and fashions designed in London. Later that year, women were encouraged to “Win the Economic War—by Planning!”<sup>78</sup> Facilitating this planning was a serial guide to Irish products published throughout 1933. Over the course of the year, women were encouraged to serve Denny’s Bacon for breakfast, as “The prosperity of your country depends on the way in which each of you supports its industries,” and to “Make *your* home one a patriotic Irish man or woman would be proud of.”<sup>79</sup> (Figure 3.12) Beyond bacon, women were told to purchase Irish margarine, mineral water and “Irish Paints for brightening the All-Irish Home”;<sup>80</sup> and bridging the gap between fashion and patriotism, to wear “Irish Woolens only in the All-Irish Home.”<sup>81</sup> (Figures 3.13-3.15) Urrey Chocolates would provide a little luxury for the Irish Home, as would iron gates produced in Ireland. Irish children would be comforted and healed by “All-Irish Preparations,” and medicinal and toilet items should “be Irish whenever possible,” and were of the “highest quality obtainable.”<sup>82</sup> Finally, this poem appeared in a column entitled “The Irish Ideal Home” on 6 December 1933:

The ideal home has room for no complaints;  
 The painted spick and span with Irish paints,  
 From roof to ground, no trace of dust is seen;  
 Tis cleansed with Irish goods, and therefore clean,  
 And those who in this ideal homestead dwell,  
 By Irish food are fit and well.  
 Though hygiene paves the way, they rightly think—  
 Good health’s maintained on Irish food and drink  
 Thus, hygiene, health and happiness are found

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<sup>78</sup> “Win the Economic War—by Planning!” *Irish Press*, 4 August 1933, 5.

<sup>79</sup> “Breakfast in the Irish Home,” *Irish Press*, 10 June 1933, 5.

<sup>80</sup> “Irish Paints for Brightening the All-Irish Home,” *Irish Press*, 21 June 1933, 5.

<sup>81</sup> “Look for this Trade Mark,” *Irish Press*, 24 June 1933, 5.

<sup>82</sup> “For Your Medicine Cabinet... These All-Irish Preparations,” *Irish Press*, 22 July 1933.

In every home where Irish goods abound.<sup>83</sup> (Figure 3.16)

Referred to as the “Nation’s Bursar,” Irish women were expected to combat British colonialism, and in turn support Fianna Fáil nationalism by contributing to what was hoped to be an increasingly self-sustaining Irish economy. After all, shopping and bargain-hunting were deemed the “most popular pastime for women.”<sup>84</sup> Granted, this was a far cry from the intellectual and active involvement of republican women prior to the formation of de Valera’s republican party, there was nonetheless an indication that women did indeed have a role in an Irish republic that was suitable to Fianna Fáil’s gendered discourse. Although the connection between nationalistic consumerism and the Economic War was begun in earnest in 1933, the connection between republican efforts and the advocacy of goods of Irish manufacture had its origins in the first Ard Fheis of Fianna Fáil when the following resolution—put forth by Robert Bondfield of the Dublin City Craobh (branch)—was passed: “That F.F. [sic] should start an Irish Industrial Revival Campaign, by urging its members to buy nothing but Irish goods, and, also as far as possible, to have propaganda distributed throughout the 32 counties and to see that every Craobh set up committees to deal with the same.”<sup>85</sup>

The appeal to women and their significance to the Economic War<sup>86</sup> can be found in a statement made by Eamon de Valera:

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<sup>83</sup> “The Irish Ideal Home,” *Irish Press*, 6 December 1934, 5.

<sup>84</sup> May LaVerty, “At the Sales, Bargain Hunting—A Game of Skill,” *Irish Press*, 16 January 1936, 5.

<sup>85</sup> Fianna Fáil, *A Brief Outline of the Aims and Programme of Fianna Fáil*, de Valera Collection, UCDA, P150/2048 (7). The first Ard Fheis took place on “24 ad. agus 25ad. lá de m.ína Sam.na, 1926.”(November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>) Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> The Economic War (1932-1937) began when de Valera refused to pay land annuities to Great Britain. Although this topic will be covered in greater depth in the next chapter, it is worth

I make a special appeal to the women of this country...if they want to help us win this war, that every time they go out to buy an article they will try to get an article of home manufacture. I used to say that we could get back our cotton and silk trade, but until we can get Irish cotton and silk we ought to be content with Irish woolens. We can get our artists to design costumes for our women much more appropriate in our country and climate than the fashions imported from Paris, London or New York.

I know that we can work up a tremendous enthusiasm here by sanctioning deeds of violence in certain directions, that we could get up a war atmosphere in which we would all be at fever [pitch], and we would get in that way a sort of artificial enthusiasm. But that wears off. That state of exhilaration might evaporate as it evaporated in certain conditions before.<sup>87</sup>

This particular speech, likely to have been given in 1932 or thereafter—note the present tense of the reference to winning “this war”—was de Valera’s most explicit call for the form of political activity advocated by Fianna Fáil. It was more than just a call for support of the party’s protectionist policies, as de Valera was calling for women to become active agents in the Fianna Fáil spectacle; working, sewing, buying, wearing, and enthusiastically advancing the cause of a free republic.

De Valera’s intentions were mirrored in a call for the creation of the Woman’s Industrial Development Association, “an endeavour to co-ordinate the activities of town and country.”<sup>88</sup> According to a report of the inaugural meeting that took place in late February 1935, the goal of the WIDA was to establish markets for country products in the city: “Quantities of fireside articles are made in the very midst of the country; markets

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mentioning that economic self-sufficiency and protectionism were key components of de Valera’s plan for victory.

<sup>87</sup> Eamon de Valera, “Call for National Discipline. Mr de Valera’s Stirring Ard-Fheis Address. Economic Programme.” Undated newspaper clipping. UCDA, de Valera Collection, P155/2054.

<sup>88</sup> “Fireside Industries,” *Irish Press*, 26 February 1935, 5.

should be found for them in Dublin and other big towns.”<sup>89</sup> Days later an article appeared marking the progress of the WIDA, noting that it had “left the ranks of small organisations and has become the national voice of the consumer, an active agent for the sale and purchase of Irish-made goods, and with the proposed new organisation that voice will make itself heard over all Ireland.”<sup>90</sup> The article further noted plans by the Dublin Branch of the WIDA to “hold a mannequin parade of Irish clothes... which promises to be one of the most interesting exhibitions of what can be worn in the way of all Irish garments that has ever been held.”<sup>91</sup> Although limited and somewhat stereotypical, women were indeed granted a sense of political agency via the mobilization of their consumption habits. The very fact that the *Irish Press* would deem it appropriate to publicize—albeit to its female readers—the WIDA demonstrates a clear link between the party and its envisioned role for women in Ireland. The intersection of fashion and nationalist intentions neatly coalesced in the push for an Irish *vogue*, which, in turn would support the isolationist elements crucial to the intended results of the Economic War.

The relationship between economics and nationalism were readily apparent in the advocacy of the WIDA, yet there was a noticeable, if not unique, call for a larger cultural nationalism seen in the organization’s material. For example, in covering the “All Irish Dress Parade” from March of 1935 called for an increase in Irish design. The author, A.K., stated

Goodness knows we have enough tweeds, woolens and linens of all sorts to cover us from Rathlin to Mizen Head. What we want are people to show us how it

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> “Progress of W.I.D.A., Mannequin Parade in March,” *Irish Press* 28 February 1935, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

would be done. How it should be done gracefully, with art and style and that subtle touch that is the difference between being covered and being ‘dressed’.

The French have a word for it, many words.

When Irish designers and dressmakers can catch up with the Irish manufacturers of beautiful dress goods, then we shall have a word for it too. At present the designers with one or two exceptions, are left at the post, while the manufacturers are well away.

We send tweeds and wools all over the world, while we have no one at home to show us how they should be worn.<sup>92</sup>

Accompanying the show were “Misses Sheridan [who] sang songs and duets in Irish and English with harp accompaniment and gave a very entertaining finish to the show.”<sup>93</sup>

After a later show in May of 1935, the *Press* declared the event to have “effectively demonstrated what could be done when brains and good taste were combined in the production of garments.”<sup>94</sup> The show further “attracted people of all classes of the community to the hall and was more representative in this respect than any all Irish dress display yet held at Ballsbridge.”<sup>95</sup> According to the article, the following persons “occupied seats on the platform”: Sean T. O’Kelly, Seán Lemass, Dr. and Mrs. James Ryan, Frank Fahy, Tomás Ó Deirg, and Senator Mrs. Wyse Power.<sup>96</sup> The dignitaries at the meeting represented some of the most powerful and prominent members of Fianna

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<sup>92</sup> A.K. “All Irish Dress Parade,” *Irish Press*, 13 March 1935, 5. Although it is not clear as to why the event did not occur as planned, there was a reference to the “wheels of transport [not turning] at all,” thus postponing the event. *Ibid.* However, in an article from 27 March, there was a reference to a transport strike that derailed the event that was to have been held earlier in the month. “Parading the Dresses of Spring,” *Irish Press*, 27 March 1935, 5.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> “Handsome Women in Handsome Clothes,” *Irish Press*, 8 May 1935, 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

Fáil—clearly an effort by the party to publicly advocate on behalf of the WIDA. Whether or not the WIDA was an outgrowth of Fianna Fáil, the mere fact that the organization existed and was trumpeted in the *Irish Press* clearly demonstrates the manner in which the party sought to politicize the women of Ireland through the embracement of a cultural aesthetic in which they were to be both producer and consumer of the republican thrust.

By 1935 the home advice articles became more overt in their recommendations that Irish women incorporate Irish-made products into their home projects. Further, these products, such as that discussed in Sheila O’Brien’s article regarding a crocheted cosy-cover, were meant to utilize Irish linen and featured Gaelic designs. O’Brien’s pattern called for a “half-yard primrose-coloured Irish linen,” and was meant to be “a most acceptable gift for every woman who possesses a tea-pot, and, of course, every woman does!”<sup>97</sup> Later that month a pattern for a turtle neck jumper, which “worn with a hand-woven Irish tweed skirt and a belt, ... completes a very smart Spring outfit.”<sup>98</sup> For a readership trained in creating the idyllic Irish home, the slight change in advice advocating the greater presence of Gaelic symbols in the home was simply an added level of nuance.

Beginning in 1934 and continuing into early 1936, periodic articles also encouraged female physical activity and personal health that augmented Fianna Fáil’s gendered consumerism. At that time weekly columns appeared that educated women about fitness, so that they could lose their “double chins” or “thin those ankles.” Evident

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<sup>97</sup> Sheila O’Brien, “Irish Linen and Crochet Combine in This Cosy Cover,” *Irish Press*, 18 February 1935, 5. Another interesting element of this article was the assertion that this pattern was “specifically designed and made for *The Irish Press*. Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Maire, “Turtle Neck Jumper. In Stock Stitch. Worn With Tweeds,” *Irish Press*, 26 February 1934, 5.

of consumerist nationalism, women were told, “If everyone ate an Irish apple a day, this homegrown fruit industry would soon be on its feet.”<sup>99</sup> Women were encouraged to take up the new trend—as seen in Germany—toward such outdoor physical activities as hiking or engaging in a game of *Camogie*, or *Camoghuidheacht*, dubbed “Irishwomen’s National Game.”<sup>100</sup> In this sense, women were encouraged to literally participate in expressions of Irish primordial nationalism through exercise and the training of their bodies amidst the physical beauties and restorative properties of the Irish landscape. Moreover, the channeling of feminine energy into the nationalist cause was in direct contrast to the passivity encouraged in 1931 and 1932. This increased malleability regarding women suggests Fianna Fáil’s policy toward women was more fluid, and, rooted in political expediency than previously believed. This also suggests that Fianna Fáil was willing to back away from its initial repressive rhetoric toward women, which has been established as an action necessary to the combating of Cumann na nGaedheal’s power.

### ***The Greatest Career of All—Public Vocations for Irish Republican Women***

Moreover, in 1935 a new thematic trend emerged that was concerned with the vocations of the modern Irish woman, which again suggests that Fianna Fáil’s stance toward women’s work was more nuanced than previously appreciated. Concerns regarding the vocational role of women had appeared in the *Irish Press* as early as

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<sup>99</sup> “An Irish Apple a Day?” *Irish Press*, 23 November 1934, 5.

<sup>100</sup> “Camogie—Irishwomen’s National Game,” *Irish Press*, 4 April 1934, 5. Camogie is the female version of Hurling, a sport of Irish design and one advocated by the Gaelic Athletic Association. For a study on the role that youth played in Nazi culture, see George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture, A Documentary Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966, 1981), 263-318.



December of 1933 when an article was printed under the headline “What Shall We Do with our Girls?”<sup>101</sup> The author, apparently a woman but listed only as D.F., queried: “Are women going back to where they were twenty-five years ago?...Retrogression on the part of our sex would indeed be a step in the wrong direction.”<sup>102</sup> Noting that poor economic conditions were threatening to flood the job market with women, the author stated that the problem could be solved if “Irish capital were diverted into home industries...[and] it requires small breadth of vision to see that this country must save itself by endeavouring to supply the nation’s needs as far as possible, from within its own boundaries.”<sup>103</sup>

According to D.F., possible vocations for women included accountancy, catering, auctioneering, publicity work, and law where “solicitor in preference to the Bar” was recommended.<sup>104</sup> Despite the tentative acceptance of women in the workplace, the author cautioned:

In Ireland of course, we regard religious vocations and marriage as the highest careers for women, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that for many reasons a big proportion of women do not marry.

In justice, therefore, we cannot deny the intelligent woman with the necessary qualifications and possessing industry and ability, the right to be economically independent and have the free choice of a career. In the minor commercial positions undoubtedly women are a menace to men. This arises from the fact of men themselves refusing to pay an economic wage, and taking advantage of a glut in the labour market. If a living wage were paid and the standard of service raised the inefficient and pin money woman would be eliminated.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> D.F., “What Shall We Do with our Girls?” *Irish Press*, 13 December 1933, 5.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

Once again we find propaganda in the *Press* operating at the intersection between party politics/legislation and gendered tropes, as Fianna Fáil was clearly positioning women away from jobs meant for men. Clear writes “The ban on women doing certain kinds of industrial work in the mid-1930s was a pragmatic attempt to prevent new industries from hiring female labour (by definition cheap) in preference to paying breadwinner wages to men, rather than an explicit attempt to limit women to the home.”<sup>106</sup> Such policy was not unique to Ireland, as many nations, in response to the Depression, sought to direct female workers away from such traditionally male vocations as manufacturing or construction. Yet, in light of the gendered labeling utilized by Cumann na nGaedheal against its republican rivals, the desire to refocus and redefine feminine energies had implications beyond economic recovery in that there were nationalistic intentions in what Fianna Fáil was advocating.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, in addition to its intent to attain electoral success, Fianna Fáil was in the midst of a wide-ranging and all-encompassing effort to construct a new Irish state while the world was mired in an economic nadir. Daly has cited Fianna Fáil’s concern with female employment as a means of “reversing population decline and creating employment, in part because the post-1929 international recession had meant a virtual end of emigration from Ireland—the safety valve of previous generations.”<sup>107</sup> However, the distinction between economic safety-valve and paternalistic misogyny were not the sole reasons for Fianna Fáil’s policies regarding

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<sup>106</sup> Clear, “Women,” 107. Clear also examines the restricting of factory employment by women in Clear, *Women of the House—Women’s Household Work in Ireland 1922-1961* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>107</sup> Mary E. Daly, “Women in the Irish Free State, 1922-39: The Interaction Between Economics and Ideology,” *Journal of Women’s History* 6, no. 4 (Winter/Spring 1995): 109.

women's vocation. As with the examples given above regarding fashion, homemaking, and consumerism, the direction in which the party sought to guide women through the *Irish Press* was solely intended as part of constructing the nation anew.

Thus it is readily evident that the woman's pages of the *Irish Press* were constructed in such a manner to guide women in a direction that best suited the aims of the party. Critically, Fianna Fáil was attempting to redefine notions of femininity and female existence to fit within its newly constructed Irish narrative. Beyond just mere politicization, Fianna Fáil sought to make everyday life an extension and daily reiteration/reaffirmation of a new existence where party affected all aspects of normative behavior. Mary Cullen has noted that many works of history “do treat the masculine role as the human norm, presenting a past of male agency and leadership and female passivity and dependency.”<sup>108</sup> In the case of Fianna Fáil and the *Irish Press* in the years leading up to the Constitution of 1937, there was a distinct effort to construct a certain level of socio-political agency for women, at least in the sense that the party sought to make indistinguishable the political and the socio-cultural. In the Ireland that Fianna Fáil was seeking to construct, political activity was not solely limited to household work or preordained occupations. As such, relegating women to such roles were not simply a means to restore heteronormativity, but also to appropriate women into Fianna Fáil's nationalist project.

As prelude to a running discussion on women in the workforce, Sighle ní Chinnéide editorialized in 1935 that women must work because of the socio-economic

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<sup>108</sup> Mary Cullen, “The Potential of Gender History,” in Valiulis, *Gender and Power*, 18.

realities that Ireland faced in the 1930s.<sup>109</sup> This implied that Fianna Fáil was able to concede the point of women in the workplace so as to secure a purely Irish workforce, yet they still maintained an attitude reflected by writer Nan Mahony who declared housekeeping to be “the greatest career of all.”<sup>110</sup> A series of editorials appeared in the *Irish Press* in early 1935 regarding women in the workforce, and came at a time when there were increases in labor force participation by women throughout Ireland.<sup>111</sup> This very short-lived journalistic debate marked a fascinating turn for the *Irish Press*, as women writers were becoming both more visible—in that they were given featured bylines—and decidedly political.<sup>112</sup> Ní Chinnéide’s editorial from 18 January 1935 opened by noting that a “certain hostility towards the woman worker has crept in amongst us.”<sup>113</sup> She added: “While professing to have women’s best interests at heart, quite responsible people now advocate the exclusion of women from public employment, that

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<sup>109</sup> Síghle Ní Chinnéide, “Why Women Must Work,” *Irish Press*, 18 January 1935, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Nan Mahony, “Why Women Must Work.” *Irish Press*, 8 February 1935, 5.

<sup>111</sup> Daly, “Women,” 103. Daly’s article cites an increase in single women’s employment between 1926 and 1936, with single women’s participation increasing from 48.6% to 53.3%, and that of married women during the same time remaining stagnant at 5.6%. *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> It is no coincidence that this transformation occurred following the transformation of Cumann na nGaedheal into Fine Gael, marking the end of Fianna Fáil’s concern with the so-called “gunmen.” Now the party of majority, de Valera and his followers became increasingly concerned with governance, and perhaps most importantly, gathering a larger number of supporters for the constitution he was hoping to install in 1936 or 1937. Regarding the shift from anonymous bylines, one such example can be seen in an article from January 1934 entitled “The Married Woman Worker: A Married Woman’s Reply,” whose authorial credit is listed only as “A Dublin Professional Woman.” It is remarkable that many of the same arguments made by ní Chinnéide can be found in this article that predated the one that would appear almost exactly one year later, suggesting that she might in fact be the author of this article. The main difference between the two pieces was in the emphasis placed on the ability of married women to juggle career and family, in addition to the fact that “she understands dignity of labour.” Cf., A Dublin Professional Woman, “The Married Woman Worker: A Married Woman’s Reply,” *Irish Press*, 15 January 1934, 5.

<sup>113</sup> Ní Chinnéide, “Why,” 3.

they may be thereby inclined to return to their pre-war life as the cherished wives, sisters and mothers of bread-winners.”<sup>114</sup> This latter point referred specifically to the Great War—note the absence of allusions to the Anglo-Irish War or Irish Civil War—having necessitated the increase in female labor and is of great interest, for it asserts that chaos and instability had created a problem that needed remedying. Ní Chinnéide further cited capitalism and the Industrial Revolution as both curses and blessings for women because they afforded female laborers an opportunity to demonstrate their vocational worth but also created the low rates of pay that “for women workers [was] the main cause of the real injustice.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, Ní Chinnéide claimed, the conceptions of female labor in a Catholic nation such as Ireland needed to be rethought to better suit the realities of post-war modernity, such that “when equal pay for equal service becomes the rule, then only, will the fathers of families obtain the preference to which they are entitled.”<sup>116</sup>

In essence Ní Chinnéide argued that a system of equal pay would correct the imbalances created by capitalism and the Great War, not to mention provide “honest work for all citizens, men and women,” a message not unfamiliar to followers of Fianna Fáil’s rhetoric. Ultimately, ní Chinnéide used feminist language to codify the role of women in the Ireland envisioned by Fianna Fáil. Rhetoric aside, there was no arguing that ní Chinnéide was readily defining the accepted place for women in the Irish economy: the primacy of the domestic ideal (“Women are generally the first to admit the married man’s prior right to employment”); republican provision of work; and most importantly, the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

positioning of women in a manner that supports but does not challenge the nationalistic aims of de Valera's party.

Responses to ní Chinnéide's article were published the next week and were duly divided by gender. Among the male responses listed under the article header "Women Must Work While—Men Must Write—these letters," were statements that centered upon the notion that motherhood was an "innate ambition of every female," or that cited the importance of a stable and orderly home.<sup>117</sup> Such sentiments clearly reflected the types of themes present in the earliest editions of the *Irish Press*. For example, a letter written by Sean Gearoid Traynor queried:

If the solution of the difficulty is to be found, we must put back our clocks not twenty years, but forty or a hundred, if necessary. Who minds going back a little anyway? Certainly not the enthusiastically-minded political economist. Better to be dubbed a personified anachronism than look for a solution in a future that seems to be landsliding [sic] further into the political mire. If our men could find enough to do, our women should be happy in consequence. The fables say they were happy long ago.

Let us first provide employment for our men; and if our unemployment queues are filled to overflowing with women we shall only have to pity them in their self-created misery. Back to their homes! If instinct does not tell them this we shall be forced to devise a place of sending them to some desert island where, like Mark Twain's immortal company of charwomen, they can eke out an existence by taking in each other's washing.<sup>118</sup>

Another reader made an implicit reference to the problems of emigration and late marriage and claimed that women's apathy regarding employment was due to single

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<sup>117</sup> "Women Must Work While—Men Must Write—These Letters." *Irish Press*, 24 January 24 1935, 5.

<sup>118</sup> Sean Gearoid Traynor, "The Remedies are not Modern," *ibid.*

status, as they tended to “concede the prior right of employment to husbands which they have denied to potential fathers of families.”<sup>119</sup>

Ní Chinnéide responded to these writers logically and dispassionately:

My main thesis—that in this modern man-made world women must, of necessity, find work outside their homes—remains unchallenged. Instead of trying to disprove this fact your chief male correspondent indulges in a glorious onslaught on a number of absurd unchristian theories which have no place in my original article...

In Ireland the great body of women workers is composed of—(1) Elderly spinsters whose hopes of matrimony have long passed away; (2) Girls in their twenties who will, for the most part, marry eventually; (3) Those comparatively few women who wish to exercise their undoubted right, as individuals, to remain single; (4) Widows; (5) Mothers with ne'er-do-well husbands. These classes of people will always be with us, and it is for them, primarily, that the plea for fair play was made; that, in the Ireland to-morrow [sic], they may not be deprived of their hard earned right to occupy those positions for which by ability, education and training they are best fitted.<sup>120</sup>

Ní Chinnéide's response remained the final word on the subject and can be seen as most representative of Fianna Fáil's position. Indeed, ní Chinnéide accepted—if not advocated—the primacy of the male in the work place, yet there was still a rather progressive element to her arguments. Having women in the workplace, she argued, was an inescapable facet of modernity as well as the nationalist project.

Indeed the “ní Chinnéide exchange” was a precursor to the series of articles that appeared throughout 1935. This series began a mere four days after ní Chinnéide's riposte to her critics and explored the career options for young Irish women who were neither interested in nor perhaps able to dedicate their lives to housekeeping. The

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<sup>119</sup> A Reader, “Marking Time,” Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Sighlé ní Chinnéide, “The Working Woman Controversy,” *Irish Press* 4 February 1935, 5. Of note was the English spelling of ní Chinnéide's name in the article, where she was listed as Miss Kennedy. Ibid.

introduction to the series promised that career women from all fields would assess their careers in these articles, “giving you solid data, [and] will add to them the benefit of her own wise advice and experience.”<sup>121</sup> However, the rest of the article was filled with warnings regarding these professions, as Nan Mahony declared that housekeeping was the career in which she was most interested. She added that “the intelligent girl, with a trained mind, makes a better housekeeper than the girl with good biceps but not mind,”<sup>122</sup> insinuating that the professions to be addressed in future columns might, in fact, lead women back to the home. This passive-aggressive approach was indicative of Fianna Fáil’s position regarding professional women, in that so long as their vocational choices fit within their approved frameworks—as well as accepting the primacy of domesticity—then women were “free” to enter Ireland’s workforce.

The careers given read like a list of so-called “traditional” jobs for women: Nursing;<sup>123</sup> Domestic Economy Teaching;<sup>124</sup> Civil Service—not if you planned to marry, however;<sup>125</sup> Technical Teaching;<sup>126</sup> Woman of the Land;<sup>127</sup> Professional *Bean Tighe*

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<sup>121</sup> Nan Mahony, “What Career Would You Choose?” *Irish Press*, 8 February 1935, 5.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Annie M. Smithson, “Careers For Women, No. 1: The Nursing Profession,” *Irish Press*, 9 February 1935, 5.

<sup>124</sup> Josephine Redington, “Careers For Women, No. 2: Domestic Economy Teaching,” *Irish Press*, 18 February 1935, 5. Essentially, the duties of a domestic economy teacher included the instruction of cooking, sewing, etc. Redington was credited as being principal of the Irish Training School of Domestic Economy in Kilmacud. *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> A Woman Civil Servant, “The Ladder of the Civil Service,” *Irish Press*, 23 February 1935, 5. This particular article did not include the “Careers For Women” heading, but was still a part of the series.

<sup>126</sup> Katharine S. Cruise O’Brien, M.A., “Careers For Women, No. 4: Technical Teaching,” *Irish Press*, 2 March 1935, 5. The article claims that Cruise O’Brien had “adapted Gregg Shorthand to the Irish language.” *Ibid.* As far as can be told, technical teaching was centered upon educating women in such secretarial skills as shorthand and typewriting. *Ibid.*



(housekeeper);<sup>128</sup> Waitress;<sup>129</sup> Librarian;<sup>130</sup> Telephonist;<sup>131</sup> and Draper<sup>132</sup>, among others.

Exceptional columns exploring careers as doctors, pharmacists, and journalists were largely written in a way that was discouraging, noting the long hours, difficult road, and general hardships toward attaining these positions. Indeed, there must have been difficulties for women entering these positions, yet in light of the general sentiment encouraging women toward domesticity, the bias against professional was clear.<sup>133</sup>

Moreover, the lack of politicization as well as the emphasis on careers as Ireland's caregivers fits within the larger trend regarding careers for women, not to mention Fianna Fáil's concerns with promoting what might be called a "contained feminine." This series on women's vocations was, therefore, part of the much larger trend by Fianna Fáil to balance modernity with its primordialist national discourse. Moreover, it was

<sup>127</sup> Maire Comerford, "Women of the Land, A Woman Farmer's Point of View," *Irish Press*, 9 March 1935, 5.

<sup>128</sup> The Bean Tighe [sic], "The Professional Bean Tighe," *Irish Press*, 23 March 1935, 5. This article also excluded the "Careers for Women" heading.

<sup>129</sup> Margaret O'Donnell, "Working Women, No. 8, The Waitress," *Irish Press*, 30 March 1935, 5. Note the altered heading in this particular entry.

<sup>130</sup> Roisin Walsh, B.A., "Working Women, No. 9, Librarianship for Girls," *Irish Press*, 6 April 1935, 5.

<sup>131</sup> John Brennan, "Careers for Women [sic], The Telephonist," *Irish Press*, 6 July 1935, 5. John Brennan, it should be noted, was indeed female. *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> John Brennan, "Careers for Women [sic], The Drapery Trade," *Irish Press*, 3 August 1935, 5.

<sup>133</sup> Mary Hayden, M.A., "University Training for Women," *Irish Press*, 16 March 1935, 5, also A Dublin Woman Doctor [sic] "Working Women, No. 10, The Woman Doctor," *Irish Press* 13 April 1935, 5. The latter article offers the following warning: "The work of a medical woman is of such grave importance, and makes such severe demands on her energies, both physical and mental, that much consideration is required before recommending the profession to the average girl as a suitable vocation." *Ibid.* Mary Teresa Hayden (1862-1942) was an important figure in the cause of women's rights in Ireland, forming the Irish Association of Women Graduates in 1902 with Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington. Hayden fought for equal access for women in public education and government employment. In addition to her activism, Hayden served as a lecturer in history—later full professor of modern Irish history—at University College, Dublin. Diarmaid Ferriter, "Mary Teresa Hayden," *Dictionary, Volume 4*, 531-32.

representative of the party's effort to establish acceptable frameworks for women who did not fit within that of the much-preferred domestic.

1936 marked a further, more radical departure in regards to the representation of women in the *Irish Press*. Throughout the year there was an explicit move away from the heavy-handed articles on fashion and domesticity that had been seen from 1931 to 1935, as there now appeared on the women's page an intersection between women and Irish politics. On 21 March 1936, the *Press* announced the reconstitution of the women's page, cementing its status as being concerned with both the domestic and public lives of Irish women.<sup>134</sup> That year also saw a regular feature entitled "Women in the News," which included columns dedicated to charting the philanthropic and social activities of prominent Irish women. Another innovation was the increased presence of female writers whose articles were often accompanied by photographs of either the author or the subject of said column. In the 11 March 1936 edition of the *Press*, there occurred the first recognition of feminist organizations, with a "Women in the News" column that announced the formation of *Mná na hEireann* (Women of Ireland) and *Mná na Poblachta* (Women of the Republic). The article neither promoted nor condemned the groups, stating only that they were purely republican. Articles written by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, a longtime advocate of women's rights, saw a push toward the construction of a new Irish feminism, which—informed by the horrors of World War I, a war that she had demonstrated against—promoted pacifism and greater sense of gendered equality.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> "Our New Page Three," *Irish Press* 21 March 1936, 5. Note the reference to the page as "Page Three," despite its location on page three. This implies that readers still connected the woman's page to its original location in the *Irish Press*.

<sup>135</sup> Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington (1877-1946), was born in Cork to a politically active family. Sheehy-Skeffington was active in the Irish suffragist movement—namely the Irish

When viewed within the political context of 1936, the association with Skeffington's vision of feminism enabled Fianna Fáil to put up a stronger bulwark against claims by their enemies of communistic leanings. This trend toward appealing toward a more explicitly politically aware readership can be seen as setting the foundation for the headline which was emblazoned across the 4 November 1936 edition of the *Irish Press* which read: "Mr De Valera Outlines the New Constitution."

In the years leading up to the passage of the *Bunreacht na hÉireann* in 1937, the *Irish Press* served as the most consistent example of Fianna Fáil's effort to define acceptable definitions of femininity. As the 1930s progressed, the party's female norms changed, reflecting both its electoral successes and its increasingly sure-footed sense of the aesthetics of private and public life. Granted, there was a distinct level of paternalism, if not misogyny, in the legislation of Fianna Fáil in the 1930s, yet in the party's envisioned Ireland, women were to be both the physical embodiment of the nation, and the main consumers of its products. This was the level of agency *granted* by Fianna Fáil in its overarching efforts to establish an independent republic. Additionally, women were not just relegated to the embodiments of the primordial notion of both femininity and Irish national identity. Like the male—whom Fianna Fáil defined as upholders of traditional, Catholic manliness, and as the muscle behind the modernization and

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Women's Franchise League, which she formed along with Gretta Cousins—but refused to join Inghinidhe na hÉireann or Cumann na mBan due to her belief that nationalist organizations were inherently subservient to men. Despite this, she joined Sinn Féin in 1919, rising to a position of prominence within the organization, serving as envoy to the League of Nations in Paris (1923) in the hopes that the League would not recognize the Free State. She left Sinn Féin to join Fianna Fáil, serving on its executive board, but left when de Valera opted to enter the Dáil. Following the split, Sheehy-Skeffington expressed support for the Soviet Union and disdain for de Valera's Constitution. Maria Luddy, "(Johanna) Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington," *Dictionary, Volume 8*, 983-84.

industrialization of Ireland—the female of Ireland was also encouraged to accept and utilize aspects of modernity in the effort to construct an Irish Republic. Such evidence stands in direct contrast to de Valera’s call for a nation of comely maidens, instead being more representative of the participatory ethos so common to third-way governments throughout Europe in the interwar period.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER THREE



*A cape of unusual line in sherry brown velvet, with a fox collar.*

*The cape lining is in beige satin, which makes the cuffs also of the gown.*

*This, of the finest texture brown and beige small check, has a new pleat arrangement in front which, while definitely slimming, makes for freedom in walking.*

**Figure 3.1: “In Brown and Beige,” *Irish Press*, 1 October 1931, 3.**



*Fashions to please*

Every Purse Are Advertised  
in **The Irish Press**

Whether you need—

- Tailored Suits
- Frocks
- Evening Dresses
- Lingerie
- Silk Stockings
- Smart Shoes
- A Chic Hat or  
Gloves

**The  
Irish  
press**

Will tell you *WHERE* to buy  
them. *HOW* much they cost.  
And, for your convenience,  
you can order by post.

Figure 3.2: “Fashions to Please,” *Irish Press*, 6 April 1934, 5.

Distinctive . . .



**T**HIS little outfit has distinction. It comprises a grey tweed coat and skirt, red velvet waistcoat and cap, and a red and grey spotted poplin cravat.

Figure 3.3: “Distinctive...,” *Irish Press*, 1 December 1933, 5.

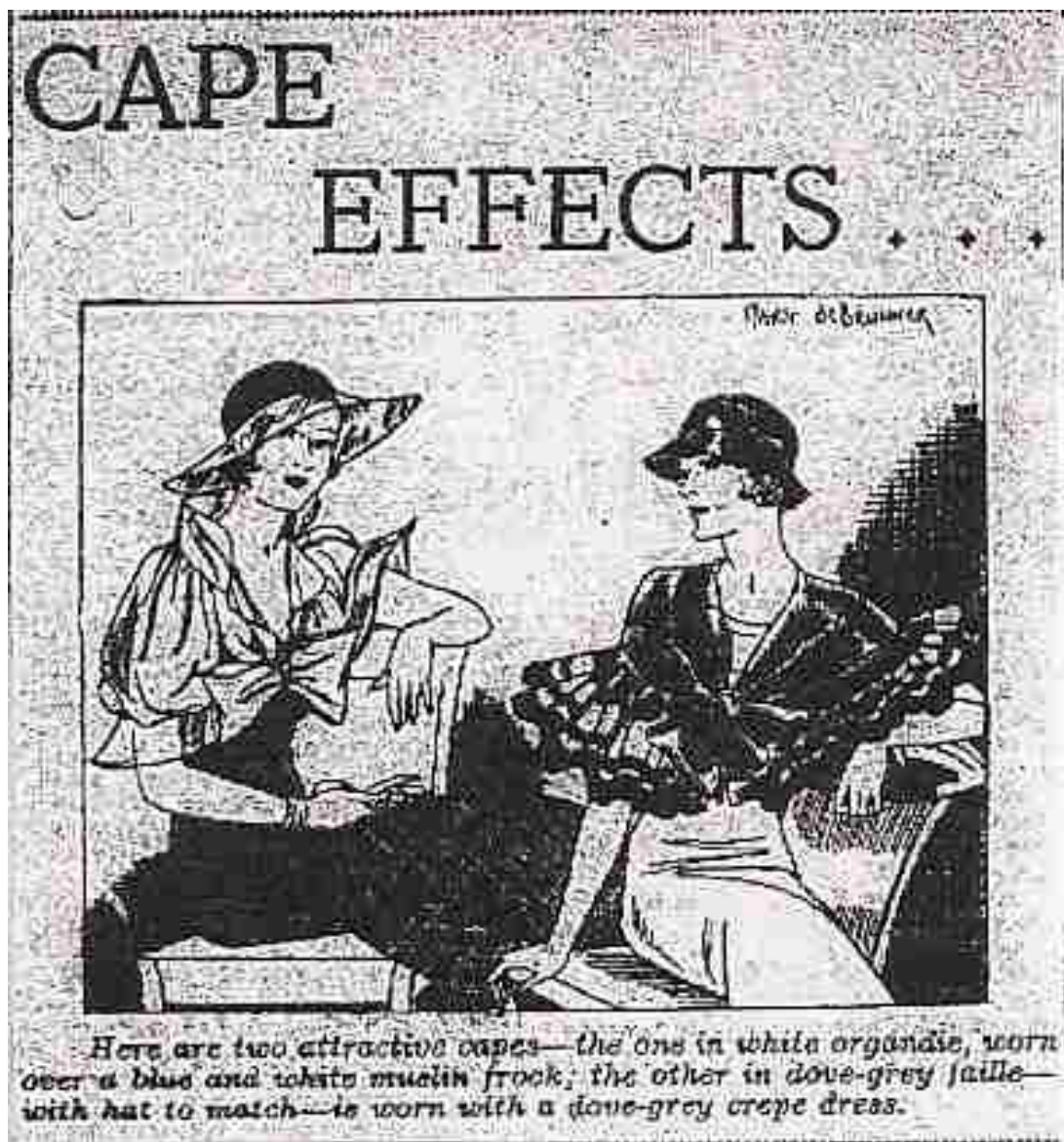


Figure 3.4: “Cape Effects...,” *Irish Press*, 16 August 1933, 5.



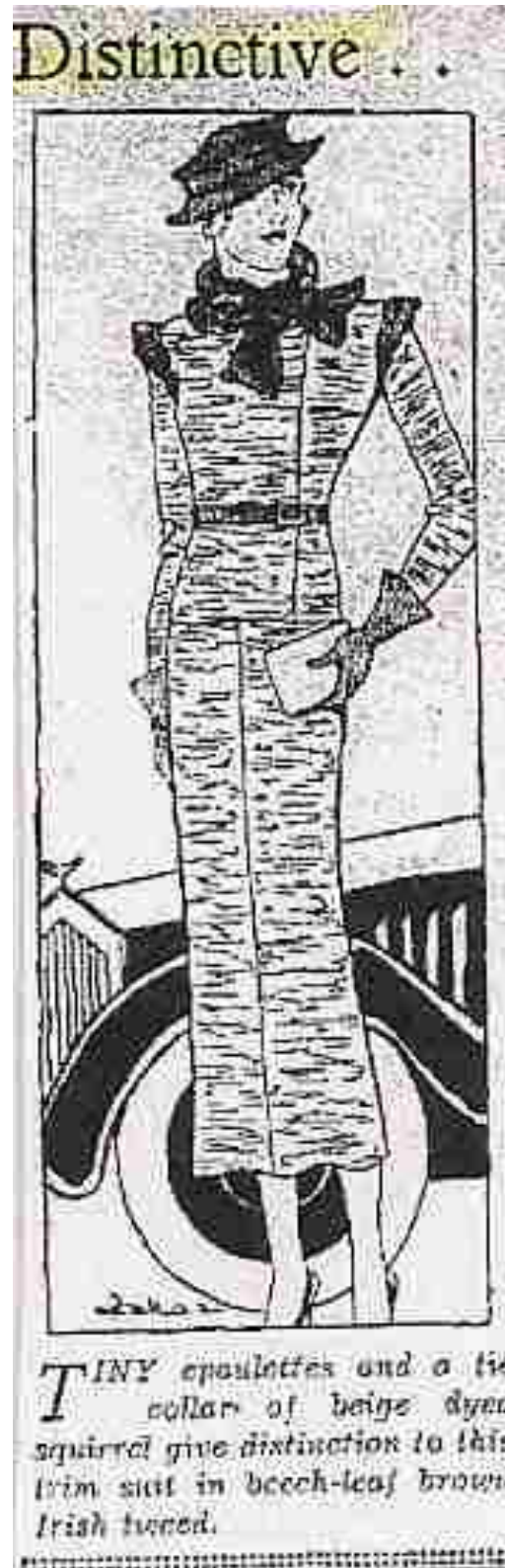



Figure 3.5: “Distinctive,” *Irish Press*, 14 November 1933, 5.

# FASHION'S LATEST WHIMS

## NEED NOT ALARM US



*Illustration of a woman's face wearing a wide-brimmed hat with a veil.*

most day dresses—and evening gowns also—do these days.


The day dress, then, remains neat and trim, though sometimes a pleated sash or a shirred roll of the material appears at the hem. And this finishing touch that is not to be the figure and care slightly towards the ankles, is another, giving a petal-like effect which is at once graceful and easy to carry off successfully.

**At the Neckline**

There is, perhaps, a little more decoration at the neck than there was a few weeks ago. As, for instance, a pleated sash or waist, fish-belly collar to go on a plain silk or fine wool frock. Such a collar really belongs in a "set" which includes also double cuffs and bow. Or a mahogany-colored wool crepe model with a pleated sash in taffeta of a slightly paler tone. And a second set to be worn alternately was in pinky-bloss satin—a wonderfully good contrast with the rich berry tint. Such a set—or two or three of them—could well be made by the amateur. It is merely a case of cutting two strips for the collar—one a little wider than the other—two for each cuff and one for the bow. Strips for collar and cuffs are neatly pleated for half their length, attached, then, left to open out, thus obtaining the correct shape to fit neckline and sleeves. The bow is not spread, of course, and this, like collar and cuffs, can have pleated ends or tiny rolled hems.

**The Rolled Collar**

Another smart neck finish takes the form of a shirred and rolled collar made either in plain wide mode or with a big floppy bow. The idea was carried out in dark satin



*Illustration of two women sitting at a table, one in a black dress with a ruffled collar and the other in a black Ottoman silk dress with a white collar.*

**FRILLED** frocks have made a triumphant return to fashion for the ladies who, the popular have they proved for parties and dances, indeed that was on very occasions with more waiting and less late arrivals for day dresses. The new "frills" and the "fish-belly" collar has had renewed very enthusiastic support. Usually, I suppose, on account of the difficulty of keeping frills even and fresh-looking when the frock comes in for a good deal of hard wear, is

**W**HIMS like one distinctive. One model in dull black crepe depends on the frill for the broad shoulder line; the other, in black Ottoman silk, is finished with a white collar of soft ivory tulle.

you may be interested. I saw a prettier day dress made to come close up to the throat, where it was finished with a triangle of patterned silk, the lower part frill like a gray bandana. The dress was made of dull-surfaced black satin, and the finishing was in printed crepe or chips of many colors, the latter, by the way, hiding the small buttons with which the bodice was fastened.

**And the Hat**

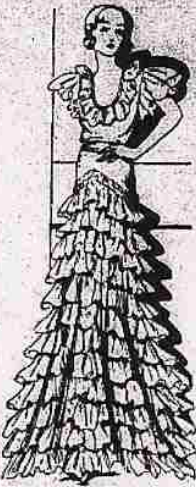
One of the foremost milliners has introduced an extremely soft felt hat, very much of the vagabond type, except that the crown is somewhat shallower and the brim is slightly pulled down over one eye. It is a pleasant change after the plethora of day toques, pill-boxes, and berets which left half the head exposed. I believe we shall see the fashion taken up pretty generally when Spring makes high fur collars unnecessary.

By the way, another new hat is worn tilted well to the back of the head, leaving uncovered the whole of the forehead and a good deal of the hair in front. This, when we had just grown used to the forehead bill! On a youthful wearer, however, the effect is good, the shape of the hat rather suggesting a small child's sun-bonnet with the front of the brim turned back.

**FOR YOUR NOTEBOOK**

**TO REMOVE A CORN.**  
 IF a corn has been pushed down into a bottle, tie a shoe button on to a string and drop it into the bottle. Then with a pointed instrument lift the corn to the neck of the bottle, pull the string with the button on it, and the corn will come out.

**KEEP THE CURTAINS CLEAN.**  
 A PIECE of net twine stretched across the lower part of the kitchen window, about four inches from the sill, will prevent the curtains from blowing out when the window is raised, thus saving them from being soiled or frayed.



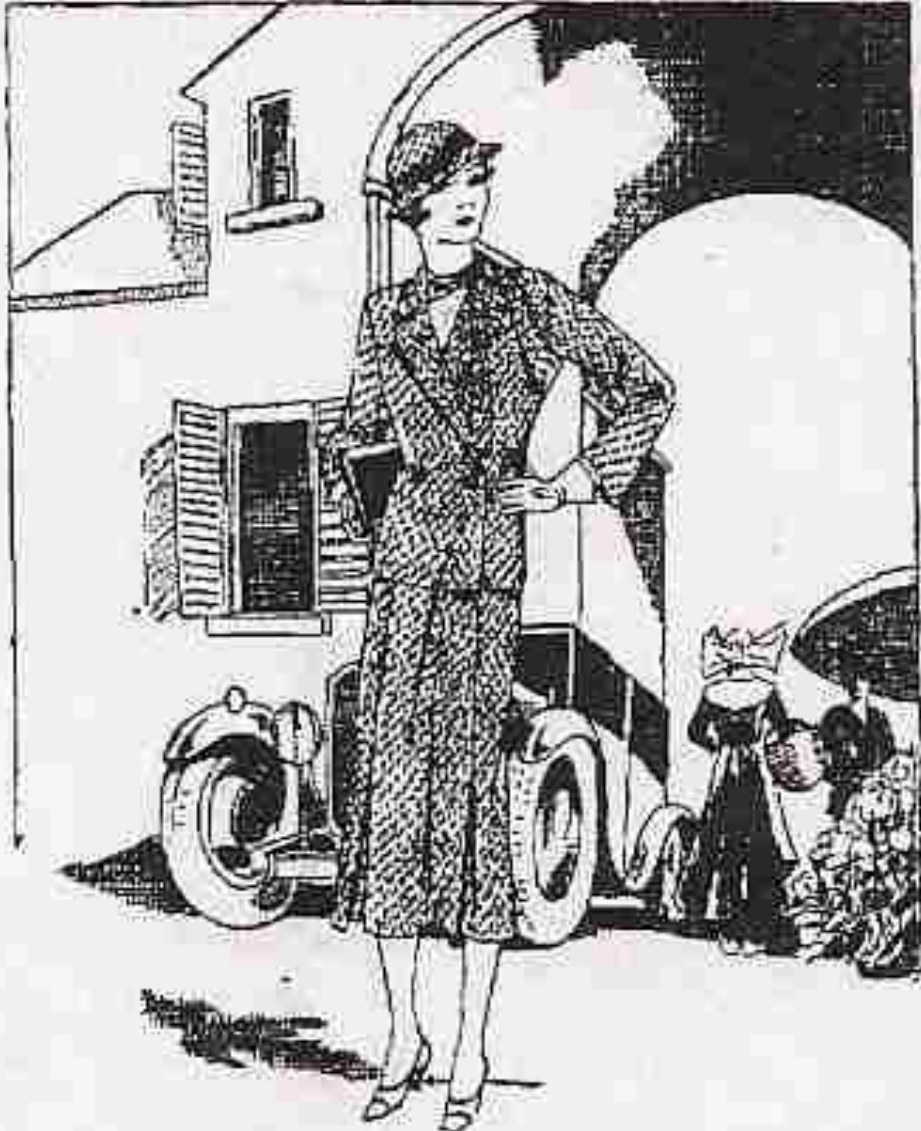
*Illustration of a woman in a long, ruffled, tiered dress.*

**A** PALE green net frock, flounced from hips to hem, posed over a foundation slip of taffeta in the same shade.

Figure 3.6: "Fashion's Latest Whims Need Not Alarm Us," *Irish Press*, 8 January 1934, 5.



Figure 3.7: "Tweed Five Piece," *Irish Press*, 6 November 1933, 5.



**ON THE JOURNEY**

*THIS trim suit would make ideal travelling wear. It is in light weight Irish tweed in shades of brown, red, and fawn, and the scarf and hat are made of the same material. The inverted pleats in the skirt give a slim line, as well as freedom of movement.*

Figure 3.8: "On the Journey," *Irish Press*, 9 November 1933, 5.



Figure 3.9: "Home Wear," *Irish Press*, 4 November 1933, 5.

# Be Individual in your Clothes

## Embroidery Motifs for your Lingerie

**N**EXT time you make a new set of lingerie, try trimming it with one of the pretty little embroidered motifs sketched here. The first, which is especially suitable for a night-dress yoke or petticoat top, is a garland of *Convolvulus* leaves worked in stem-stitch, while the second is a little group of tiny conventional flowers.

### Use Stranded

#### Cotton

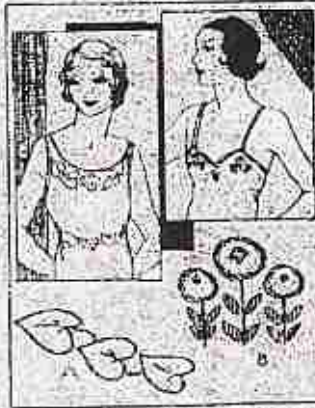
Buy ordinary stranded cotton for the embroidery, and use as many strands as you please in the needle. Two strands give

By

Maeve

Collier

good results on nainsook or cambric, but for extra thin material you may prefer to use only one. Two or three in dif-



ferent colours will be enough for embroidering several sets of lingerie.

Diagram A gives you a "close-up" of the *convolvulus* leaves. Sketch a trail of them on a piece of thin paper, following the curve of the garment. Then trace them on to the material by laying a piece of red carbon paper on it, greasy side down, putting the tracing on top, and going over the outlines with a steel knitting

needle. When the paper is lifted you'll find a nice clear outline on the material.

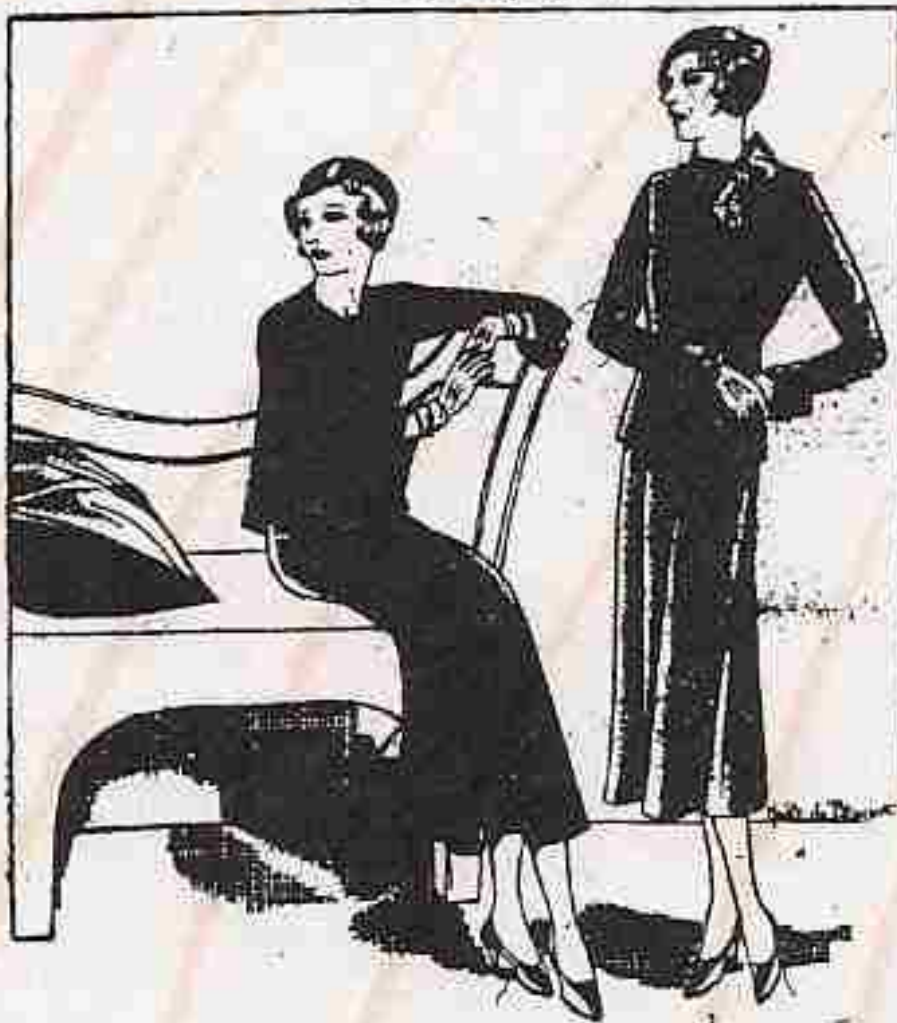
### Drawing the Design

Use bright emerald thread for the leaves and work another trail round the waist.

Diagram B shows the tiny flower-clusters. The bigger blossoms are outlined by drawing round a sixpence, and the small ones by drawing round a three-penny bit. Straight stems and short leaves radiating from them each side, are easily matched on to the material. Work the outlines of the flowers with chain-stitch in pink or blue, and give each one a centre of French-knots in yellow. The stems are green stem-stitch, and the leaves are green satin-stitch. The little posies look best if each flower is worked in a different colour. The design could be adapted for the embroidery round the hem of a baby-girl's frock.

Figure 3.10: "Be Individual in your Clothes," *Irish Press*, 4 November 1932, 3.

*Bright Days  
Are  
Coming!*



These two outfits would make pleasant spring wear. The first is in Quaker grey fine wool for the frock, with a darker grey jacket and felt hat.  
The second has a coat, skirt, and cap in light navy fotherweight tweed, with a beige cloth bow at the draped neckline of the coat and smaller one on the cap.


Figure 3.11: "Bright Days are Coming!," *Irish Press*, 10 March 1932, 3.

**Breakfast in the All-Irish Home**

*No. 2 of a Series*

The prosperity of Irish country depends on the way in which each one of you supports its industries. You can make sure, for instance, that everything you use at the breakfast table is Irish, whenever possible.

There will be a long journey in the effort to make your home one of the best in the world, but you would be proud of it and tomorrow when looking over the country you'll gain too—because Irish goods are better and they're very often cheaper.



The best and tastiest breakfast that ever kept a family in good humor is that eaten in the real Irish home—eggs and Denny's Irish Bacon. Denny's—delicious, crisp, appetizing, that's what will tempt the whole family to eat a hearty meal. There'll be no grumbles from anyone—add you know how they can grumble at breakfast time.

Denny's Bacon comes from prime Irish-fed pigs, cured and prepared for you by Irish workers—it's the finest you could buy at any price—and it costs no more than just ordinary bacon.

And don't forget—when you buy Denny's, in addition to pleasing the family you are doing your part to help your country, the farmers and the bacon industry.

Be sure you ask for

**DENNY'S  
BACON**

*No. 1 of this series showed why Crown's Soaps should be used in every Irish home. Further advertisements will follow dealing with other ideal Irish goods. Be sure you cut out and keep the whole of the series. It will be a guide to you in making purchases for your All-Irish home.*

Figure 3.12: "Morning in the Irish Home," *Irish Press*, 7 June 1933, 3.



**Look**  
**for this**

**IRISH WOOLLENS ONLY  
IN THE ALL-IRISH HOME**

The buyer of all-Irish products is in a particularly happy position when purchasing any kind of woollen goods. Irish Woollen Mills have long been famous for the excellent quality of their tweeds, blankets, serges, and serges. The finest materials in the world are yours by just insisting on the products of Irish mills.

**Trade Mark**




**it means you are getting  
genuine Foxford goods . . .**

Foremost among fine Irish Woollens come the products of the Providence Woollen Mills at Foxford. In this up-to-date factory are made the superb rugs, tweeds, serges, and blankets (white and coloured) that have made the name Foxford so famous.

Blankets from Foxford—warm as toast, light and cosy as an eiderdown. The young housewife finds the years passing by, but her Foxford blankets remain ever new.

Well dressed men and women to-day must have Irish tweeds. Those who appreciate really distinctive tweeds of the finest quality, insist on being shown the latest Foxford patterns.

When buying rugs, blankets, tweeds, and serges always look out for the "EYE" Trade Mark, denoting Foxford products. They don't cost nearly so much as you'd expect to pay for such distinctive goods.

**FOX FORD**

**RUGS • BLANKETS  
SERGES • TWEEDS**

MADE BY  
PROVIDENCE WOOLLEN MILLS, FOXFORD

Telegrams: "PROVIDENCE, FOXFORD."  
Telephone: FOXFORD 4.

No. 1 to 5 of this series showed why Green's Soap, Denny's Bacon, Corcoran's Mineral Water, Blue Band Morphine, and Harrington's Paints, should all be used in the ideal Irish home. Further advertisements will deal with other all-Irish products. Cut out and keep these advertisements for reference when shopping.



Figure 3.13: "Irish Woollens Only in the All-Irish Home," *Irish Press*, 24 June 1933, 5.

*Morning in the All-Irish Home* No. 1 of a Series

*"Do you're a real Irish home? Are you doing everything a patriotic Irish man or woman should do to support the industry of your own country? In this series we shall show how you can have a real 'All-Irish Home' not only without entailing any extra cost but with immediate advantage to yourself in the matter of quality and price. Take for instance the morning toilet—do you have the household and toilet soaps, shaving cream, etc., as good as the finest imported products, yet made in Ireland and at no extra cost?"*

## "Cleanliness is next to Godliness"

**C**REAM'S "DROMONA" Toilet Preparations serve their purpose in helping the truth of this proverb. Not only do they cleanse, but their perfume, texture, lathering properties, shape and colour, all combine to give that "Good to be Alive" feeling first thing in the morning.

And there is another point—Cream's are 100% Irish, 52 weeks every year—not 52% Irish for one week.

Dad of course has first run in the bathroom. Hard to know whether to get Dromona Shaving Cream or Soap. They're both so good. The same in the bath. "Dromona" Bath Soap with its floral perfumes or one of the medicated range (Carbolic, Pine Tar, Lanoline, Castille)—all Giving the fit feeling

HURRY UP DAD GIVE A FELLOW A CHANCE

THEN the boy. Looking forward to the time he can shave—dad seems to enjoy it so. Plumps for Pine Tar for his wash—loves the lather. Mum and the girls say there is nothing like "Complexion" or "Cream" Soap. Although Bouquet and Floral come close. They know they not only clean, but refresh and retain the health of their Irish complexions.

Ask your chemist—he knows

# DROMONA

Shaving Soap or Cream—Bath Soaps

"COMPLEXION" "CREAM"  
"FLORAL" "BOUQUET"

Medicated Soaps

★ This is the first of a series of advertisements designed to show how you can have everything of the best in your home while buying Irish goods only. Cut out and keep each advertisement in this series. You'll find them very helpful in your effort to make yours a real All-Irish Home.




Figure 3.14: "Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness," *Irish Press*, 7 June 1933, 5.

**No. 10: FOOTWEAR FOR THE ALL-IRISH HOME**



All patriotic Irish men and women will gladly put their weight in the scale of building up the nation and ensuring its future prosperity. You can be sure of doing YOUR part if you see that your home is a real Irish one—one for which you buy only the products of your own country. Below we deal with Irish footwear—you'll find that boots and shoes are now made in this country at least as good as the best imported, and there's no reason why an Irish family should use any but Irish footwear.

**Fine Irish Footwear for Comfort and Wear!**

When Dad and the boys go off to business and school on a dreary wet morning it's good to feel that they're all comfortably and smartly shod with Irish made footwear. Sure-Phit boots and shoes made in Waterford, are hard-wearing and really smart.

With this Irish made footwear there's no need to worry over the duties on the imported article. When you buy Sure-Phit you are benefiting your country by supporting its industries and yourself by getting better value for your money.

● Always ask for Sure-Phit Boots and Shoes when you buy Footwear

**Sure-Phit BOOTS AND SHOES**

Made by  
Hearne & Cahill, Ltd., Waterford




The first nine advertisements of this series have shown why an all-Irish home should use Crown's Soaps, Benny's Bacon, Carrigan & Co.'s Minerals, Blue Sand Margarine, Harrington's Paints, Foxford Woollens, Radium Polisher, Urney Chocolates and be insured with the Munster and Leinster Assurance Co. Further advertisements will deal with other ideal Irish goods and services.



Figure 3.15: "No 10: Footwear for the Irish Home," *Irish Press*, 8 July 1933, 5.

# The IRISH IDEAL HOME



"The Ideal Home has room for us completely,  
The painted spick and span with such civility,  
From roof to ground, an Irish of the best is here,  
The dressed with Irish goods, and shrouded clean,  
And those who in this home homestead dwell,  
By Irish food are rendered fit and well,  
Though hygiene gives the way, they rightly think—  
Good health's maintained on Irish food and drink,  
TAKS, hygiene, health and happiness are found  
In every home where Irish goods abound."

R. G.

**THE WIDIA'S** new Handbook opens very thoughtfully with a calendar for next year and closes with song.

This now widely advertised and much publicized body do not need any further introduction, do they? Widias they call themselves, but neither celibacy, marriage or widowhood, make any bar to membership of the Women's Industrial Development Association.

Their Handbook is a neat and handy shopping guide to almost all the goods now being manufactured in Ireland. If any are left out, it is the fault of the manufacturers themselves, for goodness knows every effort was made to get all their names in.

**No Saxophones**

Between the calendar and the song are packed a list of products from "A" to "Window Locks," (or, apparently we do not make anything beginning with X, Y or Z. On looking over the dictionary I find we have not missed very much, for I cannot see anything in XYZ that we cannot do without, except yolk of egg. If any Wida wants a yacht she'll just have to marry a millionaire to get one.) But as for xylophagoid, yawn, xeros and zebra we can get on very well without them.

I am sorry that the Saxophone comes under "S" and not under X, Y or Z, but on going through the Handbook I was referred to find we make no saxophones or, if we do, they are concealed under an alias. Not under "Musical Instruments," for there are none mentioned.

But for ordinary shopping the book is a Godsend. Armed with it we can face and defeat the most supercilious "No-Mocks" that ever faced us across a counter. There are certain standard products that everyone knows are made in Ireland such as whiskey, meat, soups, jams and such like. The retailers must of necessity hand them out, because they haven't got any substitute. But there are hundreds of lesser known and these, together with the new home goods that are coming on the market every day, are impossible to identify without knowing the name of the brand.

Cleaning materials, for instance. The imported products are hard and charwoman who "don't believe in 'em except those they have been using all their lives. In the Handbook six firms are listed as Polish Manufacturers. They make polishes for shoes, brass and wood; for knives and silver plates; for motor cars and

windows. That handy tin for the kitchen clean-all, is great value in the Irish material.

**Your Face**

Pharmacy is another on-coming business. Under the new tariffs your face will cost you more if you don't use Irish materials. You can add put on Irish vanishing cream (scented with Irish perfume) and apply Irish face powder on top of that. And you can paint on the spot where your eyebrows used to be, a slender artificial eyebrow just like

paragraph the Handbook offers a wide field. There are hairpins and stomach rubbers, chinrests for rheumatism, scales and ringers, and an excellent vinegar made in Cork.

There are varnishes, scales and metal work for men, all sorts of brushes including tooth brushes for men, women, and children and tramping cakes for people who are thinking that way. And cradles, too.

There are some items which I expected to find and did not. Furniture for instance. Neither is there any reference to notepaper (women are forgetful about Irish notepaper), and poetry, a subject in which we are all very interested just now. There are some very good tenpins and vases being turned out in Cork and very soon we shall have tea sets and dinner sets from Arklow.

A book like this will be constantly added to and enlarged and its next edition will, no doubt, bring all Irish products up-to-date if the manufacturers will help.


As it stands it contains the great majority of necessities, as well as luxuries for the Irish Ideal Home.

**All Irish Menus**

To enhance its value there are some very interesting menus compiled with all Irish food, a sermon on the use of turf, a spate of House-hold Hints and one of the nicest IRISH PRIMER jumpers with instructions on how to knit it.

The book costs threepence, plus postage, and can be had at your local branch or from the Association's office at 51a Dawson Street, Dublin. Get it, make a hole in the top left-hand corner, run a string through it, hang it in the kitchen and never go shopping without consulting it.

A.K.



the Mona Lisa's, with an eyebrow pencil made in Ireland, and finish out with a dab of an Irish Spetick (Oh Widias!), alluring under the brand of "Kismet." In summer you can go all breezy without the expense of a foreign sun—or an Irish sun for that matter.

For those who are exulting about of disdain after reading the above

Figure 3.16: "The Irish Ideal Home," *Irish Press*, 6 December 1934, 5.

## Chapter Four

### “Put the Laggards Out!” Fianna Fáil and the Aesthetics of Masculinity 1932-1938

“Il coraggio, l’audacia, la ribellione, saranno elementi ssenziali della nostra poesia...Noi vogliam esaltare il movimento aggressivo, l’insonnia febrile, il passo di corsa...”<sup>1</sup>

—*Futurist Manifesto*

More than a mere political party, Fianna Fáil sought to be a full-fledged nationalist project operating within a democratic framework facilitating the transition from colony to independent state. The Treaty that ended the Anglo-Irish War, and the Free State it created, enabled Fianna Fáil to shift republican discourse from an anti-colonial reactionary rhetoric to an active, multileveled nation-building project. Because the party leaders viewed the Free State as a temporary transition from colony to independence, they embraced a rhetoric aimed toward both destroying the last vestiges of British interference and actively constructing the facets of a modern, independent nation-state. Having broken free from their Sinn Féin roots, they—legitimated by electoral successes—reoriented representations of themselves from the feminized images created by Cumann na nGaedheal by constructing a nationalist project steeped in masculinism.

In particular, when viewed through the prism of gender, the Anglo-Irish Economic War of 1932-37 elucidates the mechanics of Fianna Fáil’s construction of an independent Ireland in a renascent republican image. Fianna Fáil represented its work as an effort to instill a command of means—a distillation of nationalistic efforts into the everyday. The party transcended class and history, as it was neither encumbered by

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<sup>1</sup> “The Futurist Manifesto,” in Valerio C. Ferme, “Redefining the Aesthetics of Fascism: The Battle Between the Ancients and the Moderns Revisited,” *Symposium* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 68-69. “Courage, boldness, rebellion, are essential elements of our poetry... We want to exalt aggressive movement, feverish consciousness, advancement of the race...” The translation is my own.

Marxian trappings nor beholden to a liberal-capitalist lineage; rather, its immediate concerns centered on problems not salvageable by nineteenth-century ideologies. As Brian Girvin notes, “these policies coincided with and reinforced a conviction within Fianna Fáil that a new age had begun: one in which sovereign Ireland would finally break the historic connection with the United Kingdom and establish a specifically Irish dimension to social life and the economy.”<sup>2</sup> The party was concerned with the infinitely Irish problem of reconciling traditionalism with the realities of modernity; both the latter’s fixation with imperialism and industry and the former’s role in creating a harmonious social unit. The problem of Ireland’s colonial ties—compounded by the instabilities of the inter-war period—enabled a nationalist project that advanced a uniquely twentieth-century approach, and the question remained as to how this model would be presented to the Irish people.

Intriguingly, the interwar period actually provided various avenues for the creation of an independent Irish state, with Fianna Fáil crafting a nationalist program encased within masculine rhetoric. This presentation seeks to demonstrate how Fianna Fáil engaged in a hegemonic struggle aimed toward forging a new republican power bloc, which utilized common tropes in order to naturalize its ideology within the nation’s public discourse. Drawing on these gendered frameworks, Fianna Fáil fashioned an ideology aimed toward restoring an imagined social harmony, but bent on correcting the legacies of the colonial past.

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<sup>2</sup> Brian Girvin, “The Republicanisation of Irish Society, 1932-1948,” in Hill, *New History*, 130-31.

Having emerged from a contentious six-year battle in which it depended largely on broadsides and pamphlets to combat Cumanna na nGaedheal's gendered attacks, Fianna Fáil—upon its election into government—began to affect a more aesthetic expression of party policy. Abandoning Sinn Féin's policy of abstention from the Dáil, Fianna Fáil had become an active participant in an entity that they ultimately sought to destroy. The means by which the party advanced its socio-economic nationalist agenda for a new republican movement were as follows: first, through the establishment of a profoundly gendered active/passive dialectic between itself and Cumann na nGaedheal (and, later, Fine Gael); second, through the assertion of an aesthetic of masculinity and growth, readily seen in Fianna Fáil's economic propaganda; and, finally, in the Economic War where de Valera's party forged a nexus between these active and masculine personae to protect the nation from the last vestiges of British colonialism.

In short, in the years between 1932 and 1938<sup>3</sup> the socio-political and economic constructs of Ireland were reimagined by the conscious nationalist thrust of Fianna Fáil. The recasting of Irish republicanism under the guise of de Valera's party coalesced around its larger discourse, such that all aspects of the Irish polity came to be viewed in direct relation to the nascent movement. While the previous chapters have demonstrated the manner in which the party reconstituted its gendered discourse as well as how it harnessed and re-imagined the role of women in Ireland, the present chapter

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<sup>3</sup> The reader might notice a vacillation between 1937 and 1938 as the ending date of this chapter. This is reflective of the difference between my own thesis as opposed to Fianna Fáil propaganda that is largely culled from the elections between 1932 and 1937. Having twice triumphed electorally in 1937 much of the party's energies were legislative as opposed to that of the political. As such my focus is to examine the party's economic thrust in the years leading up to the Eire Confirmation Bill and ensuing end of the Economic War, and therefore when promoting my own ideas 1938 will be used as an end date to this particular period.

depicts the party in its more aggressive and activist economic policies. Joe Lee notes that “the annuities controversy provided the focal point of Anglo-Irish conflict in 1932. The issue fused emotional and economic appeal in an optimum electoral manner for de Valera.”<sup>4</sup> Having then been twice elected into government in 1932, Fianna Fáil seized its opportunity and initiated an economic campaign that sought to promote Irish industry through protectionism, in turn weakening ties to Britain and thus invalidating the entire purpose of the Free State.

This approach by Fianna Fáil complemented the party’s view of women, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, for the party’s rhetoric regarding women showed how the party sought to refocus their energies in the interests of the republic. Although a far cry from the revolutionary thrust of such groups as Cumann na mBan and Inghinide na hÉireann, there was nevertheless an attempt to reconcile the role of feminine activity within Fianna Fáil’s party rhetoric. Most important were the lengths to which the party went in order to establish a gendered discourse clearly marking what was acceptable and thus worthy of inclusion in the republican model which it was in the process of creating. Further, the promotion and fetishization of Irish goods underscored the party’s overall economic approach in the years after 1932. As we have seen, Fianna Fáil positioned women in such a manner that they were still servants to the masculine.

An analysis of Fianna Fáil’s economic program for the period between 1932 and 1938 reveals a parallel effort to construct a new nation upon a masculine, aggressive, and activist base. Using the paligenetic model as a prism, we find that the party—unlike its

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<sup>4</sup> Lee, *Ireland*, 178. For an in-depth study on the events that led up to the Economic War, see Terence Dooley, *‘The Land For the People’: The Land Question in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2004).



political opponents—bridged the chasm between primordial nationalism and modernist nationalism. That is to say there was a balance struck between the cultural Gaelicism that had already taken root in Ireland and the realities of modernity. Fianna Fáil set out to combine the two—the glance to the past justifying the push toward the future. Such an approach also positioned its opponents as either reactionary or passive. In light of Ireland’s postcolonial struggles, as well as the larger socio-economic conditions of Europe and the world following the Great War, Fianna Fáil’s rhetorical frameworks reflected the same anxieties and solutions to the problems facing other nationalistic movements of the time. As such, the party adopted gendered means of clearly establishing what was deemed acceptable (male, active) and unacceptable (feminine, queered/othered) for the state that it was constructing.

In looking at Fianna Fáil’s economic program during the Formative Era, many historians have tended to focus on the party’s protectionist policy or its propensity to misrepresent the effectiveness of its legislation. For example, Mary Daly’s article “An Irish-Ireland for Business?: the Control of Manufactures Acts, 1932 and 1934,” demonstrates that Fianna Fáil’s public rhetoric of protectionism and overall effort to ensure that Irish-funded businesses were given a clear path to success.<sup>5</sup> While Daly examines the failure of the party’s efforts to limit—if not eliminate—foreign capital in the name of promoting Irish industry, she does not go far enough to wed the relationship between legislation and party rhetoric. Viewed simply as legislative initiative, the Control of Manufactures Acts, “only served to artificially boost a protected Irish capitalist class,

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Daly. “An Irish-Ireland for Business?: The Control of Manufactures Acts, 1932 and 1934,” *Irish Historical Studies* 24, no. 94 (Nov. 1984): 246-72. See also Daly, *Industrial Development and Irish National Identity, 1922-1939* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, Ltd., 1992).

who benefited from the profits of a protected market, but were incapable of using these profits to underpin genuinely innovative investment.”<sup>6</sup> Where the acts were more successful, however, was the manner in which they underscored Fianna Fáil’s activist economic ambition. It is impossible to distinguish between the party’s legislative activity *and* its nationalist ambitions. In light of earlier assertions regarding Fianna Fáil’s envisioned role of women as republican consumers of native-produced goods, it is thus clear that the party’s push toward an independent republic and its legislative actions existed symbiotically.

Indeed, for many historians, Fianna Fáil has remained elusive and difficult to define—was the party capitalist? Was it socialist? Speaking of the interwar global economic malaise, Roy Foster has noted the fine line trod by political entities and “how to approach the problems of recession in a manner that provided an alternative both to failed free-market capitalism and untried by alarming totalitarianism.”<sup>7</sup> Daly, meanwhile, has written that de Valera’s economic “agenda was an amalgam of nationalist and quasi-socialist policies often stolen from the manifestos of left-wing republican organizations, tempered by Gaelic antiquarianism and Catholic social teaching as found in papal encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum* or *Quadragesimo Anno*.”<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Lee has noted that “while de Valera liked to dwell on the idea of a ‘balanced’ economy, [Minister for Industry and Commerce, Seán] Lemass pursued a policy that was neither balanced nor unbalanced, but simply improvised.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Daly, “Irish-Ireland,” 27.

<sup>7</sup> Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 541.

<sup>8</sup> Daly, *Industrial Developments*, 61.

<sup>9</sup> Lee, *Ireland*, 191.

Essentially, Fianna Fáil was tasked with overseeing Ireland's economy in a period in which the nineteenth-century liberal/Marxian divide was deemed by inter-war nationalist groups as either ineffective or incompatible with the challenges of modernity. As was the case with many nationalist parties elsewhere in the interwar period, Fianna Fáil forged a third option either as a means of economic correction or out of political expediency. The improvisational skills of Lemass, as well as the rejection of capitalistic passivity and Catholic hostility to fundamental Marxism, encouraged Fianna Fáil to seek alternative paths. In this sense, the party was willing to embrace modernist approaches to economic thought in a manner akin to what was happening on the Continent. While capitalist dogma stressed the invisible hand and Marxian ideologies advanced classism, neither was necessarily conducive to the socio-economic and political nationalism of Fianna Fáil. As such it is important to situate the party's economic ideology within the larger trends of the 1920s and 1930s, in order to gain greater insight into how the party forged this inseparable link between party, people, and policy.

Brian Girvin notes that the Fianna Fáil's economic and political policies were mutually inclusive, and that the Economic War "provided the opportunity to reduce Ireland's dependence on the United Kingdom and to reorganize the economy along lines more congenial to (Seán) Lemass's developmental nationalism."<sup>10</sup> "Fianna Fáil," he contends, "provided an interventionist framework within which Irish sovereignty could be asserted in economic and social policy."<sup>11</sup> Daly supports such an assertion, noting that the promotion of native industry and entrepreneurial investment advanced by The Control

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<sup>10</sup> Girvin, "Republicanism," 136.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

of Manufactures Acts of 1932 and 1934 were promoted despite “no evidence that hostility to foreign capital investment in Ireland predated the establishment of the Irish Free State, perhaps because the scale of such investment was insignificant.”<sup>12</sup> While much of Girvin’s work analyzes the level of success to which the republicans in power attained economically, my concern is the way in which Fianna Fáil utilized its economic positions as means to advance their nationalistic cause.

### **‘The Damn Fool Business’ of the Ottawa Economic Conference of 1932**

Like many nationalist projects of the early twentieth century, Fianna Fáil policy and propaganda were largely constructed upon a binary in which activity and passivity were delineated within gendered constructs. In essence, it is my contention that the Irish Republic that emerged in the latter 1930s was a Fianna Fáil construct; a product of the party’s efforts to recast Ireland’s socio-political and economic frameworks. However, Fianna Fáil’s intended path toward an Irish Republic would have been fruitless had it not been for the democratic foundation established by the Free State. The same democratic constructs that had invalidated Sinn Féin’s physical force methods enabled the reconstitution of republicanism as advanced by Fianna Fáil. As such, it is important to reiterate that nearly everything Fianna Fáil did during the Formative Era was part of a larger effort to discursively dismantle the perceived connections between the Free State and Great Britain with the ultimate goal of creating an independent Irish state. This is not to say, however, that Fianna Fáil was absolutist in their self-aggrandizement, especially after its time in government beginning in 1932, for the party did effectively govern the

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<sup>12</sup> Daly, “Irish-Ireland,” 247.

Free State at the same time that it continued its nationalistic push. This paradox was not lost upon the members of the party, and as chapter two demonstrated, it was a key factor in their appeal to the Irish voter.

The Ottawa Economic Conference of 1932 marked the beginning of the transformation of Britain's empire from a military-political empire into that of an economic union where the playing field was clearly put in favor of John Bull. It also afforded members of the Empire an opportunity to openly defy and question British policy.<sup>13</sup> The April conference was held less than two months after Fianna Fáil's remarkable electoral gains ushered in the party's first coalition, resulting in a whirlwind of activity from the party. It played host to the visit to Ireland by a Papal Legation marking the 1,500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Patrick's mission to Ireland; it spearheaded legislation to remove the Oath of Allegiance from the Free State<sup>14</sup>; its hardened stance against the payment of land annuities heightened tensions between Ireland and Britain; and it began to debate in the Dáil the party's first budget (passed 12 May 1932).<sup>15</sup> As such, the conference took place at a time when the delegation that was to represent Ireland in Ottawa was explicitly and aggressively challenging the nature of Britain's authority over the island. To be certain, tensions between Ireland and Britain were high, and Fianna Fáil's intransigence played a significant role in shaping the two countries'

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<sup>13</sup> T.O. Lloyd notes that, heading into the conference, "British representatives had expected a rapturous welcome for the prodigal Mother Country come home, and were a little taken aback by the sharpness of the bargaining." T.O. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe, English History, 1906-1992* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 177-78.

<sup>14</sup> "The Oath Removal Bill Passes Through the Dail [sic]," *Irish Press*, 20 May 1932, 1.

<sup>15</sup> "The New Government's Dramatic First Budget," *Irish Press*, 12 May 1932, 1.

diplomatic efforts. Indeed, Fianna Fáil's attacks on the Oath yielded responses from the prime ministers of New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa.<sup>16</sup>

The Ottawa conference had been called to reassert England's primacy in regulating tariff rates, which had grown markedly due to interwar economic anxieties and complicated by nationalist stirrings among the nations united in the empire. The central point of confluence was the Import Duties Act of 1932 that resulted in a ten percent increase of import rates. Exempted permanently were colonies, while Dominions were granted conditional rights on products coming into their nation from Britain. D.K. Fieldhouse writes, "The implied condition was that Britain would expect new or increased preferences in Dominion and colonial markets."<sup>17</sup> Despite the best intentions of the British delegation, the conference was "confused and generally ill-tempered,"<sup>18</sup> a sentiment no doubt due in large part to the aggravation of the Irish delegation comprised of Fianna Fáil republicans emboldened by their electoral victory just months prior. In regard to the Anglo-Irish divide, the conference at Ottawa marked a watershed in the Economic War—a "conflict" fought between an increasingly distracted British government and an electorally-emboldened Fianna Fáil.

It is a rather difficult task to summarize the origins and the nature of the Economic War between Ireland and Britain, for the conflict represented an attempt to rectify to a long-simmering debate regarding annuity payments. Beginnings with its

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<sup>16</sup> "The Conscience Test Must Be Removed," *Irish Press*, 9 April 1932, 1. The general consensus was that of hesitant support of the Irish cause, but distaste regarding the timing of Fianna Fáil's effort to remove the Oath.

<sup>17</sup> D.K. Fieldhouse, "The Metropolitan Economics of Empire," in *The Oxford history of the British Empire, Volume IV The Twentieth Century*, eds., Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 90.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

inception, Fianna Fáil sought to end the payments of the land annuities to Britain—payments by Irish farmers on loans granted by the myriad land acts passed between 1891 and 1909. Terence Dooley notes that the “annuities question allowed de Valera to link once again the land question with Irish nationalism.”<sup>19</sup> Further, the annuity question justified Fianna Fáil’s economic self-sufficiency and protectionist policies to be advanced from party rhetoric to national endeavor. The so-called “war” comprised of legislative action including British duties on Irish imports as well as Irish duties on coal and other British goods. Writing in 1934, Henry Harrison, O.B.E. observed:

‘Economic War’ is trade war and, as such, something of a contradiction. It is waged not by successful trade operations, but by the destruction and suicide of trade. Trade is a human activity resting upon the incentive of mutual advantage. The usual trade or ‘economic war’ arises out of a conflict as to the apportionment of that mutual advantage between the respective trading communities, and is marked by its diminution pending reconciliation. But a trade or economic war, waged to achieve a non-trading or non-economic purpose, involves inevitably a lavish cutting-off of domestic noses in order to spite foreign faces. Mutual loss instead of mutual benefit is pursued in the pious hope that it will prove more painful and more dangerous to one’s opponent than to oneself.

The economic war against the Irish Free State was started by Britain in July, 1932, with the enactment of the Irish Free State (Special Duties) Act, 1932, and the imposition of special import duties to be levied upon the Irish imports and upon Irish imports alone.<sup>20</sup>

Harrison later declared Ireland the initial victor in the conflict—at least in the short-term—but his most keen observation comes from the war as being a purely political conflict.

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<sup>19</sup> Terence Dooley, *“The Land for the People”*: *The Land Question in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2004), 100.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Harrison, *The Anglo-Irish Economic War of 1932-1934. The Game of “Beggar-My-Neighbour” Who Wins?* (London: The Irish News and Information Bureau, 1934).

The Economic War with England is a central example of party policy that was rooted in nationalist aims. Although the Economic War and its core issue regarding annuity payments owed to England had rhetorical origins in early Sinn Féin policy, the “war” began in earnest shortly after the Ottawa Conference. Using the private correspondence of Sean T. O’Ceallaigh<sup>21</sup> as a guide, it appeared as if the British were willing to make economic concessions, so long as Ireland chose not to pursue its aggressive political agenda. It is thus clear that the whole sequence of events was politicized so as to be a key component of Fianna Fáil’s economic rhetoric. The sticking point between the two sides was indeed political, thus enabling the economic split to fester as the decade wore on, and making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the political and economic questions. Further, this allowed de Valera and his followers to make a tariff issue into a larger, national issue of republicanizing Ireland, where economics, politics, and Irishness became intermeshed. Of course, other political groups, such as Sinn Féin, Saor Éire, and the Irish Labour Party, were largely constructed around economic aims. The question becomes, therefore, how was Fianna Fáil able to parlay its economic policy into political gain.

Writing from the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa on 8 August 1932, O’Kelly penned a letter marked “Personal & Confidential.” Although not explicit, it can be

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<sup>21</sup> In keeping with the policy of using Anglicized rather than Gaelicized names in the text, all future references to Sean T. O’Kelly shall use such associations, but when referring to his collection of papers at the National Library of Ireland, I shall maintain said entity’s usage. Sean T. O’Kelly (1882-1966) began his career as a Gaelic nationalist, serving as national secretary of the Gaelic League, and was a founding member of Sinn Féin. O’Kelly was imprisoned for his role in the Easter Rising, and after siding with the anti-Treaty side, he travelled to the United States as envoy for de Valera, returning in 1926 to be a founding member of Fianna Fáil. After the 1932 election, O’Kelly served as Cabinet Minister for Public Health, Vice-President of the Executive Council, as well as Tánaiste (Deputy Taoiseach). Patrick Maume, “Seán Thomas O’Kelly,” *Dictionary, Volume 7*, 615-19.



assumed that the letter was intended for de Valera, as it is similar in scope and tone to others written at the same time. In the letter, O’Kelly sought to give a “brief resume of my impressions of the discussions with Stanley Baldwin and John Thomas<sup>22</sup>, as far as they have gone.”<sup>23</sup> The ensuing letter detailing diplomatic maneuverings revealed a certain level of understanding between the representatives of Ireland and Britain regarding the political considerations of their economic dispute. In reference to the Oath, O’Kelly implied that the British were willing to bury the issue assuming that Fianna Fáil suppressed its republican/nationalistic efforts. O’Kelly wrote that in his talks with British diplomats “the question of the Oath was never once mentioned,” and “perhaps it may be no harm to mention also that one night at dinner a couple of weeks ago, Mrs. Runciman, wife of the British Minister, said to [Sean] Lemass that they (the British) did not care a damn about the Oath, but that they did not intend to let us get away with the land Annuities.”<sup>24</sup> The implication was that the British were willing to acquiesce to Fianna Fáil’s political efforts, thus demonstrating that the symbolic importance of the Oath was more of an Irish concern, but that the practical matter of the annuities mattered more to the British.

In the same letter, O’Kelly sought to convey Britain’s position in regard to the fight over tariffs and the land annuities. Referring to a discussion with Baldwin, O’Kelly

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<sup>22</sup> At the time of the Economic War, Baldwin (1867-1947), served as Lord President of the Council. Most important, however, was Baldwin’s leadership of the British delegation at the Ottawa Conference. Stuart Ball, ‘Baldwin, Stanley, first Earl Baldwin of Bewdley (1867–1947)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2008, accessed 1 April 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Sean T. O’Kelly, unnamed and incomplete letter written, 8 August, 1932, Sean T. O’Ceallaigh Papers, NLI, Manuscripts Collection, MS 27,685 (1).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

wrote that the Tory leader considered that “this present dispute... was a ‘damn fool business’. He could not see any profit coming out of it on either side.”<sup>25</sup> He continued:

It seems to me, nevertheless [sic], that they feel that, now that the fight is on, they have us in a position where they can squeeze us to advantage for political purposes. I get the impression that they regret now their haste in imposing the tariffs, but they say to themselves, the unwise step having been taken, we may as well go forward now and get some profit out of it on the political side. It appears to me that, if they could get some even slight political profit of the nature of a statement or declaration by you that we would only progress nationally in a constitutional way, they would be prepared to make what we might regard as a reasonable settlement on the financial issues. Of course, I know that if they got the political statement they are looking for, they would immediately harden on the financial side. If, therefore, there be any thought of making a statement such as they would regard as satisfactory from their point of view, this should not be done until we had driven them to the utmost limit on the financial side. We should also, in my opinion, use the situation to settle the position of the Governor General to our satisfaction.<sup>26</sup>

There is rather clear evidence from this letter that both sides sought to take advantage of the worsening economic situation for their own political gains; for Ireland it meant the ability to make a greater push toward republicanism and the dissolution of annuity payments, and for the British, it appeared that they could use the economic conflict as a means to persuade Fianna Fáil to scale back this same political agenda.

The Economic War was a construct—that is to say, something that developed knowingly and purposefully, as opposed to something which was a long-developing, multi-faceted series of complex events—and part of the nationalist creation of Fianna Fáil. This is not to say, however, that Fianna Fáil “created” a conflict with Britain over

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. The governor-general was the British Crown’s representative in Ireland, as created by the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Fianna Fáil would often cite the governor-general as evidence of the Free State’s continued subjugation to Britain. After forming a government in 1932, Fianna Fáil sought to weaken, and eventually eliminate the office, finally succeeding in 1936 with the passage of the External Relations Act.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

land rights and annuity payments nor that Britain's imposition of tariffs on Irish cattle occurred at the direction of Fianna Fáil. Still, in another undated letter likely to have been written by O'Kelly at Ottawa he appeared confident that the British might be willing to negotiate the land issue with Fianna Fáil, but that they were hesitant to concede to the party's political aims. In the letter O'Kelly noted that "The British are much more interested in the Constitutional portion than the financial position... Again and again it was suggested that a deal over the Land Annuities, satisfactory won [sic], would be made if E[amon] deV[alera] would make a declaration on the political issue satisfactory to the British."<sup>27</sup> O'Kelly continued, noting that the British would concede the annuity issue if de Valera would accept a position commensurate with other members of the Commonwealth. Further, he wrote, "the main anxiety of [the] British on constitutional position arose from [de Valera's] statement that he would seek [a] mandate for [a] Republic at [the next] Election."<sup>28</sup> Even here, we find the fundamental and immutable link between Fianna Fáil's economic and political agendas. Indeed, the two were intermeshed and mutually inclusive.

In a letter dated 25 July 1932, D. O'Donovan commented on the strengthening of Ireland's position in the nascent economic conflict with England.<sup>29</sup> He noted:

It is astonishing to hear within so short a time so many people express the fear that England will agree to unrestricted arbitration. There is a growing feeling that we are strong enough to take an uncompromising stand: accept England's last decision as final; apply the annuities and other moneys to defensive and

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<sup>27</sup> Undated, handwritten letter written during the Ottawa Economic Conference, O'Ceallaigh Papers, NLI, MC, MS 27,685 (1).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Although the O'Donovan is never fully identified, the letter might have been written by the future economist John O'Donovan, who would become O'Kelly's private secretary in 1935. Joseph McNabb, "John O'Donovan," *Dictionary, Volume 7*, 421-22.

development purposes; and negotiate no more. That line would probably make your position in Ottawa untenable but I should imagine it is almost that already. *Comments on your attitude and work over there are very favourable.*<sup>30</sup>

The last line in this paragraph emphasizes that Fianna Fáil was taking a very calculated risk in its entering into a prolonged economic “battle” with England, with public opinion and electoral support being the prize. Indeed, there was the matter of principle in retaining the annuity payments, but in terms of electoral popularity and the overall thrust toward an independent state, such a premeditated position was far more tenable with the knowledge of electoral support. Further support for the party’s stance regarding the annuities was the knowledge that England had no desire to engage with Ireland beyond the effort to prevent it from leaving the Commonwealth to form an independent state. In the same letter, O’Donovan wrote: “Judging by my own contacts *I think the main fear is that England will climb down too soon*—before we get under way the defensive measures from which greater hardening of feeling and many at home regard this as a providential opportunity to achieve a real unity.”<sup>31</sup> In light of the conflict being waged as a means to build and expand Fianna Fáil policy, the party sought the issue to remain at the fore of the public’s attention. After all, this *was* Fianna Fáil’s conflict.

While on board the *S.S. Laurentic* en route to Ottawa, O’Kelley had pondered Ireland’s goals at the conference, most notably the aggressive position of a policy of isolationism. In a letter addressed to “A hUachtaran a Chara<sup>32</sup>,” (de Valera) he weighed the consequences of policy on economic realities—another example of Fianna Fáil’s

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<sup>30</sup> D. O’Donovan, letter to Sean T. O’Kelly, 25 July 1932, O’Ceallaigh Papers, NLI, MS, MC 27,685 (1).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* The emphasis in the text is my own.

<sup>32</sup> Sean T. O’Kelly, undated letter to “A hUachtaran a Chara,” O’Ceallaigh Papers, NLI, MC, MS 27,685 (1).

break from the idealistic economic stances of Sinn Féin. However, like their former brethren, there was a clear concern regarding the viability of such an economic policy as a measure toward the advancement of an independent state. Again, the matter of public opinion and electoral concerns came to the fore. Regarding the the impact of British tariffs against Irish goods, O’Kelly wrote:

The great danger, of course, is the effect of the British action on public opinion. I suppose you have considered bringing the constitutional special powers clause into operation. If there is any deliberate attempt to produce a panic, it should be done, but consider first whether it would not appear a sign of weakness on our own part.

I think that the present situation, if right handled, can prove of permanent benefit to the Free State if our people are prepared to stick out the transition stage. We can alleviate hardship by the Relief expenditure already provided for any additional expenditure which can be made possible by a rearrangement on the Budget or, if necessary, by borrowing...The situation calls for wide powers of action and freedom of movement in the hands of the Government...<sup>33</sup>

Once more we find reference to the importance of a sustained conflict to the fortunes of de Valera’s party. Further, the correspondence between Ottawa and Dublin reveals a foundational policy that further wed economic strategy and nationalistic ambitions.

The concern with public response—seen in both the O’Donovan and O’Kelly letters—is similarly reflected in a cablegram written by de Valera, sent on 9 August 1932.

In it, he stated:

The Treaty or Secession not involved in Government attitude towards the Oath and Empire Tribunal. Whether in favour of remaining within the Commonwealth or not Government attitude towards Oath and Empire Tribunal would be the same.

The future will depend on the state of public opinion within Ireland. Given a free choice between a united Ireland within the Commonwealth in a position of full co-equality with Britain and a separate independent Republic, it would be difficult

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

to prophesy what the people's decision would be... With Ireland as an Independent Republic I believe that desire is more likely to be realised than with Ireland forced against its will to be part of the Empire. This personal view, however, matters little. It is the public opinion of the future that will count and no man can tell in advance what that will be.<sup>34</sup>

In this short excerpt, one can glean the duplicitous, if not genius, position taken by de Valera. In response to Britain's balking at Fianna Fáil's push toward a republic, de Valera offers the Irish position as being out of his hands; instead the decision was to be made by the electorate. In diplomatic terms de Valera was forging a new style of abstention, stating that the matter of the Republic should be left to the machinations of the Free State democracy—a democracy constructed in part by the British. In the meantime, Fianna Fáil would still maintain its intransigence regarding the annuity payments. Meanwhile—as will be demonstrated in the chapter below—de Valera and his party would use an electoral rhetoric rooted in manhood for securing Ireland's independence via the destruction of the Free State. Simply put, de Valera was having it both ways: on the one hand, he was the head of a nationalistic party founded on the principle that an independent state as its ultimate aim diplomatically, and on the other, he was playing coy with the British regarding the possible declaration of a republic.

Such sentiment is supported by a telegram sent from the Dominions Office to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canada, dated 15 August 1932. The lengthy cipher revealed that the British were spying on de Valera's wife, but more importantly that the Irish President was unwilling to place the issue of a republic as an explicit goal in terms of Ireland's relations with England. This was evidenced by the

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<sup>34</sup> "Esteró," cablegram, 9 August 1932. O'Ceallaigh Papers, NLI, MC, MS 27,685 (1). It is worth noting that the cablegram was signed "Esteró" despite the obvious fact that it was written by de Valera.

author, who claimed: “Generally, de Valera desired friendship with [the] United Kingdom; although personally in favour of [a] Republic he was not prepared to lead the people in demand for one while Great Britain regarded it as an hostile act. His desire for [a] republic ‘did not affect relationship of I.F.S. to the British Commonwealth.’”<sup>35</sup>

This brief analysis of the perceptions of Anglo-Irish relations at the Ottawa Economic Conference—at the very beginning of the Economic War—demonstrates three points: first that the Irish instigated the Economic War with the knowledge that Britain was willing to concede the annuities so long as Ireland did not actively seek an independent republic; second, the Economic War was a Fianna Fáil construct aimed at further advancing their nationalistic aims; and third, that such a position was a diplomatic gamble rooted in a larger effort to attain electoral gain. All told, these factors contributed to the seemingly aggressive economic policy that Fianna Fáil would advocated as part of its larger socio-political rhetoric. Most important, however, was the fact that Fianna Fáil headed into a prolonged economic conflict based on the conceit that Britain was willing to concede many of the points for which Ireland was “fighting.” Having established operable boundaries in terms of its relations with England, Fianna Fáil was free to pursue a hyper-masculanized economic nationalist thrust. Stated simply, this “conflict” with Britain was a calculated gamble.

### **A Logical Attack on the Annuities**

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<sup>35</sup> Copy of cipher telegram from the Dominions Office to the High Commissioner in Canada for the United Kingdom. No. 548. Received 10 p.m. 15 August [1932], O’Ceallaigh Papers, NLI, MC, MS 27,685 (1). Regarding the information gathered on Sinead de Valera, the British based their findings on a sworn statement on a Miss Ellis, who was a “member of Society of Friends and a friend of Mrs. De Valera.”

Having triumphantly deflected claims of being harbingers of renewed violence and conflict with Great Britain, Fianna Fáil now restarted its fight against the land annuities. The annuities totaled about £5 million per year, and, Kevin O'Rourke points out, were a significant part of the Free State's "GNP of roughly £150 million annually."<sup>36</sup> In language similar to the logical and pacifistic tomes used in its early years, Fianna Fáil couched its rhetorical battle against the annuities with appeals to law, national tradition, and reason. Distinguishing Fianna Fáil's public discourse on the annuity issue was an underlying sense of manly activism and guardianship that would become increasingly evident throughout the party's economic efforts in the years between 1932 and 1938. Instilled with confidence that resulted from its experience at Ottawa, the party aggressively—but cautiously—sought to sell the Economic War to the Irish people.

Published late in 1932, Fianna Fáil issued a pamphlet that laid out the logic for its opposition to these payments. This document made clear the ties between the party's nationalist platform and its economic policies. Further, one finds that the party's socio-cultural ideal was so interlocked with its economic policy that one aspect served the other, so that no one single element could be removed from the larger effort. For example, refusing to pay the annuities was presented as both a simple matter of principle and as a stimulus to native Irish industry. Continuing on this trajectory, Fianna Fáil argued that this money would be a boon to the Irish worker, giving jobs to the Irish male, and—as seen in the previous chapter—providing an outlet for the ideal Irish republican woman. There was also significance to the fact that Fianna Fáil was suggesting that they

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<sup>36</sup> Kevin O'Rourke, "Burn Everything but Their Coal: The Anglo-Irish Economic War of the 1930s," *The Journal of Economic History* 51, no. 2 (June 1991): 357.



could turn the annuity “tax” into Irish capital. Stated simply, this rhetorical fight was both self-serving and self-aggrandizing.

Such sentiments are reflected in the opening paragraphs of the imaginatively titled “Ireland’s Right to the Land Annuities,”:

The amount paid to Britain in respect of Land Annuities is £3,000,000 a year. The total amount so paid since the Treaty is just £20,000,000. These Annuities are not legally or morally due to Britain. ‘Northern Ireland’ retains the Annuities arising in the Six Counties. [The] Free State is equally entitled to do so.

We cannot afford to make Britain a free gift of £3,000,000 a year. To do so means continued emigration for our young people. It means unemployment and impoverishment for those who remain at home. **If this money were kept at home it would be sufficient to relieve agricultural land and buildings of the entire burden of local rates** (stated by Mr. Blythe to be £2,000,000), and there would be £1,000,000 a year left for general economic development.<sup>37</sup>

This passage implies that payment of the annuities was an act of capitulation by those who paid them—namely Cumann na nGaedheal—and also an act of betrayal to the Irish people in the sense that it contributed to the centuries-old problems of emigration and domestic poverty.

Whereas Cumann na nGadheal did not necessarily condone the payment, they did take a dramatically different approach to the annuities. For Cosgrave and his ministers, the annuities were viewed more as an obligation whose repayment would ensure Ireland’s future solvency. Such was seen in Cumann na nGaedheal’s *Fight Points for Cumann-na-nGaedheal Speakers and Workers, General Election 1932*, which explained the annuities thusly:

Land purchase is therefore a purely business affair governed by the same principles of morality and good faith as obtain in the cases of similar transactions

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<sup>37</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Ireland’s Right to the Land Annuities*, c. 1932, Seán MacEntee Papers, UCDA, P67/134 (51).

in everyday commercial life. The farmer received the loan to buy out his farm from private individuals who took up the Land Stock guaranteed by the British Government and is bound to repay the loan first as he would be bound to repay a loan from his Bank for the Agricultural Credit Corporation.

The land annuities, in other words, represent debts which purchasers under the Land Code in this country have contracted to pay other individuals **for value received. They are not a tribute like German Reparations of a contribution to any Government.**<sup>38</sup>

Far from being the weak-willed supplicants to British whims, Cumann na nGaedheal's position more or less was grounded in maintaining the Free State's solvency—not to mention the fear of upsetting Ireland's largest trade partner—and any position otherwise would represent a “Communitistic Proposal.”<sup>39</sup> Regarding Fianna Fáil's policy of retention, Cumann na nGaedheal held the position that “nothing could do more to destroy the credit of the country, the national character of the people, or their confidence in each other, than the proposal to evade the payment of a debt, honourably and openly entered into.”<sup>40</sup> To back out of such payments would be irrational and tantamount to “communism,” or at the very least, a basis for renewed conflict with England.

For a party that willingly entered the legal political constructs of the Free State, Fianna Fáil's approach to the annuities was decidedly political. Such an issue was raised

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<sup>38</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal, *Fight Points for Cumann-na-nGaedheal Speakers and Workers, General Election 1932* (Dublin: Cumann-na-nGaedheal, 1932), 20.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Cumann na nGaedheal claimed that “The first suggestion for the non-payment of Land Annuities seems to have come from a gentleman by the name of Mr. Peadar O'Donnell at a joint meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 1926, of a body calling itself ‘the second Dail,’ and another body calling itself ‘Comwhailre na DTeachtai,’ at which Mr. De Valera and his colleagues of the Civil War were present.” O'Donnell was one of the leading leftists in the IRA. His suggestion *was* apparently the germinal point for de Valera's picking upon the annuities issue. See Timothy M. O'Neill, “Handing Away the Trump Card? Peadar O'Donnell, Fianna Fáil, and the Non-Payment of Land Annuities Campaign, 1926-32,” *New Hibernia Review*, 12, vol. 1 (Spring/Earrach 2008): 19-40.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 110.

in one particular section of the pamphlet introduced with the question “Free State Ministers ask why Fianna Fáil does not proceed against them in the Courts for illegally exporting the Annuities.”<sup>41</sup> Given their willingness to enter the political fray of the Free State Dáil, it is somewhat surprising that the party would invalidate the machinations of the entity within which they operated. However as seen above, Fianna Fáil often couched its contrarianism in democratic terms. In response to its own question, the position of Fianna Fáil regarding its extra-legal stance on the annuities was stated as follows:

The answer is that they [the Cumann na nGaedheal ministers] and their Parliamentary majority are the makers of the law, and they have safeguarded themselves by inserting in the Land Act of 1923 a provision entitling them to hand over the Annuities. While the provision remains, no redress can be obtained against them in the Courts. Section 12 of the Land Act of 1923 must be repealed; but it will never be repealed until Cumann na nGaedheal and its supporters are placed in a minority in the Free State Parliament.

*Fianna Fáil’s appeal, therefore, is not to the Courts, but to the electorate.*<sup>42</sup>

However dubious this position might be, the importance of this stance lay in the manner in which Fianna Fáil sought to invalidate all aspects of Cumanna na nGaedheal’s policies—a position that was promoted by the party from its inception, most notably in the arguments regarding entrance into the Dáil. Although undated, Fianna Fáil’s pamphlet seemed largely intent on justifying actions underway or about to be taken—such as the holding of the annuities, as well as references to Cumann na nGaedheal, which would cease to exist after merging with the Blueshirts and the National Centre Party to form Fine Gael in 1933—indicate that these documents were published after the 1932 election but before the January 1933 election.

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<sup>41</sup> “Ireland’s Right to the Annuities.”

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. The emphasis is my own.

Despite their rejection of the validity of the Free State Constitution and its legal frameworks, Fianna Fáil nonetheless appealed to a legality that transcended such constraints. For example, it is stated in the pamphlet that

Six of the most imminent [sic]lawyers in Ireland (including five senior counsel), some after months of deliberations, have publicly stated their opinion that the case for the retention of the Land Purchase Annuities in the Free State is legally sound. The legal advisers of the Government have not replied. Their silence is an admission of the weakness of the Government's case. Unable to answer the legal case, Cumann na nGaedheal is trying to confuse the issue by raising cries of 'embezzlement' and 'repudiation of just debts.' There is no embezzlement in retaining what is legally and morally one's own.<sup>43</sup>

While labeling Cumann na nGaedheal as silent and weak—hallmarks of passivity and timidity—Fianna Fáil also advocated passive-aggressive means to retain the annuities, in light of their opponents' acquiescence to the will of the British. As the manly embodiment of Irish nationalism, Fianna Fáil grounded its arguments in legal opinion, further exemplifying its departure from its Sinn Féin past. Additionally, Fianna Fáil was not advocating the *end* of annuity payments *per se*, but rather the party sought to change the bank to which the monies would ultimately be deposited. Thus, for the landholder, the annuity issue was being reduced to a choice between paying “us” or “them.”

Adding greater complexity to its argument was the usage of parliamentary commissions to justify the party's cause. Such was exemplified by the following passage that reads, in part:

Two British Government Commissions—the Childers of 1896 and the Primrose Committee of 1912—unanimously reported that Ireland had been grossly overtaxed for many years. The Primrose Committee (appointed when Home Rule was in contemplation) recommended that the proposed Irish Parliament should retain the entire proceeds of Irish taxation, and that Ireland should receive from the British Government £3,000,000 a year to pay the existing Old Age Pensions[.]

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

The Committee recommended a further British contribution if this were not found sufficient.<sup>44</sup>

Significant in this argument is the notion that the Irish people owed no debt because of their having overpaid on earlier taxation, enough that the advances given to buy farms was already “Irish” money. Once again, the implication was that Cosgrave’s party acted as enablers for Britain’s duplicity regarding the draining of wealth from Ireland, not to mention the monies being robbed from the elderly. Lastly, it is worth noting that on the first page of the pamphlet Fianna Fáil presented a laundry list of items that the retention of annuities would pay for. The party claimed, for instance, that the monies saved could solve unemployment, aid in the distribution of land, end emigration, provide for the infirm and elderly, and undo any other problem primarily attributed to the British presence in Ireland. Reading such a list, one wonders, just how thin Fianna Fáil was willing to spread these monies. However, reality and political rhetoric are never mutually inclusive.

This choice of “us” or “them” underscored the notion that the retention of the land annuities would undo what was presented as a centuries-long rape of the soil of Ireland by the British invader. The pamphlet reads, in part:

**The Land Purchase Annuities are unquestionably our property.** On the grounds of natural justice we have a right to them as part of the revenue of the land of our own country.

We have a right to them as partial restitution for the over-taxation of Ireland by Britain (which during the period between the Act of Union and the Treaty amounted to several times the capital value of the annuities), as compensation for the destruction of Irish industries and for the various other financial and economic losses we have suffered as a result of English rule...

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. See also, L. Perry Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland, 1880-1892: A Study in Conservative Unionism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

It is only just that Great Britain should pay for land purchase in Ireland. In the past she confiscated the land of Ireland to reward the soldiers and adventurers who served her against Ireland. When she bought out the interests of the landlords she was merely changing into cash for the descendants the rewards which she had previously given to their ancestors. That is entirely her affair, as the British Parliament admitted in the Home Rule Act of 1920. It is fantastic to maintain that Ireland is under a moral obligation to recoup England for the wages of her Cromwellian and Williamite soldiers. That, however, is, in effect, the contention of Cumann na nGaedheal.<sup>45</sup>

The retaking and rebuilding of Ireland are recurrent themes in the arguments presented here. The appeal to Irish nationalism that was such an elemental and foundational aspect of Fianna Fáil was evident as well. De Valera's party was clearly making the case for the undoing of the wrongs of history—the resetting of the primordial order so as to realign the natural trajectory of Irish history blocked by Cumann na nGaedheal.

Returning to the legal arguments that comprised the bulk of the pamphlet elicits two responses: first, Fianna Fáil was rhetorically positioning Britain and Cumann na nGaedheal as conspirators working against Irish interests, portraying one as colonial aggressors, and the other as passively enabling the prolongation of the colonial condition, thereby creating a vacuum of masculinity which de Valera's party could fill; secondly, Fianna Fáil vacillated between positions that either validated or invalidated the legal frameworks of the Free State in a manner that best suited their needs at a given time. This latter point recapitulated the party's reluctance to portray themselves as ardent revolutionaries intent on declaring a new Irish republic at the Ottawa Conference. Played either way, Fianna Fáil found its position bolstered by the electoral victories—however narrow—in February 1932 and again in January 1933.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. The emphasis in this excerpt reflects the original text.

In regard to the Cumann na nGaedheal-British axis as advanced by Fianna Fáil, the so-called “Ultimate Financial Settlement” between Ernest Blythe—Free State Minister for Finance—and the Chancellor of the British Exchequer, Winston Churchill was tantamount to an act of treason. Citing the Boundary Agreement of 1925, which “relieved of liability in respect of the Public Debt of the United Kingdom,”<sup>46</sup> therefore cancelling Ireland’s obligation to pay the annuities to Britain was meant to portray Cumann na nGaedheal as passive and ineffective. However, in what was portrayed as an act of villainous treason, Blythe and Churchill secretly forged an agreement that ensured the payment of the annuities to Britain. Additionally, it was claimed “Mr. Blythe’s agreement was kept secret from the Free State Parliament for eight months after it was signed, and even then Mr. Blythe refused to give the Senate access to the documents, or in any way facilitate enquiry into the transaction.”<sup>47</sup> Therefore, according to Fianna Fáil, the promise to pay the annuities was done in a manner that undermined the Irish cause and gave further proof that Cumann na nGaedheal was working against the interests of the people of Ireland. This supports Girvin’s claim that “Fianna Fáil’s charge against Cumann na nGaedheal was that their economic policies, however well intentioned, allowed economic policy to be formulated outside the state.”<sup>48</sup> The pamphlet concluded with the following exhortation underscored by bold typeface: **“Mr. Blythe and his colleagues may believe to be bound by the ‘Ultimate Financial Settlement.’ You are not. That Dail has never ratified it. No future Government will be bound by it. The**

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Brian Girvin, *Between Two Worlds, Politics and Economy in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989), 89.

**Land Annuities are rightfully ours, and Fianna Fail [sic] stands for keeping them in Ireland.**<sup>49</sup>

Fianna Fáil's aesthetic push toward the reclamation of Irish land for the Irish was often accompanied by Fintan Lalor's refrain, "Ireland Free, Ireland Irish." It should not be construed, however, that Fianna Fáil was the originator of land-based nationalist agitation, for Ireland has a long history of land agitation. Rather, Fianna Fáil was indeed singular to the Irish Free State in its ability to construct a large, nationally based political program that enveloped all aspects of Irish society. All of which was buttressed by the socio-economic condition of the interwar years, not to mention the democratic frameworks of the Saorstát. Indeed Fianna Fáil was aided and emboldened by this long tradition of reclamation efforts to redistribute land to the people of Ireland. As Timothy G. McMahon notes, the issue of land reclamation was part of a larger, "revolution of rising expectations...that fueled the push for full separation from the United Kingdom."<sup>50</sup> Whereas much of what McMahon argues took place during a period in which popular, "bottom-up" movements were a larger threat—and indeed, more palpable—Fianna Fáil seized these energies, enveloping the cause into its larger, all-encompassing nationalist schmea. As McMahon writes, "Fianna Fáil party seized upon the [land] issue, reconfiguring yet again how one defined 'the land for the people' in modern Ireland, and deploying the land issue for its own political gain."<sup>51</sup> Like previous nationalist

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<sup>49</sup> "Ireland's Right to the Annuities". Emphasis reflects the original text.

<sup>50</sup> Timothy G. McMahon, "The Land for the People: The Irish Revolution as a Revolution of Rising Expectations," in *Power and Popular Culture in Modern Ireland: Essays in Honour of James S. Donnelly, Jr.*, eds. Michael de Nie and Sean Farrell (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), 174.

<sup>51</sup> McMahon, "Land," 188.



movements such as the National League and the Sinn Féin of the 1910s, land reclamation served as a central point of contention, but as will be shown below, it was not the only *raison d'être* for the party, for the elevation of industrial development and economic growth with positive results for social conditions in Ireland.

### **“They Call This Progress”—The Aesthetics of the Economic War**

To push an assertive, masculine economic nationalism proved advantageous to many political movements in the wake of the Great War and Great Depression.<sup>52</sup> In an Irish context, Fianna Fáil offered an alternative to the liberal/Marxian framework with a blistering attack on the status quo, which the party portrayed as yet another Anglo-Free State construct. Operating as iconoclasts of sorts, Fianna Fáil’s activist economic rhetoric can be viewed both as a means to rescue Ireland from stagnation as well as a final push to break the centuries-long supplication to England. In a study of the electoral ephemerae of Fianna Fáil, three themes become evident: a dialectical discourse in which the party’s activist stance contrasted with the passivity of Cumann na nGaedheal’s free market capitalism; the portrayal of Fianna Fáil as dynamic agents of growth marked by the party’s embodiment of the male; and finally, the party as the protectors of Ireland—both symbolic and literal—from the trappings of depression and colonialism. Within this rhetorical push, one found conversations on land, the fetishization of both Irish products and manly work, imagery of insemination and reforestation, glorification of industry coupled (ironically) with a romantic view of Irish pastoralism, and the effort to heal and offer shelter for the sick and the weak. As was the case with many fascistic entities, there

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<sup>52</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 12-13.

occurred a dualistic glorification of both the past and the future—an embrace of modernity built upon the glorification of a racial primitivism. Like the Fascist’s embrace of Futurism and its glorification of speed, industry, and Roman iconography, Fianna Fáil trumpeted the glories of progress and movement whilst maintaining the backward gaze toward Ireland’s mythical racial heritage. While the party did not engage in the martial vagaries seen in Italy, Germany, or Spain, there was a kinship of sorts in how Continental parties and Fianna Fáil developed—that is, they were products of new thinking that rejected the tenets of the previous age, but more importantly, were better served to deal with the anxieties specific to the age in which they were created. Fianna Fáil was built upon a narrative in which past and present coalesced, so that progress was justified by its racial uniqueness.

### **Fianna Fáil Frames the Economic Discourse—Active v. Passive**

A handbill from 1927 offers an introduction to one of the many underlying themes present in the party’s economic message—that Fianna Fáil was a party seeking to move the nation forward, advancing beyond the stagnation wrought by imperialism and capitalism. The handbill featured text divided in two columns; on the left was the header 1918, and on the right was 1927. “In 1918,” the text read, “The Irish People were faced by a terrible Menace: Conscription. They looked to Eamon de Valera to save them. And he did.”<sup>53</sup> To the right of this simplistic over-statement was a rather boastful yet

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<sup>53</sup> Unnamed Fianna Fáil Election Handbill from 1927, Archives of the Fianna Fáil Party, UCDA, P176/827 (28).

optimistic claim: “In 1927 The Irish People are again faced by a terrible Menace: Bankruptcy and Starvation. They are looking to Eamon de Valera to save them. And he will.”<sup>54</sup> This is but one example of the economic rhetoric created by the party to emphasize Fianna Fáil as a bulwark against financial calamity. In terms of economic policy, during its first decade Fianna Fáil—cast itself as a dynamic, indeed, manly, agent of growth and revival in stark contrast to the inactive, passive Cumann na nGaedheal. A similar message pervaded still another handbill from the same period. Appealing to the “Workers, Fathers of Unemployed Sons and Daughters,” the pamphlet presented readers with two choices: on one side you had Cumann na nGaedheal as represented by P.J. McGilligan, Free State Minister for Industry and Commerce, who was quoted as saying: “It is not the function of the Dáil to provide work, and the sooner that is realised the better...people may have to die in this country in starvation.”<sup>55</sup> On the other side, under the heading “Party of Work,” Fianna Fáil was represented by a quote from de Valera, which read, “I hold it is the primary duty of a modern state to ensure that every man who is able to and willing to work will have work, so that he may earn his daily bread.”<sup>56</sup> As the economic conditions in Ireland deteriorated—both from historical forces and those aggravated by the Depression begun in 1929, the passive/active dialectic soon became the central, if not dominant, component of Fianna Fáil’s self-portrayal. Examining this dialectic sheds light on the alternative economic structures embraced by de Valera’s party.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Unnamed Fianna Fáil Election Handbill, Archives of the Fianna Fáil Party, UCDA, P176/827 (22). Although undated, it is likely that this handbill comes from 1927, as the rhetoric and choice of quotes is consistent with what Fianna Fáil advanced in the 1927 elections.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

An undated and uncategorized Fianna Fáil handbill for James Geoghegan in Longford-Westmeath demonstrates how the party used land redistribution to portray Cumann na nGaedheal as timid in its efforts to reclaim Ireland from the British. Extending the land issue beyond the question of annuities, the republicans attempted to portray land reclamation and distribution as an ongoing project to be undertaken with immediacy and aggression. Thus, Geoghegan's opponent was well-intentioned but all together too slow to act. The handbill featured the title "They Call This Progress," and it was filled with examples of how Cumann na nGaedheal's torpid stance to land redistribution had impacted the farmers of Longford-Westmeath.<sup>57</sup> Raising the issue of untenanted land, the handbill notes "From 1923 to 1929 the number of Acres acquired and distributed was...17,374. *The number of Acres yet to be distributed is...32,338. So it will take the Land Commission 21 years to vest all the Tenanted Land, and 11 years to divide the Untenanted Land in Longford-Westmeath.*"<sup>58</sup> Regarding tenanted land, the handbill claimed that under Cumann na nGaedheal only 16,268 acres were vested, while 57,585 were yet unvested, costing the farmers of Longford-Westmeath £3,807 per annum.<sup>59</sup> If one were to analyze only this portion of the handbill, much could be said regarding the characterization of Cumann na nGaedheal and its inability to initiate genuine land reformation. However, the handbill specified the amount of money being lost each year by Geoghegan's potential constituents. Its text continued, "The Cosgrave Government think nothing of £3,807. They give the Governor-General £3,000 to their

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<sup>57</sup> Fianna Fáil, *They Call This Progress*, NLI EC. Although undated, this handbill is likely to have been produced for the 1932 election, if not an earlier by-election.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. The emphasis reflects that of the original text.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

army officers to become Cumann na nGaedheal candidates. They give Lord Glenavy a pension of £3,692 6s. 1d. per year. They give the Automobile Association £3,000 to cover its losses on motor races in Phoenix Park.”<sup>60</sup> In this short passage we find charges that Cumann na nGaedheal was using what could have been land rent monies to bolster its electoral support, as well as to pay for the pensions of a *British lord*, not to mention support for the decidedly un-Gaelic motor races in Dublin. The handbill concluded with this damning statement:

What does that Government care whether the Longford-Westmeath Farmers lose £3,807 a year through the shameful laziness of the Land Commission[?]  
*If you think Longford-Westmeath can do something better with £3,807 a year than having it stolen by the Land Commission.*

WORK AND VOTE FOR JAMES GEOGHEGAN  
 THE FIANNA FAIL CANDIDATE<sup>61</sup>

Essentially, two characterizations of Cumann na nGaedheal can be culled from this handbill: first, that the party was slow, lazy, inactive—in a word, passive; second, that the party blithely wasted Irish monies on British interests. Both were acts that were deemed intolerable to the active Fianna Fáil candidate.

The transition of land ownership from “British” control to Irish ownership was a centerpiece of Fianna Fáil’s early economic platform. In another election flyer produced that same year, Fianna Fáil sought to highlight what it felt was the slow-paced effort to reacquire and redistribute the land for the Irish citizenry, as well as to promote its agenda in advance of the January 1933 election:

The total area of land acquired by the Land Commission during the year ended March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1931, amounted to 38,570 acres, while the land in process of

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

acquisition on that date amounted to 139,058 acres, and the area of land inspected reached 232,147 acres. Hence, it is clear that the present rate of progress it will take the Land Commission ten years to complete the acquisition of the lands now on their hands.

But there were over 413,000 acres which were the subject of enquiry by the Land Commission on the same date...[and] at the present rate of progress the Land Commission will not have completed their present programme and divided the untenanted land available in less than 21 years.<sup>62</sup>

The flyer goes on to note that beginning in 1929 Fianna Fáil had introduced legislation to appoint a day to finalize the tenancies, but the bill was rebuffed by Free State Ministers as being impossible. However, once in government, Fianna Fáil—according to the handbill—was able to streamline the process, resulting in a “speedy vesting of the lands [so] that to-day practically all the tenants in the Twenty-six Counties have their lands vested and have been placed on an annuity basis with reductions from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. in their annual payments. Fianna Fail can speed up the work of acquisition and division in the same way.”<sup>63</sup> The message was clear that the party intended to rapidly and actively return ownership of land to the Irish citizenry, not to mention reduce and eventually eliminate the annuity to Britain. This promise to build upon what they had already done was best summarized by a refrain oft-repeated throughout the period between 1932 and 1937: “Put out the Laggards. Vote Fianna Fáil.”<sup>64</sup>

The notion of active land reclamation coalesced with the party’s economic intransigence on the annuity issue. Further, the party promoted a rhetoric that not only encouraged the reclamation of land, but, when combined with the protectionism of the

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<sup>62</sup> *Another generation before Land Purchase is Completed!*, Undated Fianna Fáil election flyer, MacEntee Papers, UCDA, P67/350 (25). Although undated, the UCD Archives list the document as being from circa 1932.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

Economic War, a sense of industriousness in regard to the usage of the land. In other words, Fianna Fáil was not just advocating for the reclamation of land, but it would also aggressively promote legislation that facilitated its usage. For example, an article/party advertisement appeared in the June 1937 edition of the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*. Titled “We Couldn’t—But We Did,” it proclaimed that “in 1931 we ‘couldn’t mill our own flour’—but With [sic] the development of our mills under a Government which said ‘WE MUST’—the flour imports fell from £1,662,402 [in 1931] to £74,816 [in 1936].”<sup>65</sup> Most notable was the claim that it was the Fianna Fáil government that was largely responsible for the construction of modern flourmills, which resulted in 4,014 mill workers in 1936—an increase from the 2,417 employed in 1931.<sup>66</sup> Underscoring these claims was the exclamation that “Fianna Fail Will Keep The Wheels Turning!”<sup>67</sup> Present throughout the article were examples of activism and aggressive tactics in regard to the Irish economy. For instance, there appeared a series of points noting “Eleven Other Benefits to Farmers,” most of which were designed to counter claims that the Economic War was damaging Irish agriculture and industry by stunting trade with England, the largest consumer of Irish-produced goods. This, the eleventh point, claimed that Fianna Fáil had actively pursued new markets in Germany and Belgium, and that “the export of cattle to these new markets had a beneficial effect on the market price for cattle as a whole by removing part of the surplus of exportable cattle at relatively high prices.”<sup>68</sup> Also highlighted were the benefits of land reclamation legislation which had increased acreage devoted to beet,

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<sup>65</sup> “We Couldn’t—But We Did,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 15.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

tobacco, potato, swine, and vegetable production, aided in large part to the reduction of the land annuities, giving “relief to the Farmers of over £2,000,000 each year.”<sup>69</sup> Further adding support to the agricultural-industrial nexus was the championing of a government-funded canning factory in Waterford that produced “canned meat in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the country, and such products as meat extracts, canned tongue, casings, etc., are also produced. . . The farmers are being relieved of old and useless cows which are being converted into meat meal at Roscrea.”<sup>70</sup> As far as can be seen, Fine Gael ceded to Fianna Fáil the leadership in the canned tongue market.

The notion of proactive, aggressive economic legislation falls in line with the third-way economic theories of John Maynard Keynes. A hallmark of Keynesian economics was the importance of an activist government “priming the pump” through aggressive policy. This sentiment was not lost upon Minister of Finance Seán MacEntee who highlighted the following phrase in his personal copy of Keynes’s *The Means to Prosperity*: “But in present circumstances this would be true of only a small proportion of the additional consumption, since the greater part of it could be provided without much change of price by home resources which are at present unemployed.”<sup>71</sup> MacEntee noted in the margins “Precisely why the fuller employment of men and machines. At present only partially employed.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> John Maynard Keynes, *The Means to Prosperity* (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1933), 10, UCDA, MacEntee Papers, P67/889.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.



As with all economic theories, there was a divergence between dogma and practice, as was seen in Keynes's comments regarding the situation in Ireland however positive his intonations.<sup>73</sup> As a result, Fianna Fáil defied categorization within the traditional modernist economic definitions of liberalism and socialism. By navigating the third way between capitalism and socialism, the party cherry-picked elements of both systems without having to raise the banner of either—a factor that contributed to the decline and marginalization of Cumann na nGaedheal and Saor Éire. Such a stance demonstrated that Fianna Fáil was not fearful of modernity; in fact, it was quite the opposite. The party, by embracing the third way between capitalism and socialism (as well as between liberal democracy and totalitarianism), was in the vanguard of the welfare states that developed in post-World War II Europe. While many nations, such as the United States with Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, embraced Keynesian-style policy as a means to combat economic depression, Fianna Fáil and its European counterparts used this approach as a means of nation-building, and, in the case of Ireland, as a unique means to dissolve its colonial ties.

Such is seen in another piece of party propaganda from the June 1936 edition of the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*. Encouraging readers to vote for the party's candidates, the article read in part "You have the choice of voting for a party most of whose policy is second-hand[,] Most of whose leaders are far from united in their views[;] or for a party

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<sup>73</sup> Ged Martin cites Keynes's lecture at University College, Dublin, where the economist "shocked some of his audience by expressing sympathy for Fianna Fáil economic policies. Although privately regarding the new government's drive to grow more wheat as 'insane', Keynes was attracted to its other developmental plans. He met de Valera, 'who impressed me distinctly favourably', and helped pave the way for a visit by Josiah Stamp, a retired senior British civil servant who was an expert of debt negotiations. Stamp in turn found de Valera 'very charming'." Ged Martin, "De Valera Imagined and Observed," in Keogh, *De Valera's Irelands*, 93.

with a definite policy and a record of achievement in *nation-building*. Your help is needed to complete the work.”<sup>74</sup> Implicit within this paragraph are a number of points, including the notion that the party’s opposition was incapable of providing the leadership necessary to increase Ireland’s independence. Most importantly, however, was the claim that Fianna Fáil was a party united in message, working for the entire nation and its implied destiny of complete independence. The message was that the party was working for the people and by the will of the people.

In the same article, Fianna Fáil trumpeted claims that it was responsible for “the building of an Industrial Arm”; placing “as many families as practicable on the Land”; “Re-Housing the Nation”; providing “Work or Maintenance for the Unemployed”; ensuring “The improvement of roads, drainage, water supplies...”; and finally, watching over “The control of prices of essential commodities.”<sup>75</sup> This last point had in fact been advocated at least as early as a party handbill from 1932 that read:

LISTEN!

While Free State Ministers creep over to England and in all humility, kneel down and beg for the rich man’s crumbs, Fianna Fail [sic] asks you to consider our own home market. Your Government has no power to regulate or demand a price on the British market. But the Dail [sic] can and must confine the home market to Irish agricultural produce. Further, if necessary, it can legislate for a fair price. If the Government creates a demand at home for fair-priced Irish produce (which it undoubtedly can) Fianna Fail [sic] knows that the Irish farmer will supply that demand!

And now P.T.O.!<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Untitled Fianna Fáil election propaganda, *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1936, 8.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Untitled Fianna Fáil election material, MacEntee Papers, UCDA, P67/350 (26). It is likely that the “P.T.O.” is short for Put Them Out—a reference to the refrain utilized in 1932 where Fianna Fáil encouraged voters to “Put the laggards out!”

For the reader of such propaganda there was no doubt about Fianna Fáil's commitment to activist economic policy, with top-down approaches that were part and parcel of its Keynesian leanings.

Moreover, the advocacy of manly, industrial work was a key element in Fianna Fáil's economic aesthetic. Elevating the status of the Irish worker while carefully not appearing to be Marxian classists, Fianna Fáil nevertheless forged a connection between the modern laborer and government policy. For the republicans, protecting the polity meant the construction of industry and reclamation of land, creating markets for Irish products and resulting in work for the men of Ireland. As seen in the previous chapter, Fianna Fáil sought to channel the energies of republican women as well, in order to reconstitute the notion of Irish femininity and to buttress the party's economic and political aims. In a similar fashion, Fianna Fáil fetishized notions of manly work and the value of labor to the Irish land and people.

An electoral flyer from 1932 addressed the unemployed of Ireland, claiming "There's work for you. Plenty. Right here at home in Ireland!"<sup>77</sup> Again, Fianna Fáil presented a circuitous logic in which work would make the man, the man would make the nation, and Fianna Fáil would make the work. Thus, in the very next line of the flyer one reads: "Making the clothes, growing the food, building the houses—doing a hundred other things for your fellow Irishmen—doing the work that is to-day being done for us by foreigners. We can do it all ourselves...You can do it!"<sup>78</sup> Once more, Fianna Fáil advanced a seamless and symbiotic policy in which the Irish male would produce the

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<sup>77</sup> Untitled Fianna Fáil electoral propaganda, MacEntee Papers, UCDA, P67/350/28. Although undated, it is clear that the flyer was intended for use in the 1932 general election.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. The emphasis is reflective of the document.

goods that the Irish woman—or the Belgian or the German—would purchase to stock their Irish home or to feed their children. The next line of the flyer erased any doubt about who would be providing such work: “THERE IS NO WAY OF ENDING UNEMPLOYMENT EXCEPT BY PROVIDED WORK. THAT’S THE SURE POLICY OF FIANNA FÁIL.”<sup>79</sup>

Fianna Fáil’s advocacy of an activist economic agenda was omnipresent in the years leading up to the 1937 election that resulted in the enactment of a new Irish constitution. For example, in a typed summary of a stump speech given by MacEntee during the Dublin campaign, the Fianna Fáil minister demonstrated the importance of a power that elevated action and effective policy above calls for party balance and governmental constraint. The official summary of MacEntee’s speech read, in part:

The Government of a country was a serious business. The task of reviving the economic life of the country was a heavy one. It was one which would never be fulfilled if the workers regarded the present political situation as a child’s game of see-saw, in which their primary duty was merely to put someone in the middle to keep a balance, while the other two parties went up and down at the end of the plank. Progress would never be made that way. Let the workers and producers make up their minds that they wanted the Fianna policy [sic] and then give the candidates who stood for that policy the swinging majority which would enable them to put in into practical operation without doubt, hesitation, or delay. If they were going to give their succeeding preferences to candidates of the Labour Party, Mr. MacEntee asked his audience to make sure to give them to real labour men.<sup>80</sup>

In this speech MacEntee walked a fine line between liberal democracy and socialism—even totalitarianism—in the way he asked for the people to give power to an aggressive strong-willed party. Such was the nature of third-way politics. Further, note the effort to

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. The phrase was not only capitalized, but presented in a darker and larger font than the rest of the document.

<sup>80</sup> Speech for the “County Dublin Election Campaign,” TS, MacEntee Papers, UCDA, P67/350 (1).

marginalize the Labour Party, insinuating that they were not truly representative of the Irish laborer, exhorting the voter to choose men who were true “labour” men. MacEntee meant, of course, that his party was comprised of candidates most true to the cause of the laborer, as evidenced by the party’s ability to enact legislation through its electability and practicality. Such a policy was to be enacted swiftly without bureaucratic delays resulting from constitutional or party see-sawing. For MacEntee and his peers, active economic policy and aggressive rhetoric were part and parcel to Fianna Fáil’s calls to “Keep the Wheels Turning.”

### **Fianna Fáil as the Active Agents of Growth**

In the January 1937 edition of the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, a political cartoon appeared that embodied the party’s effort to forge masculinized economic rhetoric. (Figure 4.1) On the right half of the image a number of workers are depicted walking to work in what appears to be new and fully functional factories and shipyards. The sun, rising from the sea, exudes rays of light, in which the words “GROWTH” and “1932-1937” are intermeshed. This image of streamlined progress is juxtaposed with that of a tombstone marked “DECAY 1649-1932 A.D.” at which William T. Cosgrave—dressed in his dandyish dark-tailed suit and spats, with a top-hat and black umbrella beside him—lays a wreath with a sympathy card inscribed with the message “From U.I.P [United Irish Party, precursor to Fine Gael], R.I.P.” The dates refer to the conquests of Oliver Cromwell up through Fianna Fáil’s electoral victory. Offering condolences to Cosgrave is a very haggard and decisively elderly depiction of John Bull. Atop the tombstone is a trophy of sorts labeled “Cup of Bitterness,” filled with scrolls marked “Oath of

Allegiance,” “Privy Council Appointments,” and “Senate.” Draped over the edge of the cup is what appears to be a coat and beret. Underscoring the cartoon is the caption “Time Marches On!”<sup>81</sup> The themes of progress, growth, insemination, activity, industry, and achievement were the hallmarks of Fianna Fáil’s socio-economic rhetoric from its inception, and grew stronger into the 1930s. Within this portrait, these themes exemplified the careful attention paid to the aesthetics of masculinity so central to Fianna Fáil’s thrust toward an independent Irish Republic. While Cumann na nGaedheal—not unlike proponents of capitalism worldwide—preached patience to allow the market to correct itself, Fianna Fáil combated both depression and the remnants of Ireland’s colonial ties with Britain through an economic policies that sought to streamline and modernize the nation.

Much of the party’s electoral propaganda was rife with language tinged with allusions to insemination and punctuated by rather phallic imagery—in essence utilizing the visual to further blur the lines between party and nation in an effort to “symbolically...settle social and economic struggles while it simultaneously promotes the charismatic image of strong and unified political action.”<sup>82</sup> Numerous examples of subliminal, although rather obvious, usage of phallic imagery can be seen in propaganda from the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*. One instance, entitled “Fianna Fail Achieves ‘The Impossible,’” included a depiction of five wheat piles representing acres devoted to wheat production in the years between 1932 and 1937. (Figure 4.2) The amount of growth—ranging from 21,000 acres in 1932 to 254,000 in 1937—were marked by piles of wheat

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<sup>81</sup> “Time Marches On!,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, January 1937, 5.

<sup>82</sup> Koepnick, “Fascist,” 51-52

increasingly engorged by greater production.<sup>83</sup> One need not read much further to find who was responsible for such an excitable spurt of output, for the party presented itself as the carriers of the seed that allowed for such an increase of product. It was noted that “in 1931 under Fine Gael [sic] we were not producing sufficient wheat to given even a crumb of bread per head per day to our population. After only five years of Fianna Fail administration we are producing sufficient to give a third of our requirements.”<sup>84</sup> Exhorting readers to “Vote Fianna Fail and Reap the Harvest,” it was implied that the continued governance of Fianna Fáil would result in the continued insemination of Irish land further increases in wheat production.

Such themes were not exclusive to agricultural growth as was evidenced in another piece from the June 1937 edition of the *Bulletin*. Highlighting the construction of new factories and workshops, the ad claimed that the party had “reorganised the economic life of the nation and the success of its industrial policy is ending forever the absolute dependence of our people on foreign made products.”<sup>85</sup> There was no question as to who was responsible for laying the seed of growth, as the ad further heralded that “800 New Factories and Workshops Give Employment to Over 78,000 People.” An illustration charting the growth of increased net output accompanied the claims that Fianna Fáil was responsible for priming the pump of industrial growth and fuelled by an increase in agricultural output, which had resulted from the reclamation and dissemination of land to the Irish farmer. Such statements were not surprising from a

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<sup>83</sup> “Fianna Fail Achieves ‘The Impossible’,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 13.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* Although Fine Gael did not exist in 1931, the fact that the party had evolved from Cumann na nGaedheal would not have been lost on the reader in 1937.

<sup>85</sup> “Fianna Fail Has Delivered the Goods!,” *Fianna Fail Bulletin*, June 1937, 7.

party that had advocated in its 1933 election materials: “as principle that it is the duty of the State, up to the limits of its power, to provide or induce the provision of work for workless citizens of the State.”<sup>86</sup> Further, the party claimed, “the work has barely started, however. Much remains to be done and Fianna Fáil will do it. *Sufficient has been accomplished to justify in the full the policy of Fianna Fáil.*”<sup>87</sup> Not only was this rhetoric evocative of action and progress, what distinguishes this particular rhetorical thread was the sublimation of the republican party as being completely responsible for the growth of industry and arable land within Ireland. The party positioned itself as one that stood in direct opposition to those that had stunted growth, and that was enacting policy that led to the regeneration of Irish industry.<sup>88</sup>

Another election flyer underscored the general message that Cumann na nGaedheal had kowtowed to Britain while Fianna Fáil was ready to work to bring manufactures and industry to Ireland :

While Free State Ministers creep over to England and in all humility, kneel down and beg for the rich man’s crumbs, Fianna Fail asks you to consider your own home market. Your Government has no power to regulate or demand a price on the British market. But the Dail can and must confine the home market to Irish agricultural produce. Further, if necessary, it can legislate for a fair price. If the Government creates a demand at home for fair-priced Irish produce (which it

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<sup>86</sup> Fianna Fáil, *The Wheels are Moving*, NLI, LOP111(10). Although undated, this pamphlet appears to have been produced for the 1933 election as evidenced by references to action “On December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1932, [when] 38,011 men were employed on these special works financed out of State funds.” Further, there is a reference to Cumann na nGaedheal, disqualifying any potential usage in 1937. Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. The emphasis is my own.

<sup>88</sup> Fianna Fáil claimed “The famous marble quarries of Ireland which have been closed for years are now reopening.” Ibid. Additionally, “The Cumann na nGaedheal and other opposition parties opposed vigorously the policy which produced these new factories. If they should get power, they would reverse it and the factories would have to close again and future development would be stopped.” Ibid.



undoubtedly can) Fianna Fail knows that the Irish farmer will supply that demand!

And now P[ut]. T[hem]. O[ut]!<sup>89</sup>

A similar theme appeared in an electoral ad from the pages of the *Irish Press* which claimed “Fianna Fáil has a plan...”<sup>90</sup> This ad was particularly striking for the connections made between work and security: “For the worker [Fianna Fáil’s plan] means continuous, well-paid employment for an additional 80,000 men, the ending of the downward pressure on wage rates produced by the present huge volume of unemployment, a better standard of living, better houses, better food, better clothes, It means Security.”<sup>91</sup> (Figure 4.3)

In an example of early environmentalism, Fianna Fáil noted the purchase of “58,500 acres acquired for forestry since 1932”—a fact punctuated by an illustration that used a sapling to represent land bought by Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael, and a mighty fir to demonstrate the immense growth under Fianna Fáil. (Figure 4.4) These figures were heralded by the headline: “Fianna Fail take the land from the Bullock and gives it back to the people.”<sup>92</sup> Once again there appeared themes of party-based insemination of the Irish land accompanied by distinctively manly imagery of mighty trees—with Fianna Fáil being the more virile in comparison to Fine Gael’s inadequate effort. Not only was Fianna Fáil reclaiming the land for the people, but they were also reinvigorating Ireland by actively contributing to the growth of the nation.

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<sup>89</sup> Untitled Fianna Fáil election poster. MacEntee Papers, UCDA, P67/350 (26). Although undated, the UCD Archives list the document as being from circa 1932.

<sup>90</sup> “Fianna Fáil Has a Plan,” *Irish Press*, 15 February, 1932, 5.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> “Fianna Fáil take the land from the Bullock and gives it back to the people,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 9

### **Fianna Fáil as the Protectors of Irishness**

The Anglo-Irish Economic War—in its essence—was a conflict centered upon the long-festered question of land ownership, annuity payments and market share. To what extent did the Irish “owe” the British for land rights? Already granted a semblance of political independence, the issue regarding the land annuity payments was framed by Fianna Fáil as the last great vestige of the British colonization. Further, the complicity of Cumann na nGaedheal (and by extension its later incarnation as Fine Gael) in the payments of the annuities enabled Fianna Fáil to cast itself as the true protectors of the Irish nation—a nation conceptualized as being older and greater than the Free State. A second threat to the nation was the aforementioned global economic depression. Fianna Fáil, like many other nationalist projects, buffered their electoral strength by offering an economic alternative to the nineteenth-century liberal/socialist framework, instead offering a socio-economic model that vacillated between modern and primordial—agriculture and industry. The nation was to be expressed not through work or class, but rather through the production and ingestion of national symbols in the guise of Irish factories and Irish-produced goods.

In a party flyer from 1932 soliciting subscriptions, Fianna Fáil made clear the connection between economic freedom and an independent republic. Noting that the annuity payments stripped Ireland of £5 million per annum, the flyer positioned Britain—as well as Cumann na nGaedheal—as the source of Ireland’s economic woes. But, of particular interest was the sheer number of phrases evoking the idea of growth or increased activity—the rhetoric of action and movement and protection—which were associated with Fianna Fáil. The flyer reads

Because Fianna Fáil stands for the Protection of Irish Industries against unfair foreign competition and thus ensure the production at home of the goods required by the Irish people;

Because Fianna Fáil has endeavoured to benefit Old Age Pensioners and to raise the level of Social legislation;

Because Fianna Fáil has a constructive programme for the development of agriculture, including the derating of Lands and buildings, the provision of a guaranteed market and fixed prices for Wheat, and the direct encouragement of tillage;

Because Fianna Fáil is the only Party which has a clearly-defined policy for dealing with the evil of Unemployment by the provision of work on schemes of public utility;

Because Fianna Fáil desires to abolish the horrors of bad housing by the establishment of a National Housing Board, financed by the Government, and fully empowered to ensure the production of 50,000 houses within a period of ten years;

Because Fianna Fáil stands for the traditional policy of complete Independence and Unity.

You do your part and Fianna Fáil will do the rest.<sup>93</sup>

Fianna Fáil was constructing a socio-political narrative clearly reinforcing the notion that the party was there to protect the Irish citizenry from the iniquities of unfair competition, where the more powerful British had stacked the odds in their own favor. A similar document was published at about the same time aimed to raise money for the Fianna Fáil Headquarters Fund for the constituency of Dublin City North. The letter read in part:

Fianna Fáil is THE Organization of the People—fighting the People’s battle...It has placed in power a Government pledged to secure the complete political and economic Independence of the Nation. It seeks to unite the People by the abolition of the memory of all past dissensions, and thereby to provide the Government with the moral support so necessary for Peace and ordered Progress.

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<sup>93</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Why You Should Subscribe to the Fianna Fáil Collection*, NLI, LO P111 (4). Although undated, the rhetoric and tone of the message suggests that this document was from one of the two 1932 elections.

The work is going ahead. Keep it going. Fianna Fáil will not cease its efforts until it has completed the task for which it was founded.<sup>94</sup>

In one of the starkest representations of the party's constructed role as protectors of the nation, a *Fianna Fáil Bulletin* cartoon entitled "Ward Off the Arrows of Adversity!" portrayed Fianna Fáil as an ancient Irish shield guarding the island itself. (Figure 4.5) Accentuated with the name "Fianna Fáil," the shield represented a nexus between the primordial, in the sense that one was to connect the modern republican party to the ancient Fianna. The caption underneath the picture read: "The Fianna Fail Majority is the Nation's Shield Against National Surrender and Social and Economic Decay." This notion was more specifically represented in the cartoon as arrows aimed at Ireland, labeled with such phrases as: "Attacks on Workers Holidays & Conditions, Official Indifference to Unemployment"; "Attacks on the Home, Ill-Nourished Children"; "Dumped Industrial Goods"; "Derelict Factories"; "Insanitary Rural Houses"; "Oaths of Allegiance to Foreign Kings"; "Secret Financial Agreements"; "Damn Good Bargains"; "Declining Tillage"; "Dumped Agricultural Produce"; "Lack of Food, Fuel, Etc."; "Houseless Agricultural Labourers"; "Dictated Constitutions," and "Neglected Widows & Orphans."<sup>95</sup>

In 1937 Fianna Fáil marked its fifth year in government by trumpeting its economic advances, including, as we have seen, the growth of new industries and farms, as well as the expansion or renovation of old manufactures. As noted in a *Fianna Fáil*

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<sup>94</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Annual Collection for the Fianna Fáil Headquarters Fund*, NLI, LO P111 (6). This letter is also undated, but is most likely from 1932, after the first election which put Fianna Fáil into a coalition government. The document solicited monies for Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, Oscar Traynor, Eamon Conney, and Cormac Breathnach.

<sup>95</sup> "Ward Off the Arrows of Adversity!," *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 16.

*Bulletin* editorial, “Fianna Fáil has changed the face of the Country—and provided a strong line of economic defence against World depression and war.”<sup>96</sup> While the struggle over land annuities was a manifestation of its conflict with Britain, the effort to ward off the impact of economic depression enabled Fianna Fáil to further advance its position as protectors of Ireland’s journey toward political and economic growth. The article continued, with a “before” and “after” snapshot of Ireland’s economic status:

Then—Before 1932 most of our towns were mere distribution centres. The cattle went out—the foreign goods came in. The towns were without modern sewerage and water systems, lined with ugly insanitary shacks. There was nothing for the people to do (except in the large cities) but send out the cattle and sell the foreign goods.

—And Now. With the Coming of Fianna Fail practically every town of size secured a new industry, giving employment, increasing the spending power of the people, creating a large market for the adjoining farmers, adding to the number of workers in subsidiary trades, building up the revenue of the railway, bringing the breath of life and prosperity to the urban centres. Industries, which had disappeared in the previous decade, were revived—existing concerns extended production—and to-day the wheels are turning with increasing speed and efficiency. Most of these factories produce goods of necessity. No matter what happens outside this island, they provide a bulwark of economic stability to the nation.”<sup>97</sup>

For Fianna Fáil, the Economic War was an extension of its overarching autarkic economic policy that included the development and extension of the party’s larger, socio-political discourse. While much has been written on the varying level of success of Fianna Fáil’s economic program, little has been done to contextualize its policies as part of a larger, nationalistic thrust; melding the intersections of process and rhetoric. Viewing such activity through the prism of gender and power as part of a nation-building effort

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<sup>96</sup> “Fianna Fail has changed the face of the Country—and provided a strong line of economic defence against World depression and war,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 9.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

elucidates the manner in which Fianna Fáil sought to renegotiate socio-political frameworks in Ireland. The examples given here represent a larger corpus of material demonstrating Fianna Fáil's activist, *masculine* effort to construct an independent Irish Republic.

After a half-decade in government Fianna Fáil advanced an even more aggressive rhetoric, and in turn abandoned the largely repressed calls for an independent state. The abandonment of the position taken in the wake of the Ottawa Economic Conference in 1932 had been alluded to but was elevated to the fore in the effort to construct a new constitution for Ireland. A piece of Fianna Fáil propaganda entitled "The Advance of the Republic" heralded: "The Next Step Will Be The New Constitution. It will be a Constitution consistent with Ireland's historic claims and one which every Irishman can accept without dishonour. It will consolidate the national advances already made and will place no barrier between the people and the achievement of their ultimate ideal."<sup>98</sup> The piece further argued that "Fianna Fail has already made ten decisive irrevocable steps to National Independence. Steps that no party dare retrace, a definite advance towards ending all foreign control."<sup>99</sup> As evidence, the ad trumpeted the abolition of the Oath, forging "a peaceful method [that] exists for resolving all political differences," the marginalization of the Governor-General and Senate, the holding of the annuities for the people of Ireland, and a "Programme of Economic Self-Sufficiency [that] is far

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<sup>98</sup> "The Advance of the Republic," *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, August 1936, 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

advanced.”<sup>100</sup> Indeed, Fianna Fáil was speeding the wheels—at least rhetorically, anyway. Attention will now be paid to the effort to end foreign control.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FOUR

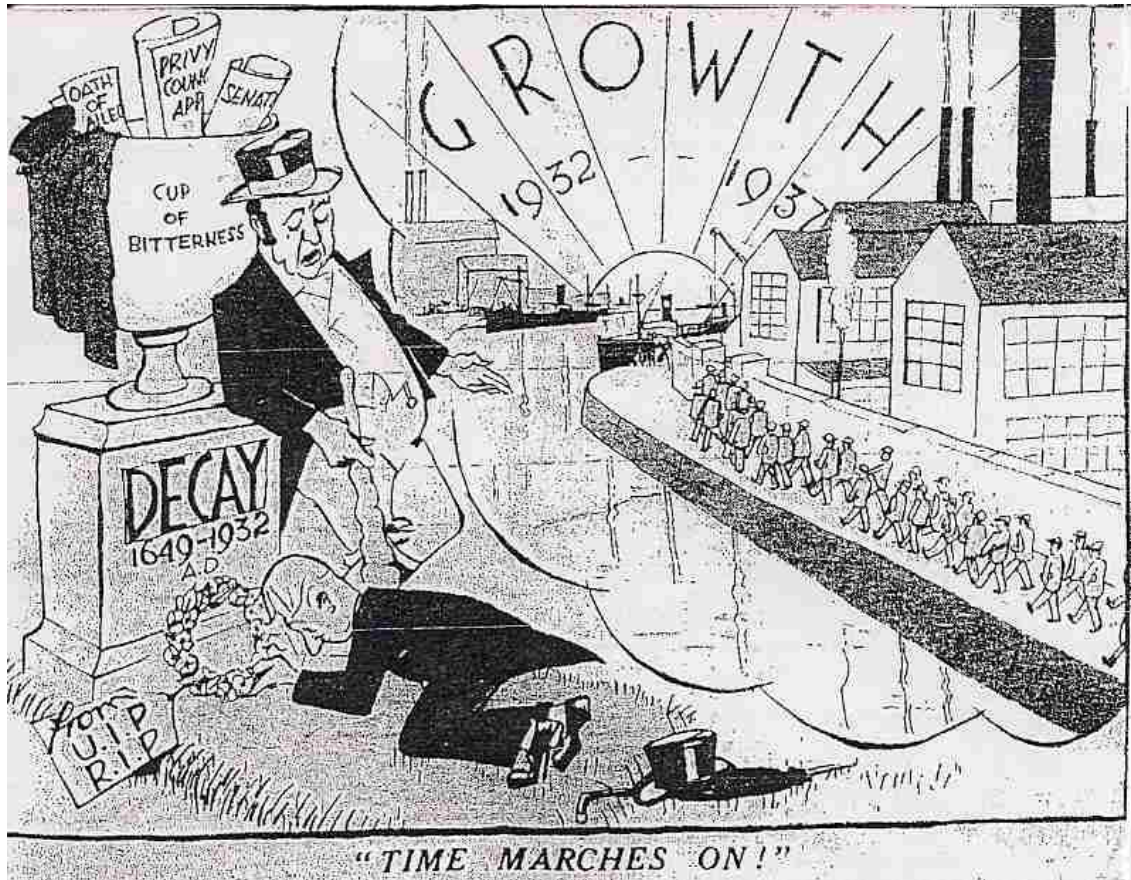


Figure 4.1: "Time Marches On!" Fianna Fáil Bulletin, January 1937, 7.



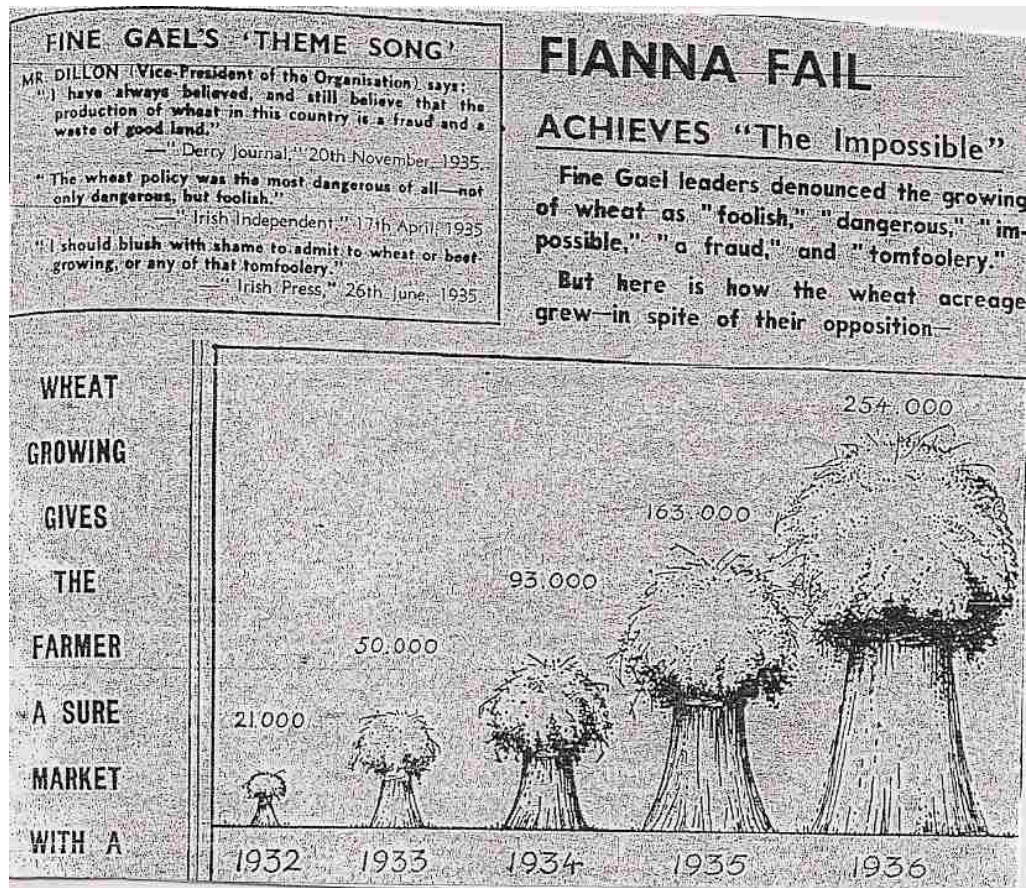


Figure 4.2: "Fianna Fail Achieves 'The Impossible,'" *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 13.

# FIANNA FÁIL HAS A PLAN . . .

The plan is to employ Irishmen in Ireland, to grow our food, to make our clothes and our implements, to provide the materials for our houses, instead of getting that work done for us by foreigners in other countries.

To develop our country's neglected resources so as to enable it to support a larger population at a higher standard of life.

To give preference to Irish workers, protection to Irish agriculture and Irish industries.

## That's our plan

Shall it operate on this island?

*The decision rests entirely with you!*

Whether you are farmer, worker, shopkeeper, or manufacturer you cannot afford to be indifferent about it. Your own prospects of better conditions in the future, your children's chances of being able to obtain a livelihood in their own country, the welfare of your friends, relatives and neighbours are all involved. You must make a choice one way or the other.

**For all—it means less taxation, lower rates, better times . . . IT MEANS SECURITY**

### For the Worker

It means continuous, well-paid employment for an additional 80,000 men, the ending of the downward pressure on wage rates, produced by the present huge volume of unemployment, a better standard of living, better houses, better food, better clothes.

*It means Security*

### For the Farmer

It means a guaranteed market and guaranteed profitable prices for a large part of his marketable produce, increased competitive power resulting in increased exports. It means giving Irish agriculture the chance it has not had since 1922.

*It means Security*

### For the Shopkeeper

It means better trade, a larger number of customers able to buy the goods he has to sell, the end of the period of stagnation and depression which has ruined business for the past years.

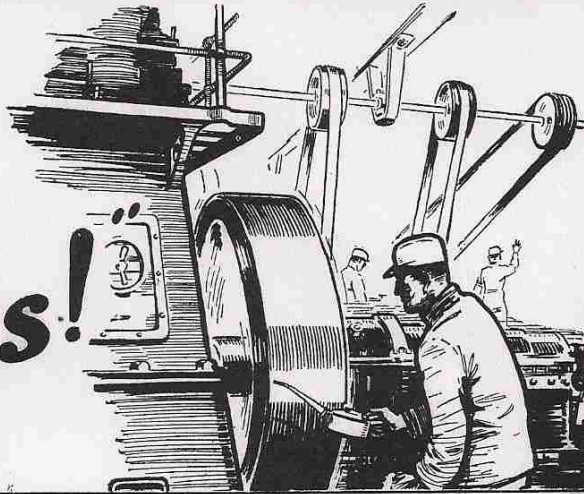
*It means Security*

### For the Manufacturer

It means freedom from unfair competition, a reserved market from which he can't be driven, except through his own fault; a demand for his products that will enable him to work to the full capacity of his factory and thus reduce his costs.

*It means Security*

**"Speed  
The  
Wheels!"**



Vote

**FIANNA FÁIL**

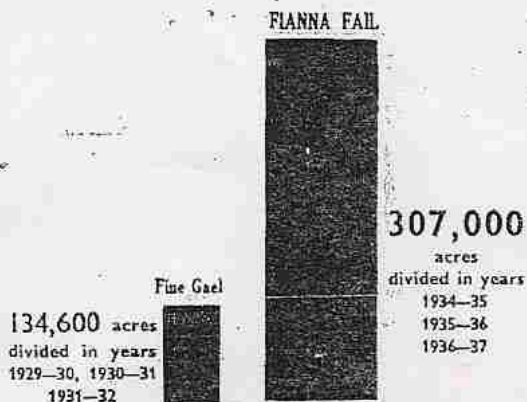
Figure 4.3: "Fianna Fáil Has a Plan," *Irish Press* 15 February, 1932, 5.

# FIANNA FAIL TAKES THE LAND FROM THE BULLOCK AND GIVES IT BACK TO THE PEOPLE

One of the fundamental aims of Fianna Fail is to settle as many families as possible on the land.

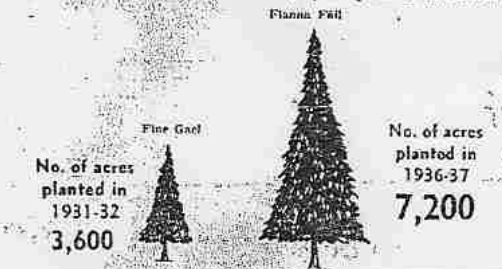
For this purpose the Land Acts of 1933 and 1936 were introduced and passed—despite the opposition of the Ranchers' friends, Fine Gael.

Result:—Fianna Fail in the last 3 YEARS divided three times as much land annually as was divided by Fine Gael in its last three years of office.



## 58,500 ACRES ACQUIRED FOR FORESTRY SINCE 1932

Ireland is the worst afforested country in Europe. Fine Gael toyed with the problem for ten years. Fianna Fail made a big effort to reorganise the Forestry Department by opening up new nurseries for young trees; by securing the best technical advice and assistance from abroad; by re-opening the School of Forestry to train young Irish experts; by planting 28,000 acres of land, and by making big experiments in the work in districts hitherto-ignored. The figures planted and the money spent speak for themselves.



The work of planting has only begun. Fianna Fail is not satisfied with the present rate of progress, but has made a good beginning. The measures it has adopted to reorganise forestry will bear much fruit in the coming five years, and in giving our country a secure supply of timber will give work and wages to increasing numbers and add to the beauty of our scenery.



Figure 4.3: "Fianna Fáil Takes The Land From The Bullock And Gives It Back To The People," *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 9.

# WARD OFF THE ARROWS OF ADVERSITY!

The Fianna Fail Majority is the Nation's Shield Against  
National Surrender and Social and Economic Decay

## VOTE FIANNA FAIL AND SPEED PROGRESS AND SECURITY

Published by the National Executive of Fianna Fail, 25 Upper Mount Street, Dublin, and printed by Irish Press, Ltd, Burch Quay, Dublin.

Figure 4.4: "Ward Off the Arrows of Adversity!," *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 16.

**Chapter Five**  
**“Queering” John Bull—Fianna Fáil and the Effort to Reify Republican Heteronormativity**

Salaries of £1,500 had to be paid so that representatives of the Irish Free State abroad might squat like the nigger when he put on the black silk-hat and the swallow tail coat and said that he was an English Gentleman.

-Martin Corry<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapters have done much to explain how Fianna Fáil established heteronormative means of inclusion within its envisioned republic.<sup>2</sup> From the clear definitions of feminine agency within the republican movement to the idealized notion of manliness with which the party cloaked itself, Fianna Fáil essentially sexualized Ireland. This is not to say, however, that the party was explicitly concerned with *coitus per se*, but rather that it utilized gendered tropes as the basis for reconstituting republicanism. Much has been said about Fianna Fáil’s efforts to define what was inclusive in light of its corrective discourse, but this raises the question as to what was done with things that did not “fit.” In her definition of gender, Judith Butler had argued that it is “a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions—and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them.”<sup>3</sup> It is the contention here that while Fianna Fáil was largely successful in constructing agreeable gendered frameworks, it also queered those elements of society and politics that could not be

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Corry, quoted in Ronan Fanning *Four-Leaved Shamrock, Electoral Politics and the National Imagination in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: National University of Ireland, 1983), 68-9.

<sup>2</sup> Heteronormativity can best be defined as the reification of heterosexual norms, which serve to strengthen gendered discourses of normality, as well as to isolate and exorcise the queer from society.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 140.

reconciled with its push for an independent state. Politically, these efforts were specific to Ireland's postcolonial condition, where the Irish cultural nationalist ideal clashed the legacies of British colonialism.

Nikki Sullivan has written that “queering popular culture, then, involves critically engaging with cultural artefacts in order to explore the ways in which meaning and identity is (inter)textually (re)produced.”<sup>4</sup> As demonstrated above, there was little distinction between politics and popular culture in Fianna Fáil's vision of Ireland, for the party's aestheticization of politics in the Irish Free State left the two mutually interdependent. Sullivan has argued further that the queer “could be described as moments of narrative disruption which destabilise heteronormativity and all the meanings and identities it engenders, by bringing to light all that is disavowed by, and yet integral to, heteronormative logic.”<sup>5</sup> The effort to queer was not unlike what Edward Said described as “Othering,” and the similarities speak to anti-hegemonic aspects of Fianna Fáil's nationalist efforts.<sup>6</sup> While not explicitly taking action against homosexuals per se, queering as defined here was tantamount to Fianna Fáil clearly delineating the Other. More than anything, this effort was about establishing a rhetorical narrative in which opponents of Fianna Fáil republicanism were portrayed as neutered and impotent, therefore asexual, neither as active agents of republican industriousness (male), or of passive-aggressive support (female).

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<sup>4</sup> Nikki Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 191. Further, Sullivan writes, “in other words, queer does not function here as a label that one can appropriately or (otherwise) apply to (the essence of) a particular text. Rather than functioning as a noun, queer can be used as a verb, that is, to describe a process, a movement between viewer, text, and world, that reinscribes (or queers) each and the relations between them.” Ibid., 192.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

For all of its efforts to withdraw Ireland from the British Empire, one fact remained immutable for Fianna Fáil: no amount of party aesthetic or gendered discourse could fully remove the remnants of British influence in Ireland. While the purpose of the previous chapters had been to examine Fianna Fáil's effort to construct a nationalist discourse of heteronormativity the present chapter seeks to briefly cite examples of how it reconciled remnants of Britishness in Ireland by relegating them to a tertiary status outside of the party's male and feminine ideal. Politically, the party affected a political rhetoric that effectively disarmed the pro-Treaty Cumann na nGaedheal and its successor party, Fine Gael, by portraying them as submissive to the whims of London, thereby emasculating the party. Culturally, Fianna Fáil sought to solidify the primacy of Irishness, by affording favored status to those expressions deemed most suitable to the party's envisioned Ireland.

### **“A Group of Men in Dark Coats”—The Eucharistic Congress of 1932**

In June of 1932 a Papal Legation visited Ireland as part that year's Eucharistic Congress, and they were greeted by a delegation of Fianna Fáil ministers led by party founder Eamon de Valera. Because Fianna Fáil had been in government for only a few months, the Eucharistic Congress had largely been organized under the auspices of Cumann na nGaedheal, yet de Valera's party seized the opportunity to turn the Congress into a Fianna Fáil spectacle. De Valera was to greet the delegation in Dublin Castle—the symbol of British colonialism described in the *Irish Press* as “that stout Birmingham Tower that had looked down on ages of sufferings, even to our own day.”<sup>7</sup> The *Irish Press* also noted the significance of the former prisoner, now president, greeting the delegation within the castle's walls: “He whom the holders of

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<sup>7</sup> ““Go And In My Name Say: The Pope Loves Ireland’ Papal Legate’s Dramatic Message From Rome,” *The Irish Press*, 22 June 1932, 1.

Dublin Castle had pursued was now within those walls, not as prisoner, but as master.”<sup>8</sup> Wearing a standard business suit, as opposed to the more formal coats with tails and top hats preferred by the opposition, de Valera spoke, saying “*Míle míle fáilte romwhat, a Ard-Fhlaith na hEaglaise, a fhear-ionaid an Athar Naofa, go talamh iath-ghlas na hÉireann!*”<sup>9</sup> (Figure 5.1) De Valera continued briefly in Irish before addressing the audience in Latin. His message was that this was an Irish Ireland, free of British influence. Absent were the silk top hat and coat and tails, as was the *Béarla*.<sup>10</sup> A member of the Papal Legation recalled their entrance into Dublin harbor, where he saw that a “group of men in dark coats and soft hats whom we had taken for detectives” waited to meet the men.<sup>11</sup> These “detectives” were representatives of the Fianna Fáil government.

De Valera’s opening remarks were significant in the way he positioned the burgeoning Irish state as being on par with notable Christians who had struggled with oppression in the past. Clearly de Valera was referring to Britain when he stated in Latin:

My eminent lord, the records of centuries past bear eloquent testimony to the loving zeal with which the Apostolic See has ever honoured our nation. That special affection was ever the more amply given, in proportion to the sufferings of Ireland. Repeatedly, over more than three hundred years, our people, ever firm in their allegiance to our ancestral faith and unwavering even unto death in their devotion to the See of Peter, endured in full measure unmerited trials by war, by devastation and by confiscation. They saw their most sacred rights set at naught under an unjust domination. But repeatedly

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Eamon de Valera, “Welcome to the Pope’s Legate, 21 June 1932,” in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 218. The greeting translated as, “Many thousand welcomes to the honored representatives of the Holy Father to the emerald land of Ireland!”

<sup>10</sup> The English language.

<sup>11</sup> Dermot Keogh, *Ireland and the Vatican, The Politics and Diplomacy of Church-State Relations, 1922-1960* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995), 96. Keogh also notes that Fianna Fáil wore modern suits—as opposed to the British tradition of wearing formal clothing to Parliament—upsetting opposition members, who cited the affront to tradition made by de Valera and his followers. Ibid., 186-88.



also did the successors of Peter most willingly come to our aid, in the persons of Gregory XIII, Clement VIII, Paul V, Urban VIII, Innocent X and many others of the line of Roman Pontiffs to the present day.<sup>12</sup>

The Fianna Fáil spectacle had essentially begun with the above statement, which effectively placed Britain and, by implication, the pro-Treaty Cumann na nGaedheal, outside of the acceptable norms of Catholic Ireland. From windows adorned with Irish-manufactured candles to streets lined with “Episcopal purple”<sup>13</sup> and nationalist green to de Valera’s snubbing of the governor-general, Fianna Fáil machinations regarding the occasion of the visit by the Papal Legation served to illustrate the means by which the party marginalized that which did not fit within its gendered nationalistic binary.<sup>14</sup>

Finín O’Driscoll has referred to the visit by the Papal Legation as an “event [that] transcended the religious celebration to become a manifestation of triumphant Irish catholic [sic] nationalism.”<sup>15</sup> The Eucharistic Congress was more than just an attempt to express the nation’s Catholicity; additionally it afforded Fianna Fáil three important opportunities. First, it enabled the party to demonstrate that it had completely shed its outward associations with physical force insurgency as a means to garner a republic. When combined with the peaceful transfer of power from Cumann na nGaedheal in early 1932, Fianna Fail’s hospitality toward the Vatican’s legation

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<sup>12</sup> “Mr. de Valera’s Address Recalls Ireland’s Ties With the Holy See—A Welcome in Gaelic,” *The Irish Press*, 22 June 1932, 1. A copy of this speech can also be found in Eamon de Valera, “Welcome to the Pope’s Legate, 21 June 1932,” in Moynihan, *Speeches*, 219.

<sup>13</sup> Ann Kilmartin, “Trumpets and Drawn Swords,” *The Irish Press*, 26 June 1932, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Gillian McIntosh, “The Centenary Celebrations for Catholic Emancipation,” in Augsteijn, ed., *Ireland*, 88.

<sup>15</sup> Finín O’Driscoll, “Social Catholicism in Independent Ireland,” in *Ireland: The Politics of Independence, 1922-49*, eds., Mike Cronin and John M. Regan (Hampshire: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 2000), 131. O’Driscoll also notes that the Eucharistic Congress afforded Fianna Fáil “further opportunity to claim to be the real and true Catholic political party.”

demonstrated that the party had accepted the Pope's anti-revolutionary position. Second, the Congress gave Fianna Fáil its first opportunity to publicly defy elements of British authority, from their choice of clothing, to de Valera's greeting statement made in Irish, to the barbed tone of his statements as they related to Ireland's history of subjugation to Britain. Further, the choice to have a state reception for the delegation on the grounds of Blackrock College—de Valera's alma mater—avoided “the embarrassment of the state function being associated with the Vice-Regal Lodge or with the representative of King George V.”<sup>16</sup> Finally, Fianna Fáil was able to demonstrate that it was capable of seizing the reins of the Free State so as to fashion it in the party's own image. Thus, the Eucharistic Congress of 1932 marked the first opportunity for Fianna Fáil publicly to reify its gendered constructs of acceptability as well as defining what would not fit within their envisioned Ireland.

### **“Gael,” “Celt,” and “Socaro”—Fianna Fáil and Gaelic Sport**

Perhaps the most obvious and explicit form of queering the British came in the juxtaposition between the violent, aggressive forms of Gaelic athletics and the more proper British sports. Mike Cronin cites the example of the creation of modern Aonach Tailteann—“the Irish olympiad [sic], of 1924, 1928 and 1932”—as a cultural nation-building event advocated by Cumann na nGaedheal.<sup>17</sup> Emerging at roughly the

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<sup>16</sup> T.P. O'Neill, quoted in Patrick Murray, *Oracles of God, The Roman Catholic Church and Irish Politics 1922-37* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2000), 262.

<sup>17</sup> Mike Cronin, “The Irish Free State and Aonach Tailteann,” in *Sport and the Irish, Histories, Identities, Issues*, ed., Alan Bairner (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2005), 54. Cf. Louise Ryan, “Aonach Tailteann, the Irish Press and Gendered Symbols of National Identity in the 1920s and 1930,” in *ibid.*, 69-84. See also Cronin, “Projecting the Nation through Sport and Culture and Ireland: Ireland, Aonach Tailteann and the Irish Free State, 1924-32,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3, Sports and Politics (July 2003): 395-411; Cronin, “Is it for Glamour?: Masculinity, Nationhood and Amateurism in Contemporary Projections of the Gaelic Athletic Association,” in *Irish Postmodernisms and Popular Culture*, eds., Wanda Balzano, Anne Mulhall and Moynagh Sullivan (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 39-51.

same time as the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Aonach Tailteann drew support from across the nationalist spectrum, including from Sinn Féin and the “outlawed Dáil Éireann...[which] began arguing for the renewal of the games, and leading figures such as Eamon de Valera threw their weight behind the campaign.”<sup>18</sup> John Turpin notes that the advocacy of the Aonach Tailteann by the new Free State government represented a “manifestation of Cultural Revival ideology...attempting to create a modern political entity, distinct from Britain, with its own cultural events and emblems.”<sup>19</sup> Despite this sentiment, Cronin adds that Cumann na nGaedheal was “hesitant to fund Aonach Tailteann, at any level considered excessive.”<sup>20</sup> Support for the games disintegrated when Fianna Fáil “was not prepared to continue funding a festival whilst government loans remained unpaid. Also, the government viewed the whole event as one that had been set up by their political opponents and which represented the Irish state as imagined by the leadership of Cumann na nGaedheal.”<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, Fianna Fáil instead aligned itself with the GAA, which was still republican-nationalist in origin, but as a private body, it remained largely free from associations with the Free State. Further, and more importantly, the types of sport endorsed by the GAA were more in line with the nationalist vision advanced by Fianna Fáil.

Although Fianna Fáil was not the first to claim the Gaelic Athletic Association as their own, the very fact that it was able to envelop the anti-British facet of the GAA into its own rhetoric speaks to the party’s success at aligning itself with its

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<sup>18</sup> Cronin, “Free State,” 57.

<sup>19</sup> John Turpin, quoted in *ibid.*, 58.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

nationalistic predecessors.<sup>22</sup> Patrick F. McDevitt has noted that “male supporters of Gaelic games often connected images of British men with those of women or neutered men. The effeminization of the enemy here displays male Irish attitudes not only toward British men but also toward women and themselves.”<sup>23</sup> McDevitt further noted that Gaelic sport “reinforced the image of political unity, namely a brotherhood of Gaels which, with their women in concomitant subordination, would reclaim their lost nation from a feminized oppressor.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, it is of no surprise to find members of Fianna Fáil—many of whom had previously participated in GAA-sponsored competitions—making appearances at GAA events, promoting the uniquely Irish-manly and Irish-feminine elements of such sports as Gaelic football, hurling, and camogie.<sup>25</sup> Following the period in which elements of Irish nationalism became associated more with the perceptively Anglophillic Cumann na nGaedheal-run Free State, Fianna Fáil’s rhetorical alignment with the GAA, was akin to McDevitt’s description that “the growth of hurling and Gaelic football as propagated by the GAA was instrumental in the restructuring of an Irish nationalist manhood. The power to oppose British games and reclaim independence of action one sphere at a time marked the first dramatic steps toward greater freedom from English control.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For histories of the GAA, see: Marcus de Búrca, *The G.A.A.: A History* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, Ltd., 2000); Neal Garnham, “Accounting for the Early Success of the Gaelic Athletic Association,” *Irish Historical Studies* 34, no. 133 (May 2004): 65-78.

<sup>23</sup> Patrick F. McDevitt, “Muscular Catholicism: Nationalism, Masculinity, and Gaelic Team Sports, 1884-1916,” in *Bodies in Contact, Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* eds., Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 209-10. Although McDevitt’s article covers the period between 1884 and 1916, the very fact that the GAA survived beyond the Easter Rising—not to mention that it flourishes today—while maintaining its cultural nationalist bent, is of great significance.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>25</sup> For a history on the development of camogie and its inclusion into the GAA, see Cronin, “More Than Just Hurling and Football: The GAA and its Other Activities,” in *The Gaelic Athletic Association, 1884-2009* eds., Mike Cronin, William Murphy, and Paul Rouse (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 227-28.

<sup>26</sup> McDevitt, “Muscular,” 215.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Fianna Fáil economic rhetoric was rooted in the ability to paint Cumann an nGaedheal, and later Fine Gael, as passive and therefore outside of the acceptable gendered norms of the Free State. At first blush, such an effort appeared similar to the process described by McDevitt, but in the Formative Era, the Othering of Britain evolved due to the political transformation that had resulted from the creation of the Saorstát. McDevitt's description of the GAA as an anti-imperialist organization held true in an era when republicanism was synonymous with physical-force insurgency, yet in the Formative Era, Fianna Fáil republicanism was as much hegemonic as it was anti-hegemonic. Therefore, the alignment by Fianna Fáil with the Gaelic Athletic Association was as much about the queering of Britishness and its perceived remnants within the new Ireland as it was about the reification of its gendered nationalist frameworks. Where aestheticization of Fianna Fáilism was tantamount to a corrective force, the aspect of its alignment with the GAA was representative of its effort to create a general distaste for lingering Britishness in the new Ireland.

Along with its prominent page devoted to women, the *Irish Press*'s coverage and promotion of GAA sport was nothing less than groundbreaking. The level of primacy granted to hurling and Gaelic football helped to elevate national awareness of these sports in Ireland, which in turn, "proved very popular and obliged the *Irish Independent* to respond in kind."<sup>27</sup> Granted, such English-associated sports as rugby, football, and horse racing were covered also; however, they were afforded a secondary status on the sports pages of the *Irish Press*. Quite literally, Fianna Fáil utilized its house organ to visually construct a sense of preference regarding sport in Ireland. A fine example can be found in the sports page from the 3 September 1932

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<sup>27</sup> Rex Cathcart with Michael Muldoon, "The Mass Media in Twentieth-Century Ireland," in Hill, *Ireland*, 683.

issue where authors “Gael” and “Celt”<sup>28</sup> covered the up-coming All-Ireland hurling final. (Figures 5.2 and 5.3) Contrasted with a large image depicting the members of the Kilkenny and Clare hurling sides, were much smaller stories covering results in the Walker Cup—where the poor showing by the British was highlighted in the headline—and the Free State soccer league.<sup>29</sup> (Figure 5.3) Equally significant was the positioning of these later articles on the fringes of the page, while the eye was directed to the prominent, central photographs and headlines dedicated to Gaelic athletics.

Although it is not uncommon to find rhetoric evocative of militaristic engagement in the coverage of all sports, the sportswriters of *The Irish Press* made certain to elevate connections to the traditional aspects of Gaelic athletics. One such example can be found in the *nom-de-plumes* adopted by the sportswriters and the descriptions used to capture the fixtures: “Gael” and “Celt” covered GAA sports, while “The Sport” and “Socaro” covered horse racing and soccer, respectively. Take for example the article entitled “The G.A.A. Provides Living Example of Perpetual Motion,” where the author, Celt, wrote “scarcely has one county or inter-county competition concluded than another is started and, when championship activities die down, the National Leagues come into operation.”<sup>30</sup> The implication was that the reiteration of Irish cultural nationalism as represented by traditional sport was

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<sup>28</sup> “Celt” was the *nom de plume* of Patrick James Devlin (1877-1941). As a journalist, Devlin was instrumental in popularizing Gaelic sport in Ireland and the United States. In addition to his journalistic endeavors Devlin was active in the administration of various Gaelic sporting organizations, including the Tailteann Games. A close friend of Michael Cusack, Devlin served as sports editor of the *Irish Press*. John Rouse, “Patrick James Devlin,” *Dictionary, Volume 3*, 245-46.

<sup>29</sup> “Who’ll Win Ireland’s Hurling Blue Riband?” *Irish Press*, 3 September 1932, 8. It should be noted that, generally speaking, the Irish refer to football as soccer—so as to distinguish it from Gaelic football—much in the same way that Americans do to distinguish the sport from American football.

<sup>30</sup> Celt, “The G.A.A. Provides Living Example of Perpetual Motion,” *The Irish Press* 7 September 1932, 8.

incessant; therefore, the unceasing cycle of manly action and movement were a constant salvo in the nationalist press.

The elevation of Gaelic sport to a level of primacy by Fianna Fáil fit well within its dualistic, palingenetic discourse, for the party forged a nexus between the traditional and the modern. This was done by using elements of modernity—mass-produced newspaper, heraldry by a modern political machine and eventually radio broadcasts of major fixtures—and combining them with element of a primordial Ireland, however imagined. By associating with Gaelic sport, as well as by using its political and cultural influence to influence popular tastes, Fianna Fáil was in a position to incorporate games into its notions of heteronormativity. Anglo-tinged sports, while certainly popular, were relegated to a peripheral presence within Fianna Fáil’s envisioned Irish republic.

#### **“They Never Look Out the Window”—Queering Cumann na nGaedheal**

As was shown in chapter two, Cumann na nGaedheal’s efforts to feminize the republican cause led Fianna Fáil to advance its own logical, masculine political rhetoric. Cumann na nGaedheal was, of course, better positioned to shape opinions as the party of majority, which was largely due to the spoils of victory in the early Free State. As the 1930s progressed, Fianna Fáil benefitted from a similar process, enabling it to direct Ireland’s socio-economic and political trajectories. As such, the republican movement had come full circle. The renascent movement under the guise of Fianna Fáil had gained legitimacy because of its ability to combat Cumann na nGaedheal’s othering efforts, and now de Valera’s party worked to define what was acceptable and what was not. Thus, to cement its status as the new fulcrum in Ireland,

the party queered not only its political opposition, but also those tropes associated with British rule.

Apart from depicting their opponents as passive and ineffectual leaders of Ireland, Fianna Fáil's rhetoric was rife with allegations that Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael were cowardly supplicants bending to the will of Britain. In the early 1930s, Fianna Fáil's internal strategy document, *Scheme of Election*

*Organisation*, stated:

The next matter is the personalities of the candidates of other parties. Although it is very inadvisable to indulge in personal attacks on opponents, nevertheless it is quite legitimate to examine their public records and draw attention to anything which would make them undesirable as a public representative. In this connection it is important to note the necessity of examining and dealing with the position of special classes or economic interests in relation to those candidates.

Needless to remark, the nature of our opponents' campaign will have a direct influence on ours. The literature issued by, and speeches made on behalf of our opponents, should, therefore, be carefully noted and all false allegations and misrepresentations dealt with.<sup>31</sup>

Fundamental to Fianna Fáil's efforts to "correct" Ireland was the notion that both Britain and the Irish Free State had somehow shifted the nation away from its true destiny. Elements of this strategy were evident as early as 1927. Thus, a handbill from that election claimed that it was

Now or Never!

The scales of Justice is [sic] badly balanced, and you will shortly be asked to cast your vote for one side or other. We confidently appeal to you to cast your vote on the side of JUSTICE and RIGHT. There are only two sides—they are:-

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<sup>31</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Scheme of Election Organisation*, Aiken Papers, UCDA, P104/1598 (6). Although undated, the UCD Archives lists this pamphlet as likely to have been created for the 1932 election—an assessment supported by the nature of the language and tone, namely the following passage which reads "The next point to note is the economic situation in the Constituency and the general occupation of the people. The circumstances of every class and section must be specially considered and plans made for convincing its members that their interests will best be served by the election of a Fianna Fáil Government." (6). Of note is the fact that this pamphlet was underscored by the phrase "For Private Circulation Only." (1).



For Ireland: Those who love Ireland and would serve her.

Against Ireland:

Imperialists. Unionists. Free Masons. [sic] Job-hunters. Ex Black and Tans. Bailiffs. Those Who gave away Six Counties. Those who agree to pay Six Millions yearly to England. Ex-Judges.

Could we doubt your answer?<sup>32</sup>

Fianna Fáil's rhetorical flourish blackened their domestic opponents, depicting "those who agree to pay," i.e., Cumann na nGaedheal, as akin to imperialists, Unionists, and Freemasons, supplicants to the British, and it built on rhetoric already current in the mid-1920s. Daly has argued that, "the Cumann na nGaedheal government was forced to adopt a pro-British attitude on political matters and a conciliatory economic policy."<sup>33</sup> Pointedly, another Fianna Fáil handbill portrayed Cumann na nGaedheal as cowards who agreed to "pay Pensions to the 'Black and Tans' for Destroying Your Homes and Shooting Down Your Countrymen," and colluded to "Pay an Annual Tribute of Over £5,000,000 to England."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Fianna Fáil, untitled, undated handbill for "Boland, Gorry, Tynan," Archives of the Fianna Fáil Party, UCDA, P176/827 (24). Although the flyer is undated, the archive has it listed as being from 1927, a fact supported by the tone of the handbill. This particular piece of propaganda was likely to have come from Frank Aiken, for work that he is most closely associated tended to have some element decrying the inclusion of the Free Masons in the Irish Free State. See Fianna Fáil, *Fianna Fáil Kept Their Promise, A Survey of the Great Work Done in Louth, How Drogheda Fared: Great Industrial Revival*, c. 1927, Aiken Papers, UCDA, P104/1575 (2). See also Fianna Fáil, *The Economic History of the Land of Erin*, c. 1929, Aiken Papers, UCDA, P104/1582 (3). This latter example offers a fairy tale-like story regarding the history of Ireland where the villains include the "Knights of the Compass and Square and Ring." Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Daly, *Industrial*, 14. Daly also mentions that the position was enhanced by opposition from "ex-Unionists, a conservative Farmer's party representing larger farmers, and the Labour party." Ibid. Although not mentioned, Fianna Fáil—which had not been created at the time to which Daly refers—was able to identify and exploit the Britishness of Cumann na nGaedheal.

<sup>34</sup> Fianna Fáil, untitled, undated election handbill, NLI, LO P111 (9). Unique to this material was the association made between Cumann na nGaedheal and the inclusion of Irish soldiers in the British war cause: "An Irish Army pledged to fight England's Wars at your expense. Your Home and Country subjected to the ravages of a World-War in the interests of British Imperialism and at England's will. Ibid. Inaccuracies aside, it is of great interest that

The accusation that Cumann na nGaedheal consistently acquiesced to the whims of Britain continued to appear in propaganda that emerged from the office of Fianna Fáil minister Frank Aiken. Another pamphlet, for instance, depicted Cumann na nGaedheal as inherently anti-Irish, and therefore pro-British, having “stopped at nothing to bring about the downfall of Fianna Fail.[sic]”<sup>35</sup> Thus, in a pamphlet, likely to have been printed in 1932, with the lengthy title “*Fianna Fail[sic] Kept Their Promise, A Survey of the Great Work Done in Louth, How Drogheda Fared: Great Industrial Revival,*” Fianna Fáil depicted itself as “gallant,” pro-Irish, and advocates of policy commensurate with the wishes of the Holy See.<sup>36</sup> In regards to the Church and Fianna Fáil’s economic program—namely their housing schemes—the text claimed that “documentary proofs of this, the age-long policy of the Popes, is found in all the decrees issued by the Holy See from the reign of Innocent III to Pope Pius VII.”<sup>37</sup> The logic being presented was that Cumann na nGaedheal was being rather ungodly regarding housing, and therefore had no place within the devoutly Catholic Ireland. This rhetorical strategy aligned with Fianna Fáil’s anti-British clothing choices worn at the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. Both Cosgrave’s party and the Seanad (Senate) were equated with “Exporters, importers, the various personages, political and financial, who have made it their aim for months past to play the part of

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there existed an example of propaganda that portrayed Cumann na nGaedheal as the harbingers of violence, a rather fascinating inversion of rhetoric.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Fianna Fáil Kept Their Promise, A Survey of the Great Work Done in Louth, How Drogheda Fared: Great Industrial Revival*, c. 1932, Aiken Papers, UCDA, P104/1575 (1).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

England and hamper the onward march of the nation.”<sup>38</sup> (Figure 5.4) Following many accusations of Cumann na nGaedheal dishonesty, the pamphlet alleged that

Cosgrave has been most accommodating to every country but his own. He, being a broad-minded man, accommodated himself, too, in a generous way to all the requirements of the alien. He will ever be remembered by the Masonic Lodges as one who was a ‘Good Sport’ and struggled ‘manfully’ to make capitalistic Imperialism, respectable to the ‘ignorant Irishry.’ He will be remembered as the ‘traitor’ statesman who made ‘a damned good bargain’ over the enslaved bodies of half a million Irish Nationalists, sealing his shameful bargain with the annual tribute of 5 ¾ millions of Irish money.

Despite this opposition, despite the lying Press, despite the whole machinations of *West Britonism*, Fianna Fáil got to work.<sup>39</sup>

These damning accusations, recalling turn of the century Gaelic revival denunciations of West Britonism, solidified the party’s assertions that Cosgrave and his party were simply British puppets perpetuating the colonial ties that had been so detrimental to Ireland. Further, the language contained in the pamphlet insinuated that Fianna Fáil’s opposition was involved in a struggle of sorts with Britain, whereas Cumanna na nGaedheal assumed the position of the passive to Britain’s active, thereby sexualizing the Anglo-Irish Free State association.

By the time that Fianna Fáil had secured a place within the political dialectic of the Free State, it had begun championing associations between the Treaty—and therefore the Free State and Cumann na nGaedheal—with Britain. This association placed Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael outside of its republican vision and was reinforced in electoral literature and other party publications. For example, a Fianna Fáil handbill from 1927 presents Cumann na mGaedheal as benefitting from its associations with Britain—via the Treaty—in a manner that undermined Ireland. The handbill, in large, bold letters queries: “Why wouldn’t they? The Free State Ministers

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. For a cartoon depicting “the people’s” response to Seanad intransigence, see Figure 5.4.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 2. The emphasis in the quotation is my own.

are Enthusiastic Upholders of the ‘Treaty’. Why Wouldn’t They Be? Since they came into power they have netted the following sums in personal salaries:-- Mr. Cosgrave (12,000) [...].”<sup>40</sup> After listing other notable members of the government, the flyer closes with the refrain: “If the jobs secured by both Ministers and Deputies for their relatives and friends are added, we need not wonder at the eagerness with which these men appeal for re-election nor at the bitterness with which they malign all who stand in their way.”<sup>41</sup> By intoning that a “Vote for the Fianna Fáil Candidates [would] End this Colossal Jobbery!”<sup>42</sup> the Irish voter was meant to accept the notion that members of Cumann na nGaedheal were underhandedly—so very unmanly—reinforcing their supplication to Britain for their own political and economic gain. As such, the Treaty’s supports and the Free State regime were somehow engaged in an illicit relationship with John Bull.

Themes of Cumann na nGaedheal’s impotency took on a more explicitly sexual tone when contrasted to the activist economic policies of Fianna Fáil. One such example came from a party leaflet from 1932 that decried Cumann na nGaedheal’s inability to “even make their own policy a success!”<sup>43</sup> But as early as 1927, a flyer accused Cumann na nGaedheal of “Five Years of Poverty and Panic.”<sup>44</sup> The handbill accused Cosgrave and his party of being “Unable to answer the damning facts and

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<sup>40</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Why Wouldn’t They?*, NLI, EC. Although undated, the reference to efforts by Cumann na nGaedheal ministers and their effort for reelection makes it clear that this flyer was from one of the two elections held in 1927. Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. The names listed include Mrs. O’Higgins (widow of the recently assassinated Kevin O’Higgins), Blythe, Fitzgerald, J.J. Walsh, P. Hogan, J.J. Burke and Finian Lynch who each are purported to have received £8,500 pounds, and the pairs of Eoin MacNeill and Prof. O’Sullivan, Jos. McGrath and Mr. McGilligan, and Richard Mulcahy and P. Hughes, which shared the same amount. Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Fianna Fáil, untitled handbill, c. 1932, Aiken Papers, UCDA, P104/1601 (1). “Why Britain Created Crisis,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Fianna Fáil, *Five Years of Poverty and Panic*, c. 1927, UCDA, P176/827 (19).

figures” of what Fianna Fáil claimed to be five years of ineffectual—impotent—rule.<sup>45</sup> The most interesting aspect of this pamphlet can be found toward the end when the phrase—underscored in bold print—“It was Panic” was used no less than seven times to illustrate examples of how Cumann na nGaedheal submitted to the whims of British control because of its insecurities.

**It was Panic** which drove them to attack the Four Courts in 1922, and thus start the Civil War...

**It was Panic** which made them surrender to Britain and the Carsonite leaders on the Boundary Question, and, by agreeing to Partition, hand over the defenceless Six-County Nationalists and Catholics to the Orangemen.

**It was Panic** which made them enter into the Secret Financial Agreement of March, 1926, by which £5,000,000 a year of the impoverished Irish people’s money was handed over to the British Treasury...

**It was Panic** which made them agree at the Imperial Conference that the Free State Army should become the tail of the British Army whenever “these islands” were attacked. “It is perfectly obvious,” Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald (now Minister for Defence), said on February 17<sup>th</sup> last, “That our Army must co-operate with the British Army”—thus involving this nation in every British War...

That is the National Record of the Free State party—a Record not of courage, but of **PANIC!**<sup>46</sup>

Many of the points raised in this piece of propaganda appeared again in a speech made by Frank Aiken on 30 July 1932 in Market Square in Dundalk, where Aiken claimed—among other things—“Unfortunately Cumann na nGaedheal were either foolishly or deliberately playing England’s game. Their talk about the illegality of the Free State’s claim to the annuities was playing into Britain’s hands, and furnishing arguments which Britain herself would be ashamed to put forward.”<sup>47</sup> To put it

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. The emphases are reflective of the original text.

<sup>47</sup> “Why Britain Created Crisis,” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin* 1 August 1932, 4.

simply, Fianna Fáil—like “true men”—did not panic. They did not submit themselves to the will of the colonial oppressor.

The themes explored above are seen further in visual representations of Cumann na nGaedheal in Fianna Fáil party propaganda. One example necessitates a return to the cartoon that appeared in the January 1937 *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, “Time Marches On!”, discussed in Chapter Four. In this case, using queering as a prism, the themes of Britishness and subjugation to the Crown are readily apparent. In the reading from the previous chapter, the picture was representative of Fianna Fáil’s efforts to couch their party as a masculine endeavor, bringing economic rebirth via industrial growth to Ireland, while William Cosgrave mourns the loss of decay.<sup>48</sup> (Figure 5.5) Viewed through the perspective of queering, the image elicits a different response, for the artist took care to highlight that Cosgrave, in his dandy attire—coat with tails, spats, and coiffured hair—was juxtaposed with the idealized, yet faceless Irish workers adorned in the clothes of the laboring man. More important was the depiction of Cosgrave bowed down in a pose that explicitly depicts mourning, but that implicitly evokes images of sexual passivity to the active master (a grotesque representation of John Bull) who was adorned in a similar fashion. This visual essentially recapitulated the rhetoric explored above.

Indeed, many representations of Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael ministers highlighted their dandyish attire—a critique that was not only meant to depict them as snobbish and out of touch with the Irish working man—but that also evoked connotations of them as servants, or perhaps poseurs, dressing up in the “drag” of the British upper class. It also spoke to the recurrent accusation that members of Cumann na nGaedheal had actively profited from their association with the Crown. These

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<sup>48</sup> “Time Marches On!” *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, January 1937, 7.

themes were readily apparent in a dual-paneled cartoon from the 9 June 1932 edition of the *Irish Press* (Figure 5.6), where Patrick McGilligan, Minister of External Affairs, Industry and Commerce, and Cosgrave stood beside a stereotyped “Higher Civil Servant.” Certainly, it was widely appreciated that many civil servants in the 1920s had retained their positions from prior to the formation of the Free State, and thereby they could be readily portrayed as having a British lineage. In the “Then” panel, the three stood in a room, dressed in rather clubbish attire, ignorantly turning their backs on the unemployed Irish workers adorned in simple suits and newsboy hats most associated with workingmen who stood outside the window. The unnamed “Higher Civil Servant” stood butler-like beside Cosgrave and McGilligan, who were labeled as “The Ministers,” and were quoted as saying: “The Country is so prosperous!”<sup>49</sup> The “Then” panel, which was meant to be representative of Cumann na nGaedheal’s time in government, was juxtaposed with a “Now” panel that emphasized Fianna Fáil’s activist economic policy, surprising the ex-ministers because of their trusted civil servant has had his salary reduced. Such is shown by the civil servant who appeared unaffected by the image of the once idled workingmen busily at work, but expresses shock because Fianna Fáil “Cut my £1,600!”<sup>50</sup> As such, the artist quite literally positioned Cosgrave and his supporters outside of the heteronormative Ireland where the workingman labored in factories and on construction sites thanks to the seed planted by Fianna Fáil’s economic policies. Further, in reference to the title “They Never Look Out the Window,” the artist was certain to place the civil servant and Cumann na nGaedheal ministers inside a building, enclosed in their own world outside Fianna Fáil’s heteronormativity. Their

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<sup>49</sup> Bee, “They Never Look Out the Window,” *Irish Press* 9 June 1932, 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

light-colored pants would have most certainly been ruined by the dirt and grime of construction had they ventured outside.

Another cartoon from 1932 by the same artist, Bee, depicted a roomful of British ministers sitting around a table at Downing Street, where “they turned on the radio and smiled again.”<sup>51</sup> (Figure 5.7) Divided into two panels, the cartoon on the left depicted British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald conferring with his colleagues, who included his second in command Stanley Baldwin seated at the far right of the panel. “Gentlemen,” MacDonald declared, “we cannot unseat this new Irish Government. Lets [sic] come to terms.”<sup>52</sup> Before the cabinet could accede to Chamberlain’s wishes regarding the recently triumphant Fianna Fáil, Baldwin says “Hold on a little while—something may happen yet.”<sup>53</sup> Situated ominously behind the four men—all of whom were dressed in formal coats and ties, one adorned with a banker’s monocle, all with expressions of consternation—was a large wireless radio. In the next panel, the following phrases emitted from the radio: “Mr. Cosgrave:- ‘England is Right’”; “Mr. Blythe:- ‘De Valera has no case’”; “Mr. McGilligan:- ‘The Land Annuities are Britain’s’”; Mr. Fitzgerald-Kenny:- ‘England must get them’”; and most threatening from the perspective of Irish farmers, “Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald:- ‘Pay or—’”.<sup>54</sup> As these words were transmitted, the British cabinet were seen to reply “Saved Again!”; “Attaboy!”; and “Ha! Ha!” while a smug Baldwin concludes, “What did I tell you!”<sup>55</sup> Bee’s cartoon clearly defined the pro-British aspects of Cumann na nGaedheal’s policy in regard to its opposition of Fianna Fáil’s Economic War against

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<sup>51</sup> Bee, “At Downing St. they turned on the Radio and smiled again,” *Irish Press*, 3 September 1932, 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*



Britain which had begun in earnest in June of 1932 when de Valera announced the party's plan to withhold payment of the land annuities. Further, the cartoon was printed shortly after the private discussions with Baldwin at the Ottawa Conference, and less than three months before the January 1933 election, thus providing another example of Fianna Fáil's nationalist/party duality. If, as argued in the previous chapter, Fianna Fáil was to represent the masculine, and was properly supported by appropriate feminine behavior—as shown in chapter three—then there was no place for Cumann na nGaedheal within the male/female heteronormative binary. Cosgrave and his supporters, therefore, were positioned outside of the acceptable republican realm.

In February 1936, the *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, reprinted an article from the magazine *New Statesman and Nation* under the headline: “‘Irish Housekeeping’ British Writer on the Results of Fianna Fáil’s Economic Policy.” The article highlighted the assertion that “The Cosgrave regime, it is true, for ten years carried good marks in the British Press by a docile acceptance of previous conditions. Ireland’s role was to concentrate on animal husbandry, to supply Great Britain with meat, butter and eggs, importing in exchange most of the necessaries [sic] and luxuries of life.”<sup>56</sup> While the piece did not originate with Fianna Fáil, its inclusion certainly reiterated the party’s rhetorical portrayal of Fine Gael as having been subservient to Britain. Within sixteen months, however, the *Bulletin* trumpeted Fine Gael’s “slow conversion” to Fianna Fáil’s economic approach. The article, entitled, “The Education of Fine Gael” heralded:

The slow conversion of Fine Gael to the greater part of the Fianna Fail [sic] Economic Programme is proof of the overwhelming support of the people for the policy of National Self-Sufficiency and Security. Equally it reveals the

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<sup>56</sup> “‘Irish Housekeeping,’ British Writer on Results of Fianna Fáil’s Economic Policy,” in *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, February 1936, 5.

negative outlook of the Opposition and is the proof of their utter failure to think constructively or nationally.

Three leaders have left Fine Gael. The desperate and unscrupulous attempt to create a Fascist movement fizzled out in miserable wire-cutting and free-falling. Then followed the conversion—a conversion too late to deceive the Irish people.<sup>57</sup>

Much of the article discussed “The slow and Pitiful Surrender to Fianna Fail” and demonstrated Fianna Fáil’s growing confidence that it was now the hegemonic force that was driving the push toward a new nation. Further, this article serves as a marker of how the rise of Fianna Fáil had transformed Cumann na nGaedheal from a party—with its own ideology—into one that was essentially reacting—and thereby acquiescing—to the new republican hegemony.<sup>58</sup> Most interesting, however, was the depiction of Fianna Fáil as being the “National Educators” who would “teach Fine Gael that the people of this country want a Government that will lead them to prosperity through constructive effort and not a party which encourages their oppressors by prophecies of disaster—nor a party which threatens to ‘knock the hell out of them.’”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “The Education of Fine Gael,” in *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, June 1937, 14.

<sup>58</sup> Girvin, “Republicanisation,” 132-33.

<sup>59</sup> “Education of Fine Gael,” 14.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FIVE



**Figure 5.1: Eamon de Valera and the Papal Legation, *The Irish Press* 21 June 1932, 1.**



THE IRISH PRESS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1932

# WHO'LL WIN IRELAND'S HURLING BLUE RIBAND?

## Kilkenny Have Skill, Speed and Youth

By Gael

THE Hurling season is now well advanced and the excitement of the game is at its height. A problem that only the most ardent devotees of the game will understand is the question of the Blue Riband.

It is an old story that the Blue Riband is awarded to the team which has won the most games in the championship. This year the Kilkenny team has a very good chance of winning it.

The Kilkenny team is a very young one and has a great deal of skill and speed. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

The other teams in the championship are also very strong and will be a great test for the Kilkenny team. The game is expected to be a very exciting one.

## CLARE THE FORM TEAM

By J.S.

CLARE have been in the form of their lives since the beginning of the season. They have won every game they have played and are the only team in the championship who have not lost a game.

The Clare team is a very strong one and has a great deal of experience. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

The other teams in the championship are also very strong and will be a great test for the Clare team. The game is expected to be a very exciting one.

## "Grandest Spectacle Any Land Can Produce"

By Celt

TO-MORROW'S FINAL WILL UPHOLD A GREAT TRADITION

THE Hurling season is now well advanced and the excitement of the game is at its height. A problem that only the most ardent devotees of the game will understand is the question of the Blue Riband.

It is an old story that the Blue Riband is awarded to the team which has won the most games in the championship. This year the Kilkenny team has a very good chance of winning it.

The Kilkenny team is a very young one and has a great deal of skill and speed. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

The other teams in the championship are also very strong and will be a great test for the Kilkenny team. The game is expected to be a very exciting one.

### WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

SEATTLE HURLED the blue riband of the championship to Kilkenny who won the final by a score of 1-11 to 0-10. The Kilkenny team was a very young one and has a great deal of skill and speed. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

### MESSAGE FROM CLARE

CLARE have been in the form of their lives since the beginning of the season. They have won every game they have played and are the only team in the championship who have not lost a game.

### MURTACH VICTORIOUS

MURTACH won the swimming championship by a score of 1-11 to 0-10. The Murtach team was a very strong one and has a great deal of experience. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

### CHANCES IN IRISH OPEN

By Hazard

THE Irish Open is now well advanced and the excitement of the game is at its height. A problem that only the most ardent devotees of the game will understand is the question of the Blue Riband.

It is an old story that the Blue Riband is awarded to the team which has won the most games in the championship. This year the Kilkenny team has a very good chance of winning it.

The Kilkenny team is a very young one and has a great deal of skill and speed. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

The other teams in the championship are also very strong and will be a great test for the Kilkenny team. The game is expected to be a very exciting one.

### SOCCER FIXTURES

FREE STATE LEAGUE

WOMANS v. St. James' Gate, at 10.15. (1) St. James' Gate, (2) St. James' Gate, (3) St. James' Gate, (4) St. James' Gate, (5) St. James' Gate, (6) St. James' Gate, (7) St. James' Gate, (8) St. James' Gate, (9) St. James' Gate, (10) St. James' Gate, (11) St. James' Gate, (12) St. James' Gate, (13) St. James' Gate, (14) St. James' Gate, (15) St. James' Gate, (16) St. James' Gate, (17) St. James' Gate, (18) St. James' Gate, (19) St. James' Gate, (20) St. James' Gate, (21) St. James' Gate, (22) St. James' Gate, (23) St. James' Gate, (24) St. James' Gate, (25) St. James' Gate, (26) St. James' Gate, (27) St. James' Gate, (28) St. James' Gate, (29) St. James' Gate, (30) St. James' Gate, (31) St. James' Gate, (32) St. James' Gate, (33) St. James' Gate, (34) St. James' Gate.

### ANNALS OF SPORTS

THE Annals of Sports are now well advanced and the excitement of the game is at its height. A problem that only the most ardent devotees of the game will understand is the question of the Blue Riband.

It is an old story that the Blue Riband is awarded to the team which has won the most games in the championship. This year the Kilkenny team has a very good chance of winning it.

The Kilkenny team is a very young one and has a great deal of skill and speed. They have won the championship in the past and are expected to do so again this year.

The other teams in the championship are also very strong and will be a great test for the Kilkenny team. The game is expected to be a very exciting one.

ALIKENY TEAM - No. 1-16 (1) J. J. O'Connell, (2) J. J. O'Connell, (3) J. J. O'Connell, (4) J. J. O'Connell, (5) J. J. O'Connell, (6) J. J. O'Connell, (7) J. J. O'Connell, (8) J. J. O'Connell, (9) J. J. O'Connell, (10) J. J. O'Connell, (11) J. J. O'Connell, (12) J. J. O'Connell, (13) J. J. O'Connell, (14) J. J. O'Connell, (15) J. J. O'Connell, (16) J. J. O'Connell.

CLARE TEAM - No. 1-17 (1) J. J. O'Connell, (2) J. J. O'Connell, (3) J. J. O'Connell, (4) J. J. O'Connell, (5) J. J. O'Connell, (6) J. J. O'Connell, (7) J. J. O'Connell, (8) J. J. O'Connell, (9) J. J. O'Connell, (10) J. J. O'Connell, (11) J. J. O'Connell, (12) J. J. O'Connell, (13) J. J. O'Connell, (14) J. J. O'Connell, (15) J. J. O'Connell, (16) J. J. O'Connell, (17) J. J. O'Connell.

Figure 5.3: Sample sports page from *The Irish Press*, 3 September 1932, 8.

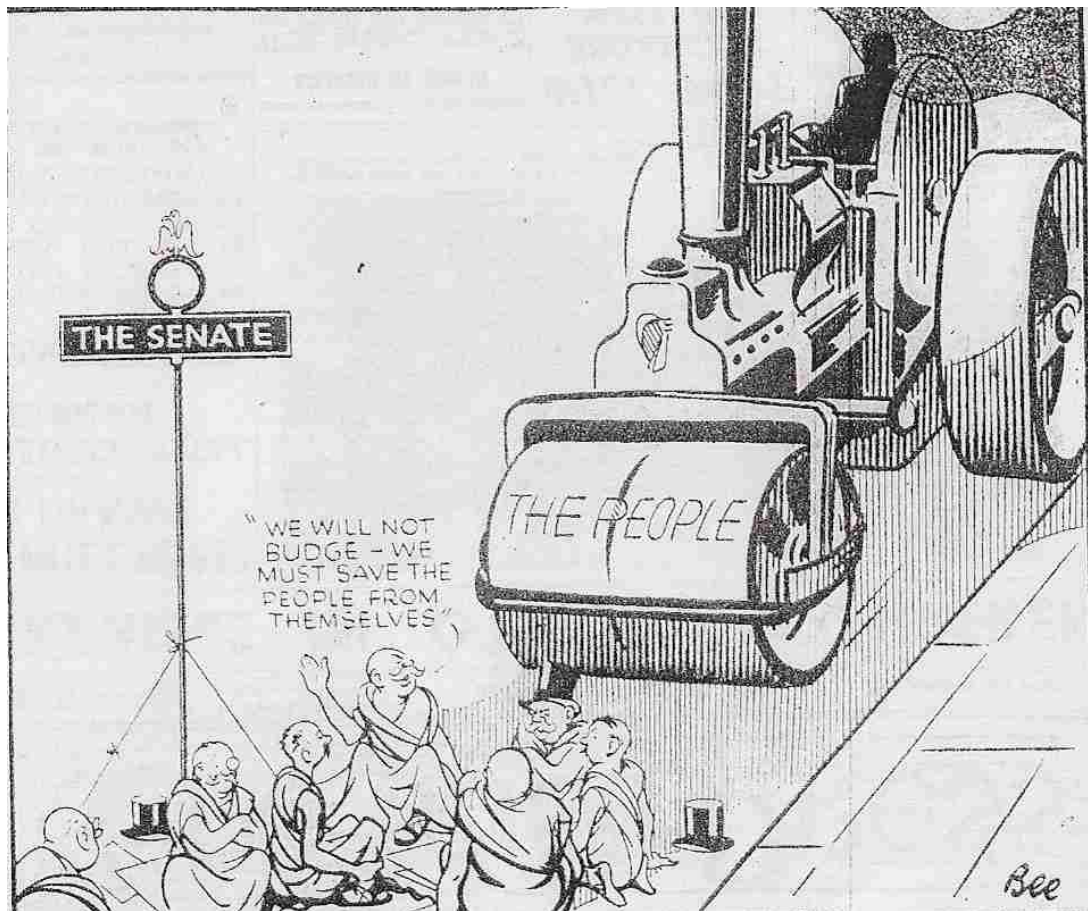


Figure 5.4: Bee, Untitled Cartoon, *The Irish Press*, 4 June 1932, 1.

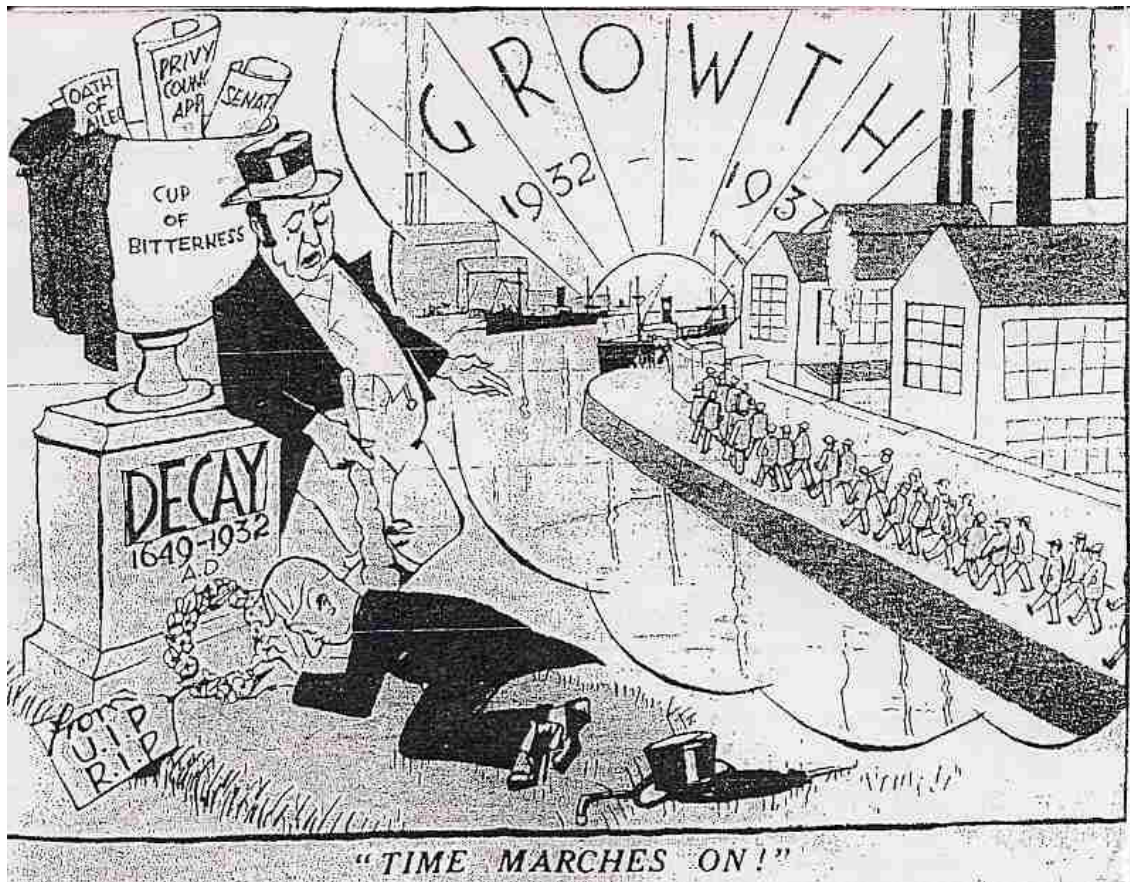


Figure 5.4: "Time Marches On!" *Fianna Fáil Bulletin*, January 1937, 7.

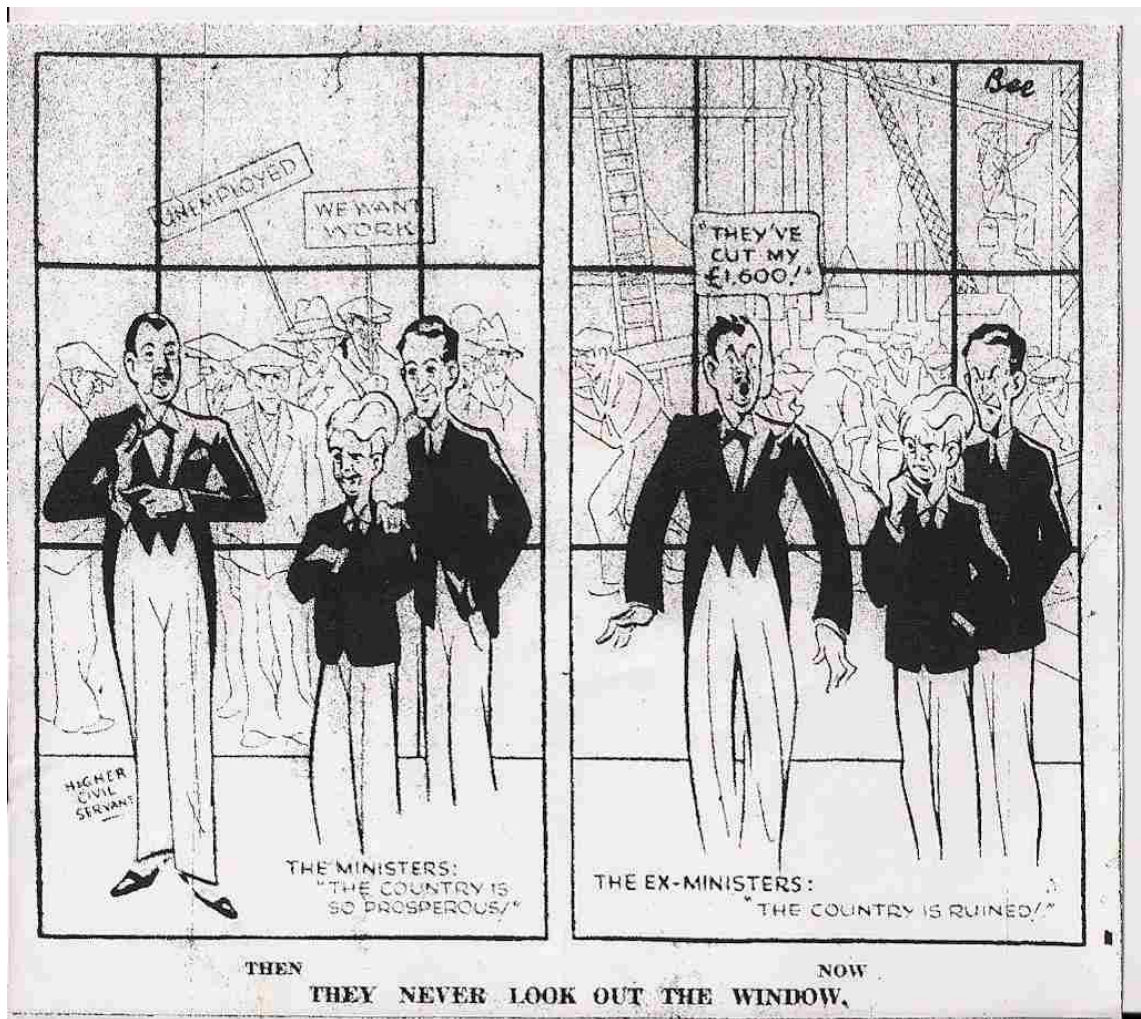
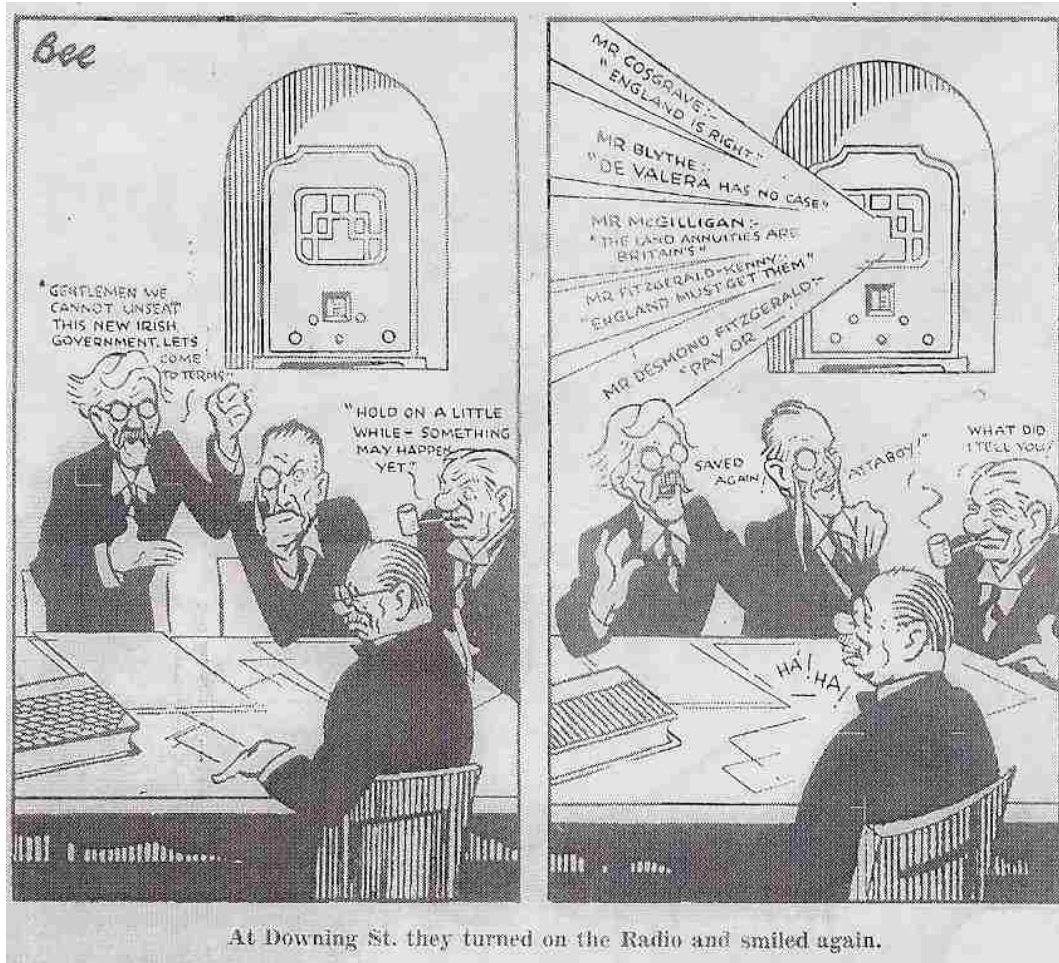


Figure 5.5: Bee, "They Never Look Out The Window," *Irish Press* 9 June 1932, 1.





**Figure 5.6:** Bee, "At Downing St. They turned on the Radio and smiled again," *Irish Press*, 31 September 1932, 1.

**Chapter Six**  
**“Memory is a Rather Fleeting Sense”—The Curious Case of Pathé Films and the Cinematic Archive of the Militant Era**

I've been dreaming of a time when  
 The English are sick to death of Labour, And Tories,  
 And spit upon the name Oliver Cromwell,  
 And denounce this royal line that still salute him,  
 And will salute him forever.  
 -Morrissey<sup>1</sup>

In 1935, three years after taking control of the Free State government, certain Fianna Fáil ministers were made aware of an archive of film taken by the British studio Pathé in the years between 1919 and 1923. The studio had contacted the government in the hopes of getting approval for a possible film depicting the previous twenty-one years of Ireland's history. Over the course of three years, the administration debated internally about what to do with the film that eventually devolved into a conversation on how to suppress the footage.<sup>2</sup> There was an overall consensus that the film needed to be preserved, and the dialogues revealed a certain level of nostalgia for the period, as well as serving as a reminder that many prominent members of Fianna Fáil had been actively involved with the belligerence of the previous decades. Given the struggle to remove itself from the shadow of the gunmen by Fianna Fáil republicans in the period after 1926, it would come as no surprise that the party would seek to suppress a visual reminder of its militant origins.

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<sup>1</sup> Morrissey, “Irish Blood, English Heart,” *You Are the Quarry*, Attack Records 001, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Noel Redican relates the story of James Montgomery's efforts to collect films of historical interest to Ireland, and describes a circumstance not unlike the situation with Pathé. During his search, Montgomery “collected all but one, a very important one about de Valera's tour of the USA in 1920.” Noel Redican, *Shadows of Doubt* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2008), 182. Essentially, de Valera had told Montgomery that he had given the film to Séan Harling, a republican who had been shunned by Fianna Fáil and had been refused entry into the civil service. The government requested that Harling return the film, and when he asked for permission to do so in person, he was rebuffed by P. Ó Cinnéide. *Ibid.*, 182-85. The film was delivered to Montgomery with the following note from Ó Cinnéide: “The Taoiseach considers that it may be worth while [sic] adding the film to your collection of Irish historical films but for the present he desires that no action should be taken in regard to it and that you should merely retain it in your custody until he has an opportunity of viewing it.” *Ibid.*, 185.

It serves to engage this story in a history of the era between 1926 and 1932, for it stands as evidence that the party's effort to distance itself from its militant origins remained a prominent feature of its political discourse. Further, Fianna Fáil's effort in the 1930s to suppress the IRA and other militant organizations, including the fascist Blueshirts, while acting as the legitimate government of the state necessitated that the Irish people not be reminded of Fianna Fáil's origins. Thus, the fate of the film is particularly telling about the lengths the party went to in its effort to maintain a sense of independence and distance from Sinn Féin's physical force insurgency.

In June 1935, representatives of Pathé films wrote two letters to James Montgomery, the head of the Film Censor's Office in Dublin, making him aware of the Pathé archive.<sup>3</sup> The first letter read, in part:

The Minister for Local Government and Public Health desires me to send you enclosed film which has been handed to him by Mr. Dan O'Donovan, his former Private Secretary. This film was taken in the early stages of the launching of the Second Dail [sic] Loan. Mr. O'Donovan states that it was taken in the grounds of Saint Enda's and it has considerable historical interest. The Minister will discuss with you later what he wished done with the film.<sup>4</sup>

A second letter from an official at Pathé was sent ten days later:

I have to transmit herewith, for safe custody two rolls of film, about 6" and 4 4/5" in diameter, respectively, which were received here from the Minister for Local Government and Public Health. The film deals with the launching of the Second Dáil Loan, and is of considerable historical interest. It is thought that one may possibly be a continuation of the other, and if so, it is suggested that they might, if you so consider it desirable, be rewound into one roll.<sup>5</sup>

In response to these letters, Montgomery wrote:

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<sup>3</sup> James Montgomery (1870-1943) served as the first censor of the Irish Free State, having been appointed to the position by Kevin O'Higgins in 1923, and served until his retirement in 1940. Montgomery was a rather unique case in that his service as film censor continued after Fianna Fáil had succeeded Cumann na nGaedheal in office. Marie Coleman, "James Montgomery," *Dictionary*, accessed 15 March 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Letter dated 3adh Meitheamh 1935, (3 June 1935) Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI, S8230A/S7850.

<sup>5</sup> M. McDunphy, letter to Montgomery, dated 13adh Meitheamh 1935 (13 June), Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI, S. 7850.

I have received for inclusion in our Historical Collection the two rolls of film which you sent me. I have had them rewound into one roll. There is already a nucleus of a historical collection and I am trying—with the help of the Film Trade—to keep it up to date by the addition of news reels [sic] of national importance from time to time. Some effort should be made very soon to edit the earlier films, so as to have an authentic record of the scenes and people portrayed.<sup>6</sup>

Inherent in this conversation is the fact that there was some interest within the government to collect and preserve a film record of Irish history. This matter was private and thus leads one to conclude that it was the intent of the government to keep the matter private. The situation changed, however, on 31 August 1935, when an article was published in the decidedly anti-Fianna Fáil *Irish Independent* in which the presence of such films was made known. According to the columnist “J.A.P.”:

In my notes last week I suggested that we were doing nothing in the matter of film archives. Well, I was wrong. During the last few weeks we have been doing something, thanks to the perspicacity and stalwart endeavour of our Film Censor Mr. Montgomery. As a matter of fact, *the President has had his attention drawn to the matter quite recently, and as might have been expected, is very keen about it.* Mr. Montgomery, who has had an eye to this part of his duties ever since he was appointed Film Censor, has carefully catalogued all films of national interest, and has made his own archive...

### **What We Have**

I understand (being utterly without official knowledge) that there is a suggestion of an impartial committee to do the ‘cutting’ of these historical films. Which will mean (I hope) that every side will get a square deal, and the subtitles (those that matter being all silent films) will be judiciously written. But when we have pruned these historic films so that they will give no offence to anybody, what are we going to do with them? Of course, we could show them in the schools—only that the vast majority of our schools have not electric light and could not show them unless an enthusiastic National teacher footed the bill for a battery projector out of his own pocket. I suppose that while the great bureaucratic brains that run the country in the shape of the little tin gods of the Civil Service are brooding about the matter[,] the films will still remain in Mr. Montgomery’s charge. And he, being also a civil servant, will get no thanks for looking at them.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> J. Montgomery, letter to McDunphy dated 15<sup>th</sup> June 1935, Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A, S. 7850.

<sup>7</sup> J.A.P., “We Are Achieving Archives—Irish Films of Historic Interest are Being Preserved,” *Irish Independent*, 31 August 1935. The emphasis is my own.

This particular article functioned in two ways: first to make public the fact that the Film Office retained footage of possible historical interest; and second that de Valera had known that the footage existed. From this point onward, all conversation from the government's offices included the caveat that no part of any film shall be shown in public. Further, it became a matter of great importance that all filmed depictions of the period between 1919 and 1923 be obtained by the Film Censor's Office.

In an anonymous letter for the Roinn an Uachtaráin (Office of the President), it was noted that:

On Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. the Film Censor, Mr. Montgomery showed on the screen at his office in Molesworth St., a number of historical films to a small audience...[that] covered the incidents of the Anglo-Irish and Civil wars, the Peace negotiations in London, 1922, and the funerals of Gen. Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith. The idea is gradually to assemble a library of such films, which would be added to from time to time and kept as State records. *The films shown to us were given to him on the conditions that they are not to be shown in public.*<sup>8</sup>

Although not present at this screening, de Valera, among others, was present at a similar screening on the 9 November 1935.<sup>9</sup>

In a letter written to Pathé's MacDunphy, Montgomery reiterated the importance of the Irish government's effort both to collect all footage from the era 1919-23, as well as to ensure a certain level of privacy regarding said film. It reads, in full:

Dear MacDunphy [sic],

I enclose a list of subtitles from the copies of the Pathe [sic] Gazette which form the nucleus of the Historical Collection which I have been trying to form for some years.

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<sup>8</sup> J. Montgomery, letter to Mr. MacDunphy, undated, Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A, S. 7850. Emphasis is my own.

<sup>9</sup> A note from the Office of the President stated: "President, Vice-President and some other selected persons, visited the Film Censor's studio today at 3p.m. for the purpose of viewing the films referred to in Mr. Montgomery's note of 7<sup>th</sup> Nov." Ibid.

Recognising the importance to posterity of such a collection, I got in touch with Mr. Gordon Lewis—who at that time was acting for Messrs Pathe, *and he presented all the films in his possession dealing with the period of the Truce, the Treaty, and the Civil War, to Mr. W.T. Cosgrave, for the State, on condition that they were to be treated as historical records, were not to pass from the custody of the State, and were not to be shown in public. They are the only copies in existence—all the negatives were burnt in Messrs Pathes during ‘The Trouble’. There must be other films of that period in the possession of private individuals, and every effort should be made to secure them—notably the O’Donovan Rossa funeral.*

When an incident of National importance appears in the news reels, I request the Renter to let me have it at the end of its run. Some Renters have complied, and there is a fairly good sequence in our possession.

I feel that the films covered by the list enclosed should be more fully documented. You could see yourself, from the screening given the other day, to a few who should have an intimate knowledge of the names of the persons portrayed, *that the memory is a rather fleeting sense, and that in a few years many identities will be utterly forgotten—this is a strange irony; but unfortunately true.*

I therefore suggest that it would be a good idea to get a group together who could see the films, and arrive at an agreed list of subtitles, with the necessary names of the parties in each section. When these subtitles are added, these valuable records should be securely sealed and stored in a safe place. I have shown them very rarely fearing injury to the celuloid.[sic]

Is mise le meas,

J. Montgomery, Scurdoir na Scannan

In addition to the enclosed list we also have a sound film entitled ‘Pathe [sic] Jubilee Retrospect’ dealing with historical Irish events, and the film record of the ‘First Dail Eireann Loan Issue’ which you sent me.<sup>10</sup>

Again, it is rather clear that Montgomery wanted to ensure that all elements of the filmed historic record—at least of this period—were to remain in the hands of the government and not to be shown in public. Included in the cache of films referenced by Montgomery were such titles as: “Sinn Feiners in Downing Street. Mr. De Valera and Mr. Lloyd George and peace prospects are bright”; “Presidential Tour ends in Peace. President De Valera accompanied by Mr. Cathal Brugha (Minister of Defence)

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<sup>10</sup> J. Montgomery, letter to ‘Dear MacDunphy,’ 7 November, 1935,” Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI, S7850. Emphasis is my own.

and Mr. R.J. Mulcahy (Chief of Staff) reviews the Western Division of the Irish National Army”; “Dublin Castle. Symbol and citadel of British Rule in Ireland for centuries surrender to Sinn Fein Provisional Government. English Troops mount guard for the last time. The official entry was singularly undramatic though a moment that will live forever in Irish minds”; “Republican Campaign Opens. Huge demonstration in O’Connell Street”; “Pilgrimage After the Poll. Prominent Anti-Treaty Republicans at the grave of Wolfe Tone at Bodenstown. General Mellowes declares that election results do not mean the death of Irish republicanism”; “The Battle of the Four Courts. Exclusive pictures by our Staff Cameraman.”<sup>11</sup> In light of the effort by the Free State Government—notably Cumann na nGaedheal—in the period between 1922 and beyond to portray de Valera and his followers as instigators of the Civil War, such evidence could certainly be used against Fianna Fáil. Further, with the party in the midst of the Economic War with Great Britain, it was potentially dangerous for the Irish citizenry to be shown images of the British “evacuating” Dublin Castle ten years prior at the same time they were being told that they, as a people, were struggling under the yoke of British colonialism. And, as Montgomery wryly noted, the screening of the film was intended in part to privately secure a historical record, so that names would not be forgotten, yet publicly every effort was made by Fianna Fáil to forge a public amnesia. Such was the nature of the socio-political landscape of Ireland in the Formative Era.

Of further interest in Montgomery’s letter is the revelation that Cosgrave was presented with this same material, and despite the opportunity the film provided to further portray de Valera and his followers as militants, the Cumann na nGaedheal leader never did so. One may only offer conjecture as to why Cosgrave and his party

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<sup>11</sup> Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A, S. 7850.

opted to keep this archive in secret. However, two possibilities may be explored briefly. First, the film contained images of Cumann na nGaedheal ministers participating in acts of violent rebellion that they had spent much of the 1920s decrying. On a related note, it might have been deemed dangerous for members of Cumann na nGaedheal—a party that was busy forging a working relation with Westminster—to be shown participating in rebellion against Britain. Secondly, the film also depicts Cumann na nGaedheal ministers serving a leadership that was comprised largely of men and women that would comprise the anti-Treaty/Sinn Féin cadre. Indeed, both parties had something to lose had the Pathé film been shown in public after 1927. Thus, it is of no surprise that the film was suppressed by both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil.

Another brief exchange of letters between Montgomery and Gordon Lewis of Pathé exposes the efforts by the government to secure the cinematic record from the period. The matter at hand was whether or not Pathé could secure film stock from Ireland in order to “issue a film of the past 21 years of Irish history in the near future for public exhibition.” The project, Lewis claimed, “would prove invaluable as it [would] provide a living history of Ireland’s fight for freedom in the last quarter of a century.”<sup>12</sup> It is of great importance to note that the Fianna Fáil government had great interest in censoring a good portion of the “fight for freedom,” ensuring that the public fight for freedom was—at least for the party—something that began with the formation of Fianna Fáil in 1926, and that the previous generation was a distant, if not forgotten, memory.

Montgomery’s response exposed a few facets of the government’s position— notably that they sought to secure more footage than what was listed (note the

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<sup>12</sup> J. Gordon Lewis, letter to J. Montgomery, 1 July 1938,” Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A.



reference to Black and Tans), as well as his implicit effort to secure some level of editorial control over Pathé's production. Montgomery, in part, wrote:

Today we handed you our list of the films, which you so kindly presented to the State as the nucleus of a historical collection. There are also valuable pictures of the issue of the First National Loan at St. Enda's, and the funeral of Thomas Ashe. Please return the list as soon as possible.

I was always under the impression that these copies were unique, but in your letter of July 18<sup>th</sup>, you mention 'negatives in our Library'. Does this mean that the negatives of these films are in existence? Does it also mean that you hold records of the Black and Tan period?

On [the previous letter] you state that your firm intends to issue, in the near future, a film of the last twenty one years of Irish history. *Could arrangements be made so that this publication would meet our requirements, and obviate the need for the special production of a film for the State from the records presented by you?* [Which] according to the terms of your presentation, could not be shown to a General Audience, in public, and could only be used as an archive, for exhibition occasionally to a limited audience.<sup>13</sup>

Lewis' response demonstrated his and Pathé's willingness to acquiesce on the subject, going so far as to say that "when this film is produced I have no doubt that my Company will be prepared to sell copies to the Government for preservation as a historical record and for exhibition to a limited non paying audience."<sup>14</sup> Further, there is no indication that Pathé ever created the film in which they intended to produce.

Two months later in October of 1938, Montgomery wrote to Commissioner Cleary:

Some years ago Mr. Gordon Lewis, representative of Messrs Pathe [sic] Pictures, gave us a number of old news reels [sic] covering the Truce Treaty and Civil War periods, to form the nucleus of a National Historical collection of films. The conditions were that they were to be kept by us merely as archives; *they were not to be reproduced without Pathe's permission, and they must never be shown to the general public.* They are of course, very valuable records. An Taoiseach [de Valera] saw them, and suggested that a series of sub-titles or a running sound commentary should be added for the benefit of posterity, but at present this is not feasible. However, there is a danger which

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<sup>13</sup> J. Montgomery, letter to Gordon Lewis, 10 August 1938, Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A.

<sup>14</sup> J. Gordon Lewis, letter to J. Montgomery, 1 July 1938," Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A.

must be guarded against, that is—fire—and it is proposed that a duplicate should be made and stored, say in the Museum.<sup>15</sup>

Most interesting is the assertion—made second-hand—by “An Taoiseach” that a running commentary should be included in any possible future manifestations of the film. It is difficult to believe that the approved commentary would depart from Fianna Fáil’s overall effort to reconstitute history in such a manner that might connect members of the party to the unrest depicted in the newsreels.

Unfortunately, the fate of the film was not to be decided by the Irish government. Correspondence from 1943 between P. Ó Cinnéide, secretary to de Valera, and the Department of Justice reveals that Montgomery’s fear of fire had come to fruition. On 24 April 1943, Ó Cinnéide wrote, “I am to refer to the recent fire in the Film Censor’s Office and to inquire whether the collection of Irish historical film which it is understood were stored in that Office was damaged and if so to what extent.”<sup>16</sup> In response, Justice officials informed him, “as a result of the recent fire at the Office of the Official Censor of Films, the following are the only items of Irish historical interest now available in that Office: Irish items from the new reels for the period from the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1941 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 1942, five items for the month of January, 1943, and six reels from the film ‘Man of Aran.’”<sup>17</sup> So it went for the filmed record of Ireland’s history in the years between 1919 and 1923.

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<sup>15</sup> Scrudoir Na Scanna (J. Montgomery), letter to Commissioner Clearly, 10 October 1938, Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A, S8230A. Although it cannot be confirmed, it is likely that this letter was written to Joseph Cleary, who, according to Kevin Rockett was an “honorary film censor.” Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship, A Cultural Journey from Silent Cinema to Internet Pornography* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 387fn.

<sup>16</sup> P. Ó Cinnéide, letter to Roinn Dlíghidh agus Cirt, 14adh Abrán 1943, Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI S230A.

<sup>17</sup> Roinn Dlíghidh agus Cirt, letter to P. Ó Cinnéide, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1943, Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Historical Films General File, NAI, S8230A.

The new departure for the republican movement under the guise of Fianna Fáil demanded that all necessary steps were taken to ensure that the party could not be saddled with that which made Sinn Féin republicanism so distasteful to the Irish people in the early 1920s. In essence, de Valera's party was attempting to reconfigure the public conception of the republican cause, thereby keeping at arm's length his and his cohorts' connection to the militancy of the previous decade. Yet, for Fianna Fáil, to control the memory of 1916 and 1919 and 1922 was seen as a necessary *cause belle* in its overall effort to construct a new socio-political masternarrative for the envisioned Irish Republic.

By shaping the forms of mass media, Fianna Fáil thus attempted to position itself in such a way that it could control and focus the backward, historical gaze of its citizens. Herein lay one of the great ironies of Fianna Fáil's nationalist project. It emphasized connections to a glorified Gaelic past, yet its key members chose to downplay, if not erase, their connections to the more recent events in which they had played important roles. In their successful effort to censor the visual record depicting them as revolutionaries—gunmen indeed—they were partaking in an explicit effort to control the shared memory of Ireland's recent past for their own gain. What we see occurring privately in regard to the Pathé collection encapsulated the core principles exerted by Fianna Fáil in the period from its formation in 1926 well into the 1930s.

In a larger sense, Fianna Fáil's suppression of the historical films of the 1919-23 era encapsulated the direction that the party was headed in during its early days. To put it simply, the party attempted to construct a palingenetic nationalist discourse, whereby it built upon the primordial nationalism espoused by the Gaelic Revivalists, but also one that embraced such notions of modernity as industry, modified Keynesian economic models, and modernist artistic and political ideologies. The

problem with such an approach—something that hindered its efforts to firmly establish its new departure—was the issue of the events of 1916-22. In essence, it was a generational issue, that is, a political struggle of a new, transitional era, fought among the participants of the previous era. As such, the contests between Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil were as much about notions of memory and identity as they were about legislation and governance. In this early phase, the discursive conflict was centered upon Fianna Fáil's effort to erase the recent past from the minds of the Irish people, and for Cumann na nGaedheal, every effort was made to remind the same Irish people of Fianna Fáil's militant past. This latter point led de Valera and his party to create a new socio-political master narrative built upon gendered lines. To accomplish this, the party found it necessary to reset its gendered identity where notions of heteronormative masculinity and femininity were clearly defined. As has been demonstrated above, Fianna Fáil was a national movement—faced with the challenges of modernity; recipients of an unfinished decolonization from Britain; willing inheritors of the republican tradition; pacifistic rebels; occupants of the very house that they sought to destroy—intent on forging a truly modern nation. The level to which the results of Fianna Fáil's policy equaled its lofty aspirational rhetoric is largely irrelevant when examining the Formative Era, for the wake of the party's actions were yet to be felt. There is little doubt, however, that Fianna Fáil's plan for a new republic was appealing enough to attain a majority of support in the 1930s. Despite its contradictions and inherently paternalistic approach—factors that most assuredly contributed to the social and economic woes faced by the country following World War II—Fianna Fáil's resurgent republicanism forged a modern nation built in its own image.

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