THE TIMES' COVERAGE OF SINN FEIN, 1906-1918: A BIASED PERSPECTIVE

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MARILYN JANE MARTIN

THE TIMES' COVERAGE OF SINN FÉIN, 1906-1918: A BIASED PERSPECTIVE

By

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

When the Easter Rebellion erupted in Ireland in May 1916, Sinn Féin, as an active, influential political organization was virtually nonexistent. Initial public response to the insurrection in England and Ireland, condemned both leaders and participants. However, the British authorities, in a concerted attempt to reestablish control and authenticate their authority, chose to execute sixteen 'organizers' of the rebellion and intern several hundred 'Sinn Féin' sympathizers. Their irresponsible handling of the situation, in which many innocent people were treated as criminals, was commonly viewed with disdain by many Irish men and women, and the once unpopular rising, which the government dubbed the Sinn Féin Rebellion, gradually attained an aura of respectability in Ireland. The uprising became identified with Sinn Féin, and the leaders released from English prison camps at the end of 1916 and during the course of the spring and summer 1917 made no attempt to correct the misnomer. As a result, new memberships in Sinn Féin clubs boomed and it became all too evident to the British that Sinn Féin had attracted much more than a nominal base of support. Results from by-elections in 1917 and 1918 and the general election of December 1918 eradicated doubts about the extent of Sinn Féin influence throughout Ireland. Sinn Féin had rocketed from near-oblivion to become the most

important nationalist force in the country. Yet its remarkable ascent could not be attributed to a systematic plan of action by Sinn Fein officials.

Arthur Griffith, the main impetus behind Sinn Féin, had attempted to increase public acceptance of Sinn Féin doctrine from the organization's official inception in 1905. The combination of several factors prohibited the fruition of his dream, and consequently, internal dissension within the party doomed it to fading support by 1910 and soporific stagnation until the Easter Rebellion. Nevertheless, Sinn Féin's very existence, as unobtrusive and harmless as it may have been, continued to be regarded as a serious threat by Unionist newspapers such as the Irish Times and its mighty associate, The Times of London. The Times, in particular, refused to regard Sinn Féin as anything other than treasonous. A reader perusing the columns of the stalwart Times during the period of the uprising would be confronted with the impression of Sinn Féin as a well-oiled and finely-tuned machine, ready to sabotage the English government in Ireland. The presentation of this image, inaccurate as it was, influenced public perception at the time and helped to establish the Sinn Féin of conventional historical memory.

PREFACE

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln said of The Times that it "is one of the greatest powers in the world; in fact, I don't know anything which has more power, except perhaps the Mississippi."[1] The American president was not alone in recognizing the importance of The Times whose stature, although somewhat tarnished by the scandal surrounding the Parnell case later in the nineteenth century[2], remained intact and allowed the paper to present itself in the twentieth century as "a solid rock of traditional English thought and virtue that provides a stabilizing influence in a chaotic world."[3] Its coups in the reporting of foreign affairs had enabled it to build such a reputation for itself and few thought it capable of presenting inaccurate news. As Ralph Waldo Emerson had observed, what was read in the morning in The Times, was heard in the evening in "all society," for the greatness of The Times lay not in its surmises or predictions, but rather in its reporting of what was "so" and "so it shall be."[4] The Times inspired a blind faith among its readers and

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[1]Abraham Lincoln as quoted by Sir Edward Cook, Delane of the Times. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1916, p.94.

[2]See below Chapter III.

[3]John C. Merrill, The Elite Press. New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1968, p.161.

[4]R.W. Emerson as quoted by Cook, Delane of The Times, p.1 and pp.28-29 respectively.

before long was "universally regarded as the Bible of English journalism,"[5] and an excellent source of reference.[6] Still this example of the English press at its zenith was capable of error and a study of its coverage of Sinn Féin from 1906-1918 provides ample evidence that The Times was not always a model of veracity. To establish this conclusion, examination of both Sinn Féin and The Times proved necessary and thus, this thesis questions two legends: the omnipresence of Sinn Féin and the Gibraltaresque reliability of The Times.

This thesis has been informally organized into two sections: the first two chapters deal with Sinn Féin and the last two look at The Times. More specifically, Chapter 1 analyzes the writings of Arthur Griffith in the United Irishman, the basis of Sinn Féin's early political philosophy. From this examination there emerged a clear picture of the idealism which permeated Griffith's brand of nationalism. Griffith believed that he offered a viable alternative between Parliamentarianism and physical force but more "ardent" nationalists were offended by his ideas and eventually withdrew their support from Sinn Féin. The Sinn Féin which Griffith imagined never did

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[5]R. Barry O'Brien, The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell 1846-1891. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1968, p.198.

[6]Brian Lake, British Newspapers. London: Sheppard Press, 1984, p.97.

emerge; the Sinn Féin which gained notoriety after the Easter Rebellion assumed a character very different from Griffith's original intent. Its checkered existence is the topic of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discusses the functions of newspapers and the history of The Times from its birth to 1918. It establishes how The Times groomed its mighty reputation and in the latter part of the chapter, examines how The Times performed under the tutelage of Lord Northcliffe, an ardent Unionist who insisted that his publications tout loyalist sentiments. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of The Times' coverage of Sinn Féin from its first notice of the organization early in 1906 through 31 December 1918. That particular cutoff date was chosen because it marked the end of a major period of transformation for Sinn Féin. It was during these years that The Times helped to create a particular image of Sinn Féin: after that time, the Sinn Féin party was the controller of its own reputation and destiny.

The three major primary sources used for this thesis were the newspapers United Irishman (Dublin 1899-1906), The Times (London 1906-1918), and the Irish Times (Dublin 1915-1918). The purchase of the microfilm of the former of these papers was gratefully authorized by the Department of History of Memorial University; unfortunately, funds did not allow its successor, Sinn Féin, to also be obtained. Inaccessibility to certain other primary

sources did prove a problem and consequently, official government papers were not within my reach. Hence, I had to rely upon accounts of the same in available secondary sources. However, through the interminable patience of the Interlibrary Loans Staff at the Queen Elizabeth II Library, it was possible to command many memoirs of primary figures in both the development of Sinn Féin and in the newspaper business. Accounts of the 'real' Sinn Féin came from the memoirs of Tom Barry, Dan Breen, Padraic Colum, Charles Dalton, Shaw Desmond, John Devoy, R.M. Fox, R.M. Henry, George Lyons, Séan MacEntee, Uinseann MacEoin (editor of a number of recollections by Easter Rebellion participants and I.R.B. members), P.S. O'Hegarty, Ernie O Malley, Desmond Ryan and James Stephens. The various works of Arthur Griffith turned an invaluable eye inward to the philosophy underlying Sinn Féin. In addition, official accounts by Augustine Birrell and Major C.J.C. Street provided a glimpse of the 'official' version of events and the publication of Dublin Castle's Intelligence Notes 1913-16 by Breandán MacGiolla Choille helped to establish a more accurate picture of what the authorities knew and what they thought they knew about Sinn Féin.

Other memoirs provided significant insights into the workings of the newspaper industry in England. Lord Beaverbrook's reflections about Lord Northcliffe (Alfred

Harmsworth) presented interesting opinions about Northcliffe's strengths and weaknesses, as did the work by E.H.C. Moberly Bell. Northcliffe's ideas about journalism were both admired and hated by contemporaries as can be seen in accounts by R.D. Blumenfeld, Hamilton Fyfe, Philip Gibbs, Kennedy Jones, F.J. Mansfield, J.W. Scott Robertson, J.A. Spender, and Wickham Steed. Works by these journalists helped to situate Northcliffe's role in The Times and gave important clues about The Times' position on Irish nationalism. Restricted access to primary sources forced the use of secondary materials in certain areas to bolster understanding and information. Secondary sources were particularly useful in piecing together the history of Sinn Féin from 1907-1918 and providing background on The Times from its inception to its ownership by Northcliffe.

To thank all those persons who helped and encouraged me is a monumental task; however, there are some who deserve special recognition. I am especially grateful to my thesis advisor, Professor William A. Kearns, for his sound direction and advice. His patience and encouragement never failed - a factor which became particularly important when I returned to the workforce and pursued my thesis on a part-time basis. Special thanks are also due Dr. Stuart Pierson and Dr. C.J.B. English for their keen insights, suggestions and interest

in this work. Dr. Christopher Youé took the time to read a final draft of this document; his thoughtful comments, suggestions, and encouragement are deeply appreciated. To Dr. Wayne Ludlow, my mentor, goes yet another round of thanks. Over the years his moral support, encouragement and friendship have provided an invaluable stimulus to my academic pursuits. The staff at the Queen Elizabeth II Library were immensely helpful; the cooperation of the staff in the Interlibrary Loans Division was indispensable. Thank you all for your time and effort expended on my behalf. Diane Dawson, Colleen Dalton and Irene Whitfield spent many hours typing and correcting this thesis; their friendliness and professionalism saved me many hours of work. Their assistance in producing the final product is deeply appreciated. Finally this section could not close without recognizing the contribution of my husband, Sam, in this endeavour. To him a special word of thanks for his unfailing patience and support.

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Ch.I - The Evolution of Griffith's Early Nationalist Thought and its Influence on the Development of Sinn Féin Doctrine

The Time Shall Come

Oh, the time shall come when our dear green flag
Shall proudly wave 'bove the Saxon rag,
When the cry shall ring out from sea to sea -
"Long suff'ring Eire at last is free."

Yes, the time shall come when our lovely isle
Shall thrive beneath Freedom's sun-bright smile;
When, from Malin Head down to Bantry's Bay,
Our own dear tongue shall again hold sway.

Ah! the time shall come when the Saxon horde
Shall fly before Erin's avenging sword;
When her clansmen brave shall avenge the fate
Of the heroes butchered in 'Ninety-eight.

And the time shall come, when the harp once more
Shall sound through the land, as in days of yore;
When peace from shore unto shore shall reign
And our land a nation once again.

"Dalcassian"
The United Irishman
1 April 1899
p.3.

Sinn Féin warranted little attention and concern in the columns of The Times prior to 1916; indeed, the general Irish populace, specifically those outside Dublin, were also ignorant of its existence. While it did not officially come into being as a political organization until 1905, its seeds were publicly planted as far back as 1899 and, under the discerning eye of Arthur Griffith, its growth, though slow and laboured, was nurtured. Had it not been for Griffith's dogged persistence, his willingness to work for a small salary, and his strong belief in the ability of the Irish to govern themselves and control their own destiny if educated to do so, the United Irishman as the initial mouthpiece of Sinn Féin policy would doubtfully have ever survived after its first few years of publication.

There were several factors from Griffith's background which had instilled fervent nationalistic beliefs in him. Born in Dublin in 1871, the son of Irish Catholic working class parents, Griffith was educated by the "patriotically-inclined" Christian Brothers.[1] However, at the age of fifteen, he sacrificed further formal academic training to become an apprentice in the Underwood printing establishment, from which he later graduated to the position of copy-reader on the Parnellite paper, the Irish

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[1]Richard Davis, Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein. Dublin: Anvil Books, 1974, p. xv.

Independent.[2] It was during this period that Griffith became a significant figure in the Leinster Literary Society, and it was at one of the society's meetings that Arthur Griffith had his first encounter with William Rooney. Almost immediately, Griffith recognized the energies and abilities of Rooney and later referred to him as "the destined regenerator of his people."[3] They shared a like concept of nationalism - a rooted belief in Ireland's ability to govern her own affairs.

When the Leinster Literary Society showed signs of stagnation, these shared ideals propelled Rooney, with Griffith's support, to launch the Celtic Literary Society in 1893. Like the Leinster chapter, the Celtic Literary Society channelled its energies into stimulating a sense of Irish nationality.[4] This was to be achieved through the encouragement of Celtic themes, mythology, and values which would frame their search for "a Celtic Irish cultural identity".[5] Their politics touted an Ireland free from British domination: an Ireland rich and independent in its heritage. Like most Nationalist clubs of

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[2]Padraic Colum, Ourselves Alone! New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1959, pp. 18-26. Further biographical details of Griffith in this passage are taken from this source.

[3]Ibid., p. 21.

[4]F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine. London: Fontana Books, 1982, p. 247.

[5]Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Ireland from colony to nation state. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979, p. 122.

that time, the Celtic Literary Society preached progressive thought to an exclusively male membership. To Maud Gonne, a self-proclaimed Nationalist who had been influenced by her close friend, the Fenian John O'Leary, and whose views had been consolidated by the relief work which she had conducted in the nineties among the poverty-stricken area of western Ireland,[6] Nationalist thought was not the sole domain of men. As a result, she formed her own intellectual circle in her rooms in Nassau Street, over a lending library. Her background was that of a Unionist,[7] her thoughts that of a Nationalist and thus, she attracted persons from diverse backgrounds. Regulars included William Butler Yeats, James Connolly, George Russell (A.E.), Stephen McKenna, Douglas Hyde, John O'Leary and Dr. George Sigerson - all lights of Irish thought.[8] As members of this group, Griffith and Rooney gained access to other stimulating personalities. The consequent interchange of philosophies and ideas undoubtedly helped to mould and expand Griffith's national-

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[6]Robert Kee, The Green Flag. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972, pp. 434-435. See also the account of Maud Gonne's son, Sean MacBride in Uinseann MacEoin (ed.), Survivors. Dublin: Argenta Publications, 1980, pp. 106-107.

[7]Kee, The Green Flag, p. 435 points out that Maud Gonne's father was an Irish Unionist colonel. Colum, Ourselves Alone!, p. 27 records that Gonne had been presented at the Viceregal Court "and her singular beauty and charm had made an impression on the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII."

[8]Colum, Ourselves Alone!, pp. 28-29.

istic attitudes.

Yet another important influence in the shaping of Griffith's nationalist philosophy was the two years he spent in South Africa from 1896-1898. Intended originally as a sojourn necessitated by failing health and the need for a warmer climate,[9] the journey also provided Griffith with an opportunity to view events firsthand and consequently, he became fascinated by the politics of the Transvaal where a situation similar to that of Ireland's was occurring. While, ironically, he ignored the rights of blacks, Griffith supported the Boer leaders in their quest to free their country from British imperialism and in conjunction with other Irishmen in Johannesburg, formed an Irish Society to promulgate their support of the Boer cause.[10]

Meanwhile, in Ireland, William Rooney was anxious to launch a new journal based on the principles of Irish nationalism "the basic ideas of which could not be disregarded if Ireland was to have a life as a nation rather than a province".[11] In 1898, Griffith acceded to Rooney's request that he return to Dublin to edit that

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[9]Davis, Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein, p. 7.

[10]Colum, Ourselves Alone!, p. 41. Indeed this is where Griffith met Major John MacBride, a future political ally in Irish affairs.

[11]Ibid., p. 45.

journal. With Rooney, he founded the United Irishman, named after its militant forerunner which had been created by the nationalist revolutionary, John Mitchel, and which had been suppressed in 1848, when Mitchel became the first Irishman to be tried under the Treason-Felony Act.[12] As editor of the new United Irishman, Griffith brought his own perception of nationalism which had been coloured not only by the writings of Mitchel, Thomas Davis, and Charles Stewart Parnell and by the discussions which had emanated from the meetings of Maud Gonne's circle, but also by his experiences in the Transvaal.

Although not a charismatic public speaker, Griffith forcefully wielded his pen as an instrument for expressing his fervent nationalist opinions.[13] It was in the columns of the United Irishman that Griffith began his campaign to put Ireland in the hands of the Irish. Through his writing for the paper, which was founded in 1899, Griffith purveyed his philosophy on nationalism - a philosophy which was to become the foundation in 1904 for his "Hungarian Policy", and later in 1905-06 the basis of Sinn Féin. He was greatly affected by Rooney's nationalistic beliefs and therefore there may be some basis for the

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[12]Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 109.

[13]Henry Egan Kenny, "Arthur Griffith", in William Fitzgerald (ed.), Voice of Ireland. Dublin: John Heywood, 1924, p. 103. Kenny (Sean Ghall) states that Griffith was no orator and that monosyllables were often his reply to fluent speakers.

argument that Griffith was actually a co-founder rather than founder of Sinn Féin. Nevertheless, the ideas expressed so adamantly in the columns of the United Irishman present a unique organization and it is necessary to examine what Griffith wrote in its annals during the years 1899-1906 in order to fully appreciate the spirit and logic of Sinn Féin as he conceived it.

If success of a paper is measured by its circulation figures, the United Irishman was a questionable venture.[14] Its mediocre reception may have been due to Griffith's self-perceived role as editor. It has been said that a journalist may inflame and perhaps even instruct and direct public opinion; however, firstly, the public mind must be amenable to such an influence and secondly, if the sentiments are not already present within the public's mind, the journalist cannot create public opinion.[15] The columns of the United Irishman most often reflect Griffith's personal and intense detestation of the British

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[14]While circulation figures are not available, one can assume that the success of the United Irishman was very limited, when Griffith's small salary as editor is studied. In fact, during the life of the paper and its successor, Sinn Fein, Griffith suffered through numerous salary cuts so as to ensure sufficient revenue for the paper's publication. Colum on p. 46 of Ourselves Alone! notes that Griffith for his total work drew a mere "twenty-five shillings a week".

[15]See T.H.S. Escott, Masters of English Journalism. Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1970 and R.D. Blumenfeld, The Press in my Time. London: Rich and Cowan Ltd., 1933 for more extensive treatment of this idea.

government - a sentiment which he presumed was shared by a majority of the Irish public. To Griffith, the paper would serve as an organ for expression of Irish dissatisfaction and as a rallying point for 'true' nationalists who wanted to see Ireland returned to its own people. He emphasized in the first issue of his new paper that ...

> We bear no ill-will to any section of the Irish political body, whether its flag be green or orange, which holds that tortuous paths are the safest for Irishmen to tread; but, knowing we are governed by a nation which religiously adheres to
> The good old rule - the simple plan -
> That those may take who have the power and those may keep who can,
> we-with all respect for our friends who love the devious ways - are convinced than [sic] an occasional exhibition of the naked truth will not shock the modesty of Irishmen and that a return to 'the straight road' will not lead us to political destruction.[16]

Griffith hoped to reawaken Irish tempers over British mistreatment. He was incensed at the way the Irish had been downtrodden and through the columns of the United Irishman, he hoped to sensitize his readers to the ways in which the British had subdued Ireland. Griffith's ideal of a self-sufficient Irish nation blinded him from the reality that, generally, his level of politically sophisticated thought was not common among the masses. He believed that British propaganda was primarily responsible for Irish apathy. He made his position decidedly clear when he wrote, in another early issue:

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[16] United Irishman, 4 March 1899, p. 2.

> The majority of our countrymen have long been blinded to the truth that the security of their lives, the restoration of their liberties, and the advancement of their interests, demand not the readjustment of foreign government in Ireland, but its total abolition. Irish Nationalism and British Imperialism cannot continue coexistent for any length of time. One or other must perish utterly in the near future.[17]

Griffith saw it as his duty to penetrate that British propaganda. He would point out to his readership the evils perpetrated by the British who continued to attempt to sink Ireland into permanent ruin.

Throughout the seven year life of the United Irishman, Griffith attacked the Irish Parliamentary Party as an instrument of the British government. Their use of the label "Nationalist", was roundly criticized as was their aim to reestablish an Irish legislature, which, as he saw it, would have "inferior prestige and inferior powers" even when compared with the Irish legislature which had existed at the time of the original United Irishman.[18] Griffith saw the Irish Home Rule movement as one "initiated mainly by the Irish Unionists in opposition to the Irish Nationalist movement for independence".[19] The Irish Home Ruler and the Irish Unionist were one and the same:

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[17] United Irishman, 18 March 1899, p. 4.

[18] United Irishman, 11 March 1899, p. 2.

[19] United Irishman, 28 June 1902, p. 4.

> Both acknowledge the monarch of England as their lawful monarch, both accept the Act of Union as irrevocable, both claim a share in the Empire- both are Unionists, for there are only two parties in this country, the Unionists and the Separatists, ...[20]

There has been a great deal of historical discussion as to whether or not Griffith could justifiably refer to himself as a separatist.[21] Nevertheless, Griffith's early writing clearly explicates his belief in an independent Ireland which could, he asserted, be "an Ireland leading the world against the bloody, rapacious and soul-shivering Imperialism of England" - an Ireland which would be the champion of the oppressed peoples of the British Empire.[22]

Griffith saw emigration as one of the major problems of Ireland. He attributed the blame for the Great Famine of the mid-nineteenth century to Britain.[23] If Ireland was to rise to its potential greatness, depopulation had to be curbed. Griffith suggested several ways in which this goal could be accomplished: he concentrated on two in particular - discouraging enlistment in the British forces and stimulating industry to absorb the extra manpower.

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[20]Ibid.

[21]This will be dealt with in greater detail in the discussion of Griffith's proposed Hungarian solution. See below pp. 20-28 passim.

[22]United Irishman, 1 July 1899, p. 4.

[23]United Irishman, 15 April 1899, p. 2.

In 1899, affected by what he had witnessed in South Africa, Griffith undertook a campaign in the United Irishman's columns to dissuade young Irishmen from enlisting in the British army. Maud Gonne, in a contributing article to the paper, denounced those with Irish names among English troops recruited to fight the Boers. She insisted that they should be ashamed to wear the uniform of a foreign government which was the source of their country's immense suffering.[24] Griffith concurred that recruiting for the British army had to be "prevented in Ireland at any cost."[25] Even after the Boer war had ended, the number of Irish troops in the British forces greatly perturbed Griffith.[26] He attributed their enlistment to three causes:

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[24]United Irishman, 23 September 1899, pp. 4-5.

[25]United Irishman, 28 October 1899, p. 4.

[26]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, p. 3. Griffith cites several statistics but does not name a particular source. He says that "there are less Irishmen now in the British army than at any period during the last century, but there are still proportionately more Irishmen than there are Englishmen or Scotchmen. Thirty years ago, out of every 1,000 men in the British army, 248, or just one-fourth, were Irish- to-day, out of every 1,000 men in that army, 115 are Irish; but in proportion to its population Ireland supplies much more fighting men to England than England supplies for herself. Out of every 10,000 men between 15 and 40 in England, 276 are British soldiers. Out of every 10,000 men between 15 and 40 in Scotland 248 are British soldiers, and out of every 10,000 men between 15 and 40 in Ireland 354 are British soldiers."

> The first is lack of employment; the second ignorance of their rights and duties; the third, the military instinct which is part of their nature. ... The moral is plain - educate the Irishman, and only the pangs of hunger will induce him to enter the ranks of his enemies, and even that inducement will not prevail in most cases, for the Irishman who is taught to think, will prefer the emigrant - ship or the workhouse to the red coat or the blue one.[27]

Thus, education became a keystone in Griffith's philosophy. An Irishman educated to the wrongs committed by Britain and therefore, fluent in the history of Ireland, could support no other belief except that of an independent Ireland. An effective education would encompass more than Irish history, however; for Griffith also advocated a fluency in Gaelic and, until that goal could be achieved, he preached exposure to Irish literature, ideally written in Gaelic, but to accommodate those unfamiliar with the Irish language, written in English.[28] Aware of the Gaelic revival and cognizant of the extremes to which some of its advocates were prepared to go, Griffith was opposed "to any insistence on a knowledge of Gaelic as the test of patriotism."[29] In this respect, Griffith was realistic as only a minority of the Irish

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[27]United Irishman, 31 January 1903, p. 4.

[28]United Irishman, 13 May 1899, p. 1 and passim throughout 1899 in particular.

[29]United Irishman, 4 March 1899, p. 2.

population was fluent in the language.[30] He was thus also realistic in his belief that exposure to Irish literature written in the English tongue was much better than no exposure to the subject at all.

In later years, Griffith incorporated and formulated his ideas on education into a coherent policy. He strove for a "really national system of education" pioneered by the Irish Christian Brothers. Undoubtedly, Griffith's early experiences with this group underlined the faith which he entrusted to them to accept such a major responsibility. Upon leaving the schools operated by the Christian Brothers, one could attend Griffith's proposed National University. Its halls would be open to academics of all classes such that wealth would not be the only passport to this institution, as was the case with Trinity College. Griffith believed that the opportunity for universal education would be popular and that the National University would be financed and supported by the

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[30]In 1901, it is estimated only 19.2% of the population of the twenty-six county area which is now the Republic of Ireland were Irish-speakers. See D.J. Hickey and J.E. Doherty, Dictionary of Irish History since 1800. Totowa: Barnes and Noble Books, 1981, pp. 184-185. Also Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 88 in a footnote quotes statistics from the Census of Ireland, 1901 pt. ii and from the General Report pp. 170, 575. These statistics indicate that by the second half of the nineteenth century the decline of the Irish langauge had been greatly accelerated. By 1901 the total of those who possessed some knowledge of Irish had fallen to 641,000. Irish speakers numbered no more than 21,000.

patriotic sympathizers.[31]

Arthur Griffith's educational goals were supported by the Cumann na nGaedheal (community of Irishmen) which he helped to found with Rooney in 1900. The intention behind this organization was that it should become the body under which other existing Nationalist societies could unite. The aim of this society was to help to advance "Ireland's National Independence" by "cultivating a fraternal spirit amongst Irishmen". This could be most effectively achieved by adhering to a platform adopted at that first meeting of the Cumann na nGaedheal. Griffith's influence as this organization's first President was reflected in the importance which the society attributed to the role of education. In "discountenancing ... everything tending towards the Anglicization of Ireland", the Cumann na nGaedheal encouraged the study and teaching of Irish history, literature, language, music and art; "Irish National games, pastimes, and characteristics" were also to be cultivated. The realization of these goals would aid immeasurably in the "physical and intellectual training of the young".[32]

The Cumann na nGaedheal further sought the development of an Irish foreign policy and the nationalizing of public boards. Griffith's influence was evident in yet

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[31]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, p. 1.

[32]United Irishman, 6 October 1900, p. 4.

another of this body's goals: the agreement on the necessity of the diffusion of knowledge about Ireland's available resources and the essential support of Irish industry, a policy which would have a dual effect.[33]

Irish industry rightfully belonged in Irish hands which were concerned with making it viable and profitable. In turn, Irish owners whose first loyalties were to Ireland, would readily employ Irish labour to produce Irish goods for Irish people. Thus, a threefold benefit would be accomplished: the Irish owner would be a major player in the stimulation of the economy; a healthy economy would provide a profitable venture for the businessman; profitable ventures might expand and consequently need to draw more heavily from the reserves of Irish labourers. Further, Griffith argued, "... it needs no subtle genius to comprehend that the stoppage of emigration", an exigency if Ireland was to advance, "can be best brought about by providing work for the people in their own country."[34]

He also advocated that all Irishmen refuse to purchase imported goods and boycott those Irish firms which employed foreigners. What better way to encourage local preference hiring and stimulate the economy? Griffith urged that the spirit of self-reliance had to be

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[33]Ibid.

[34]United Irishman, 2 March 1901, p. 4.

cultivated among Irishmen. It was on this point that Griffith developed a long-standing feud with labour organizers. He could not justify the existence of unions which seemed to pay no attention to this matter of foreign infiltration into the Irish workforce. To him, Irish labour organizers had to place the future of Irishmen before the future of the union.[35] In later years, this was to be one of many labour policies which Griffith vehemently criticized.[36]

Griffith also recognized the need for development of Irish agriculture. Through an alliance of manufacturing and agriculture, Irish self-sufficiency could be attained. At present, the dilemma of Irish agriculture was that it could be viewed only in terms of what it had become- little more than a "cattle trade".[37] Griffith was incensed by the decrease of one quarter in the amount of tilled land that had occurred over just one generation. He suggested that many of those relegated to the system of Poor Law could be actively employed to till the land, thus benefitting the country and the individual simultaneously. While his intentions were honourable in proposing this solution, Griffith again allowed his idealism to overtake realistic considerations. This idea cannot be enforced

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[35]United Irishman, 21 February 1903, p. 4.

[36]See below, pp.51-52.

[37]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, p. 1.

quite as simplistically as he leads his readers to believe. The scheme would demand tight organization by someone and subsidized funding to make it work. In all fairness to Griffith he never claimed to have finely tuned this idea; perhaps, it was his intention that such difficulties would be tackled by the agricultural and manufacturing union which he thought should be established. Regardless of this incongruity, it was his ultimate vision that a liaison between the two sectors would contribute to the eventual goal of self-reliance. The idea of friendly co-operation between the manufacturing and agricultural sectors came directly from the writings of Friedrich List, a German economist who was admired by Griffith. By his own admission, Griffith attributed this esteem to List's success in establishing a measure of economic independence for Germany.[38] He summarized List's theory by drawing the following analogy:

> An agricultural nation is a man with one arm who makes use of an arm belonging to another person, but cannot, of course, be sure of having it always available. An agricultural-manufacturing nation is a man who has both arms of his own at his own disposal.[39]

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[38]For further information about Friedrich List's ideas on the economy, see Friedrich List, The National System of Political Economy. New York: A.M. Kelley, 1966. As well, for a discussion on Griffith's failure to understand and correctly interpret List's policies see Richard P. Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", M. Litt. Trinity College, 1958/59, pp. 188-219.

[39]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, p. 2.

Griffith constantly preached the need for a fraternal spirit among Irishmen. In order to present a united front against Britain, he argued that there must first develop a spirit of cooperation among Irishmen as well as the honing of an Irish consciousness. Griffith believed that until self-respect was achieved, it was impossible to command respect from others. He preached a broad tolerance of anyone and anything Irish as long as Ireland ultimately benefitted. Certainly, in his writing, he attempted to downplay racial and religious differences. One's commitment to Ireland provided the most exacting measure of one's nationalistic fervour. Griffith courted those who were sincere in their desire to build a future for Ireland and advised his readership to do the same. On the subject of the upcoming County Council elections of 1899, Griffith counselled:

> To ourselves alone we are, and ought to hold ourselves, responsible, and the realisation of this truth-obscured for some years from the eyes of the people by the smoke from the Union of Hearts' dung-heap -will lead the electors next month to reject, with equal contempt, the slavish Home Ruler and the knavish Unionist and vote for representatives, regardless of their party politics, who are honest men.[40]

His actions, however, did not always speak as loudly as his words did on the need to cultivate tolerance. Griffith recoiled from the support of those whom he deemed to have divided loyalties. Richard Davis refers to a

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[40]United Irishman, 26 March 1899, p. 2.

meeting at which the social policy of Sinn Féin was being discussed. Griffith interpreted one comment as a suggestion that Sinn Féin should adopt a class policy. When Dudley Edwards, a socialist, attempted to clarify the point, Griffith admonished his participation on the grounds that he was an Englishman.[41] Bearing in mind Griffith's ideological disagreement with labour, Edwards' politics were likely equally as disturbing to Griffith as was his nationality.

Griffith welcomed both Catholics and Protestants into the folds of Nationalism and admonished those who regarded Catholic and Nationalist, Protestant and Unionist to be synonymous terms. To those who tried to argue with Griffith on this point, he referred to Swift, Grattan, Tone, Fitzgerald, Russell, Emmet, Davis, and Mitchell as examples of Protestants who could not be characterized as Loyalists. To those who believed all Nationalists to be Catholics, he cited the examples of Hugh O'Neill, Hugh O'Donnell, Roger O'Moore and "the insurgents of '98 [who were] faced by the Catholic militia regiments of half Ireland...".[42] Griffith did, however, admit that "the great majority of our Protestant fellow-countrymen" tended to be "wedded" to "the British connection", but he also found that the Catholic leader of the Irish Parliamentary

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[41]Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", p. 216.

[42]United Irishman, 23 July 1904, p. 1.

Party, John Redmond, staunch advocate of Home Rule, was just as firmly so wedded. He went on to charge that the Catholic clergy blindly supported Redmond's party and in addition, by their role in demoralizing the people of Ireland, helped cause emigration.

> Their churches are built, furnished, and decorated by foreigners out of the money of the Irish people, the very prayerbooks they issue to the people are printed abroad; the priests of Ireland ... have made life dull and unendurable for the people by frowning down and banishing everything tending to lighten the cares or bring colour into the monotonous lives of the poor.[43]

Griffith knew that there were weaknesses in the Nationalist front and that to draw further distinct lines on the basis of religion, race, or politics would create a still more fragmented group. His only concern in defining a Nationalist was that he/she sought freedom for Ireland and believed in Ireland's ability to survive without English intervention.[44]

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[43]United Irishman, 25 May 1901, p. 4..

[44]United Irishman, 12 July 1902, p. 1. The following statement was published: "With our countrymen, whether they be the children of Milesian, Norman or Cromwellian, whether their creed be Catholic, Protestant or Dissenter, we have no quarrel as such. The men with whom our quarrel lies are those who deny this country's right to freedom."

> The National cause must be raised out of the region of parochialism and made the cause of all Irishmen. A broad toleration must mark the Nationalist, who, while demanding unity of action in essentials, will allow the utmost freedom in non-essentials and practise charity in all things. We are convinced a movement broad-based on these principles will attract at once to its support all of the more thoughtful and earnest elements of Nationalism despite differences on minor points and matters of expediency.[45]

The independence of Ireland, Griffith apparently believed, would not be achieved without the country having to resort to physical force. In the early years of the United Irishman, he called upon his fellow Irishmen to "prepare to aid the forces working for the destruction of the meanest Empire which has ever cumbered the earth."[46] He clearly stated his support of "the Nationalism of '98, '48 and '67 "and adopted as "the watchword of patriotism", Grattan's cry of "Live Ireland-Perish the Empire!"[47] Griffith's unabashed association of degrees of nationalism is agreeably somewhat confusing; nevertheless he had extracted a dominant theme from these historical events.[48]

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[45]United Irishman, 22 April 1899, p. 2.

[46]United Irishman, 12 August 1899, p. 4.

[47]United Irishman, 4 March 1899, p. 2.

[48]Richard Davis in his M. Litt thesis 1958/59 refers to the passage as "that curious confusion of ideas which was to characterise Griffith's 'Hungarian Policy'". However, throughout his writings, it is obvious that Griffith was an eclectic and extracted from the philosophies of others, those parts with which he most agreed. His 'carte blanche' approach to eclecticism and his omission of apology to others for taking parts of their

Quiet grumbling and silent discontent would not aid Ireland's struggle for independence. Active participation in and affiliation with nationalist groups making a concerted effort to gain Irish freedom was the only way to combat British domination. Whatever the justification for his admixture of somewhat divergent ideas on nationalism, his support of physical force seems to have been a qualified one. Griffith recognized the demoralized state of the Irish people and knew that before physical force could be successful, their level of morale would have to be raised.[49] It is not that he disagreed with armed insurrection, for, in principle, he supported it. Indeed, it is here that the criticism of Griffith as an incurable idealist breaks down. Griffith was aware that an armed insurrection in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century would be supported only by physical force men. It would never be sanctioned by the majority of the Irish people. It seems that he sincerely believed that a system of education and moral resistance to the British would build the morale of the people and get them to believe in themselves once again. Physical force could not succeed without solid groundwork; indeed, perhaps, physical force

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ideas illustrate that he felt no contradiction or pang of conscience about his approach. The ideas which he borrowed all supported his thesis of the possibility of a self-sufficient and independent Ireland.

[49] United Irishman, 11 March 1899, p.2.

would be unnecessary if a cohesive mental bond could be created among all Irishmen.[50]

It was in 1902 that Griffith first referred to the example of Hungary - a country which, as Griffith the eclectic saw it, had successfully overcome its oppressor

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[50]The debate on Griffith's support of physical violence is extensive and long-standing. Some authors state that Griffith never supported any policy other than that of passive resistance. See P.S. O'Hegarty, Sinn Fein - An Illumination. Dublin: Maunsel and Co. Ltd., 1919, pp. 28-29; M. Ó Dubhghaill (ed.), Insurrection Fires at Eastertide. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966, p. 41; Richard Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", M. Litt. Trinity College, 1958/59, Appendix VI p. xvii; Owen Dudley Edwards, Gwynfor Evans, Ioan Rhys and Hugh MacDiarmid, Celtic Nationalism. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1968, pp. 129-131; and R. Fitzgerald, Cry Blood, Cry Erin. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1956,p. 42. Most of the aforementioned authors state that Griffith was thrust into the position of having to support the 1916 Rising. However, it is the assertion of this paper that Griffith saw the futility of armed insurrection without a wide support base among the populace. Several other authors concur with this theory. In a contradictory stance to that expressed in 1919, P.S. O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1952 pp. 634-35 states that the United Irishman under Griffith's tutelage "preached self-reliance, and separation, and physical force, if necessary, and in suitable circumstances." In another book by O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin. Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd., 1924, p. 134 the author states that Griffith believed that Ireland's independence would eventually only be gained through armed insurrection but "... held also that a Rising by a minority was unjustifiable, save as a demonstration, [as] a blood sacrifice which the Rising of 1916 actually was:" R.M. Fox, Green Banners. London: Secker and Warburg, 1938, p. 68 agrees that Griffith's opposition to fighting was "purely tactical". Charles Dalton, With the Dublin Brigade (1917-1921). London: Peter Davies, Ltd., 1929 stated Griffith's opposition to physical force was based on the fact that "he saw no hope of his people ever being strong enough to free their country by a military victory.". Undoubtedly, the debate on this issue is far from resolution.

through moral resistance. Following the example of the Hungarian Policy in Ireland would negate the Irish Parliamentary Party's contention

> ... that the only alternative policy to the policy of Parliamentarianism was armed insurrection, and that as armed insurrection was not practicable at the present time, it was the duty of the Irish people to support the Parliamentarian policy.[51]

A key element in the transfer of this policy's success required the abstention from Parliament of the Irish elected representatives, as the Hungarian Deputies had done in their protest against Austria. It was with some reluctance that Griffith advocated several features of the Hungarian Policy such as the concept of Dual Monarchy. He expressed a preference for the policy of Louis Kossuth, a separatist who believed in Hungary's complete independence rather than a co-equal partnership with Austria.

> But Kossuth recognized after '49 that Hungary could not for many years, unless in the event of a great European war, hope to take the field against Austria with a prospect of success; and we recognize that unless in the same event Ireland cannot hope for some years to be in a position to face England in arms.[52]

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[51] United Irishman, 1 November 1902, p. 1.

[52] United Irishman, 22 November 1902, p. 4. Seán Ó Lúing, "Arthur Griffith and Sinn Fein" in F.X. Martin (ed.), Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1967, p. 67 states that Griffith only proposed the Dual Monarchy concept as a means of reconciling the Nationalist and the Unionist. He maintains that anyone reading through the United Irishman and Sinn Fein could not "... doubt that the man behind the policy was to the depths of his soul, the Great Separatist."

The Hungarian Policy proposal sparked interest outside of the regular United Irishman readership. In a 1903 editorial, Griffith claimed that his paper was the most widely-read Irish journal "within the walls of Trinity to-day".[53] Throughout 1903, letters appeared in the paper requesting that the Hungarian Policy be expounded and in response to those queries, in 1904, a series of anonymous articles on the Hungarian Policy and its implications for Ireland found their way into the columns of the United Irishman. The articles were penned by Griffith but it was not until later that year that he admitted to their authorship.

There is no doubt that Griffith misinterpreted several of the events which had occurred in Hungary. Some historians have charged that he misunderstood the basics of the example to which he referred, such as his confusion over the function of the Hungarian Ausgleich.[54] Regardless of his rather faulty interpretation, he drew elements from the Hungarian example which he felt could be adapted to the Irish situation. Familiar themes included the revival of the Irish language, the need for a national system of education, local encouragement of the growth of Irish agriculture and industries, and, of course, the

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[53]United Irishman, 10 January 1903, p. 4.

[54]See such authors as Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein" and Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, for more extensive treatment.

promotion of a fraternal spirit among Irishmen.[55]

A rather new concept on which Griffith hoped all Irishmen could unite was the principle of a Dual Monarchy which identified the sole bond between Ireland and England as the King.[56] The Irish would dictate their own affairs of state through a de facto government. A Council of Three Hundred consisting of representatives from local bodies and members of the Irish Parliamentary Party who had retired from Westminster, would gradually assume the functions of government from Dublin Castle. The Council would strive to meet the aforementioned objectives as well as extend tillage of the soil, appoint arbitration courts to replace British courts already in existence, and organize Harbour Boards to enforce port taxation on foreign manufactured goods. The latter policy would be simply one facet of a protectionist scheme to be enacted by the new government. Griffith argued that the Irish manufacturer would be better able to compete against foreign competitors if a mercantile marine, which would open new markets for Irish goods, was established. Irish

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[55]Arthur Griffith, The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland. Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1904, pp. 6-15.

[56]P.S. O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1952, p. 652 reports an undated statement made to him by Griffith. "I am a separatist. The Irish people are not separatists. I do not think that they can be united behind a separatist policy. But I do think that it is possible to unite them on this policy."

consular officials, acting on the advice of the General Council, would also help to prepare fertile markets for Irish products.[57]

Essential to the success of Griffith's scheme were an effective Irish civil service and the cooperation of the entire population. Irish consular representatives would have the complete cooperation and advice of the top officials in an Irish National Civil Service - officials who had attained their positions based on their thorough knowledge of the Irish language, the country's history and an exhaustive familiarity with Ireland's resources. This reiterated Griffith's contention that Ireland could not be free until its populace was educated: education brought awareness and awareness brought freedom.[58] In addition to education, Griffith recognized that these policies could not be effectively instituted without collaborative efforts from the complete population. That this cooperation would not be readily forthcoming did not seem to have crossed Griffith's mind. If the result of these policies was an end to British domination, Griffith assumed that the Irish employee and his employer would gladly assent to the contributions they were being asked to make. After all, the nation was "the basic unit of all creative and progressive effort" and the individual a contributor to

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[57]United Irishman, 2 July 1904, p. 3.

[58]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, passim.

that unit.[59] Some sacrifices in the short run were well worth the long-term result.

Griffith's idealism coloured each tenet of his Hungarian Policy. Many of these doctrines would not be easy to effect politically. In many cases, practical suggestions for their implementation were not proffered by Griffith, ostensibly because he saw his role as only that of the propagandist. In response to suggestions from various readers of the United Irishman that the author of the articles on the Hungarian situation should assume the position of a political leader who could lead a movement in Ireland similar to the one which Ferenc Deák had led in Hungary, Griffith countered that such a situation was impossible. He wrote in response to those requests:

> The Irish Deák must be a man who can accept an Ireland linked with England just so far as Hungary is linked with Austria as a final settlement. Now the writer of the Hungarian articles could not do so, without being untrue to his own convictions.[60]

Griffith added that had the writer been a Hungarian, he would have been, without question, "a Kossuth supporter"- a follower of a man who would not accept compromise in the form of the 1867 Ausgleich and who blatantly advocated armed resistance as the means for securing national

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[59]Virginia E. Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish-Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1975, p. 26.

[60]United Irishman, 23 July 1904, p. 5.

independence. This editorial clearly emphasizes that Griffith proposed the Hungarian Policy not as an ultimate solution which he could unquestionably support but rather as a means of raising national consciousness by providing a channel through which nationalist and unionist elements could find common ground. He obviously realized that his preference for armed resistance was not shared by a majority of the population, yet nationalist elements might awaken and support a more moderate policy. Griffith reflected that others would be better suited to lead a movement with such a philosophy. He wrote:

> In the absence of the power of effective armed resistance, the alternative policy is what we have advocated and called the Hungarian Policy- and which is simply the policy of passive resistance, based on Unassailable Right, carried out steadily, firmly, and fearlessly.[61]

It would be the responsibility of others to develop a concrete plan of action which would employ a nonviolent means to meet the end of Irish independence.

Griffith's Hungarian Policy captured the imagination

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[61] Ibid. Further in the edition of 10 September 1904, p. 4, a letter appears from Major John MacBride suggesting that a new movement to counter Parliamentarianism was needed, not an imitative process of a situation in the history of the 19th century. The edition of 1 October 1904, p. 5 carries yet another letter from MacBride. In it he amends his position on the Hungarian Policy by stating that he had not meant to discourage but rather to awaken the policy's proponents to the difficulties they faced. To support his stand, he refers to the similarly-expressed opinion of the United Irishman "... that there is only one way and one way alone in which Ireland can obtain her freedom and that is by the strong right hand."

of a significant segment of the public, evidenced not only by the letters of support received in the offices of the United Irishman but also by the sale of pamphlets entitled The Resurrection of Hungary based on the articles which had appeared in Griffith's paper. The United Irishman reported that within twenty-four hours of its publication, 5000 copies had been sold.[62] By February, sales of the pamphlet had jumped to almost 30,000 copies.[63] It is quite likely this overwhelming public response led Griffith to assume the responsibility for the development of a nationalist policy for Ireland.

For the first time, in 1905, he identified the Irish equivalent of the Hungarian policy as 'Sinn Fein' and encouraged men "of patriotism, grit, and capacity" to run for election to local bodies, such as the Poor Law Guardians, the Rural District Councillors and the County Councillors of Ireland, under the guidelines of the proposed policy.[64] Local representation would allow for change at the local level and the application of such Sinn Féin policies as industrial education of the people, promotion of tillage-farming, and afforestation of the waste lands. Local change would pave the way for the eventual installation of the Council of Three Hundred and

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[62]United Irishman, 26 November 1904, p. 4.

[63]United Irishman, 18 February 1905, p. 4.

[64]United Irishman, 4 March 1905, p. 4.

its national policies.[65]

Sinn Féin's first venture into elections at the local level appears to have been successful. While there are no statistics available as to the total number who answered Griffith's call for men "of patriotism, grit, and capacity" to seek office, Griffith reported that "three out of four" of the candidates "who went to the polls as supporters of the Sinn Fein policy have been returned."[66] Griffith appeared to be encouraged by the results yet still had no intention of turning Sinn Féin into a competing political party on the national level.[67]

Griffith had made the move from author to organizer when he assumed the role of "the Irish Deák"; however, he had failed to make the transfer mentally. Perhaps he was still having difficulty reconciling a move from Kossuth's philosophy to the ideas of Deák. No doubt it was also difficult for him to assume the role of a strategist for the employment of the Hungarian Policy. He was still, first and foremost, a propagandist. At the National

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[65]United Irishman, 18 March 1905, p. 3.

[66]United Irishman, 17 June 1905, p. 4.

[67]United Irishman, 27 January 1906, p. 4. "It was unanimously decided ... that no opposition should be offered at the present time to the re-election of the members of the Irish Parliamentary Party to the British Legislature, in order that no excuse might be afforded that Party if it failed to redeem its promise to procure that passage of a Bill establishing an independent Parliament in Ireland on the accession of the British Liberal Party to power."

Council Convention in December 1905, he attempted to develop practices which would effect his theories.[68] Unfortunately, he failed to realize that the first step in initiating constructive action was to develop a national political profile for the Sinn Féin movement. From January to April 1906, the last months of the United Irishman, there were virtually no articles in the paper dealing with Sinn Féin policy. Instead, editorials were devoted to items attacking the Irish Parliamentary Party and its perceived abandonment of Home Rule. Griffith had proposed a theoretical base for Sinn Féin - one not supported by the physical force men of the Irish Republican Brotherhood but one which seemed, on the basis of its initial reception in Ireland, to hold some public appeal as a more moderate, conservative, and constructive policy than armed aggression. The Sinn Féin doctrines needed refining and further development: Griffith's failure to pursue that course, perhaps because of his own indecision about the role of physical force, and his preference to avoid the risk of national elections, thus keeping the movement low-profile, almost doomed Sinn Féin to moribundity. He had originally maintained that he was not the man capable of expounding Sinn Féin policy. In the final evaluation - he was right. It would be up to other forces to actively create Sinn Féin, and the respon-

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[68] United Irishman, 9 December 1905, passim.

sibility for its public profile in Britain was assumed by The Times of London.

Chapter II - The Reality of Sinn Féin

"Whenever great intellectual cultivation has been combined with that suffering which is inseparable from extensive changes in the condition of the people, men of speculative or imaginative genius have sought in the contemplation of an ideal society a remedy, or at least a consolation, for evils which they were practically unable to remove."

- Lord Acton, Essays in the Liberal Interpretation of History, 1967.

Coverage by The Times and its Irish counterpart, the Irish Times, depicted the Easter Rebellion of 1916 as the work of the extremist and anarchical group, Sinn Féin. Nothing could have been further from the truth. However, the columns of The Times had long reported and pointed to the anti-loyalist behaviour of Sinn Féin and its drive to prevent Irish subjects from joining a British war.[1] Naturally, in 1916, when it became evident that there had been German cooperation in the staging of an Irish uprising, The Times, partially influenced by the information received from its Unionist correspondent, John Healy of the Irish Times, assumed that responsibility for the insurrection lay squarely on the shoulders of Sinn Féin. Yet the reality of Sinn Féin was something considerably different from that which was represented by the columns of that stalwart British newspaper, The Times. At the time of the rebellion, Sinn Féin was a crippled, uninfluential and largely - ignored nationalist group: it was incapable of drawing new members into its cause and was certainly too inefficient to organize and execute an uprising. Shortly after the founding of Sinn Féin, when it was still more of an ideal than a reality, Sinn Féin did seem to have the potential to mobilize the kind of support that could lead to a rebellion. That support,

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[1]From the first report about Sinn Féin, 15 January 1906, The Times advised that this group had to be carefully watched as "it is apt to produce terrorist crimes."

however, was not forthcoming. What The Times' coverage of Sinn Féin tended to portray as a threat to the Union and the Empire, was more accurately a reflection of the ideal rather than the real Sinn Féin. It is the real Sinn Féin with which this chapter is concerned.

Arthur Griffith was not a lone wolf crying for the cause of nationalism in the wilderness. Nationalist sentiment had been revived in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century through the auspices of the Gaelic Athletic Association, founded in 1884, and the influential Gaelic League, founded in 1893. While the prime ambition of the Gaelic Athletic Association was to encourage the revival of Irish games such as Gaelic football and hurling, it also indirectly inspired both local and national patriotism. Local pride was instilled through county competitions; national pride was stimulated in the general recognition that something Irish was equal to or better than its English parallel. The Gaelic League, while supportive of the gains achieved by the Gaelic Athletic Association, sought to broaden its horizons from simply encouraging the public to play Irish games to extending their interests to the study of Irish language, history and literature. This study transcended all political and religious boundaries. The League declared it necessary that it should stand apart from such struggles. Thus, for a short period at the beginning of the

century "Irishmen of every shade of opinion" found an opportunity to shelve traditional contentious arguments in the hopes of achieving an ideal - "the ideal of a Gaelic Ireland".[2] Other clubs, which espoused similar ideals, had been founded to attract academically-minded as well as nationally - inclined Irishmen. W.B. Yeats and Douglas Hyde together founded first in 1891 the Irish Literary Society in London and soon after, in 1892 the National Literary Society in Dublin.[3]

Griffith, as a member of these societies, shared the enthusiasm for all things Irish. As has already been discussed, he firmly adhered to a policy of self-reliance for Ireland. Those ideas were in no small part influenced by his membership in the Gaelic League and the Fireside Clubs. They also seem to have been consolidated by Griffith's South African experience of 1896-1898.

Griffith's arrival in the Transvaal coincided with a period of serious political unrest in the area - a time in which the Boer leaders sought to free their country from British imperialism. From his knowledge of the Boer struggle, Griffith could discern many similarities to the Irish situation. Both Boers and Irish were being unwillingly suppressed by a common enemy; both were subject to

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[2]Dominic Daly, The Young Douglas Hyde. Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974, p. 168.

[3]F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine. London: Fontana Books, 1982, pp. 226-227.

British imperialistic desires; and both wanted to gain a measure of independence so that they could enact self-rule. Almost instinctively,

> Griffith was on the side of the Boers: this was their country, assuming that it was a white man's country at all, and no Chartered Company nor Colonial Office had any right to disrupt its polity.[4]

Griffith took these thoughts with him and his return to Ireland in 1898 marked his accelerated involvement in those activities which could be branded as anti-British. In 1899, Griffith in cooperation with William Rooney, founded the United Irishman. Both men realized the need to educate Irishmen to their own abilities and to the opinion that Ireland could comfortably survive on her own initiative without unsolicited English intervention. They borrowed liberally from the ideas of those who had preceded them in the nationalist struggle. In the columns of the United Irishman, Griffith and Rooney espoused the main belief of Thomas Davis - the possibility of a union of all Irishmen, regardless of creed.[5] When appropriate,

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[4]Padraic Column, Ourselves Alone! New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1959, p. 40.

[5]P.S. O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1952, p. 637. As regards the name of Griffith's paper, the United Irishman, W. Allison Phillips, in The Revolution in Ireland 1906-1923. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923, p. 54, says the name was in itself a programme. It reminded everyone that in the 1840's John Mitchel had used a journal of the same name to propose that the surest means for dissolving the hated Union rested on the threefold policy "of Parliamentary obstruction, 'systematic opposition to and

they extracted from philosophies of other Irish heroes such as Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and Charles Stewart Parnell. The result was the eclectic design best described by Shaw Desmond:.

> Before Ireland can be free, she must first free herself from herself, for freedom comes not from the outside but from the inside. She has to develop a social cohesion, a public opinion, a moral courage, and, above all, a national consciousness, before she can take her rightful place amongst the nations....Ireland has to build herself up from the inside, economically, physically, intellectually, spiritually. She has demonstrated to the world her right to be free - she has now to demonstrate her capacity.[6]

In addition to coediting the United Irishman, Griffith helped to found other societies such as the Irish Transvaal Committee which was dedicated to support for the Boers and an anti-enlistment campaign directed at Irish participation in the British forces.[7] His continued involvement in other organizations no doubt drew heavily upon his time as his membership was usually active rather than passive. It may have been just this which motivated him in 1900 to establish the Cumann na nGaedheal, an umbrella organization under which the other existing National societies could unite. "Ireland's National

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contempt of law ... so as virtually to supersede English dominion,' and open rebellion 'in the event of a European war.'"

[6]Shaw Desmond, The Drama of Sinn Fein. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923, p. 492.

[7]Robert Kee, The Green Flag. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972, p. 443.

Independence" was its unifying cry.[8]

In these early years, Griffith subscribed to the position of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. It has been suggested that Griffith may have entered I.R.B. ranks as early as age nineteen, while he was working for the Irish Daily Independent; certainly he seems to have been a member before he left for South Africa. It is not surprising then that he gratefully accepted Fenian funds which helped support the United Irishman. Far from ruling out the importance that physical force might play in the achievement of Irish independence, "he apparently saw it as an essential ingredient for insuring the success of his proposed withdrawal of Ireland's members from Westminster."[9]

Despite Griffith's early advocacy of the necessity of physical force, he came to believe that the physical force tradition could not unite the Irish people. He became convinced that they first must be educated and confident in their own abilities to govern themselves. He searched for an alternative and developed his Hungarian Policy in a

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[8]United Irishman, 6 October 1900, p. 4. For further elaboration upon the aims of the Cumann na nGaedheal, refer to Chapter One on Griffith's early political thought.

[9]Virginia E. Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish-Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Kansas, 1975, pp. 130-131. See also the chapter on Griffith's early political thought for a more detailed treatment of Griffith's attitude towards physical force.

series of articles staggered throughout 1903-1904. In these writings, he minimized the role of physical force and offered suggestions aimed at providing an alternative to the policies of the I.R.B. on the one hand and Parliamentarianism on the other. This did not mean that Griffith abandoned the idea of physical force altogether; rather as L.P. Curtis has hypothesized about an earlier period in Ireland's history, the line between moral and physical force became conveniently blurred[10] in this case, for Griffith. He was cognizant that a solely physical force platform would not command the support of the majority of Irishmen; his Hungarian Policy was, in Griffith's eyes, a workable alternative. His ideas which were dubbed Sinn Féin in recognition of a concerted Irish attempt at self-reliance brought him public support and demands that they be developed into a coherent political platform. These requests partially helped to convince Griffith of the viability of his policy.

Griffith had advocated infiltration of local bodies by men imbued with Sinn Féin ideals before any attempt could be made at making Sinn Féin a national policy. He believed that it was necessary to inculcate as many Irishmen as possible to the Hungarian Policy: this could be most effectively accomplished by attacking the grass

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[10]L.P. Curtis Jr., Unpublished Paper "Moral and Physical Force: Rhetorical Violence During the Land War", presented at ACIS-New England Conference, 24 October 1986.

roots on a localized basis. The elected Sinn Féin candidate would press for reform and attempt to put untried policy into practice. Griffith was certain that the vast majority of the candidate's constituents would recognize the beneficial changes which would result from enactment of Sinn Féin policies and consequently, grow stronger in their belief of a self-sufficient Ireland. Word about its success would circulate and after the process of education had been completed, people would want the policies expanded to operate on a national level. In all of this, Griffith, who shied away from the political arena, naively believed that this process would occur without the need for a political body to direct the activity.

Regardless of Griffith's naivete, his theory about infiltration at the local level received some support in the Dublin Municipal elections of 1905. In all, eight 'Sinn Fein' sympathizers contested the election, four being returned. In the Poor Law elections of the same year, thirteen 'Sinn Fein' candidates were returned while at the County and District elections of June "three out of every four" Sinn Féin candidates were returned.[11] These elections were likely as much a protest against Parliamentarianism as they were a demonstration of support for

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[11]George Lyons, Some Recollections of Griffith and His Times Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd., 1923, p. 66.

Griffith's proposals. Nevertheless, public recognition probably spurred Griffith to acquiesce to his supporters' demands to bring Sinn Féin onto the stage of the Irish political scene.

Yet another reason that might have influenced Griffith in his decision to establish Sinn Féin formally was the continued proliferation of Nationalist clubs. Griffith saw unity of action as an absolute necessity-something the Cumann na nGaedheal had not been able to accomplish. His ideal was to attract all shades of nationalist opinion, including members of the recently-formed Dungannon Clubs, which had been established in 1905 by Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough "to discourage recruiting into the British Army" and "encourage recruiting into the I.R.B.".[12] Griffith, forever the philosopher, believed that the goal of an independent Ireland could and would override disagreements about how best to achieve that ambition.

It was in November 1905 at the first annual con-

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[12]Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 316. Also Richard P. Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", M. Litt at Trinity College, 1958/59, p. 34 notes that Griffith originally was the leader of the Dungannon Club in Dublin. However, Griffith's Hungarian Policy which espoused physical violence as unnecessary caused him to fall into disfavour particularly with extremists like Hobson who saw no alternative to physical force.

vention of the National Council[13] that Griffith launched the Sinn Féin programme. To the meeting of delegates, Griffith expressed his desire that the main purpose of the programme be propagandist, and that the movement remain centralised except for individual efforts to promote the policy.[14] This suggestion was not supported generally and a majority of delegates led by one Thomas Martin of London "carried a motion to form branches in the country with combative intentions against other parties."[15] Sinn Féin was to proceed into the future as a political organization with its own executive council and branches of at least ten members in every electoral district.[16] The executive consisted of one hundred and one elected members, forty-five of whom were residents of Dublin. Not only was such a large, geographically-diffused body unlikely to be effective but it also allowed Griffith and his Dublin

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[13]The National Council had been formed in the summer of 1903, on the inspiration of Griffith. The intent of the body was to organize protests against the visit of King Edward VII to Ireland as a means of demonstrating Irish dissatisfaction with English treatment of Ireland. At its inception, it drew considerable support and decided not to disband even after the King had departed and its original raison d'être had expired. It instead provided an opportunity for representatives of other nationalist societies to meet and discuss policies and common difficulties.

[14]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, passim.

[15]Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", p. 24.

[16]United Irishman, 9 December 1905, passim.

nucleus to control the reigns of power.[17] Thus while political power had seemed attractive to a majority of the National Council delegates, Griffith could ensure a cautious approach based on his desire for the conciliation of all Irishmen to his policy.

Sinn Féin continued its involvement in local elections and in January 1906 captured fourteen seats in the Dublin Corporation. Although some of those elected subsequently dropped out of politics, it was the Dublin Corporation "which gave pre-1916 Sinn Fein the opportunity to act as a credible political party and exercise a modicum of power for the first time."[18] Griffith's influence, however, was not confined to Dublin. According to George Lyons, a contemporary of Griffith, Sinn Féin enjoyed increasing attention throughout the country so much so that in 1907, it penetrated the ranks of the Irish Parliamentary Party itself as evidenced by the resignation of the Members of Parliament for South Kilkenny and North Leitrim, James O'Mara and Charles Dolan respectively, and their public declarations in favour of Sinn Féin policies.[19]

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[17]Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", p. 112.

[18]Richard Davis, Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein. Dublin: Anvil Books, 1974, pp. 78-79.

[19]Lyons, Some Recollections of Griffith and His Times, p. 66. Richard Davis, Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein, p. 79, argues against this point: "The partial success of Sinn Fein in the Dublin corporation did

Amalgamation of other nationalist societies with the Sinn Féin programme was rather slow. It was not until April 1907 that the Dungannon Clubs and the Cumann na nGaedheal merged to form the Sinn Féin League. Even then unification with the National Council to eventually form the body known as Sinn Féin did not occur until September 1908.[20] This venture trailed Sinn Féin's debut in the political arena.

According to P.S. O'Hegarty, the Sinn Féin executive did not particularly want to fight the election occasioned by Dolan's resignation, but were swayed by circumstances which "gave them no other choice".[21] O'Hegarty does not clarify his statement but Richard Davis has made a plausible suggestion as to what those circumstances actually were. When Charles Dolan resigned as the Irish Parliamentary Party member for North Leitrim, his intention was not to abandon politics. Rather he proposed that he would recontest his old seat but this time as a Sinn Féiner. Dolan had become, in his own words,

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nothing to assist the progress of Sinn Fein in the provinces, England and overseas."

[20]Donal McCartney, "The Sinn Fein Movement," in Kevin B. Nowlan (ed.), The Making of 1916. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1969, p. 36.

[21]P.S. O'Hegarty, Sinn Fein - An Illumination. Dublin: Maunsel and Co., Ltd., 1919, p. 37.

> ... a follower of Arthur Griffith and I held to the belief that under the circumstances existing in 1907, the restoration of the constitution of 1782 was a more practical objective than the establishment of an Irish Republic.[22]

Despite Dolan's conversion and his good intentions, funds needed to fight an election were scarce and the ground of North Leitrim as yet untilled by Sinn Féin propaganda. Yet to defer the participation of a Sinn Féin candidate, especially when the man who offered to stand for Sinn Féin had but recently held the seat, would allow the Irish Parliamentary Party to recover. It was true that Dolan himself was somewhat of an anomalous political entity. He had only represented North Leitrim since the 1906 by-election in which he had been uncontested.[23] However, there were several indications that Dolan could garner a significant degree of clerical support. This was a plausible belief not only because Dolan's uncle was Vicar-General of the diocese in which most of the constituency lay,[24] but also because Dolan, at the turn of the century, had been a lay student at Maynooth College. His pursuit

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[22]Statement made by Charles Dolan to Richard Davis on 7 October 1957 as quoted by Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", p. 47.

[23]Brian M. Walker (ed.), Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978, p. 170.

[24]Leitrim Advertiser (Mohill), 27 February 1908 as quoted by David W. Miller, Church, State and Nation in Ireland 1898-1921. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973, p. 218.

of the degree of Licentiate in Philosophy[25] had no doubt allowed him to make many friends and acquaintances during his tenure there, a factor which could benefit him in the contest. Rather than lose an opportunity to capitalize on dissatisfaction within the Irish Parliamentary Party, Sinn Féin decided to support Dolan's candidacy.[26]

The result of the election, while not an unequivocal victory for Sinn Féin, produced an impressive showing. Dolan's 1,157 votes as compared to his Nationalist opponent's 3,103 were interpreted by Griffith and the executive as a resounding vote of confidence in Sinn Féin policy, rather than simply as evidence of Dolan's personal popularity. The party newspaper's exuberance may have been exaggerated but it was clear that it was ecstatic:

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[25] Impartial Reporter and Farmers' Journal (Enniskillen), 4 July 1901 as quoted by Miller, Church, State and Nation in Ireland 1898-1921, p. 218.

[26] Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", p. 67.

> A political era has begun. Twelve hundred votes have been cast in an Irish constituency in denial of the right of the parliament of England to legislate in our history...We have fixed for ever [sic] a line beyond which Irish nationalism cannot be driven back....We were madmen and fools to the practical politicians who have been killing our country body and soul for generations. Today in the teeth of their wealth, their press, their organization, and their friends in Dublin Castle, we have rallied three-fourths of the young men of Ireland and one third of the nationalist electorate to our side. Ten years more and five-sixths of Ireland-Catholics and protestant - will be landed together in national brotherhood, and the epitaph for foreign rule in this country will be in the graving. The Leitrim election is the Declaration of Irish independence. The men of future generations will date Ireland's ressurection from the day when 1,200 Irishmen, in the poorest and most remote county in Ireland, voted for sinn fein.[27]

As a result of Dolan's showing in the by-election, so George Lyons claimed, Sinn Féin branches began to spring up in every part of Ireland and Sinn Féin policy gained widespread recognition being "acclaimed in America, preached in the Argentine and practised in India and Egypt." Furthermore, Lyons asserted, the physical force element even embraced it and officially voted monies which would, in the future, help to support other Sinn Féin candidates. Sinn Féin policy, Lyons contended, was seen as "an essential intermediary between Westminster and the barricades." Physical force advocates believed that Sinn Féin "must hold the political platform <u>till the guns came</u>"

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[27]<u>Sinn Fein</u>, 29 February 1908 as quoted by Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", pp. 76-77.

[emphasis added] and "contend the limelight with the professional politicians."[28] A statement made by Denis McCullough, co-founder of the Dungannon Clubs and an ardent I.R.B. man seems to support Lyons' contention. As McCullough later recalled:

> The I.R.B. had the utmost confidence in Griffith and his strong nationalism, his courage, and his integrity. He was a member of the organization, shared our sentiments, and...regarded himself as traveling the same road only suggesting that "passive resistance" to British rule offered better chances of success than an armed rising...no question of incompatibility between Griffith's Hungarian Policy and the frank Republicanism of the I.R.B. ever existed...The I.R.B. in my time was not wedded or pledged to action in arms only. It was prepared to back and support any man or movement that had separation from England as its final objective.[29]

Thus, though it may have appeared so from the outside, this was not a one-sided relationship for while Griffith, at times, may have depended on funds from the I.R.B, the I.R.B. also benefitted from the support of Griffith's pen.[30]

Despite the post by-election rise in Sinn Féin support and despite contributions from the I.R.B., by the

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[28]Lyons, Some Recollections of Griffith and His Times, p. 68.

[29]Statement made by Denis McCullough in answer to questions submitted to him by Richard Davis and quoted by Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish-Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", p. 62.

[30]Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish-Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", p. 130.

end of 1907 Sinn Féin appeared to be on the wane. I.R.B. funds helped to keep the party's paper, Sinn Fein, afloat but the paper was less than successful. It was never able to pay its own way and the attempt to keep it solvent drained the movement dry. Its failure, O'Hegarty declared, "was a grave discouragement" to the nationalist movement in general.[31] One reason for the failure was that Sinn Fein lost readers to new advanced papers such as W.P. Ryan's The Peasant (1907) and The Irish Nation (1908-1910) and the I.R.B.'s own organ, Irish Freedom (1910-1914).

The future of Sinn Féin must also have been affected by Griffith's refusal to conciliate Labour leaders such as Jim Larkin and James Connolly. Griffith agreed that many workers in Ireland were exposed to dreadful working conditions, yet he could not sanction strikes which he deemed as "wasteful" because they slowed national and industrial development.[32] Griffith also feared for the small employer who, in conceding to the demands of trade unionism, would be forced to pay higher wages to his employees. This, in turn, would drive up the cost of Irish goods and in the long run, damage the competitive-

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[31]O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union, p. 655.

[32]Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", p. 88.

ness of Irish industry.[33]

About this time, Griffith was managing to alienate more than Labour support. His attempt to provide a rallying point for all Irishmen, regardless of political stripe, motivated him to suggest to the Sinn Féin executive in 1910 that they should merge their organization with William O'Brien's 'All for Ireland Movement', an anti-Redmond, pro-Home Rule body. This proposal caused much disillusionment and several of Sinn Féin's supporters eventually drifted into the camp of the Socialist Party of Ireland rather than remain and see Griffith destroy the movement for independence.[34]

There was a feeling among the Sinn Féin Executive that the Irish occupied an excellent position from which

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[33]F.S.L. Lyons, Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 77. See also C. Desmond Greaves, The Life and Times of James Connolly. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961, p. 93.

[34]Greaves, The Life and Times of James Connolly, p. 189. Seán Ó Lúing was quoted by Davis, "The Rise of Sinn Fein, 1899-1910", in a footnote on p. 94 as having taken a statement from P.S. O'Hegarty who insisted that Griffith had only negotiated with O'Brien because he thought that O'Brien might supply enough money to keep Sinn Fein alive. O'Hegarty is credited with stating: "I thought then, and still think, that that was what attracted Griffith....I could only explain the imbroglio then, and still, by suggesting that Griffith's heart was so deep in the daily, and his belief in its possibilities so profound, that he lost eight [sic] of the fact that Sinn Fein could not adopt any measure which would tolerate attendance at Westminster - even spasmodic attendance as suggested."

to demand concessions from Parliament.[35] Griffith announced that he would not hamper the I.P.P. "in any of their efforts to secure the passing of a genuine measure". As a result,

> He suspended the operations of Sinn Fein and practically closed down all the clubs - a self-denying ordinance that almost extended to self-effacement, from the effects of which Sinn Fein was very slow to recover. It is impossible for a political movement to stand still. To dam its current is to invite stagnation and ultimate evaporation.[36]

Such a policy naturally irritated many members of the I.R.B. who, discouraged by Sinn Féin's lack of progress toward the goal of independence, dropped quietly from the organization.[37] No doubt the physical force men also felt that their efforts could be better directed: the decrease in Sinn Féin branches would rob them of a guise which they had often used as a means of communicating with Irishmen from all walks of life. Little could be accomplished with the Sinn Féin organization having dwindled to only one branch in Dublin and "perhaps two or three in the

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[35]O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union, pp. 655-657.

[36]Lyons, Some Recollections of Griffith and His Times, p. 71.

[37]Bulmer Hobson, "Foundation and Growth of the Irish Volunteers, 1913-14", in F.X. Martin (ed.), The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915. Dublin: James Duffy and Co., Ltd., 1963, p. 14.

provinces".[38] Griffith was likely told that his blurred political policy fuelled severe disagreement with the I.R.B.. In 1910, he withdrew from the Irish Republican Brotherhood and had little contact with them until 1914.[39]

Griffith's decision to disband existing county branches and not to bother with organizing branches in the untapped areas of Ireland more than ever focussed the movement on Dublin. Effectively Griffith lost the opportunity to establish a grass roots rural membership and Sinn Féin became "little more than a coterie of Dublin journalists, minor politicians, politicised students and office-workers."[40] For the next several years, Griffith and Sinn Féin assumed the role of bystanders to the Irish scene for Griffith could not command enough support to undertake a role as an active participant.

Occasionally, throughout 1910-1914 Griffith's voice was heard. True to his feelings about trade unionism, Griffith strongly attacked the strikers who caused the labour unrest in Ireland in 1913. He was not only perturbed at their demonstration of violence, he also saw

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[38]O'Hegarty, Sinn Fein - An Illumination, p. 39. See also Alan Ward's explanation for I.R.B. involvement in Sinn Féin in The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism. Arlington Heights: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1980, p. 54.

[39]Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", p. 132.

[40]Tom Garvin, The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981, p. 105.

them as "would-be destroyers of the precious growth of Irish capitalism" upon which the future independence of Ireland would probably be based.[41]

The threats of the Ulster Unionists who vocally refused to become part of a Home Rule settlement for fear that the rights of Protestants would not be safeguarded, were treated by Sinn Fein as a bluff. The Ulster murmurings were passed off as the hysteria of a few.[42] This was probably the only time that Sinn Féin and the British government agreed on a position. While both missed the significance of the formation of the Ulster Volunteers, the government realized the potential for trouble before Griffith grasped its meaning. It would appear that Griffith was totally out of touch with what was going on in his country, and caught up in his idealism about the union of all Irishmen.

What Griffith did not see, others saw clearly. Philip Gibbs, an English journalist on a visit to Ireland, reported that it took but "a very brief inquiry" in 1913 to learn that large quantities of arms were being imported into Belfast and being distributed through Ulster. Gibbs found that

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[41]E. Rumpf and A.C. Hepburn, Nationalism and Socialism in twentieth-century Ireland. Liverpool: University Press, 1977, p. 13.

[42]Sinn Fein, 24 August 1912 as quoted by Davis, Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein, p. 55.

> There was hardly a pretence at secrecy, and the Great Western Railway authorities showed me boxes bearing large red labels with the word "Firearms" boldly printed thereon. The proprietor of one of the Belfast hotels led me down into his cellars and showed me cases of rifles stacked as high as the ceiling. He told me they came from Germany.[43]

If Griffith was aware of this information which was apparently readily available for the asking, he preferred to indulge himself in 'The Great Ulster Illusion': he insisted that it was the duty of nationalists to join the Ulster Volunteers if they ever fired on British troops. After all, Ulster was Irish and would certainly rally to the call of the South against the common enemy-England.[44]

In response to the Ulster Volunteers, a similar movement was begun in the South by Professor Eoin MacNeill. The Irish Volunteers' manifesto recorded their intent to guarantee freedom and self-government for all Ireland. MacNeill, like Griffith, was opposed to partition and believed the only answer to Ireland's troubles lay in "toleration and persuasion, combined with a firm stand on principles."[45]

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[43]Philip Gibbs, Adventures in Journalism. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1924, p. 211.

[44]Richard Davis, "Ulster Protestants and the Sinn Fein Press, 1914-22" in Éire-Ireland 1980 15(4), p. 66. See also Desmond, The Drama of Sinn Fein, p. 105.

[45]F.X. Martin, "Eoin MacNeill and the Easter Rising: Preparations", in F.X. Martin (ed.), The Easter Rising, 1916 and University College, Dublin. Dublin: Browne and Nolan Ltd., 1966, p. 20.

Arthur Griffith was conspicuously absent at the christening of the Irish Volunteer movement; he did not want to lend it the appearance of a splinter group of Sinn Féin.[46] Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh provides the reason in a conversation that he had with Tom Clarke, who tried to dissuade Ó Ceallaigh from joining the movement in the beginning:

> Tom then explained ... that it would give the Redmond party an excuse for opposing the Volunteers right from the start if notorious Sinn Feiners, such as myself, were too much in evidence on the committee.[47]

Nonetheless, Griffith did approve of the Irish Volunteer movement and it was his approval which led many to refer to the body of men as the Sinn Féin Volunteers. It was a label many Volunteers resented partly because of Griffith's advocacy for pacifism and a Dual Monarchy but also because Sinn Féin was already regarded as a "failure".[48] Regardless of this open animosity, Griffith did join the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and was present at the Howth gun running of 26 July 1914, through which the Volunteers hoped to arm themselves. Early in 1914, Griffith had been invited to join the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. but

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[46]The O'Rahilly, "The Irish Prepare to Arm", in Martin, The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915, p. 76.

[47]Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, "The Founding of the Irish Volunteers," in Martin, The Irish Volunteers 1913-15, pp. 89-90.

[48]Michael Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917," in Irish Historical Studies, XVII, 1970-71, p. 356.

refused. After the outbreak of the European war in August, however, he reestablished a closer working relationship with the Brotherhood.[49] On 9 September, he attended a meeting of representatives of separatist organizations called by Tom Clarke and Sean MacDiarmada of the I.R.B.. (In fact, many of the main participants of the future Easter Rising were there.) One participant, the labour organizer, James Connolly, advised the group that the present instability of the European situation favoured Ireland's opportunity to prepare for an insurrection. German Help might be secured to that end. While those present thought it highly unlikely that a rebellion would succeed, it was decided that German assistance would be accepted if offered under the right conditions. The group also pledged to resist Irish conscription and any attempt by British authorities to deprive the Volunteers or Citizen Army of their arms. The group also agreed to form the Neutrality League. Griffith assumed the position of an officer in the League but little was achieved by the organization, in general, as it was forced to fold after a few months because of pressure from Dublin Castle.[50]

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[49]Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish-Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", pp. 132-134.

[50]Sean Cronin, The Revolutionaries. Dublin: Republican Publications Ltd., 1971, pp. 147-148. Cronin records the presence of Patrick Pearse, representing the Volunteers; Major John MacBride, hero of the Irish Brigade in the Boer War and an ex-I.R.B. man; Thomas MacDonagh, Eamonn Ceannt, and Joseph Plunkett, members of the

Griffith's renewed liaison with the I.R.B. was further secured by the latter's financing of his journalistic attempts during the war. This sponsorship was invaluable to Griffith even though, periodically, he found his papers suppressed by the British authorities.[51] Not invited to become a member of the Volunteers' Provisional Committee because of apprehension that the organization would thus be identified too closely with Sinn Féin, Griffith contented himself, during the first two years of World War I, with attacking the British in the columns of his various newspapers.[52]

Volunteers; Sean T. O'Kelly (Ceallaigh), a member of Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League; William O'Brien and James Connolly representing the Labour movement and the Citizen Army; Clarke and MacDiarmada of the I.R.B.; and Griffith, representing Sinn Féin. Eight of these eleven men would play major roles in the April rising of 1916.

[51]Glandon, "Arthur Griffith and the Irish-Nationalist Press, 1900-1922", p. 374. Glandon states that the I.R.B financed Eire, Scissors and Paste and Nationality (first series).

[52]Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, "The Founding of the Irish Volunteers" in Martin, The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915, pp. 89-90 reported that he had been approached by Tom Clarke and asked to assume a low profile. Clarke explained to Ó Ceallaigh that "it would give the Redmond party an excuse for opposing the Volunteers right from the start if notorious Sinn Feiners, [like Ó Ceallaigh] were too much in evidence on the committee." Lyons, Some Recollections of Griffith and His Times, p. 73 records that even though the Executive of the Volunteers sought to avoid "anything in the nature of a 'Party' label", Griffith's advocacy of the Volunteers was so ardent that they were ultimately referred to as the "Sinn Fein Volunteers". Colum, Ourselves Alone!, pp. 120-121 says that Griffith was quite supportive of this new leadership and "asked the individual and the public to take a responsible attitude towards this new force and new leadership". The Volunteer leadership would have to be "manful"; such guidance would

That Griffith was kept in the dark about the Easter Rising of April 1916 when he had such close connections with the I.R.B. speaks admirably of the men who organized the rebellion and their efforts to maintain secrecy. As an Irish Volunteer who was close to Eoin MacNeill, he was aware of the call that had been issued to all Volunteers for their Easter Sunday 'parade' and aided MacNeill in issuing the counter-manding orders.[53] He obviously felt that those orders would end the matter. It is fairly safe to assume that Griffith had no appreciation for the gravity of this "parade" undertaken by a handful of the I.R.B. and the Citizen Army. One source maintains that Griffith received the news of the Easter Rising as he was shaving that Monday morning.[54] Griffith had been opposed to a rising, not only because he thought it doomed to failure but also because it violated his conception of "an

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put "a public opinion with a backbone in it into the country". Griffith's comments to Colum indicate that he was aware that his presence on the Provisional Committee would impede those ends, for he was not known for his unqualified support of physical force. Griffith, speculating on the future direction of the Irish Volunteers, stated: "A national army strong enough to hold Ireland for the Irish may eventually be evolved. All this is with God. It is the clear duty of every able-bodied man to arm in the country's cause, let the event be what it may."

[53]Ibid., pp. 134-135.

[54]Redmond Fitzgerald, Cry Blood Cry Erin. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966, p. 121.

orderly and evolutionary movement",[55] but when one actually began he could not desert his comrades. In the middle of Easter Week he got a message to Connolly requesting that he be allowed to join the battle being fought from the General Post Office. Connolly's response was that he believed Griffith's talents could be better utilized by carrying on propaganda through his newspapers and writings on behalf of Ireland.[56]

Griffith had not been the only Sinn Féiner kept out of the plans of the insurrection. "The Rising had been a complete surprise to the greater number of Sinn Feiners."[57] In fact, of the seven men who signed the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, only one of them- Sean MacDiarmada, was "in any sense, a Sinn Feiner".[58]

As Sinn Féin had so little to do with the Easter Rising, it was extremely ironic that the event would come to be known as the Sinn Féin Rebellion. In actual fact,

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[55]P.S. O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin. Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd., 1924, p. 45.

[56]Ruth Dudley Edwards, Patrick Pearse. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1977, p. 306. See also Calton Younger, Ireland's Civil War. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1968, pp. 25-26 and Seán Ó Lúing, "Arthur Griffith and Sinn Fein", in Martin, Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916, p. 63. The latter author contends that this was confirmed by Griffith himself at a dinner held in 1917 in honour of Professor Liam Ó Briain.

[57]Roger McHugh (ed.), Dublin 1916. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1966, p. 68.

[58]O'Hegarty, Sinn Fein - An Illumination, p. 52.

the I.R.B., which had abandoned Sinn Féin when it lost its popular appeal and had subsequently infiltrated the Volunteers so as to quietly continue recruiting to its cause, had been solely responsible for its staging. Through John Devoy in America as a go-between, they had negotiated with the Germans for arms and men.[59] The I.R.B at this time were pro-German only in so far as Germany could be the force which would help suppress the greatest enemy of the Irish-England.[60] There was no place for a propagandist like Griffith; a time for talking had been replaced by a time for action. The leaders of the revolt, who pictured themselves as "inheritors of Ireland's past" were "committed willy-nilly to violent action in order to arrest the attention of their complacent countrymen".[61] P.S. O'Hegarty states that the Easter Rising was "a forlorn hope" and "a deliberate blood sacrifice". The leaders of the rebellion knew that they could not win, especially once MacNeill had issued the counter-manding order, "but they counted upon being executed afterwards and they knew that THAT would save Ireland's soul."[62]

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[59]Ward, The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism, p. 99.

[60]Dorothy Macardle, The Irish Republic. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966, p. 117.

[61]F.X. Martin, "1916- Myth, Fact, and Mystery," in Studia Hibernica 7 (1967), p. 10.

[62]O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin, p. 4.

The aftermath of the Easter Rising brought executions, jail internment and a multiplicity of recriminations against Sinn Féin. Initially, the public reaction to the rebellion was extremely negative.[63] It was seen as a treasonous activity designed to aid Germany achieve superiority over Britain. Had the British simply jailed those responsible, they might have avoided the turn of public opinion which was to sweep over them in the latter months of 1916. However, the authorities thought it necessary to publicly punish the leaders of the rebellion. Accordingly they sanctioned a series of executions. The public would probably have supported the decision to shoot Patrick Pearse who had identified himself as the leader of the Provisional Republic. The shooting of Willie Pearse, however, for no other reason than he was the brother of the Rising's leader sent shudders throughout Ireland. The execution of another leader, James Connolly, might also have been accepted had it not been for the manner in which it was conducted. Strapping up an already half-dead man who was too weak to stand so that he could serve as a target for a firing squad engendered no admiration of British behaviour. The story of Joseph Plunkett, who was already dying of tuberculosis, and whose last wish was to marry his

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[63]Charles Dalton, With the Dublin Brigade 1917-1921. London: Peter Davies Ltd., 1929, p. 20.

fiancée, Grace Gifford, before he was shot touched the hearts of many as well.[64] The horrors associated with these executions did much to turn Irish opinion against their English masters.

Another factor which contributed to growing negativism about England was the gradual release of the interned prisoners who had been indiscriminately arrested as supporters of the uprising. The British arrested "3,400 Sinn Fein activists and sympathisers throughout the country".[65] Even Griffith had been arrested.[66] This massive arrest record was quite a feat considering the moribundity of Sinn Féin at the time of the Rising. During their internment, the prisoners had occasion to converse, as well as interchange ideas. The camps became a forum for Sinn Féin propaganda and discussion. The men, who for the most part, had been misidentified and falsely arrested as Sinn Féiners, listened closely to a platform which was definitively anti-British. Ironically, the British authorities had submitted these men to a politicized education of Sinn Féin doctrine.

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[64]F.X. Martin, "1916 - Myth, Fact, and Mystery," in Studia Hibernica, pp. 11-12.

[65]Michael Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917," pp. 353-354.

[66]O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin, p. 7 commented about the British arrest of Griffith: "Mr. Griffith, who was Sinn Fein, they had interned under instructions from the Irish Times."

> And therefore when the internment camps opened their doors at Christmas, 1916, for all the untried prisoners not considered to be dangerous, the new Irish movement was at once supplied with leaders who knew each other's minds, who knew what they wanted to do and how they meant to do it.[67]

When these men emerged, they returned to relatives and friends angry at their treatment by the British. It was as though Ireland had been swept by a wave of patriotism and all nationalist Ireland "began to turn to the men, dead or imprisoned, whom they now hailed as the lineal descendants of their national martyrs."[68]

Countess Constance Markievicz, an ardent Nationalist and participant in the Rising reflected:

> If we failed to win, so did the English. They slaughtered and imprisoned, only to arouse the nation to a passion of love and loyalty, loyalty to Ireland and hatred of foreign rule. Once they see clearly that the English rule us still, only with a new personnel of traitors and new uniforms, they will finish the work begun by the men and women of Easter Week.[69]

The public had already been courting anti-British sentiment before the outbreak of the Easter Rising. The British postponement of Home Rule for Ireland until the cessation of the European War had angered many Irishmen and considerably diminished popular opinion of John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

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[67]O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin, p. 9.

[68]Dalton, With the Dublin Brigade 1917-1921, p. 20.

[69]Constance Markievicz, "Women in the Fight", in McHugh, Dublin 1916, p. 125.

Redmond's open declaration of support for Britain in the war did nothing to enhance his status. The public was also worried about the impending threat of Irish conscription.[70] Ireland was ripe for change: British opinion may have approved of the way in which the authorities handled the rebellion but ultimately, Irish opinion did not.[71] The interned leaders, aware of the perceived association between Sinn Féin and the Rising seized the moment and unwittingly at first but intentionally afterwards proposed Sinn Féin as the political vehicle through which that demand for change could be channelled.[72]

The next year was one of rapid growth and reorganization for Sinn Féin. The initial months of 1917 depicted a rather "amorphous and directionless" group.[73] However, that scene drastically altered in the spring and summer of that year when Irish internees from the Frongoch and Reading prisons returned to provide leadership. Many of these prisoners had been directly influenced by

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[70]Dan Breen, My Fight For Irish Freedom. Tralee: Anvil Books Ltd., 1964, p. 37.

[71]D.G. Boyce, Englishmen and Irish Troubles. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1972, pp. 32-33. See also Tom Barry, Guerilla Days in Ireland. Dublin: Irish Press Limited, 1949, p. 8, and Sheila Lawlor, Britain and Ireland 1914-23. Totowa: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983, pp. 14-15.

[72]For support of this statement see M. Ó Dubhghaill (ed.), Insurrection Fires at Eastertide. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1966, p. 330.

[73]David Fitzpatrick, Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1977, p. 146.

Griffith. The enthusiasm with which their ideas were accepted was partially due to Griffith's propaganda and partially a result of the activities of local supporters from the ranks of those released Volunteers that Sinn Féin spread rapidly through the countryside. Michael Collins toured the country with the express purpose of building up a network of I.R.B. and Volunteer branches.[74] As Michael Laffan has pointed out, Sinn Féin "underwent a sweeping grass-roots reorganization," and capitalized on "the mass support" which had been built up during the aftermath of the Easter Rebellion.[75] The success experienced by Sinn Féin was no doubt fuelled by the imposing threat of conscription which weighed heavily upon the minds of many, and likewise by the lack of opposition from the clerical hierarchy, a factor which many interpreted as unofficial encouragement to join Sinn Féin.[76]

Sinn Féin's decision to become active in the political arena saw fruition in a February 1917 by-election in the district of North Roscommon. Count Plunkett, the father of the executed martyr, Joseph, ran

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[74]Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917", p. 368. See also Michael Laffan, "The Sinn Féin Party 1916-1921" in The Capuchin Annual, 1970, pp. 228-229.

[75]Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917", p. 374.

[76]John H. Whyte, "1916 - Revolution and Religion," in Martin, Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916, pp. 222-223. See also Lawlor, Britain and Ireland 1914-23, p. 14.

as the Sinn Féin candidate. Plunkett's nomination was widely supported by the Irish Volunteers, "the old Griffithite Sinn Fein", and the Labour movement as well as "many other groups".[77] Plunkett scored on overwhelming victory with 3,000 votes compared to 1,700 polled by the Irish Parliamentary candidate. The victory at once made Sinn Féin a serious contender in the country's political life: not only had the Parliamentary Party been challenged and convincingly beaten on its own turf, but Sinn Féin demonstrated a degree of victory over the British government, achieved not through physical force but rather by popular support.[78]

Another by-election in the district of South Longford, this time in May 1917, returned the Sinn Féin candidate, Joseph MacGuinness, by a mere thirty-seven vote margin.[79] However, results were much more decisive in other by-elections held later that year: In Clare, Eamon de Valera polled 5,010 votes while the Nationalist candidate, Patrick Lynch, recorded only 2,035. A similar margin of victory was realized by the Sinn Féin candidate, William T. Cosgrave, who ran in Kilkenny. Cosgrave received 772 votes compared to the Nationalist candidate,

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[77]Laffan, "The Sinn Féin Party 1916-1921", p. 229.

[78]Ibid.

[79]O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union, p. 713.

John Magennis who only managed a showing of 392.[80] These by-election results signalled the rejuvenation of Sinn Féin and

> ...people identified themselves increasingly with the movement as they joined clubs, attended meetings and paid subscriptions, and in the course of 1917 Sinn Fein, from being no more than a sentiment or belief, became a party with over 1,200 clubs and a quarter of a million members.[81]

Sinn Féin's growth was not without internal problems. Disagreements soon developed between Griffith and Plunkett. Plunkett wanted to gain control of Sinn Féin and build an organization loyal to himself. To do this, he established a system of Liberty Clubs. The purpose and agenda of these clubs was very blurred and while they were intended to compete with the Sinn Féin groups already in existence, many could see no advantage to subscribing to the Liberty League as opposed to Sinn Féin. Plunkett sent out circulars asking nationalist supporters to form Liberty Clubs: the replies revealed "confusion, resentment, and, in Cork at least, the prospect of grass-roots revolt against what was seen as a divided and incompetent national executive".[82] By May 1917, the Liberty League, unable to compete with Sinn Féin, agreed to merge with the

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[80]Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922, pp. 334 and 356 respectively.

[81]Laffan, "The Sinn Féin Party 1916-1921", p. 229.

[82]Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917", pp. 370-371.

latter. Both factions had agreed to certain concessions to reach this agreement: the Liberty League had allowed its identity to be absorbed but Sinn Féin realized that this situation was amenable only until October when a convention of Sinn Féin clubs would meet to assess the situation. Nevertheless, an outward manifestation of unity was achieved for the time being.[83]

The control of Sinn Féin willingly passed from the hands of Griffith during the summer/fall period of 1917. This phase was marked by the return of the released Lewes prisoners who were led by de Valera. De Valera had little time for the petty disagreements voiced by Plunkett. Instead he believed that Sinn Féin could best advance by "reconciling the antagonistic wings of the movement" with "the more acceptable elements of Griffith's policy" such as his economic doctrines and policies of self-reliance while retaining the now familiar title of Sinn Féin.[84] De Valera intended Sinn Féin to be taken seriously by the public and the results of that year's by-elections indicated that popular sentiment was receptive to that idea: a united front was a matter of necessity not choice if that momentum was to be retained.

When Prime Minister Lloyd George, in an effort to

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[83]Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917", pp. 372-373.

[84]Macardle, The Irish Republic, p. 230.

control the Irish situation by setting up proposals for Irish self-government, called for an Irish Convention in July 1917, Sinn Féin refused to participate. They were joined in their abstention by Labour. Sinn Féin justified its boycott on the grounds that the gathering's membership "was representative neither of Sinn Fein nor of post-Rising sentiment and aspiration".[85] Indeed, of 101 members "hand-picked" by the government, Sinn Féin was only to hold five seats as was Labour for a total of less than ten per cent between them.[86] In the end result in April 1918 Sinn Féin's scepticism had been proven to be credible: the Convention had uncovered "a complete divergence" between the efforts of the southern Unionists led by Lord Midleton "to produce a workable scheme" and "the uncompromising attitude of the Ulster Unionists".[87]

While the government was occupied with the Irish Convention, Sinn Féin decided to hold its own meeting - an Ard Fheis which was held at the Mansion House in Dublin on October 25, 1917. The Ard Fheis was to thereafter replace the National Council as the supreme governing and legislative body. Made up of the President, officers, one

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[85]Timothy Patrick Coogan, Ireland since the Rising. London: The Pall Mall Press Ltd., 1966, p. 23.

[86]Kenneth Griffith and Timothy E. O'Grady, Curious Journey. London: Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1982, p. 113.

[87]Denis Gwynn, The History of Partition (1912-1925). Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1950, pp. 164-165.

delegate from each Constituency Executive and two from each branch as well as the standing committee of the Ard-Chomhairle (Governing Body), the Ard Fheis met once a year. In the interim between those annual meetings, the Ard-Chomhairle met quarterly. While the Ard Fheis was not in session, the supreme direction and government of Sinn Féin was to reside in the Aid-Chomhairle.[88] Thus, from this convention a decentralised body emerged. De Valera was elected as its President and Griffith as its Vice-President. De Valera was also simultaneously elected as head of the Irish Volunteers so that the political and military wings of the government could be united under a single leadership.[89] Griffith, who expressed admiration for de Valera and who harboured no desire for personal power and authority, supported de Valera's election to office.[90]

The main objective of Sinn Féin established at the Ard Fheis was to obtain international recognition of an "Independent Irish Republic". Once that goal had been secured, the Irish, by referendum, could "freely choose their own form of Government". Further, Sinn Féin would

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[88]Desmond, The Drama of Sinn Fein, pp. 157-158. See also Ernie O Malley, On Another Man's Wound. London: Rich and Cowan, Ltd., 1936, p. 66.

[89]Ward, The Easter Rising, p. 116.

[90]Laffan, "The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917", p. 375.

continue to refute the will of the British Parliament or of "any other foreign government" to legislate for Ireland. If necessary, Sinn Féin would employ physical force to counter British rule, so that English domination could eventually be replaced by a constituent assembly (as per the 1905 Sinn Féin resolution) which would consist of members elected by Irishmen to speak and act for the Irish people.[91] O'Hegarty commented that these aims marked a transfiguration in Sinn Féin, not in its aims of separatism which had also distinguished the old Sinn Féin, but rather in its spirit:

> It became a mob movement, run by a political machine more effective and more unscrupulous, and even more intolerant of ability and independent judgement, than even the Parliamentarian movement had been. That political machine, in its turn, become a tool in the hands of the military side of the movement; so that, in the end, the whole thing was moulded by men who were incapable of regarding democratic government seriously only in so far as it could be manipulated, or forced, to do what the military mind wanted.[92]

Even Griffith openly supported the use of physical force to achieve that independence and he realized that "the character of Sinn Fein inevitably would change, as, in association with the Volunteers, it became part of the

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[91]Lawlor, Britain and Ireland 1914-23, pp. 13-14.

[92]O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin, pp. 171-172. See also O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union, pp. 715-716.

physical force movement."[93]

Violence did play a greater role in Sinn Féin activities. Such was evidenced by the agrarian crisis of 1917-1918. There were reports of cattle drives which would free allotments of land to landless men and "uneconomic holders".[94] Sinn Féin had also formed an Irish Food Control Committee whose job it was to curtail the excessive amounts of "cattle, oats, dairy produce, and food stuffs" being exported to England. Sinn Féin warned of the possibility of another Great Famine and circumvented deliveries of foods destined for the English.[95]

This increased "seditious" activity was met with arrests by the British authorities. In fact, it appeared that Sinn Féir was losing momentum in the early part of 1918, not only because of the internment of so many of its active members but also because of defeats suffered at the

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[93]Younger, Ireland's Civil War, p. 46.

[94]Reports from the Office of the Inspector General and Monthly (Confidential) Reports for December 1917, as quoted by Fitzpatrick, Politics and Irish Life 1913-1921, p. 156.

[95]O Malley, On Another Man's Wound, pp. 67-69 recounts the Sinn Féin seizure of pigs. The pigs were surrounded by Sinn Féiners and directed to Donnelly's bacon factory in Dublin. There they were slaughtered and after Donnelly's had finished their job, the meat was sold at a Sinn Féin market for reduced prices. "The seizure of the pigs caught the imagination of the people. As a result Sinn Fein markets were held in some towns. It was arranged that the surplus food of one country be exchanged for the needs of another. The resurgent Nationhood was planning."

hands of the Irish Parliamentary Party in three successive by-elections.[96] Sinn Féin was also once again being closely linked to another German plot.[97] In the face of all these hindrances, the issue which attracted public support for Sinn Féin was conscription. It was a national political issue which could "mobilize the mass of the people".[98]

The result was that under de Valera's leadership, Sinn Féin confidently entered the General Election of 1918. Sinn Féin emerged victorious, having won seventy-three of the one hundred and five seats, sending to its grave the Irish Parliamentary Party and its quest for Home Rule. This election feat was even more remarkable considering that forty-seven of the Sinn Féin candidates were still interned in prison at the time of balloting. Admittedly, in Protestant - dominated constituencies the Unionists had overwhelmingly won - capturing twenty-five

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[96]Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922, p. 329 records that in Armagh South, Dr. Patrick Macartan (S.F.) polled 1,305 votes compared to that of the Nationalist candidate's 2,324. On p. 377, figures indicate that the Sinn Féin candidate in Tyrone East, John Milroy received 1,222 votes to 1,802 for the Nationalist candidate, T.J.S. Harbison. On p. 378, Walker notes that the death of John Redmond opened the seat for Waterford City. There the Sinn Féin candidate, Dr. V.J. White, polled 745 votes to 1242 collect by Capt. W.A. Redmond, brother of the former member and I.P.P. candidate.

[97]O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union, p. 722.

[98]Charles Townshend, Political Violence in Ireland. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983, pp. 318-319.

seats of a possible thirty-one.[99] As F.S.L. Lyons notes, thirty-one per cent of the electors did not vote and only 47.7 per cent of the votes cast were votes for Sinn Féin.[100]

Sinn Féin refused to be disheartened and chose to believe that it had received a mandate of suppprt for the establishment of an Irish Republic.[101] A new era for Ireland and Sinn Féin had dawned. Sinn Féin was no longer that organization which had been given its original character by Griffith in 1905. In retrospect of all that had transpired, the British might have wished that it had had the insight later expressed by Winston Churchill:

> When you come across any scheme for dealing with Irish affairs which does not satisfy the extreme organisations in Ireland on the one hand and makes The Times newspaper very angry upon the other, let me recommend you not pass it by without a careful examination.[102]

The Old Sinn Féin certainly met both these requirements identified by Churchill. Yet the prejudices of the British in the early years of Sinn Féin prevented them

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[99]Ward, The Easter Rising, pp. 120-121.

[100]Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 399.

[101]Ward, The Easter Rising, p. 116. Sinn Féin had campaigned on a platform of (1) Ireland's withdrawal from Westminster (2) the establishment of an Irish assembly in Dublin (3) an appeal to the peace conference about to assemble in Paris for recognition of the Irish Republic (Ward p. 123).

[102]Robert Rhodes James (ed.), Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches 1897-1963. vol. 1 New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1974, p. 363.

from seeing the merits of Griffith's original programme. But then hindsight is always an accurate instrument of measurement.

Ch. III - The Thunderings of *The Times*: Rhetoric as an Institution

> "Tell people something of public importance which they have not seen in their daily paper, and they will have difficulty in believing you. In order to convince them that the Press misleads them you will have to use the Press itself.",
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> -Hilaire Belloc in Jane Soames, *The English Press* 1936.

Society has often been marked by controversy when it attempts to delineate the function and role which the press should play. The history of The Times illustrates that even that paper has not been exempted from such debate. Interestingly perhaps, The Times' treatment of a key figure in late nineteenth century Ireland wrought the greatest public scrutiny to which that paper had been subjected. The Pheonix Park Murders in 1882, in which the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his Under-Secretary, T.H. Burke, were mysteriously murdered, cast much suspicion upon Charles Stewart Parnell, a prominent figure in the Land League and Home Rule campaign, and his associates.[1] However, these rumours remained unfounded speculation until 1887 when The Times published a series of articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime" which eventually culminated with the printing of a facsimile letter, attributed to Parnell, in which he allegedly sanctioned the Phoenix Park Murders.[2]

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[1]Alan O'Day, The English Face of Irish Nationalism. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1977, p. 128. O'Day suggests that there was a great deal of speculation and suspicion in the House of Commons about the role of the Parnellites in the Phoenix Park murders. In fact, he goes so far as to comment: "Suspicion of Parnellism now engendered probably induced The Times later to swallow the Pigott forgeries."

[2]For a discussion of the contents of these articles and the letters attributed to Parnell and Patrick Egan, treasurer of the Land League, see F.S.L. Lyons, The Fall of Parnell. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960, pp. 20-21.

The impetus behind these articles had not originally rested with The Times. It began when Liberal Chief Whip, Lord Richard Grosvenor, directed one Richard Pigott to contact Edward Caulfield Houston, a former staff member of The Times' correspondent in Ireland and subsequently secretary of the leading Unionist organization in Ireland - the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union. The matter at hand was Pigott's need for outside financing of a pamphlet he had written - "Parnellism Unmasked" - a dissertation designed to alert "all defenders of the Union to the allegedly violent propensities of the Home Rule movement".[3] The contents of Pigott's pamphlet further convinced Houston of the links between Parnellism and crime and he offered Pigott a retaining fee as well as travel expenses to research further information which would consolidate the link.

The evidence which Pigott eventually produced was a series of eleven letters, five attributed to Parnell, and six to Patrick Egan, treasurer of the Land League. Houston, neglecting to ask for guarantees of authenticity, purchased the letters and brought them to George Buckle, editor of The Times, to whom he offered to sell them.[4] In

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[3]F.S.L. Lyons, Charles Stewart Parnell. London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1977, pp. 368-369.

[4]The History of The Times: The Twentieth Century Test 1884-1912. London: The Office of The Times, 1947, pp. 43-44. This was not the first meeting between Buckle and Houston. Houston had approached Buckle twice before to

a remarkable series of events, Buckle, who had no control over financing such ventures, referred Houston to the manager of the paper, J.C. Macdonald. Macdonald, in turn, brought the letters to the proprietor, John Walter, who consulted The Times' legal advisor, Joseph Soames. The decision was made to purchase the correspondence from Houston.[5] Houston had apparently been taken at his word when he declined to reveal the identity of his source: he merely stated that he believed the letters to be genuine and that they had come from a "tainted" source, a statement which Times' officials did not question as it was only to be expected "from the nature of the letters."[6]

The letters were examined at The Times' office and it

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help fund Pigott's search for these letters which Pigott had supposedly been told really did exist. Buckle could not accede to Houston's plea but encouraged him with the information that should the letters be found, he would be open to negotiate with Houston. The official historian of The Times records: "The story told by Houston was entirely consistent with suspicions that had long been entertained in Printing House Square, and the evidence he proposed to procure would, if genuine, be of the utmost assistance in the campaign against the Home Rulers on which the paper had embarked."

[5]Lyons, Charles Stewart Parnell, p. 370.

[6]The History of The Times, p. 45. Further supporting evidence can be found in J.L. Hammond, Gladstone and the Irish Nation. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938, p. 589. He states "The manager of the Times explained that when the first letter was shown to him he thought it was just the sort of letter Parnell would write; without making any inquiry into the source from which it had come, he had decided that it was his duty to the public to print the letter at the moment most likely to influence the division on the second reading of the Coercion Bill."

was felt that internal evidence was proof enough of the authenticity of the letters.[7] This was even more readily accepted with the pronouncement of "the most eminent handwriting expert of the day", G.S. Inglis, who verified Parnell's signature on the letters as authentic.[8] According to The Times' official history, it was Inglis' testimony which provided the cornerstone for the paper's charges against Parnell.[9] Armed with such evidence, publication was set for 27 January 1887.

Seemingly as an afterthought, Times' staff brought the letters to Sir Henry James, a solicitor whom The Times consulted on articles which might have legal implications for the paper. James, who had previously seen the articles, stated his doubts about their authenticity and "begged representatives of The Times to be most careful, and discouraged publication".[10] On the basis of this

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[7]The History of The Times, pp. 46-47. That internal evidence hinged on four factors: 1) the signature 2) the context of the contents identifying the murders as the "best policy open to them": a statement believed to reflect Parnell's circumstances in May 1882 3) the notepaper-supplied only to the Dublin Land League and the signature on a clean sheet of the notepaper which could be torn off from the body of the letter, if, in the future, Parnell wanted to "disown" the letter 4) in the body of the letter the substitution of a weaker expression "our best policy" instead of "the only course" - a step of a writer "carefully choosing words to extricate himself from an embarrassing situation".

[8]Ibid., p. 47.

[9]Ibid., p. 72.

[10]Ibid., p. 48.

consultation, it was decided not be publish the letters immediately but rather lead up to them in a series of articles entitled "Parnellism and Crime" which would emphasize that a relationship between Parnell and crime really did exist.

The articles extracted little reaction from Parnell and it was eventually decided to force his hand by printing one of the letters acquired from Houston. Reaction to it was swift: Parnell, in the House, denounced the letter as a forgery. Yet the reputation of The Times placed him in a position of guilty until he could prove himself innocent. The Unionists rejoiced that "a fatal blow had been dealt to the Home Rule cause". As for the "majority" of the Home Rule Liberals, "faith in the accuracy of The Times so far outweighed confidence in their new political ally that the idea of forgery occurred to very few".[11] Joseph Chamberlain, one of Parnell's most vocal enemies, "found the facsimile hard to credit"; nevertheless, he thought it "almost impossible that The Times of all newspapers could have acted without being sure of its proofs".[12] Others were just as credulous. R.B. O'Brien, a contemporary of Parnell, inquired of a friend who had remarked that Home Rule was now lost, if it

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[11]Ibid., p. 57.

[12]Oliver Woods and James Bishop, The Story of The Times. London: Michael Joseph, 1983, p. 143.

was not possible that The Times had been "let in" or led awry on the letters. "The 'Times' let in," his friend exclaimed, "the cleverest newspaper in the world let in! Why, that is the last thing that any man in England thought of."[13] It was such vehement public opinion that Parnell had to combat.

To appease Parnell who had requested a Select Committee of the House to establish the authenticity of the letters, a commission of three judges was appointed to investigate the charge contained in the articles carried by The Times. The proceedings need not be recounted here; suffice it to say that the letters were shown to be forgeries and The Times was ordered to apologize for the implications contained in the correspondence which they had printed. The Times was reprimanded for acting as both judge and jury. Parnell enjoyed a surge in popularity:

> Nationalists and Liberals turned the defeat of the 'Times' to good account. In Parliament and out of Parliament, Printing House Square was denounced, and the Government were held responsible for the indiscretion of their chief organ in the Press.[14]

As was the case with The Times until the publication of its "Parnellism and Crime" series, the role of the press remains largely undiscussed until some kind of

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[13]R. Barry O'Brien, The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell 1846-1891. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1968, p. 198.

[14]Ibid., p. 228.

crisis occurs. Its function is then evaluated and its role in the crisis analyzed. This chapter will examine the role which others have attributed to newspapers. It will then, after providing a brief history of The Times before and during the reign of Northcliffe, examine The Times' role as it was perceived by Printing House Square in educating the British public about the Irish crisis of the early twentieth century.

In its most simplistic form, the primary function of the press is, according to Wickham Steed, whose own long career with The Times began in 1896, "to gather, to make known and to interpret news of public interest." Journalists, Steed maintained,

> know that, as its name implies, journalism consists in gathering, printing and publishing news of events, day by day, with or without comment or opinion. They know that this is responsible work, that news is expected to be true and the comment upon it to be honest.[15]

While, indeed, journalists may be aware of such responsibilities, their comments upon the news and initial inaccurate reporting of events often present difficulties for the reading public. Some would go so far as to say that the main purpose of the press is demagogic.[16] Whether such a view is completely valid, inaccuracies in

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[15]Wickham Steed, The Press. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited, 1938, pp. 9 and 13 respectively.

[16]H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 96.

reports and comments which appear to be factual rather than simply instructive, may mislead public opinion and create a false perception in the minds of those who depend upon the newspaper for insightful information.

Some authors would maintain that the influence of the journalist and those articles which he/she writes, is relative and less harmful than one would think. The press is 'an organ of opinion' only insofar as it must

> in some degree (and that a large degree) present real matter for observation and debate. It can and does select. It can and does garble. But it has to do this always within certain limitations.[17]

Thus, the journalist "may inflame, may even instruct public opinion; he does not create it."[18] This tends to be a popular view. Lord Beaverbrook maintained that it was justifiable to mould public opinion through a newspaper[19]; R.D. Blumenfeld, a newspaperman who worked for the Daily Mail until lured away to assume the position of editor-in-chief at the Daily Express, concurred but stipulated that the moulding and directing of public consciousness could only occur if the public mind was receptive and inclined to the overtures being made by the

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[17]Hilaire Belloc, The Free Press. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1918, p. 25.

[18]T.H.S. Escott, Masters of English Journalism. Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1970, p. 336.

[19]The Rt. Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Politicians and the War 1914-1916. London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1928, p. 17.

journalist. This "moulding process", Blumenfeld wrote,

> may, indeed, have been due to newspaper agitation, suggestion argument, repetition or misrepresentation over a long period of time, but even then the public mind must have been receptive for such expositions.[20]

As long as the journalist is sensitive to what information the public will believe and accept as realistic and viable, newspapers may serve

> ... as agencies of social reform, forums for the exchange of ideas, purveyors of public information, checks on government abuse, sources of diversion and entertainment, the personal platforms of politician - proprietors, sources of cultural debasement, and so on.[21]

"Views and opinions, advice, criticism, exhortation" are "the main source of the immense influence" which a given newspaper may exercise; however, these things are not news but rather "subordinate to news in the life of the paper" and consequently, not imperative or "essential to its existence."[22] By implication, this statement suggests that for those newspapers satisfied with a reputation of presenting light reading material, stimulating editorial

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[20]R.D. Blumenfeld, The Press in my Time. London: Rich and Cowan Ltd., 1933, pp. 44-45. This view is also supported by Jane Soames, The English Press. London: Stanley Nott, 1936, p. 145 and by Wickham Steed, The Press, p. 13.

[21]James Curran, "The press as an agency of social control: an historical perspective," in George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate, Newspaper history: from the 17th century to the present day. London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1978, p. 51.

[22]Blumenfeld, The Press in my Time, p. 11.

exhortation is unnecessary; however, for those newspapers which want to be part of the pulse of events in the country, and have the reputation of reflecting public opinion, exciting debate and discussion will remain a priority.

Some newspapers have sought to extend that influence by attempting to interfere in and control events in the political arena. When a newspaper embarks on such a role, it is often because of the owner's decision:

> For the strength of a newspaper owner lies in his power to deceive the public and to withhold or to publish at will hidden things: his power in this terrifies the professional politicians who hold nominal authority: in a word, the newspaper owner controls the professional politician because he can and does blackmail the professional politician, especially upon his private life. But if he does not command a large public this power to blackmail does not exist; and he can only command a large public-that is, a large circulation - by interesting that public and even by flattering it that it has its opinions reflected - not created - for it.[23]

If the above has a degree of validity as regards Northcliffe and his perceived role of The Times, it was not true of The Times' original owner, John Walter, who on 1 January 1785 began that paper's forerunner, The Daily Universal Register. Initially at least, Walter was not particularly interested in the fortunes of the paper but, as the proprietor of a seasonal printing business, saw the opportunity to keep his printers employed all year

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[23]Belloc, The Free Press, p. 30.

round.[24] Nevertheless, times were favorable for the start of a paper which was to be "a register of the times, a faithful recorder of all species of intelligence and independent of any party".[25] Commercial enterprise, particularly in London, established a greater base for both a wider readership and increased advertising revenue. Improved communications and an agreement with the Post Office to undertake bulk distribution of newspapers outside London greatly enhanced wider distributions.[26] Conditions for a successful newspaper were present in late eighteenth-century England but they had to be properly tapped and utilized.

In 1788 he renamed the newspaper The Times, but it soon suffered financial hardship. Walter was simply unable to capture a circulation which guaranteed him a healthy enough remuneration. To improve his financial situation, he secured the position of Printer to H.M. Customs and further accepted a "subvention of £300" from the government in return for certain services.[27] Walter agreed that the columns of The Times would lend general

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[24]E.H.C. Moberly Bell, The Life and Letters of C.F. Moberly Bell. London: The Richards Press Limited, 1927, p. 233.

[25]John C. Merrill and Harold A. Fisher, The World's Great Dailies. New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1980, p. 323.

[26]Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, pp. 10-11.

[27]Ibid., p. 20.

support to Government policies and when asked to do so would carry statements directly supplied by the Ministers of the Crown or their deputies. It was this latter stipulation which caused Walter immense trouble for he had unwittingly agreed to print whatever these statements said without thought being given to possible libellous material.

The British political situation in 1789 was not overtly stable. The King's mental state was rather tenuous as George III fluctuated from moments of lucidity to recurrent bouts of insanity. Although the Younger Pitt was Prime Minister, his survival in office was generally thought to depend upon official recognition of George III's sanity and full recovery. It was Pitt's contention that in view of the continued ill-health of the monarch, the Prince of Wales would respond to the King's incapacity to rule by becoming Regent and by then dismissing Pitt, only to approach Fox to form a ministry.[28] Undoubtedly, Pitt breathed a huge sigh of relief when, in February 1789, the King was pronounced sane and fully restored to health. However, Pitt could not forget the threat which had been posed by the Prince of Wales' interference. On 21 February 1789, Mr. Steele, the Secretary of the Treasury, presented Walter with a two paragraph statement

[28] Ibid. See also J.H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1975, pp. 186-194.

to be run in The Times. The contents of this release criticized the Duke of York for wanting prematurely to assume the throne; an edition of The Times a few days later levelled a similar criticism at the Prince of Wales.[29] Both Princes were incensed and proceeded with libel charges against Walter. Although Walter submitted a plea of extenuation stating that a proprietor could not control all details included in his newspaper, he was found guilty of the charged offence because he refused to name any of his sources. For libelling the Duke of York, Walter "was fined £50, sent to Newgate [Prison] for a year, sentenced to stand in the pillory at Charing Cross for an hour and ordered to give security for good behaviour for seven years." He was also instructed to suffer the concurrent sentence of one year's imprisonment as retribution for his libel on the Prince of Wales. In the end, the pillory was remitted but Walter had to serve sixteen months in Newgate and only then secured a release because of the intervention of the Prince of Wales.[30]

As a result of this experience, Walter's enthusiasm as editor of The Times dwindled and in 1803, with the paper's circulation at approximately one thousand, he handed the proprietor's and editor's chair to his son, John, aged twenty-seven. Perhaps as a result of his

[29]Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, p. 21.

[30]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

father's experiences, John Walter II strove to make The Times "commercially independent, and so politically and culturally free". He undertook this massive task by first dealing with theatre tickets which had always been provided, without charge, to 'critics' in return for positive notices. John Walter II insisted on paying for theatre tickets and obliterated "puffs" in favour of candid reviews.[31]

The independence which the younger Walter claimed in matters theatrical led to a more revolutionary idea, "an editor independent of his proprietor with complete editorial authority", and he named Thomas Barnes as his successor.[32] The appointment of Barnes was auspicious for the enduring contribution he made

> singularly unappreciated even today, was to conceive and organize a newspaper not as a means by which government could influence people, but as one by which people could influence government. ... He sought to create a healthy public opinion by supplying it with news uncorrupted by agents of court, party, ministry and embassy.[33]

This approach enabled Barnes to develop The Times into "an important organ of public opinion and political influence" and, as well, into "a strong independent paper, a leader

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[31]Harold Evans, Good Times, Bad Times. London: Weindenfeld and Nicholson, 1983, p. 190.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., p. 191.

in influence and circulation."[34] The paper's attacks on the government for its policy and its ineptitude in dealing with popular unrest and economic recession by enforcing arrests and repressive laws, caused the pro-government press to regularly accuse The Times of "championing sedition".[35] As a result of this reputation, the paper became increasingly identified with "the middle classes, the commercial interests, the stock exchange and the manufacturers".[36]

In 1841, J.T. Delane assumed the editorship of The Times. His approach to the paper's success differed significantly from that of Barnes. Delane, under the tutelage of John Walter III, sought to achieve "the best possible newspaper"[37] based on obtaining reliable news and ensuring that The Times was the first to publish it.

> Most news stemmed from governments, and it was Delane's pride to publish advance texts of the Queen's Speech, or of government treaties, with the connivance of a friendly Minister if possible, and despite Ministers if necessary.[38]

Delane hired Robert Lowe, his old Oxford tutor, to assume the position of his leaderwriter and when Lowe became a

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[34]Merrill and Fisher, The World's Great Dailies, p. 323.

[35]Martin Walker, Powers of the Press. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1983, pp. 31-32.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Evans, Good Times, Bad Times, p. 192.

[38]Walker, Powers of the Press, p. 35.

member of the government, Delane still encouraged him to write his anonymous editorials[39] no doubt believing that Lowe brought considerable 'inside knowledge' and insight to his contributions.

As a result of Delane's political relationships, The Times in effect became "the semi-official spokesman for the government itself, irrespective of what party was in power."[40] Naturally the readership of The Times shifted from a middle class preponderancy to an increasingly upper class clientele. Men of station read The Times in order to remain attuned to government practice and policy. Gradually, The Times gained a reputation for omniscience.[41]

In 1884, Arthur F. Walter appointed George Buckle to the editor's chair and The Times became more closely associated with the Conservative camp,[42] a move which necessarily influenced its reputation. The effectiveness of The Times was further crippled by its refusal to move into a technological age. These factors and particularly the "Parnellism and Crime" case[43] led to a period of

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[39]Ibid.

[40]Merrill and Fisher, The World's Great Dailies, p. 324.

[41]G.A. Cranfield, The Press and Society. London: Longman Group Limited, 1978, p. 160.

[42]Walker, Powers of the Press, p. 39.

[43]See above pp.79-84.

decline for The Times.

Apart from trying to recover from the financial burden imposed by the Parnell case, The Times tried to stave off other difficulties. The late nineteenth century had witnessed the development of a new style of journalism. Popular newspapers and journals were ushered onto the public scene by proprietors such as Alfred Harmsworth, George Newnes, and Arthur Pearson. Their market target was the lower middle classes and the better-educated working classes "who now had more money to spare and greater leisure to read".[44] These proprietors, by adopting modern printing techniques and technology, were able to mass produce their papers and sell them at reduced prices. The Times, intentionally oblivious to changing middle-class public preferences and unable to compete economically, witnessed a drop in sales to 38,000, half of what circulation had been under Delane's editorship.[45] The Times' readership was still concentrated among the better class; however, in the face of financial ruin, such knowledge provided small comfort to the management and owners of the paper.

That the paper was read by the 'right' people did attract the interest of other newspaper proprietors, in particular the aforementioned Pearson and Harmsworth.

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[44]Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, p. 184.

[45]Evans, Good Times, Bad Times, pp. 192-193.

Through a series of complicated and sly negotiations, Harmsworth conspired with the manager of The Times, Moberly Bell, to manipulate control of this newspaper.[46] Harmsworth was a successful proprietor in his own right; he had experimented with a new style of lighter journalism which had been widely received by the general public. His attempt to address the diversified interests of the British public brought forth such publications as Answers, Comic Cuts, Chips, Forget-Me-Not, Wonder, Home-Sweet-Home, Marvel, Union Jack, and Sunday Companion. In 1894, circulation figures indicated that 1,754,500 copies of these combined newspapers were being sold.[47] Nevertheless, Alfred Harmsworth had endured much criticism about the quality of journalism which his publications provided and about the quality of the reader who purchased his papers. He longed to own a 'reputable' newspaper, one which was an English institution, and he firmly set his sights on acquiring The Times. The subscribers of The Times were, after all,

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[46]A detailed account of this transaction would serve no purpose here. However, the inquiring reader may refer to either Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, pp. 187-201 or to the official Times' account in The History of The Times - The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, vol. 4, pt. 2 London: The Office of The Times, 1952, ch. 1 passim.

[47]Reginald Pound and Geoffrey Harmsworth, Northcliffe. London: Cassell, 1959, p. 165.

> ... all the right people, [and] always had been through the century and a half of Times history, entwined as it was with the history of British imperialism and its eager instrument. At times it was uncertain whether the Times was the voice of the Government or Government policy a mere echo of Times views.[48]

Harmsworth acquired a peerage in 1905 and assumed the title of Lord Northcliffe; consequently, he no doubt felt a certain affinity with those who read The Times.[49] He secretly purchased the paper in 1908 for £320,000 but refused to reveal publicly that he had become the proprietor of The Times for fear of an immediate backlash from those who would lament that a newspaper of repute had fallen into the hands of one of the penny lords.[50] Nonetheless, his concern that his purchase of The Times would be met with fervent criticism,[51] did not affect Northcliffe's spirits which remained undaunted. John Evelyn Wrench, who knew Northcliffe described him, upon purchasing The Times as never "more alive nor more magnetic". Wrench observed that while Northcliffe liked to boast that the paper was simply a "hobby", it really

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[48]Louis M. Lyons, "A Habit That Was Handed Down" in Louis M. Lyons (ed.), Reporting the News. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1965, p. 411.

[49]Pound and Harmsworth, Northcliffe, p. 295.

[50]Walker, Powers of the Press, p. 41.

[51]For a discussion of this closely veiled negotiation see Viscount Camrose, British Newspapers and their Controllers. London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1947, p. 24.

meant much more than that to him. Northcliffe's enthusiasm was so unbridled that Wrench declared that he "was like a happy boy ..." to whom a fairy godfather had provided the object of his desires."[52] Moberly Bell saw possible trouble in Northcliffe's enthusiasm and told F. Harcourt Kitchin, "Now we've got to keep Him in order."[53]

Bell tried to accomplish that feat by extracting an agreement from Northcliffe that the editor and his assistants should be retained and "that the new proprietor should in no way interfere with the policy of the paper".[54] At first Northcliffe had no problem keeping his word. He did not discern the need to challenge editorial independence as The Times "already coupled a policy of protectionism with a fidelity to the official Unionist leadership".[55] However, Northcliffe warned that interference with editorial policy would occur if the editor failed to warn his readers of the looming German peril.[56] Through the columns of the Daily Mail, another of North-

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[52]John Evelyn Wrench, Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times. London: Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1955, p. 64.

[53]F. Harcourt Kitchin, Moberly Bell and His Times. London: Philip Allan and Co., 1925, p. 251.

[54]Bell, The Life and Letters of C.F. Moberly Bell, pp. 291-2.

[55]Stephen Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain. vol. 2 Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981, p. 95.

[56]A.J.A. Morris, The Scaremongers. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, p. 6.

cliffe's papers, he had from year to year extolled the "power, supremacy and greatness of the British Empire" and the threat of the Germans who wanted to challenge that position of dominance.[57] The Times' columns were to be used to supplement that public campaign of awareness warning against German intrigue - an activity which many contemporaries of Northcliffe were later to refer to as scaremongering.

Regardless of his own assurances to Bell and editor Buckle, Northcliffe could not refrain for long from interfering in the paper's internal operations. By 1913, Northcliffe had secured a team more amenable to his plans for the paper. Geoffrey Dawson (who until 1917 went by the surname Robinson) assumed the editorship; Wickham Steed replaced Valentine Chirol as foreign editor[58]; and John Walter IV acted as Chairman. Walter had offered Northcliffe unqualified support provided that Northcliffe would guarantee that on his death the paper would revert to Walter. Northcliffe agreed.[59] As for the new foreign editor, Steed was, as Walter recalled, "completely under

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[57]Tom Clarke, Northcliffe in History. London: Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1950, p. 93.

[58]Valentine Chirol retired as foreign editor in 1912, after lodging a vehement protest that 'the traditions and prestige of the paper" had been "steadily and grievously impaired by Lord N's interference, direct and indirect'. The quote is found in Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, p. 189.

[59]Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, p. 206.

Northcliffe's thumb".[60] Dawson, a veteran of Colonial Office service to South Africa and a former editor of the Johannesburg Star shared Northcliffe's imperial loyalties and initially "acquiesced in Northcliffe's views and prejudices, confining his protests to the pages of his diary".[61] By 1914, Northcliffe had not only exercised personal control over all appointments to the staff of The Times but he had also ensured that he was the one, not the editor, to order the policy of the paper in either the domestic or foreign area if an event attracted his concern.[62]

Northcliffe truly believed that The Times had to be an independent paper. What he failed to realize was that his loudly-sung praises of the British Empire and its imperialistic policies, views supported by his editor, had to be well-known among the staff and correspondents of The Times. Northcliffe was known as a man willing to fire those employees with whom he took offence.[63] Thus, for

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[60]Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, p. 189.

[61]Ibid., p. 207.

[62]The History of The Times v.4 pt. 1, p. 128.

[63]Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, p. 203 write. "To The Times staff their new Chief appeared an intimidating character. His means of ruling were devious, and he could be brutal to the point of sadism. One of the myths he encouraged was that he perused The Times every morning for two hours, starting at 6 a.m.." With such close scrutinization, few employees of The Times would want to openly antagonize Northcliffe by rejecting the

his subordinates, it was a matter of survival to lean towards reporting items which strongly tasted of Unionism. This was nowhere more evident than in The Times' usage of propaganda during World War I and in the paper's coverage of the separatist element in Ireland, which essentially meant Sinn Féin.

Northcliffe's success in the newspaper business has often been attributed to his ability to read the thoughts of the public. J.A. Spender, a contemporary, reflected: "His insight into the popular mind was so unerring as to make him the perfect master of crowd psychology."[64] Northcliffe sensed the English apprehension and distrust of the German - a lesson he had been preaching for many years. He seemed to think that fear of the Germans could not be overemphasized. Northcliffe assumed a personal responsibility to heighten that fear and feed propaganda to the British people. He, likely, would not have disagreed with the following statement:

> Falsehood is a recognized and extremely useful weapon in warfare, and every country uses it quite deliberately to deceive its own people, to attract neutrals, and to mislead the enemy.[65]

Northcliffe, in his overzealousness to preserve the

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idea of Unionism and British imperialism.

[64]J.A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics. vol. II London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1927, p. 166. See also Morris, The Scaremongers, p. 8.

[65]Arthur Ponsonby, Falsehood in War-time. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1971, p. 7.

idea of the mighty British Empire, exaggerated home victories and enemy defeats, all the time appealing to the public for additional volunteers in the hope of preventing the public from becoming despondent about the course of the war.

> Lord Northcliffe's Crewe House was composed of 'eavesdroppers, letter-openers, decipherers, telephone tappers, spies, an intercept department, a forgery department, a criminal investigation department, ... a censorship department, a ministry of education, and a press bureau.'[66]

Northcliffe's preoccupation with the German menace did not go unchallenged. . . A.G. Gardiner, editor of the most serious competitor of The Times, remonstrated to Northcliffe in an open letter in the Daily News on 5 December 1914. Addressing him as "the most sinister influence that has ever corrupted the soul of English journalism", Gardiner, who saw Northcliffe's publication of his scaremongerings into a book as a pursuit of his "incendiary mission", charged:

> It had always been your part to prophesy war and cultivate hate ... not because of any faith that was in you, not because of any principle you cherished [but as] a short cut to success - that success which is the only thing you reverence amidst all the mysteries and sanctities of life.[67]

Despite his usual good sense of what his readers

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[66]Blanche Wiesen Cook in Ibid., Introduction p. 8.

[67]As quoted by Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain vol. II, p. 252.

wanted, Northcliffe made a mistake in overestimating how much propaganda he could feed the public. He committed the cardinal sin of journalists and diverged from trying to reflect and guide public opinion to trying to transform it.[68] Lord Beaverbrook attributed this mistake to Northcliffe's inability at this time to interpret the political temperament[69]; no doubt this was true but it was because of Northcliffe's inability to see anything but the superiority of the British Empire. True his suspicions of the Germans were deeply-rooted,[70] yet it seems that any threat to the British Empire would have been violently attacked by Northcliffe and his chauvinistic publications. His deep-seated Unionist inclination led him to see threats to Britain and British unity in a most unfavourable light - they attacked the very foundation of his

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[68]Sir Edward Cook, Delane of The Times. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1916, p. 297 states "The opportunist, whether in Parliament or in the Press, reflects and guides rather than forms public opinion. He may confirm and consolidate political opinion; he may bring it into coherence, and in that sense lead it, but he does not originate or transform."

[69]Beaverbrook, Politicians and the War, p. 96. Philip Gibbs, Adventures in Journalism. London: William Heineman Ltd., 1924, p. 255 suggests "The miscalculation was the growing disbelief of the British public in anything they read in the press. The false accounts of air raids (when the public knew the truth of their own losses), such incidents as the press campaign against Kitchener, and that ridiculous over-optimism, the wildly false assurances of military writers ... when things were going worst in the war, had undermined the faith of the nation in the honesty of their newspapers."

[70]Woods and Bishop, The Story of The Times, p. 213.

system of values.

Northcliffe's attitude towards Ireland has never been well-defined. Born in 1865 of an English father and an Irish mother (from a strong Unionist background), Northcliffe's family vacated Ireland in haste in 1867 because of his father's being targeted (so family tradition has it) as "fair game" for the Dublin Fenians.[71] Although Alfred Harmsworth, Northcliffe's father, loved Ireland, his wife did not share his enthusiasm. She was "loyal in sentiment to her Ulster connections", but "she had no great love for Ireland" and subscribed to the rather "oversimplified" view that "the North was constructive and the South destructive".[72] Her views were to greatly influence Northcliffe in his response to the Easter Rebellion. He had, until this event occurred, remained rather personally aloof from the Irish situation. He had supported the Unionist bent which had been historically true of The Times' coverage of Ireland; his only recorded intervention into Irish affairs occurred in 1914 when he personally visited Ireland to investigate the rumour of German arms being imported into the country.[73]

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[71]Pound and Harmsworth, Northcliffe, p. 15.

[72]Ibid. and also see A.P. Ryan, Lord Northcliffe. London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1953, p. 18 for comments about the elder Harmsworth's feelings about Ireland.

[73]William E. Carson, Northcliffe. New York: Dodge Publishing Co., 1918, p. 158. See Appendix A for a more thorough treatment of Irish Times' reporting of Sinn Féin.

For the most of its Irish news The Times relied upon John Healy, editor of the Unionist Irish Times. Irish nationalists had always been critical of the latter paper. On 22 April 1899, the United Irishman remarked:

> It is refreshing, as it is amusing, to watch the wayward fancy of the editor of the Irish Times when he permits his pen to stray away into the domain of bland and ingenue irony. Not that one can accuse the Delphian Oracle of Westmoreland-street to be the slave of mimicry or a votary of Janus, without any admixture of another vein which might tone down unrestrained levity or pointless platitudes. As a 'summariser' of the London press, as a masterful organiser of inverted commas, as a true and unfaltering mirror of the passing hour, commend us to the columns of the Irish Times, to those serried ranks of quotation marks that tell the dexterity of the editor in the art of scissors-and-paste, to those priceless gems of inept jeers that, steeped in the Tory pickle of the antique ascendancy, tickle the palates of the seions of our honourable gentry, to those sad, soft sighs for toleration, not to say predominance.[74]

The Irish Times which was recognized as the organ of the upper classes of Protestant Ireland expressed vocal opposition to those nationalist movements which supported a principle other than undying allegiance to the United Kingdom.[75] Like The Times of London, the Irish Times attracted a particular audience - the 'right people' of Ireland. Most of the 'right people' were Protestants, due to former eras of history which championed Catholic

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[74]United Irishman, 22 April 1899, p. 2.

[75]See Stephen Brown, The Press in Ireland. Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1937, p. 34 and P.S. O'Hegarty, Sinn Fein - An Illumination. Dublin: Maunsel and Co. Ltd., 1919, p. 51.

repression, and they were Unionists with strong ties to the mother country. Healy, who was also an unwavering Unionist,[76] would want to appease his public by giving them what they wanted to hear, as would most newspaper editors.[77] The fact that he provided Irish news to another large prominent Unionist newspaper which was owned by a wealthy, powerful Unionist, may well have influenced not only what appeared in his own paper but also his submissions to The Times.

It is difficult to separate heartfelt beliefs from other experiences and individual honest reflection will generally produce examples of decisions coloured by values. One would like to think that objectivity is easily attained but often such is not the case. On 21 November 1903, the columns of the United Irishman criticized Reverend Father Ryan of Inchiore for failing to discern how one's values can penetrate various aspects of one's life. Father Ryan, a former president of a branch of the nationalist Gaelic League had delivered a sermon to his congregation based on the importance of reading. He

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[76]Hugh Oram, The Newspaper Book. Dublin: MO Books, 1983, p. 114.

[77]Escott in Masters of English Journalism, p. 336 noted that the editor of a newspaper must realize that "His readers expect him to emphasize and intensify their own prejudices or convictions, resent it if he makes a show of contradicting or correcting, and at the utmost only allow him to flatter their vanity by discovering, as the more thoughtful of newspaper men do, an intellectual basis for their emotional preferences and antipathies."

acknowledged that an adequate supply of periodical literature was not to be found, but rather than abandon reading altogether, the congregation should purchase harmless literature such as Tit-Bits, Answers, and Home Chat. He mentioned that these were all publications produced by Alfred Harmsworth Jr. and that Mr. Harmsworth was a Unionist. Nevertheless, argued Father Ryan, the only difference between Mr. Harmsworth and the present congregation was that the latter wanted Home Rule while the former believed that they should not get it; such differences of opinion would not be reflected in the Harmsworth literature. The United Irishman, in reply to Father Ryan's contention, simply commented that it was difficult to believe that a clergyman or any man of education "should be capable of making such silly statements".[78] Opinion from fact is not quite as easily separated.

The Irish Question had long plagued England. Northcliffe is quoted as having said that there would be no Irish Question "if there were prosperity in Ireland".[79] Prosperity was not within Ireland's immediate grasp, however. Nationalist Irish groups and the Irish Parliamentary Party had long expounded the need for Home Rule.

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[78]United Irishman, 21 November 1903, p. 1.

[79]Hamilton Fyfe, Northcliffe. New York: AMS Press, 1969, pp. 167-8.

The Times had always supported the stand of the Unionist Party as regards Home Rule. Moberly Bell had come the closest of all Times' managers to printed support of Prime Minister Gladstone and his quest for Home Rule, but apparently lost considerable faith in Gladstone who, he felt, had mishandled Egypt and the Home Rule Bill for Ireland. From 1892, Bell openly worked for the Unionist Party. He did, however, relate to an unnamed correspondent on Irish affairs that it was necessary to avoid any "exaggeration" of events in Ireland. Bell was "too good a Liberal to be in principle against any measure of self-government for Ireland": he defended his objection to Home Rule by admonishing that such a move would cause serious disruption to the British Empire.[80] Bell's ire must have been considerable when the first account of Sinn Féin, a "movement ... that ... is not only organized ... [but] embraces large number of Irishmen" was recorded by The Times.[81]

If anything, loyalties to Unionism were more stringently supported by Dawson and Northcliffe. They were vehemently against any bill that would divide Ireland and immediately place the North under the authority of a

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[80]Bell, The Life and Letters of C.F. Moberly Bell, p. 202.

[81]The Times, 15 January 1906, p. 9.

Dublin Parliament.[82]

In 1908, much against Arthur Griffith's better judgement, Sinn Féin fielded its first political candidate in Leitrim, Charles Dolan. Though Dolan was not elected, he did poll 1,157 votes to his Irish Parliament Party's contestant, who gathered 3,103 votes. It was an extremely impressive showing for a candidate espousing anti-Unionist policy. The Irish Times credited Dolan with such a startling showing in what had been one of the Parliamentary Party's safest seats. The paper went on to praise the non-political elements of the Sinn Féin programme, and likened the encouragement of Irish self-reliance to constructive "unionism".[83] The Times, while admitting that Dolan's showing was significant, was not complimentary in its review of Sinn Féin which was described as "extremist". The paper drew attention to the possibility that Sinn Féin could become a serious force in the future. What The Times did not realize was that it would be partially responsible for bringing that fear to fruition.

Up until 1916, The Times gave limited coverage to Sinn Féin activities. The articles presented for the

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[82]The History of The Times v. 4 pt. 2, p. 536.

[83]Irish Times, 24 February 1908, p.4. Richard Davis, author of Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Fein. Dublin: Anvil Books, 1974, p. 50 suggests that this report in the Irish Times may have encouraged Griffith to move further than some of his supporters in the direction of conciliating Unionists.

reader's perusal were generally negative and admonished the Sinn Féiners for the lack of loyalty to the British Empire.[84] When, however, in 1914 it came to Northcliffe's attention that secret German influences were supposedly at work in the Irish situation, Northcliffe went to Ireland to observe the situation firsthand.[85] Northcliffe found men everywhere parading and drilling. He felt that lack of government action to obliterate what he saw as "possible civil war" helped to confirm "the German belief that there was a weakening of the English spirit". While his official biographers maintain that Northcliffe was determined not to take sides in the dispute, he did make immediate plans for "reporting, not supporting" what he observed as an impending calamity in Ireland.[86]

In 1913, Dawson had sent Lovat Fraser as an undercover correspondent to Ireland. In Ulster Fraser saw the Unionist Volunteers drilling and had encountered their leader, Sir Edward Carson, whom Fraser was convinced "was not moved by vanity or consumed by passion, but filled, rather with a consciousness of 'terrible responsibility'." Fraser, impressed by the sincerity of the Ulster Unionists became convinced that Ulster "should not and could not be

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[84]The Times, 24 February 1908, p. 8.

[85]See the chapter on reporting of Sinn Féin activities in The Times for greater detail.

[86]Pound and Harmsworth, Northcliffe, pp. 454-456. See also Carson, Northcliffe, p. 158.

coerced".[87] Accessibility to the secret happenings in the rest of Ireland, however, was difficult and the activities of the National Volunteers hard to pinpoint. In the words of The Times' official historian:

> It was difficult for the paper to investigate the preparations, mainly secret, and almost impossible to obtain a contact with the most influential of the bodies, Sinn Fein, which supported the Southern movement. The Times was naturally anathema to the ardent and implacable South, for Dawson's interest was in Ulster and Carson, and the office automatically supported Carson's armed rebels.[88]

Interestingly enough, what The Times saw as "the most influential of the bodies, Sinn Fein" was in a serious period of decline which stretched to almost nonexistence! Details must have been a lot harder to obtain than one would imagine, or perhaps the paper was still smarting from its experience in the Parnell case. There is certainly a marked contrast in the way in which The Times employed an approach of subtlety in its reports on Sinn Féin prior to Easter 1916 and the way in which it had presented the articles on "Parnellism and Crime" in an attempt to "draw out" the truth about Parnell as The Times thought it existed.

The Easter Rebellion of 1916 was regarded with some relief by Dawson, who thought it not that serious; it was

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[87] The History of The Times vol. 4 pt. 2, pp. 537-538.

[88] Ibid., p. 539.

a situation that could be righted by removing Sir Augustine Birrell from his position of Chief Secretary to Ireland and replacing him with the 'right' man.[89] Otherwise Home Rule would have to be accepted as long as special provision was made for Ulster, whose contribution to the war effort was so "unimpeachable" as to give her stronger claims than ever to be left alone.[90]

It was not until the Monday following the outbreak of the rebellion that The Times was able to present a comprehensive account of what had taken place. This was primarily attributed to the silence of John Healy, occasioned by his "virtual" imprisonment in his own office which had been in the line of fire at one point.[91] P.S. O'Hegarty charges that when Healy was able to give his report, he quoted "the choice bits of his leading articles in the Irish Times, gravely putting them forward as 'moderate opinion,' or as the unanimous demand of Irish public opinion".[92] The articles expressed grave stories about Sinn Féin, obviously a handy name for both the British authorities and the press who could not produce

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[89] Ibid., p. 544.

[90] Wrench, Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times, p. 133. Quote extracted from G. Dawson's letter of 30 May 1916 to friends abroad.

[91] The History of The Times vol. 4 pt. 2, p. 545.

[92] P.S. O'Hegarty, A History of Ireland Under the Union. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1952, p. 705.

the name of another anti-imperialist organization in Ireland. The treatment of the rebels by the authorities and the press isolated many of the Irish and the leaders of the rebellion invited adherents to join Sinn Féin - a name familiar to the Irish public because of its persistent identification by both bodies. Sinn Féin had been portrayed as anti-British revolutionists only too eager to grasp the outstretched German hand to squash the mighty British Empire. The Times' editor, supported no doubt by a proprietor who was anti-German and extremely pro-British exaggerated "the political prejudices of the readers of his popular papers".[93] It was a case where ...

> In the arena of international rivalry and conflict men have placed patriotism above truthfulness as the indispensable virtue of statesmen.[94]

In its coverage of the Easter Rebellion of 1916, The Times attempted to feed the British public what it thought it wanted to hear. However, it miscalculated the force it needed to expose the misdeeds of Sinn Féin and while perhaps, it accommodated the prejudices of the 'right' people, its thunderings helped to establish a myth which could not have been successfully perpetrated without its

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[93]Quote attributed to Francis Williams, Dangerous Estate, p. 158 as quoted by Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, p. 422.

[94]Quote attributed to Stanley Baldwin in Ponsonby, Falsehood in War-time, p. 11.

intervention and that of British authorities - the myth which evolved into the reality of Sinn Féin.

Ch. IV - *The Times'* Perception of Sinn Féin, 1906-1918.

"By the mouth of her magnificent *Times* and her countless tourists and sightseers she repeats to the admiring nations a ceaseless tale of English patience and Irish insubordination."

William Butler Yeats,
Letters to the New Island
1934.

Sinn Féin warranted little consideration in the columns of The Times before the Easter Rebellion of 1916.[1] In fact, had it not been for the general reluctance of Irishmen to respond to the British recruitment campaign, a situation which The Times' Irish correspondent blamed on Sinn Féin's "disloyal" activities and propaganda,[2] the organization would have been virtually unknown to the readership of The Times before the Rising. Coverage of Sinn Féin activity prior to April 1916 was limited but the majority of those accounts attested to the anti-loyalist sentiments of Sinn Féiners and their repeated attempts to belittle Britain and destroy Irish regard for the British. Although these articles were infrequent, the attitude of The Times toward Sinn Féin was clearly indicated. The paper's negative portrayal of the organization further intensified as the number of reports about Sinn Féin escalated with the beginning of the Easter Rebellion.

The Times' first article addressing the existence of Sinn Féin appeared on 15 January 1906. It identified Sinn

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[1]Sinn Féin had been founded by Arthur Griffith in 1905; however, no mention of its birth appeared in The Times during that year. In 1906, three articles were carried on the organization; in 1907, ten articles were printed by The Times; in 1908, there were four mentions of Sinn Féin while in 1909, there was one news item. 1910 recorded three items, 1911, reported eight, and 1912 carried one article; 1913 saw four articles, 1914 saw none, and 1915 recorded one.

[2]See The Times, 17 March 1913, p. 38; 14 April 1913, p. 14; 3 May 1913, p. 10; 8 July 1913, p.6.; 16 July 1915, p. 6.

Féin's "strongest element" as those "Gaelic enthusiasts" who were already recruits of the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association. The writer, for no evident reason, deplored the establishment of the Dungannon Clubs and further criticized the manifesto adopted by the Sinn Féin membership. The main tenets of the Sinn Féin policy were denounced: abstention of the Irish representatives from attendance in Parliament, refusal to take the oath of allegiance, the boycotting in Ireland of all British imports, concerted efforts to prevent Irishmen from joining the British forces or the Irish Constabulary and the discouragement, by whatever means possible, of the "employment of English, acouted as a 'foreign tongue'". All these boded ill for Ireland's future, the writer believed, for no good could come from an organization "embodying anti-English passions and objects in their most outrageous and extravagant form".[3]

By 21 August 1906, Sinn Féin had already earned a reputation as "extreme". Its attempts to prevent "any tribute of respect to the KING'S name or person and to put down the playing of the National Anthem" had previously incurred the wrath of the reporter. Sinn Féin's continued seditious activities convinced the writer that he had accurately predicted the occurrence of "terrorist crimes" if Sinn Féin was not soon discredited and diffused by the

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[3]The Times, 15 January 1906, p. 9.

government.[4] His evidence to support this prognostication was taken from recent activities of Sinn Féin. In the first of these momentous incidents, Sinn Féin sought to stop Lord Aberdeen from performing the opening ceremony of the main drainage system in Dublin[5]; in the second it disrupted Alderman Cotton's luncheon in September of 1906. That interference was billed as nothing less than "the vulgar demonstration of disloyalty".[6]

Reports of the growth and activity of Sinn Féin were sparsely covered by The Times in early 1907. Most articles about the movement were relegated to rather obscure places within the columns of the paper. Accounts were often placed near the bottom of a page or surrounded by sports items, mail and shipping intelligence, the health of the Princess Royal, or the court circular.[7] Coverage was most often negative and dealt with hostile public reaction to Sinn Féin. An article on 16 August 1907, for example, made much of Sir John Redmond's denunciation of Sinn Féin. The leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.) is quoted as having accused some Sinn Féiners of being bitter men, frustrated by their

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[4]Ibid.

[5]The Times, 21 August 1906, p. 4.

[6]The Times, 26 September 1906, p. 8.

[7]See The Times, 22 June 1907, p. 8; 8 August 1907, p.8, and 17 August 1907, p. 5, 10 December 1907, p. 10 as examples.

own inability to be elected to the government as members of the I.P.P.. He is reported to have asserted the country's faith in the I.P.P. and charged Sinn Féiners as troublemakers "active for mischief and the promotion of dissension".[8]

In reporting the results of the North Leitrim by-election in 1908, The Times underlined Sinn Féin's potential to create that mischief and dissension described by Redmond. The article, covering the defeat of the Sinn Féin candidate, former I.P.P. member Charles Dolan, frankly admitted that although his candidature had been viewed from the outset as "hopeless", the fact that Dolan had polled over a thousand votes had to be regarded as nothing less than "a serious blow to the prestige of the Parliamentary party". It cautioned the official Nationalists to expect "a great deal of trouble at future elections".[9]

According to The Times, Sinn Féin had already caused serious problems by attempting to lure public sentiment to support its anti-enlistment policy. It was this perceived seditious campaign especially in the face of a possible European conflict that drew the unrestrained ire of John Edward Healy, The Times' official correspondent in

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[8]The Times, 16 August 1907, p. 8.

[9]The Times, 24 February 1908, p. 8.

Ireland.[10] While indicating a perturbance with this Sinn Féin policy from its inception, Healy's impatience was obviously less restrained in an article which appeared in The Times on 8 July 1913. In it, Healy resoundly expressed his annoyance over the distribution of anti-recruitment leaflets throughout Dublin.[11] However, when Sinn Féin's espousal of anti-enlistment propaganda continued well into World War I, Healy's aggravation escalated into extreme impatience. Irritated with the lukewarm Irish response to British recruitment appeals, Healy, in a 4 March 1916 article entitled "Mischief in Ireland - Continued Neglect - The Growth of Sinn Fein", reprimanded the Irish administration for not only allowing the seditionists to continue making "violent speeches" but also for not objecting to the public drilling of Irish Volunteers and their "playacting" of the capture of Dublin Castle. While pointing out that the existing situation in Ireland was not actually "dangerous", Healy clearly suggested that the activities of this "very small nucleus of bitter, sincere, and clever malcontents" was "injurious to national and Imperial interests" and, as "a growing body of Irishmen whose knowledge and experience entitle their opinions to respect," have declared, could indeed

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[10]The History of The Times 1921-1948. vol. 4, pt. 2, London: The Times, 1952, p. 536.

[11]The Times, 8 July 1913, p. 6.

become dangerous unless dealt with "quickly and firmly" by the Irish administration.[12]

Whether Healy included himself as a member of the growing body of Irishmen so disposed towards Sinn Féin is unclear; however, there is little doubt that his personal opinions supported that group's evaluation of the situation. In addition to serving as The Times' correspondent, Healy held the position as editor of the Unionist Irish Times. As an opponent of Irish nationalism, he "threw himself wholeheartedly into the defence of the union"[13] and "used all his influence to keep Ireland within the British Empire".[14] Whether consciously or subsconsciously, Healy's personal feelings about Irish nationalism shaped the way in which he regarded Sinn Féin and coloured his contributions to The Times about their activities. Virtually none of Healy's reports on Sinn Féin from 1916 to the general election of 1918 held anything positive. As a result, readers of The Times who acquired their impressions of Sinn Féin only from reports in that paper, could have formed nothing but a negative impression of its

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[12]The Times, 4 March 1916, p. 8.

[13]L.G. Wickham Legg (ed.), Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940. London: Oxford University Press, 1950, p. 412.

[14]Henry Boylan (ed.), A Dictionary of Irish Biography. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1978, p. 140. See Appendix A for a discussion of Healy and Irish Times' coverage of Sinn Féin.

intentions and actions. Intentionally or otherwise, Healy's single-minded opposition to Sinn Féin at times distorted the facts and misled the public.

John Healy was not the only person on The Times' staff responsible for misleading the public. Misconceptions were fostered in the first editorial to be published in response to the rebellion of Easter Week. On 26 April 1916, under the title "The Irish Disturbances", Sinn Féin was identified as the group responsible for the outbreak. Furthermore, alleged Sinn Féin involvement was linked to German interests. The editorial maintained that since the beginning of the war, the Germans had always counted on armed insurrection in Ireland, and commented:

> They have striven to provoke it from the outbreak of the war, and at last they have succeeded in getting their dupes to indulge in an insane rising. ... It is evidently the result of a carefully-arranged plot, concocted between the Irish traitors and their German confederates.[15]

While it is now commonly held that the Irish Republican Brotherhood had encouraged and nurtured associations with certain German officials,[16] The Times made several mistakes in its analysis of the situation. Firstly, Sinn Féin was identified as the accountable body which had

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[15]The Times, 26 April 1916, p. 7.

[16]For example see F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine. London: Weindenfeld and Nicholson, 1971, pp. 338-339.

attempted to contact the Germans with the objective of creating an anti-British intrigue. Indeed, this was a twofold error for Sinn Féin was responsible for neither the German contact nor the Easter Rebellion of April 1916. This mistake was made not only by The Times' correspondent Healy and the paper's editorial staff, but also by the British authorities who on Tuesday, 25 April, had published, in response to public queries, a proclamation "in which the label 'Sinn Fein' was attached to the insurrection."[17] On what evidence the British authorities based their conclusions is unknown; however, Dublin Castle reports from as early as 1914, interchanged the names Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin.[18] Healy, since his appointment in 1907 as The Times' Irish correspondent[19] had consistently committed the same error in his reports. The ramifications of this mistake were such that Sinn Féin, which had been a dying party only a few months before the Rising, was suddenly rejuvenated and within two years became the greatest nationalist force that Ireland had ever seen. The Times and the government spoke with one voice and said Sinn Féin was responsible; Sinn Féin

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[17]Padraic Colum, Ourselves Alone! New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1959, p. 152.

[18]Breándan MacGiolla Choille (ed.), Intelligence Notes 1913-1916. Dublin: Rialtas na hÉireann, 1966, passim.

[19]Legg, Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-1940. p. 412.

made the most of the undeserved charge.

The Times had also overestimated the extent of German-Irish intrigue. The plot was certainly not "carefully arranged" and organized - its consummation in dismal failure attests to that.[20] While the 26 April editorial actually dismissed "the Casement invasion ... [as] the merest 'opéra bouffe'", it insisted in what was to become a recurrent theme throughout 1916-1918, that Sinn Féin attempts to fraternize with the Germans could not be tolerated any longer "for it must always be serious when our fellow - subjects kill the KING'S soldiers instead of killing his enemies." Furthermore:

> ... it is the duty of us all to insist that firm measures shall be taken to overawe sedition and to suppress the organization, so many of whose members have dropped the mask and appeared as declared rebels in collusion with our enemies.[21]

The intent of the Easter Rebellion leaders to make a deliberate blood sacrifice which would hopefully awaken the spirit of nationalism within the country and "save Ireland's soul,"[22] was entirely overlooked by The Times.

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[20]For accounts of the Sir Roger Casement/I.R.B plot see: Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine. pp. 349-355; Colum, Ourselves Alone! pp. 141-144; Brian Inglis, Roger Casement. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973, pp. 303-313. Alan Ward, Ireland and Anglo-American Relations 1899-1921. London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 1969, pp. 77-78 and 101-110; and Desmond Ryan, The Rising. Dublin: Standard House, 1957, pp. 30-46 and 101-114.

[21]The Times, 26 April 1916, p. 7.

[22]P.S. O'Hegarty, The Victory of Sinn Féin. Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd., 1924, p. 4.

Whereas low Irish recruitment to the war effort had been seen as disloyalty of a serious but not dangerous nature, the attempted "Sinn Fein" rebellion was regarded as an event which might have threatened the very security of Britain and detrimentally have affected its status among nations. The possibility of such an occurrence could not be entertained at such a British institution as The Times. It became a simple matter of course to malign the organization which had attempted to denigrate Britain: Sinn Fein was doomed in the annals of The Times to be regarded as nothing but an enemy of Britain.

As April 1916 progressed and British indignation intensified over an Irish rebellion at wartime, piqued editorials criticizing the government's handling of the matter increased. Shortly after the rebellion itself, The Times questioned the government's policy of censorship on the whole matter. Editorials on 27 April and 29 April warned the Irish administration that their failure expeditiously to release the truth for publication both at home and abroad concerning the localized insurrection had permitted "the enemy" to issue its own interpretation of events. As proof, The Times reprinted an article translated from the Frankfurter Zietung which supported Ireland's cause. Further evidence of the harm created by the government's silence emanated from reports out of Washington which stated that "the Irish-American ex-

tremists" had taken full advantage of the lack of official explanation and had spread many rumours and lies.[23] The Irish administration's official policy of secrecy further vexed the editorial staff at The Times which was already exasperated with the government for allowing a seditious rising to be prepared under their eyes. How could, it asked, the Irish branch of the government headed by Augustine Birrell have been so oblivious to the actions of Sinn Féiners? Indeed, The Times maintained that

> The rebel preparations were ostentatious. The seditious character of their organization is notorious, and the contempt with which they speak of the many thousands of brave Nationalists who are fighting gallantly beside their fellow-subjects has long been a burning scandal.[24]

However, as the editorial clearly stated, much of the blame for the insurrection had to be shouldered by Birrell himself. Calling his administration "a notorious and ignominious failure" which had "brought the law into contempt" the editorial writer pointedly suggested that Birrell never visited his Irish residence and, consequently, could not possibly be expected to show some sensitivity to the development of events within that country which he was assumed to be governing![25] A later editorial

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[23]The Times, 27 April 1916, p. 7; 29 April 1916, pp. 7 and 9.

[24]The Times, 27 April 1916, p. 7.

[25]Ibid.

insisted that the Birrell administration should attempt to correct the haphazard management policy it had applied to Irish affairs in the past and teach the rebels that revolt in time of war was traitorous and would be promptly and severely punished.[26]

The editorial calls for swift and thorough government action were supplemented by bulletins on the status of Irish events. The rebel Sinn Féiners were reduced by The Times to "a large number of very ignorant men and women who cherish a sentimental sympathy with all anti-English movements."[27] Yet, warned correspondent Healy in a later article, it was not to be automatically assumed that these deluded Sinn Féiners were all poor, uneducated "day labourers", for "some of their most energetic workers and organizers" were "men in public Departments receiving Government salaries," and whose identities, Healy further charged, had been known to the Irish Executive for years.[28] Healy's ultimate conclusion about the identity of the Sinn Féiners was that they were members of two very diverse factions of society: the intimidated - members of the rabble class and persons caught up in "the spirit of revolt" and "lawlessness" against the established order of things, types which could be found in every large town and

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[26]The Times, 29 April 1916, p. 9.

[27]Ibid.

[28]The Times, 1 May 1916, p. 12.

seaport; and the misled - the intellectual who had "some education" and who saw "visions".[29]

Reports carried by The Times dealing with the events of Easter Week painted horrific pictures of the explosiveness of such a combination of men and women. Eye-witness reports emphasized the cold-bloodedness of the Sinn Féiners, who "fired recklessly under cover of many innocent people whose houses they occupied".[30] Those citizens who attempted to stop the advance of the rebels, The Times reported, met a heartless response for their valiant efforts: "the miscreants fired on the helpless fellows, each of whom was incapable of defence."[31] There were reports of policemen being mercilessly shot while guarding the gates of Dublin Castle, of soldiers who magnificently fought the rebels and who fell in the line of duty, and of innocent civilians "butchered in cold blood".[32]

If The Times' readership depended solely upon the paper for coverage of the events in Ireland in 1916, the Sinn Féiners appeared to be entirely without morals. A report quoting as its source, "a military officer",

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[29]The Times, 3 May 1916, p. 6.

[30]The Times, 29 April 1916, p. 10.

[31]The Times, 1 May 1916, p. 9.

[32]The Times, 1 May 1916, pp. 9 and 10; 2 May 1916, p. 9.

informed The Times' readers that some of the rebels defended themselves with sporting guns which contained cartridges filled with "half a dozen jagged pieces of steel in place of the usual small shot". The officer continued with a description of the contents of home-made bombs found in buildings from which the rioters had been driven. These bombs, he claimed, were filled with nuts and bolts, hardware which could cause irreparable damage and the severe maiming of humans should they have been exploded in a densely populated area.[33] Further eye-witness reports appealed to the religious scruples of The Times' audience, and the obvious lack of such morals exhibited by the Sinn Féiners. In their terrorizing of Dublin, the Sinn Féiners, a jeweller reported, had indiscriminately looted the shops. Although the jeweller's wife and children had suffered narrow escapes from the "hooligans", the man's shop did not fare as well. Not only had the condition of his premises been reduced to dilapidation through the rebels' vandalism, but "a number of silver crucifixes and sacred pictures were stolen and some ... were trampled on and completely destroyed." The jeweller, however, did eventually receive some assistance: it came from a priest, himself "the victim of an outrageous attack" which had left his forehead bleeding and

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[33]The Times, 1 May 1916, p. 10.

his body "badly injured by stones".[34]

The inhumanity of the insurgents was sharply contrasted with the bravery of the loyal Irishmen and Englishmen who fought to suppress the rebellion. Healy's reports emphasized the courage exhibited by both soldier and civilian. In one article, he reflected on his admiration for the students and faculty of Trinity College, the scene of much heavy fighting. Healy marvelled that with all of the physical and mental uproar in the area, nothing less than "a term examination was held with exact ceremony within the wall of the ancient and dauntless university".[35] The cowardice and disloyalty of the Sinn Féiners was further highlighted through interviews conducted with those Irishmen who had volunteered to fight in the Irish division during the war. In response to the queries of the correspondent who sought reactions to the Easter Rebellion, it was reported:

> The Irish troops at the front have had the opportunity of saying what they think of treason at home, and their message is there, in the German dead which still litter the ground in front of our trenches and hang crumpled among our barbed-wire.[36]

As for the general response of the public to the surprise insurrection, Healy discovered only feelings of

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 8.

"intense anger and horror," directed at "the reckless traitors who sought to sell their country to the enemies of their King".[37] In Belfast, Healy reported that the citizens expressed

> ... a considerable amount of horror mixed with indignation and detestation ... at the outrageous conduct of the rebels and the callous and cold-blooded manner in which they deliberately murdered officials, police, and military.[38]

Surely harsh treatment of those involved was absolutely necessary, the correspondent insisted.[39]

By 10 May, Healy's demands for retribution for all had been modified to a call for punishment of the leaders only. The rank and file had been "lured callously into the rebellion", and thus should be reprimanded but otherwise treated leniently.[40] When the news was released on 12 May of the trials and executions of several of the Rebellion's "known organizers" and "commanders", The Times' report unequivocably supported the decision on the grounds of "the gravity of the rebellion and its connexion with German intrigue propaganda, and in view of the great loss of life and destruction of property resulting

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[37]The Times, 2 May 1916, pp. 9-10.

[38]Ibid., p. 12.

[39]The Times, 3 May 1916, p. 6.

[40]The Times, 10 May 1916, p. 6.

therefrom".[41] The editorial carried in the same edition of The Times remarked that the revolt had witnessed 1,315 casualties - 304 of which were fatal; consequently the execution of thirteen rebels and the impending deaths of two others could not in any way be regarded as "excessive or revengeful". Further executions to emphasize the fallacious magnitude of Sinn Féin's actions should not be necessary, the editorial intoned; however,

> ... a certain number of these executions were absolutely necessary to teach the traitors who take German money that they cannot cover Dublin with blood and ashes without forfeiting their lives. ... The general public have no conception of the amount of cold-blooded murder which the rebels committed.[42]

A report by Healy which was carried in The Times of the next day, 13 May, was not as confident about public reaction to the executions as the editorial of 12 May had been. While nobody in Dublin expressed the slightest sympathy with the rebels, Healy admitted, public opinion on the rebel deaths was more elusive but seemed to indicate a distaste for further executions. As far as he could detect, the general feeling was that all the Irish involved - leaders as well as rank and file - had been duped by the Germans and were guilty of misconceptions and ignorance more than malicious intent.[43]

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[41]The Times, 12 May 1916, p. 8.

[42]Ibid., p. 9.

[43]The Times, 13 May 1916, p. 7.

Not until 6 June 1916 did The Times begin to acknowledge growing public outrage over the executions and then it tended to hide away its reports in short articles placed in obscure places throughout the newspaper.[44] The information those small reports carried, however, painted a clear scenario of growing support for Irish nationalists. On 13 June, correspondent Healy observed a strong Sinn Féin element in Dublin which was beginning to reassert itself even under martial law. His words warned of increasing unrest:

> The badges of the Sinn Fein movement are worn freely in the streets, and during the last few days unpleasant demonstrations of disloyalty have been made in picture-houses and in other places.[45]

Healy's contribution to the 19 June edition of The Times chronicled a Sunday riot in Dublin, an event which at best, was "an ugly affair". He estimated that 2,000 men and youths had been open participants in a Requiem Mass celebrated for some deceased rebels. Many "carried Republican flags and badges, cheered for the Irish Republic, and, when passing Dublin Castle and the Bank of Ireland, groaned at the sentries."[46] In the ensuing scuffle which resulted from police attempts to disband the

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[44]See The Times, 6 June 1916, p. 5; 13 June 1916, p. 3 and p. 7; 19 June 1916, p. 8.

[45]The Times, 13 June 1916, p. 7.

[46]The Times, 19 June 1916, p. 8.

massive crowd, injuries were suffered by both sides and as a consequence, six demonstrators were arrested.[47]

Further recognition of the growing influence of Sinn Féin eluded coverage in The Times until 8 September, 1916. In a special article entitled "Ireland Today", it was suggested that profound feelings about the Dublin executions were responsible for the "widespread and acute political unrest" which had erupted "even" under martial law. The article was highly critical of Sinn Féin and, in a fleeting recognition that Sinn Féin before and after the Rising were not synonymous entities, commented without further elaboration that the movement had become digressive and finally "suffered a diversion from its original doctrines which led to a disastrous rising".[48] Growing Sinn Féin popularity was attributed primarily to its programme, described as "sentimentally 'patriotic', literary, and industrial." To many of the Sinn Féin supporters - the poor "from slums so comfortless and filthy that any propaganda which begets excitement is a welcome anodyne", the youths - possessors of "wild notions of heroism and misdirected military ardour", and "the women, girls, and mere children who have been worked up to something like a revivalist ecstasy", Sinn Féin repre-

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[47] Ibid.

[48] The Times, 8 September 1916, p. 5.

sented "an all-conquering love of Ireland."[49] Although such feelings were "unpardonable from any equitable point of view", the article stated, "it would be folly to ignore" them.[50] Yet that is exactly what The Times did and made no further references to public sentiment and Sinn Féin until February 1917.

The Times' reader of 1917 who attempted to glean from the paper's erudite columns the status and growth of Sinn Féin, could have been nothing less than confused. Reports frequently contradicted one another and it became increasingly difficult to determine from The Times whether Sinn Féin had been obliterated and reduced to historical memory or had become a threatening force to British government through its buoyant corralling of Irish popular support.

News articles from late February to early June[51] gave the distinct impression that although there were some diehard Sinn Féiners still scattered about Ireland, the organization itself was in sharp decline. The Times reported that all "law-abiding Irishmen" had reevaluated the events of 1916 and had since expressed support for the deportation of hundreds of Sinn Féiners who had par-

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] See The Times 28 February 1917, p. 6; 7 April 1917, p. 3; 10 April 1917, p. 3; 11 April 1917, p. 3 and p. 7; 18 April 1917, p. 5; 30 April 1917, p. 5; 14 May 1917, p. 5; 12 June 1917, p. 3.

ticipated in the ludicrous Easter Rebellion. In fact, the correspondent stated, the deportations had contributed to a great easing of tension within the country and had allowed a semblance of normality to creep back into Ireland.[52] Although there were still those misled persons who insisted on wearing Sinn Féin colours and waving Sinn Féin flags, Healy reported that their demonstrations were essentially harmless. Although participants in such displays, even those to commemorate Easter week 1916, were guilty of a little "rowdyism", Healy believed that there was absolutely no evidence to support "exaggerated" rumours of another "organized rising".[53] An editorial of 11 April 1917, entitled "Ireland and the War" went so far as to state that it was probably safe to assume that Sinn Féin was no longer any risk. The editorial writer based his conclusion on what he saw as "a growing sense of shame, on which our Irish Correspondent has constantly insisted, at the fact that Ireland still stands so largely aloof from the war".[54] The editorial claimed the majority of the Irish public realized that those crowds which had gathered on Easter Monday to celebrate the anniversary of

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[52]The Times, 28 February 1917, p. 6.

[53]The Times, 10 April 1917, p. 3; 11 April 1917, p. 7. See Appendix A for a discussion of reports carried in the Irish Times at this time and which empahsized the dangers of Sinn Féin.

[54]The Times, 11 April 1917, p. 7.

the Rebellion were obstreperous and, at times, riotous. However, that was not the worst disgrace. The "real scandal" of the demonstration was that those who participated were "able-bodied and idle".[55] Indeed had The Times not included two isolated reports on growing Catholic clerical support for Sinn Féin, its readership might have readily assumed that it had heard the last of a dying insurrectionary organization.

In retrospect, it appears that to this point The Times' Irish correspondent and the paper's editor had entirely misinterpreted and misread events in Ireland. It seems somewhat ironic that when Sinn Féin had really been in demise in 1916, The Times painted it as an organization sufficiently strong to have planned and executed a rising. Yet, in 1917, with growing public signs of support for Sinn Féin, The Times prevailed in its insistence that the organization's public support was eroding to an extent that it would be a mere matter of time until Sinn Féin were officially dead. It is rather difficult to believe that a journalist, part of whose job it is to monitor public opinion, could so misread the situation. However, if his/her perceptions are influenced by a strongly-held set of opinions and beliefs, that interpretation can be more logically explained.

The first recognition in the paper of the development

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[55] Ibid.

of a sympathetic Sinn Féin support group among the Roman Catholic clergy appeared on 20 April 1917. The article provided coverage of a meeting held to discuss Ireland's right to representation at the impending Peace Conference. While the crowd was mixed, prominent Sinn Féiners were in attendance. The correspondent noted that Arthur Griffith tabled a resolution insisting on the right of Ireland to representation at the Peace Conference. Although Healy remarked that the "most striking feature of the gathering was the big attendance of young Roman Catholic priests",[56] he did not state specifically that they were Sinn Féiners. However, the implication in the article is that the nationalist leanings of the clergy were somewhat unhealthy. An article furthering that inference appeared on 21 May 1917. It provided a detailed analysis of Catholic clerical support for Sinn Féin and was proffered by a writer identified only as "an Outside observer."[57] The writer asserted that a number of "the younger priests" had actually fallen prey to the Sinn Féin movement and had participated in meetings where violence had been preached. Furthermore, the writer expressed concern that the more senior bishops were doing little to temper the zeal of the

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[56] The Times, 20 April 1917, p. 3.

[57] An enquiry to The Times as to the identity of the observer brought no definitive response, only the comment that John Edward Healy served as their official Irish correspondent.

younger clergy. While the bishops had expressed unqualified support for the British war effort, the contributor explained, their manifesto of 7 May 1917, in which they refused to accept either a temporary or lasting division of the country, could do nothing but weaken the relationship of the Catholic Church with the Constitutional Party (I.P.P.) and with Dublin Castle, and unintentionally encourage and strengthen the arguments of Sinn Féin. The observer suggested that the Church reevaluate its manifesto and use "the influential position" of the Irish bishops to maintain discipline among its clergy and channel their actions into a more positive direction.[58]

Other indications that Sinn Féin support was continuing to grow in strength did not appear in The Times until June 1917. Then it noted flourishing activity within the party evident not only in the "frantic enthusiasm" of huge crowds who had gathered to celebrate the release of those Irish prisoners deported to British prison camps for their part in the Easter Rebellion, but also in the active preparations of Sinn Féiners to field a candidate in an East Clare by-election, and as well in the establishment of seventy Sinn Féin clubs since the insurrection of 1916.[59] Yet The Times still did not acknowledge this growth as an indication that Sinn Féin was becoming a

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[58]The Times, 21 May 1917, p. 3.

[59]The Times, 13 June 1917, p. 3; 19 June 1917, p. 3.

force with which to be reckoned.

The Times' view that Sinn Féin was a dying organization should have been altered by its own reports of frequent rioting by Sinn Féin sympathizers in late June 1917. On 22 June, correspondent Healy noted disorder throughout Dublin. His report was not lengthy but The Times chose not to underscore its seriousness. Healy said that each night there was riotous behaviour when people took "possession of some of the streets" in the city, indiscriminately burned ruins of buildings, and, on two occasions, lit bonfires in important thoroughfares[60] Nor was disorder confined to Dublin. An editorial of 26 June commented on similar rioting at Cork and appealed to the Government not to "neglect its primary duty of maintaining law and order" until an Irish administration had been firmly established.[61]

The Times' assertion of Irish confidence in and support of British rule was struck a staggering blow when Sinn Féin's candidate, Eamon de Valera, won a resounding victory in East Clare. De Valera's success brought a renewed flurry of criticism of Sinn Féin in The Times. The correspondent attributed de Valera's win to his popularity among the youth and the young Roman Catholic clergy. While Healy acknowledged that the overwhelming

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[60] The Times, 22 June 1917, p. 3.

[61] The Times, 26 June 1917, p. 7.

vote implied that the farmers had also embraced Sinn Féin policy, he questioned their conversion to republicanism and suggested that they had just been "afraid to resist the united influence of their sons, their daughters, and their priests."[62] Thus, he inferred that a true basis of support for Sinn Féin was difficult to determine. Real figures were hard to ascertain especially when innocent people were being goaded and intimidated to declare a false advocacy for Sinn Féin rather than suffer the wrath of family members and clergy. This portrayal of a group of unreasonable Sinn Féiners who forced others to support their organization cast an unfavourable light upon the group.

In his ongoing effort to discredit Sinn Féin and reconcile the Irish to a Unionist or moderate Nationalist political framework, Healy recounted some information which, had it been more opportunely published during or shortly after the Easter Rebellion, might have considerably altered the emergence of Sinn Féin as a renewed political force. On 24 August 1917, he severely criticized the then popular Sinn Féin for taking credit as the force responsible for the Easter Rebellion. He even expressed restrained praise for the original Sinn Féin which had "never advocated physical force" and for Arthur Griffith, the only leader "who represents the original and

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[62]The Times, 12 July 1917, p. 7.

genuine Sinn Fein movement," and who "very properly took no part in the Easter Week Rising."[63] What Healy failed to mention was that Sinn Féin profited from the Rising because he, as The Times' correspondent, The Times itself, because of a lack of accurate reporting about Sinn Féin over the years, and the government which had dismissed the existence of a dangerous nationalist element until just before the Easter insurrection, had all to share responsibility in incorrectly identifying Sinn Féin as the perpetrator of the disturbance. He also neglected to report that the government's response to the crisis had stirred public sympathy and support to the cause of the rebels. The public, whose identification of the rebels as Sinn Féiners had been firmly planted in their minds by the press and by the proclamations of British authorities, transferred their sympathy and support to Sinn Féin, thereby making it the nationalist force in the country. But Healy's revelations came too late: Sinn Féin had achieved notoriety as a nationalist force and, as he noted in a later article, had there been an immediate election the Sinn Féin familiar to the Irishmen of 1917, would have swept the country.[64]

Thus, it seems that Healy realized the impact that Sinn Féin was having on Ireland. However, it appears that

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[63] The Times, 24 August 1917, p. 4.

[64] The Times, 15 October 1917, p. 9.

his own Unionist politics and that of The Times as well, prevented an objective evaluation of those factors which had captured the imagination and support of many Irishmen. Rather than unemotionally examine what was attractive in Sinn Féin policy, Healy time and again reverted to the same explanations he had used to explain the organization's sporadic magnetism. He rehashed what he had witnessed since becoming The Times' official correspondent in Ireland. Returning to a theme elaborated on at the beginning of World War I, Healy attributed rural support for Sinn Féin to the opportunity for the countryside to avoid conscription.[65] In numerous articles, he reaffirmed the lack of direct positive Sinn Féin policy and criticized the organization for its "mad and fatal policy of revolution,"[66] and as a means of reeducating supporters to the real intentions of Sinn Féin, he reestablished the organizational link with "the sinister shadow of German propaganda."[67] Healy's obvious intention was to plant the suggestion of a second Sinn Féin rebellion[68] - a rebellion

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[65]The Times, 29 August 1917, p. 3.

[66]See The Times, 29 August 1917, p. 3; 24 September 1917, p. 5; 15 October 1917, p. 9; 22 October 1917, p. 5.

[67]The Times, 24 October 1917, p. 9.

[68]See The Times, 25 October 1917, p. 6; 27 October 1917, p. 6; 29 October 1917, p. 5; 5 November 1917, p. 9. The Irish Times reported evidence of a German plot also on 5 November 1917. See Appendix A pp. 181-182 for further details.

which might duplicate the bloody anti-British events of 1916; a rebellion which would show that Sinn Féin had no loyalties to the 'best' interests of Ireland. Only when the Irish people understood these things would public opinion turn against Sinn Féin and thus Healy maintained that Sinn Féin's only policy was one of insurrection. Seeing what he wanted to see, his last reports on Sinn Féin to The Times in 1917, contained no element of surprise that public opinion registered mounting "revulsion" and "opposition" to Sinn Féin.[69]

This one-sided view continued into the next year when, from January to June, numerous reports documenting negative public sentiment towards Sinn Féin graced the columns of The Times.[70] The correspondent recorded the existence of public fear and tension in response to the widespread lawlessness and intimidation throughout the country. The reporter used the remarks of a farmer to support his observations and quoted him as stating:

> The country's destroyed the way things are now. Hardly it is I can go out o'me house at night for fear of them Sinn Fein blagyards [sic]! The raving scamps! Why wouldn't they get conscription? That's what'd qui'ten them![71]

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[69]The Times, 5 November 1917, p. 5; 9 November 1917, p. 3.

[70]The Times, 8 January 1918, p. 9; 25 February 1918, p. 9; 28 February 1918, p. 7; 4 March 1918, p. 8; 20 April 1918, p. 7; 22 May 1918, p. 7; 27 May 1918, p. 9; 18 June 1918, p. 8.

[71]The Times, 8 January 1918, p. 9.

Healy reported that to the inhabitants of the south and west of Ireland, the atmosphere was one of "insecurity and alarm". The reaction of many of the well-to-do families, he noted, had been to seek refuge in Dublin but the small farmers and shopkeepers could not take advantage of such a recourse. They had to remain with their properties and battle the scourges of Sinn Féin.[72] This was to be a recurrent theme during the following year.

The Times of 1918 carried frequent reports of Sinn Féin misdeeds and lawlessness - a total of twenty-five for the entire year.[73] Sinn Féin was criticized in general for its policy of terrorism which led to such specific incidents as harassment of magistrates, illegal drilling, raids for arms and the lawless seizure of grasslands.[74] As an example of Sinn Féin's undisguised and total contempt of the law, one article described the proceedings against two groups of men who had been charged with unlawful assembly in Sligo during which "the prisoners

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[72]The Times, 28 February 1918, p. 7.

[73]See The Times, 18 January 1918, p. 6; 4 February 1918, p. 8; 25 February 1918, p. 9; 27 February 1918, p. 7; 28 February 1918, p. 7; 1 March 1918, p. 6; 4 March 1918, p. 8; 14 March 1918, p. 7; 6 April 1918, p. 5; 8 April 1918, p. 5; 9 April 1918, p. 3; 20 April 1918, p. 7; 24 April 1918, p. 6; 18 May 1918, p. 7; 20 May 1918, p. 7; 24 May 1918, p. 7; 25 May 1918, pp. 7-8; 18 June 1918, p. 8; 24 June 1918, p. 8; 17 August 1918, p. 3; 10 September 1918, p. 3; 16 October 1918, p. 5; 13 November 1918, p. 5; 9 December 1918, p. 5; 10 December 1918, p. 10.

[74]The Times, 4 February 1918, p. 8; 25 February 1918, p. 8; 8 April 1918, p. 5.

delighted their friends who filled the Court, by smoking cigarettes and singing songs during the taking of the depositions."[75] The writer of the editorial of 14 March 1918 remarked: "Our own columns have borne constant witness to the existence of a state of sheer lawlessness, or rather of complete capitulation to the antics of a frankly revolutionary body".[76]

Criticism of Sinn Féin activities became more fervent when the nationalist groups organized protests to draw attention to the unpopularity which would be created among the Irish by the passage of a conscription bill for Ireland. The Times initially ignored the fact that Sinn Féin did not stand alone in its opposition to this bill. In fact, the passage of this legislation in the House of Commons on 16 April 1918 evoked the withdrawal of the Irish Parliamentary Party's members from Westminster and saw their return to Dublin where they joined Sinn Féin in the common cause of fighting conscription. Furthermore, as F.S.L. Lyons has pointed out, support for this anti-conscription campaign was not localized: it poured in from all parts of Ireland with the exception of the northeast corner. Trade Unions protested the imposition of the bill, as did Cardinal Logue and the Standing Committee of

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[75] The Times, 1 March 1918, p. 6.

[76] The Times, 14 March 1918, p. 7.

Irish Roman Catholic bishops.[77] The policy of anti-conscription, which was a logical consequence of Sinn Féin's earlier stand against Irish enlistment in the British armed forces, was obviously no longer regarded as a disloyal sentiment in Ireland to fight conscription.

Sinn Féin attempted to capitalize on the growing public disenchantment with Britain's desire to force Irishmen to the battlefront. One such act of dissension was the declaration of a workless day throughout the country to actively oppose conscription. Ironically, on 24 April 1918, Healy noted with some disgust that the Irish Times which had always been known for its Unionist tendencies and "which appeared in rebellion week except on two days, found that publication was now prevented by the complete withdrawal of labour".[78] From this act alone, Healy should have acknowledged the widespread appeal of Sinn Féin policies.

As far as Healy could see, Sinn Féin was exploiting the anti-conscription movement simply to fuel its election chances for the upcoming winter general election.[79] One of Healy's later reports carried a warning to the Nationalist Party about unquestioningly accepting the implied sincerity of Sinn Féin on the matter of conscription. He

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[77]Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, pp. 393-395.

[78]The Times, 24 April 1918, p. 6.

[79]The Times, 13 May 1918, p. 10.

cautioned John Dillon, who had become leader of the I.P.P. on Redmond's death in March, about further contributions to the Anti-Conscription Fund. By 23 September 1918, Healy estimated the worth of that fund to be approximately £250,000.- an enormous sum which was largely supervised by Sinn Féin, even though it had been jointly raised by the Bishops, the Nationalists, and Sinn Féin. Consequently, Healy warned, this allowed Sinn Féin to already claim an advantage over the Nationalists in the event of a November election, whereupon Sinn Féin should be "the best-prepared political party in the United Kingdom." That political advantage could further be secured if Sinn Féin consented to use the Anti-Conscription monies as a General Election fund for "Mr. Dillon will perceive a feather of his own on the lethal shaft."[80]

Throughout his 1918 reports, Healy often appealed for church intervention in support of government policy. He advised the Church to reconsider its sanction of passive resistance to conscription and officially encourage voluntary enlistment, forgetting its fear of Sinn Féin disdain.[81] The underlying implication was that the unofficial Sinn Féin - Roman Catholic Church alliance could not possibly last long into the future for the

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[80] The Times, 23 September 1918, p. 6.

[81] The Times, 20 April 1918, p. 7; 5 June 1918, p. 3; 29 August 1918, p. 3.

Church preferred to keep all Irish movements under its control and such a desire could not be effected with Sinn Féin. Healy was not above throwing in a hint at the ogre of international Marxism and warned, "Even spiritual authority is in some danger from a policy which gives a sort of Bolshevist denial to all constituted authority."[82] Not satisfied only to advise the Church, Healy also offered some gratuitous counsel to Sinn Féin. The day would come, he predicted, when the Church's ambivalent, if not tolerant, attitude would cease and demands would be made which would bring the shaky coalition down. "The wheels of Sinn Fein's chariot," he wrote, "do not feel the episcopal drag at this moment, but it is there, and will become heavy, and more heavy, as the race proceeds."[83]

Regardless of Healy's unyielding criticism of Sinn Féin, its policies and its activities, he could not deny the existing popularity of the organization in late 1918. Indeed his reports affirmed that it was virtually impossible for Sinn Féin to lose the upcoming election; yet even with that realization, Healy was confident that time would seal the fate of Sinn Féin.

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[82] The Times, 23 September 1918, p. 6.

[83] Ibid.

> Its coming victory at the polls will saddle it with the necessity of trying to fulfill impossible promises, and will mark the beginning of a period of national disillusionment.[84]

During the time that it took Sinn Féin to court the Irish public's disfavour, the responsibility would fall on the moderate Nationalists to refurbish and rebuild their party.[85]

In December 1918, the Irish electorate confirmed Healy's prediction of a Sinn Féin victory with seventy-three seats being won by the party's candidates to a mere six for the old-style Nationalists. The Sinn Féin sweep and the all too apparent "wreck of a once powerful party",[86] however, could not convince Healy that Sinn Féin's own fall would not be soon forthcoming. The Nationalists, he counselled, had a great task to perform but should they exude required diligence and perseverance in a rebuilding process, Sinn Féin's lack of political policy and direction should contribute to its own demise.

> Sinn Feiners tell me that the party is embarrassed by the magnitude of its victory. It would have preferred the survival of at least a score of the Nationalist members, on whom it could have put the blame of its own failures and mistakes. To-day no such evasion is practicable.[87]

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[84] Ibid.

[85] See The Times, 23 September 1918, p. 6; 2 December 1918, p. 10; 6 December 1918, p. 10.

[86] The Times, 30 December 1918, p. 10.

[87] The Times, 31 December 1918, p. 10.

The politics of John Healy, the editorial staff and the ownership of The Times cannot be separated from the presentation of reports concerning Sinn Féin from 1916-1918. Their inability to admit that not every part of the Empire cherished its role in the grand imperial structure pervaded the majority of references to Sinn Féin, an organization which espoused ultimate Irish independence from Britain. These men gave The Times' readership what it wanted to hear; even in the wake of Sinn Féin's success, they rejected the consequences of continued Irish public support for the organization and insisted that with time, calm and rational thought would eventually prevail in Ireland and Sinn Féin would be ousted. This assertion, as with so many of the paper's other predictions concerning Sinn Féin, proved groundless. Had the pre- and post-Easter Rising character of Sinn Féin been precisely identified and Irish opinion towards the organization more accurately canvassed and analyzed by The Times, the Irish "problem" might have been better understood by certain factions of the British public. But then empathy and insight into Irish affairs had never been an overwhelming characteristic of The Times. The paper's almost exclusive reliance on Healy's interpretation of events in Ireland from 1908 through 1918, suggest that, like him, its management had an idée fixe about Sinn Féin which contradictory evidence might slightly alter but not destroy.

Conclusion

The Times' reporting on Sinn Féin during the years 1906-1918 can hardly be credited with mirroring an accurate reflection of the organization. That trend was established from its first acknowledgement in January 1906 that Sinn Féin had been inaugurated. The Times' first recognition of Sinn Féin actually occurred more than two months after the organization had been officially formed, and its review of the movement was less than favourable. Its members were compared to terrorists and The Times issued sombre warnings to the government about the need to suppress Sinn Féin before it gathered too much support and developed into a serious threat. These warnings were in and of themselves somewhat ironic for The Times' reporters, from the beginning, assured the readership that the organization was the brainchild of a few misled Gaelic enthusiasts and could not find general acceptance among the populace.[1] At this stage of Sinn Féin, such comments were correct; to almost the whole population of Ireland, Sinn Féin was not only untried but unknown. Furthermore, its politics were embraced only by those disenchanted with the slow turning of the wheels of the Irish Parliamentary Party and by others unwilling to support a physical force alternative. Sinn Féin may have been a Dublin phenomenon but even to many Dubliners Sinn Féin held no special meaning. The Times readily admitted that Sinn Féin

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[1]See above, pp.118-121.

support was confined to a restricted group of malcontents but, it argued, the organization's numbers were consolidated against England and the monarchy. This recognition caused The Times to admit Sinn Féin's existence; however, one can only surmise that such a small following of Sinn Féiners did not warrant continued and consistent coverage of the organization. Initially, The Times carried little more than isolated reports about the organization and these articles usually emphasized the disloyalty of Sinn Féin actions while minimizing its support base.

By 1908, John Healy had become the Irish correspondent to The Times. Given Healy's main position as editor of the Irish Times, one might have suspected that the views on Sinn Féin expressed there would be reflected in The Times. Almost from the beginning, however, there were marked differences.[2] In February 1908, Healy covered the by-election in North Leitrim, a race which left the Sinn Féin candidate, Charles Dolan, the loser but a loser who had made an admirable showing. Healy's editorial in the Irish Times went so far as to praise the Sinn Féin programme:

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[2]See Appendix for further observations.

> With all its extravagance the SINN FEIN Party stands for certain principles which are as novel as they are welcome in the public life of this country. It stands for the discouragement of religious bigotry, for enlightenment and liberty in education, for industrial development on lines of self-help and intelligent enterprise, and, above all, for the co-operation of creeds and classes for the promotion of common national interests.[3]

The support given to Dolan, Healy suggested, should warn the Nationalists of future stiff competition. The Times' report of the same date was not nearly as complimentary. Rather, while lukewarm in its recognition of Dolan's success, it remarked that the campaign had always been regarded in Dublin as 'hopeless', by whom, the editorial did not elaborate. Yet it did acknowledge the blow which the prestige of the Irish Parliamentary Party had received and like the editorial in the Irish Times also commented that this Sinn Féin party might create a problem for the Nationalists in future elections. Even after this admission The Times carried few articles reporting on Sinn Féin progress and popularity. In fact in its single report about Sinn Féin in 1909 there were broad hints of confusion within the ranks and of more serious internal dissension brewing. Such was the position maintained by The Times until March 1916. How then did the Easter Rising become synonymous with the reference the 'Sinn

[3] Irish Times, 24 February 1908, p.4.

Féin' Rebellion?

While articles dealing with Sinn Féin and published in The Times were infrequent from 1906-1916, all references contained negative overtones. Sinn Féin's name was often linked to adjectives such as 'disloyal', 'negligible', 'unlawful', 'bitter', 'violent', and 'drastic', to name a few. One article in March of 1916 beseeched the government to attack and suspend Sinn Féin activities before the situation veered out of its control. It reassured the readership that events in Ireland had not escalated to a danger point but advised that Sinn Féin's very existence indeed was 'injurious' to national and imperial interests. Thus it presented to its reading public a Sinn Féin characterized by irrational behaviour and an organized stance against England. By this time Sinn Féin had almost exhausted itself trying to fight off internal decay; yet a reader of The Times who depended on the newspaper as a reliable reporter of Sinn Féin activity could not possibly have drawn such a conclusion. The Times had failed to appreciate Arthur Griffith as a propagandist and the role of Sinn Féin as the same. By taking the organization seriously, The Times gave credence to the belief that Sinn Féin was a consolidated group with well-laid plans which posed a potential threat to the continued existence of the King's administration in Ireland.

The Easter Rebellion of 1916 provided the opportunity for The Times to reprimand the Irish administration and point an accusing finger at their inaction. The paper's editorials sermonized that they had given many distinct warnings to Augustine Birrell and his officials about the disloyal sentiments touted by Sinn Féin. Yet their utterances had remained unheeded and consequently the government had to deal with a civil uprising during a time when it was most poorly equipped to attack the problem. The uprising was a thorn in the flesh of those loyal Britons and Irishmen who were occupied in the fight against Germany. It would come as a severe blow to those at the front that, while they tried to protect Britain's interests against German onslaught, the government could not defuse internal strife at home. When it came to the attention of The Times on 26 April that the Germans had played a role in the "carefully-arranged plot," the paper's remonstrances of the government became more intense. Over and over again, editorials damned the Irish administration for its ineffectuality and called for firm measures in government's handling of the rebel faction.

The inferences behind such counsel were not lost on The Times' readership. As had long been the case, The Times appealed to just the 'right class' of people: government officials and members, military officers,

diplomats, the wealthy and the influential - those who comprised the upper crust of society. Even if the readership had failed to notice those sporadic reports about Sinn Féin which had appeared in The Times' columns dating from 1906, readers could not ignore that The Times clearly stated that its warnings to the government about Sinn Féin activities over the years had been wisely given but totally ignored. Had the paper's sound advice been heeded from its first report in 1906, the Easter Uprising likely would not have happened. The past reputation of The Times no doubt added a ring of veracity to this comment. The Times had been a reliable advisor in the past - after all it was its solid reputation that had attracted the class of readers of which it could then boast. Its links to the government were well-known and its reports often based on secret, leaked information from the same source. The Times could be trusted but in this case, its wise exhortations had been ignored. That at least was the way The Times saw things.

As evidenced by the receipt of correspondence on the matter, The Times' readership joined the paper's demands for severe measures and scolded the Irish administration for its inaction in dealing with an obvious case of sedition. Initial reaction by The Times to the executions of the rebel leaders and the mass arrests of their followers was extremely positive. On 13 May, it

printed an article (attributed to its Irish correspondent) which noted a consensus of Irish opinion that the deaths of Connolly and MacDermott should end the British government's reprisals, but it did not change its position on the executions. This article and other reports on Sinn Féin were relegated to the more obscure pages of the newspaper until September 1916. By its silence, The Times indicated support of government action.

The editorial staff and ownership of The Times had consistently been Unionist in its politics. Lord Northcliffe's own Unionist leanings were well-known as were those of his editor. Any threat to Unionism was frowned upon by Northcliffe. This was particularly evident in The Times' treatment of German victories in World War I. Reports issued to counteract blows to public morale were many: the Germans could not be seen to be getting the upper hand. Northcliffe's preoccupation with the German peril was evident in his dealings with Irish affairs. After all, when rumours of an impending German penetration in the ranks of Nationalists emerged in 1913, the information influenced Northcliffe so deeply that he felt it necessary to undertake a journey to Ireland to review the situation for himself. The link between German funding and the Easter Rebellion was emphasized by The Times. In fact the uprising itself was not as much of a scandal as was the Irish-German intrigue underlying its

planning. The Times lectured its readership on the occurrence of sedition while so many of the country's loyal citizens were manning the front in an attempt to prevent German infiltration. Such disloyalty had to be denounced and denounce it The Times did.

This reaction was an integral part of the role which The Times perceived for itself and that which was envisioned by Lord Northcliffe. Northcliffe had long desired control of an influential paper - his penny rags could not wield the clout that Northcliffe so desired. Northcliffe wanted to be a player in government affairs without being a politician. He wanted to influence government decisions while still doing what came best to him. Owning a newspaper closely associated, in the public's mind, with the government was an ideal method of successfully achieving both. Northcliffe realized that The Times had long held the confidences of government and had advised it how to act and react in several situations. Such connections with government had isolated certain factions of the population but it had gained for the newspaper a very influential, and as regard to Irish affairs, pro-Unionist following. Among this class of people, Ireland had always been regarded as a backwater, never quite cooperative, obedient, loyal and appreciative enough to fit the English mold. To such people, to say that the Irish problem had plagued the British would be an

understatement. Not surprisingly, then, their automatic reaction to the Easter Rebellion would be negative.

Northcliffe was an avowed Unionist and he held the same position when it came to his stand on Irish affairs. He was also a businessman with important financial interests in England. It would have been unwise for Northcliffe to express any Irish sympathies, had he any, in a country rather disenchanted with the problems Ireland had brought to the Empire. As a proprietor of an influential English newspaper, Northcliffe, logically, had to be concerned with circulation figures in the success of that paper. To admonish the government for its lack of action was one thing, to support the cause of the Irish rebels quite another. As Belloc has surmised large circulations are often attained by flattering the public that it has its own opinions reflected. Although totally inaccurate about the role of Sinn Féin, The Times conveniently used it as a scapegoat and assigned to it responsibility for the Rebellion.

In its reports on the happenings of Easter Week, The Times constantly linked Sinn Féin to reports of mass looting throughout Dublin. That assumption was totally incorrect, but The Times was building on its past record of inaccuracy about Sinn Féin. It failed to carry reports gauging public opinion during the crucial period of September 1916 to February 1917. In fact those articles

which were carried in the columns of The Times showed a total misreading of Sinn Féin. In 1906, its initial report had attributed a character to Sinn Féin which was completely inaccurate; in 1917, it did the same. During that year, Sinn Féin support was growing rapidly; however, The Times portrayed the party as a dying ember enshrined by the same malcontents who had started the process in 1906. Again The Times was wrong, but by that point, it seems, The Times, which had helped to establish a picture of Sinn Féin in the minds of the public, could not reverse its position. It had linked Sinn Féin to the Easter Rising and by so doing had helped to give the organization the identity of a strong and determined nationalist force, bold enough to try to destroy the Union by military action. The surviving Easter Week rebels who emerged from the internment camps were confused about the connection between Sinn Féin and the rebellion, the connection of which The Times was so certain, but they capitalized on the identification and groomed Irish public sentiment to support the cause of Sinn Féin, a quite different Sinn Féin from the weak organization it had been before 24 April 1916. The Times (and to some extent the Irish Times as well) had helped to create the personality of the Sinn Féin which was newly-emerging. Once Sinn Féin had gained that public recognition and support, it steered its own destiny; yet one cannot help wondering what the outcome

would have been had The Times not given Sinn Féin its public profile, a profile which was of great assistance in Sinn Féin becoming the preeminent Irish nationalist organization by the end of 1918.

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APPENDIX: John Healy, the *Irish Times*, and Sinn Féin

In his role as interpreter of Sinn Féin to the public, John Healy wore two hats; one as Irish correspondent to The Times, the other as editor of the Irish Times. It is not surprising that The Times, ever conscious of its own status and reputation, should have had as its prime source of Irish information and opinion the man who directed the editorial policy of the most prestigious Unionist organ in Ireland. Because, at least, some of The Times' reports on Sinn Féin, credited to Healy, proved to be at best misleading and at worst inaccurate, it was felt that a survey of the Irish Times' coverage of Sinn Féin from 1915, when The Times began a more comprehensive coverage of the organization, to 1918, was warranted. If it could not be determined to what extent Healy's original reports to The Times had been altered (if at all), one could at least discover whether Healy's own paper placed lesser or greater emphasis on Sinn Féin or took positions at variance with those of The Times. In other words, one might learn whether Healy's two hats were of the same or different styles.

John Edward Healy was born in Drogheda on 17 March 1872. His scholastic achievements as a student set the stage for his eventual accession to the editor's chair of the Dublin Daily Express, closely followed by his attainment of the same position at the more influential paper, the Irish Times in 1907. For twenty-seven years,

Healy was both editor and principal leader writer at the offices of the Irish Times. During that period, he established a reputation as an opponent of Irish nationalism and used his influence to keep Ireland within the British Empire.[1] Such Unionist leanings were quite evident in the editorials of the Irish Times.

In 1915, the Irish Times made few references to the existence of Sinn Féin. Sinn Féiners could hardly be considered a threat; yet, they were a cumbersome annoyance who merited attention primarily because they were occupied with mischief such as illegal drilling and were driven by misguided ideals. A 25 May editorial criticized these "Irish ostriches" for their refusal to admit that the worst problem was not the threat of Anglicization but rather Irish refusal to admit Irish interests and duties in the war.[2] This became a recurrent theme in the columns of the Irish Times. The paper's editor was upset with Ireland's lacklustre response to recruiting calls and remained embarrassed, even after the war had ended, that the Irish had shirked their responsibility to defeat an enemy determined "to re-make the world."[3] However, all of the blame was not attributed to blind and stubborn

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[1]Henry Boylan, A Dictionary of Irish Biography. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978, pp. 140-141.

[2]Irish Times, 25 May 1915, p.4.

[3]Ibid., 30 October 1918, p.4.

Irishmen. It was argued in the columns of the paper that the government should have settled the Irish conscription issue by enforcing such a measure when it was applied to the rest of Great Britain. The government's tolerance of Sinn Féin's anti-conscription and other activities was harshly berated. Government inactivity on these issues the editor argued, was being incorrectly interpreted by the public as apathy and/or approval. In light of such government inertia, the Irish Times believed, it was no wonder that problems with sedition were being encountered throughout Ireland.

The first serious treatment of Sinn Féin as a seditious faction occurred in an editorial on 12 April 1916. It remarked that the country was "prosperous and peaceful except for the excesses of the 'Sinn Fein' element." It observed:

> They practise open sedition in the streets of Dublin and in many other parts of Ireland. They maintain a sinister traffic in firearms and ammunition. They make grossly disloyal speeches, and publish rabid sheets, which are exposed for sale under the very shadow of Dublin Castle.[4]

The time had come, it argued, for the Chief Secretary to assume responsibility for the post he occupied. The first step would be for Mr. Birrell to move to Ireland for his "absentee tenure" was no less than a "disgraceful inci-

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[4] Ibid., 12 April 1916, p.4.

dent" in itself. If he was going to accept his £4000 per year, he had to do something to earn it.[5]

Sinn Féin received no further coverage until the Easter Rising. The initial editorial addressing the rebellion was published 25 April 1916. In it no accusations were made, perhaps because few details were readily available.[6] However, in the same issue, an article referred to the Dublin crowd's reaction to the incident. The report noted a growing excitement and sense of alarm among the people, heightened somewhat by their incredulity "that a 'Sinn Fein' revolution had broken out."[7]

In the paper's combined edition of 28 and 29 April and 1 May, an editorial considered the problem of the 'Sinn Fein' insurrection. While the outbreak was "virtually at an end," it would have one distinction - it had been "more daringly and systematically planned, and more recklessly invoked, than any of its predecessors." That it had occurred, the editorial maintained, could not have come as a surprise to government officials. They had received repeated warnings but had chosen to "ignore" them all. However, as to future action, it counselled:

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., 25 April 1916, p.4.

[7]Ibid., 25 April 1916, p.5.

> The surgeon's knife has been put to the corruption in the body of Ireland, and its course must not be stayed until the whole malignant growth has been removed. .... Sedition must be rooted out of Ireland once for all. The rapine and bloodshed of the past week must be finished with a severity which will make any repetition of them impossible for generations to come. The loyal people of Ireland, Unionists and Nationalists, call to-day with an imperious voice for the strength and firmness which have so long been strangers to the conduct of Irish affairs.[8]

The call for such government action in place of the usual indifference it exhibited was reinforced by news reports about the rebellion in the same edition. One article reported that the "'Sinn Fein' Society claims that it organised the revolution, and that Irish National Volunteers carried it out." Fortunately, loyal forces had managed to kill, wound, or take prisoner "two-thirds of the 'Sinn Fein' Army" as well as blow "the whole plot'... to pieces."[9] Further articles were devoted to Sinn Féin atrocities, particularly those of sniping and killing.[10]

The tone of the 2 May editorial became yet more demanding and indignant. It had been revealed to the press that the rising had been "encouraged by German promises and assisted by German gold"; however, the "grim

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[8]Ibid., 28, 29 April and 1 May 1916, p.2.

[9]Ibid., p.3.

[10]Ibid.

barrier of the British Fleet" had made the German Emperor decide "that all aspirations of 'Sinn Fein' were not worth the bones of a single Prussian grenadier." In light of such evidence, and because of the blow which the outbreak had struck to Dublin's trade and industry, the paper reiterated its call for government measures to satisfy the world that "the spirit of sedition and anarchy in Ireland will be crushed, not merely for a time, but for all time."[11]

Succeeding editions of the Irish Times carried first-person accounts of the rebellion, reactions from the public and political leaders, and a growing cry for the Chief Secretary's resignation.[12] Birrell's eventual withdrawal from public life met with undisguised approval. The 5 May editorial remarked on the "steady preparations for an armed rising in Ireland" which had been evident within the last few months. Birrell's refusal to recognize the frequency of illegal drillings and marches, the importation of arms, the "orgy of violent language and seditious newspapers," and the occurrence of "sinister symptoms crowded on one another's heels" left the British public "helpless."[13] That the Irish Times itself had

[11] Ibid., 2 May 1916, p.2.

[12] Ibid., 2 May 1916, p.2; 3 May 1916, p.3; 4 May 1916, pp.2-3.

[13] Ibid., 5 May 1916, p.7.

neglected to note frequent references to such incidents during January 1915 to March 1916 bore no mention. The paper advised the British government to inflict the "severest punishment" upon the leaders and "responsible agents" of the insurrection not for mere vengeance but because the atmosphere for the future growth of seditious movements had to be sterilized. Once again it called for the merciless excision of sedition and treason by "the surgeon's knife of the State [which] must not be stayed 'until the whole malignant growth has been removed'."[14] Only then could Ireland return to normal. The "State" had created the opportunity for insurrection through its own "negligence and laxity"; financial compensation was due to the citizens of Dublin but justice was owed to all residents of Ireland.[15]

Executions were swift and were recorded judiciously in the columns of the Irish Times. As the public outcry mounted for an end to the executions, the Irish Times pleaded for support of Sir John Maxwell who should best know when his work was finished.[16] In response to John Redmond's request that further rebel lives be spared, an editorial of 11 May 1916 sneered:

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[14]Ibid., 6 May 1916, p.4.

[15]Ibid., 9 May 1916, p.4.

[16]Ibid., 10 May 1916, p.4.

> The Nationalist Party was afraid of the seditious elements before the insurrection, and it is still afraid of them. We have said more than once that the public will be glad when the necessity of further executions comes to an end, but the Nationalist Party cares nothing about necessity. It makes the preposterous claim that rebels - if any remain - who, after trial, found to deserve the death penalty, shall not be executed "under any circumstances." This is an invitation to anarchy from which we think that Mr. Birrell himself would have recoiled. A whole party, in a state of abject panic is an unedifying and humiliating spectacle.[17]

It adopted a more placating approach once the execution of the pacifist, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, was revealed. Nationalists were asked to accept that mistakes could hardly be avoided under the "terrible pressure of events." Truly the death, in question, was nothing less than a tragedy; however, Nationalists were asked to reconsider their "half-hearted denunciation" of the rebellion for no more "fatal obstacle to national reunion" could be presented than an attempt by "any party in Ireland to palliate the crimes and follies which have shamed our country in the eyes of the world."[18] Later editorials denied that the executions were responsible for the growth of a "sullen" and "restless" faction of the

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[17] Ibid., 11 May 1916, p.4.

[18] Ibid., 13 May 1916, p.4.

population.[19] Government action had not silenced sedition:

> The rebellion has been suppressed, but the movement which provoked it is not dead. We speak what every Irishman knows when we say that, counted by heads, the 'Sinn Fein' Party is stronger to-day than it was before the rebellion.[20]

As Irish correspondent to The Times, Healy apparently did not convey the same impression to London until more than two months later. If he did, The Times chose not to publish this view. The Times' reports, attributed to the Irish correspondent, implied that for all intents and purposes, Sinn Féin had collapsed.[21] Only on 8 September did an article note that Sinn Féin's revival heralded "widespread and acute political unrest."[22] Yet, oddly enough, coverage of this renewal escaped further press footage and consideration in either paper until the early months of 1917.

An Irish Times editorial of 29 February 1917 defended the deportation of suspects from Ireland especially since "the pro-German conspiracy in Ireland is

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[19]Ibid., 19 May 1916, p.4; 30 June 1916, p.4; 23 August 1916, p.4.

[20]Ibid., 30 June 1916, p.4.

[21]The Times, 2 May 1916, p.9; 3 May 1916, p.6; 4 May 1916, p.6; 8 May 1916, p.10; 10 May 1916, p.6; 12 May 1916, pp.8-9; 13 May 1916, p.7; 26 May 1916, p.12; 6 June 1916, p.5; 13 June 1916, p.3 and p.7; 19 June 1916, p.8.

[22]Ibid., 8 September 1916, p.5.

still active, widespread, and dangerous." It commented that Sinn Féin ranks might, indeed, be swelling and predicted, for the first time, a loss of seats for the Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.) in the next election. That Nationalist loss would not be due to Sinn Féin but rather to the disenchantment of I.P.P. supporters who could not rationalize what seemed to be a conscious effort on the part of Nationalist leaders to alienate England. Nor could those supporters reconcile, the editorial surmised, "the sorry mess to which [the Nationalist Party] has reduced their political affairs."[23]

Throughout the remainder of 1917, the impression of disaffection in Ireland manifested itself in short articles in The Times.[24] It received much greater attention in the Irish Times. The year was punctuated with reports on Sinn Féin activity throughout the country.[25] It was not until the government sanctioned amnesty

[23]Irish Times, 29 February 1917, p.4.

[24]See Section on 1917 articles carried in The Times, ch.IV.

[25]Irish Times, 10 April 1917, p.5; 20 April 1917, p.6; 15 June 1917, p.4; 19 June 1917, p.5; 21 June 1917, p.4; 22 June 1917, p.6; 25 June 1917, p.5; 26 June 1917, p.5; 30 June 1917, p.7; 5 July 1917, p.4; 11 July 1917, p.4; 12 July 1917, p.4; 16 July 1917, p.5; 17 July 1917, p.5; 20 July 1917, p.5; 28 August 1917, p.3; 18 September 1917, p.8; 22 September 1917, p.7; 25 September 1917, p.2; 1 October 1917, p.4; 17 October 1917, p.4; 26 October 1917, p.4; 29 October 1917, p.2; 5 November 1917, p.4; 6 November 1917, p.4; 16 November 1917, p.2; 19 November 1917, p.5; 23 November 1917, p.2; 26 November 1917, p.2; 6 December 1917, p.4.

for those Irish prisoners deported for their complicity in the rebellion, that the editor deemed it necessary to comment. The editorial of 16 June 1917 cautioned the government to reassess its motive for freeing the rebels. While the intent was to bring extreme Sinn Féiners into the Irish Convention planned to delineate a solution for Ireland's political troubles, the editorial warned that although the rebels would be free "through the great mercy of the country which they attacked in her hour of bitterest need," there was no guarantee that these people were remorseful about their actions, and would not cause further problems if opportunities availed.[26] The release of the prisoners brought reports of rioting, stone-throwing, and arson. The editorial of 21 June recognized that the editor's fears had been affirmed. It noted that the return of the Sinn Féiners had had the immediate effect of creating "a dangerous outburst of hooliganism." To some...

> The release of the Rebellion prisoners has been accepted by certain elements in Dublin as a triumph for the forces of unruliness and sedition: it has stimulated the most dangerous activities.[27]

The trouble caused by the release of the internees mushroomed into areas outside of Dublin: a

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[26] Ibid., 16 June 1917, p.5.

[27] Ibid., 21 June 1917, p.4.

cause for great concern was the composition of Sinn Féin supporters. An editorial dated 29 June 1917 and entitled "Priests in Politics" roundly criticized the inflammatory politics of the young curates. Describing them as "red-hot 'Sinn Feiners' and republicans," the editorial remonstrated that it was time for the Roman Catholic Church to take these young, impressionable clerics in hand. These curates were destined to become future parish priests with great influence upon their congregations: seditious thoughts were not desirable views to be spread. A Church display of firmness and proper educational instruction could quickly extinguish those flames of Celtic passion. However, clerical participation did not noticeably decline and as such became an object of concern in yet another editorial. Clerical involvement made the possibility of "not merely rebellion ... but revolution" all too real. These clerics openly chose to defy instructions by the Church and thus, provided the basis for the hypothesis that there were many men who were at large in Ireland and "quite capable of organising another rebellion - at a moment after the war, perhaps, when all England's energies will be claimed by the problems of demobilisation." The editorial further likened the existing state of Ireland to the days and months before the Easter Rebellion.[28] This statement was reaffirmed in the 7 July

[28] Ibid., 5 July 1917, p.4.

1917 editorial which pointed not only to the increasing numbers of young recruits but also to the establishment of Sinn Féin clubs throughout the country.[29] Priestly involvement on behalf of Sinn Féin was also identified as a major factor in swinging the East Clare election away from the hands of the Nationalist Party.[30] The paper warned the Nationalists of the immediate need to radically change their policy and methods of administration or face their party's own demise. Sinn Féin's policy, it declared:

> ... has captured East Clare, triumphed over the memory of a devoted soldier, defeated the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and swept the Nationalist Party out of a seat which it had held without opposition for more than twenty years. ...It seems to us that, after the portent of East Clare, no Nationalist seat in Ireland can be regarded as safe.[31]

Continued Sinn Féin activity forced the editor of the Irish Times to pursue the attack upon the growing party through what seemed to be a contradictory course- both more subtly and openly at the same time. In the column entitled "From 'The Times' of To-day" carried in the daily edition of the Irish Times, reports of Sinn Féin activity assumed a higher profile. It seems that this was

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[29] Ibid., 7 July 1917, p.6.

[30] Ibid., 11 July 1917, p.4; 12 July 1917, p.4.

[31] Ibid., 12 July 1917, p.4.

intended to present a picture of English disapproval of Sinn Féin even though the reports referred to submissions from The Times' Irish correspondent.[32]

The Irish Times' alternate strategy came in the form of a direct attack upon Sinn Féin's lack of policy.[33] Sinn Féin's only hope, the editor wrote, was in participation in a peace conference at the end of the European war and such participation necessarily was dependent on Germany being the victor or an outcome which produced no victor at all.[34] It warned the government against a growing positive emotion towards Sinn Féin based solely on sympathy and anger caused by the death of the hunger striker, Thomas Ashe.[35] Appeals were made to the British government for immediate action to quell the growth of this "powerful and popular movement." Sinn Féin's intentions were nothing less than to erect "some sort of

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[32]See, for example, Irish Times, 25 July 1917, p.5; 24 August 1917, p.3; 25 October 1917, p.5; 5 November 1917, p.5; 22 February 1918, p.3; 23 May 1918, p.3; 25 May 1918, p.7.

[33]At times, Healy talks about Sinn Féin's policy (i.e. as it existed in Clare) while at other moments, he dwells on Sinn Féin's lack of constructive policy. While he does not, at any time, clear up this contradiction of statement, he intimates that Sinn Féin policy consists of little more that obstruction of justice and intimidation of the public. He infers that the organization has no workable policy which, when implemented, could benefit Ireland.

[34]Irish Times, 25 September 1917, p.2.

[35]Ibid., 1 October 1917, p.4.

new Ireland on the smoking ruins of the Ireland of to-day." The time had come to thwart Sinn Féin's objective. Government action would not go unsupported in the country:

> 'Sinn Fein' is a big and growing movement, but it does not yet stand for the whole of Nationalist Ireland, and we believe that a large proportion of its rank-and-file is less revolutionary than its leaders.[36]

The lead editorial of 5 November 1917 carried startling rumours which, it claimed, had been circulating throughout Ireland for the previous forty-eight hours. It alluded to an impending Sinn Féin uprising. No source and no details accompanied this claim but it openly declared that 'Sinn Fein', which claimed the allegiance of "at least two hundred thousand Irishmen", followed a programme of "open revolution."[37] The editorial of the following day squelched the rumours but observed that they had at least caused Irishmen to re-examine their loyalties and recall the destruction caused by the last Sinn Féin rebellion.[38] One cannot help but wonder if this was not another tactic of a paper desperate to recall Irishmen to their senses.[39] Scaremongering was not on unfamiliar ploy

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[36]Ibid., 26 October 1917, p.4.

[37]Ibid., 5 November 1917, p.4.

[38]Ibid., 6 November 1917, p.4.

[39]In keeping with its campaign to sensitize Ireland to the extent of seditious activities committed by Sinn Féin from 1916 through 1917, the Irish Times issued a commemorative account at the end of 1917. Entitled The

to newspapermen of the day.

In 1918, the Irish Times carried articles on Sinn Féin outrages, agrarian crime, and illegal drilling on an almost daily basis. The only exception to this occurred during the months of July to November 1918 which recorded scattered references but focussed primarily upon the approaching reality of armistice in Europe. Editorials were often also concerned with Sinn Féin misdeeds and activities. Renewed calls for government interyention were issued. These were justified on the basis of the number of articles concerning lawlessness in Ireland carried by the Irish Times between December 1917 and January 1918. An editorial for 29 January 1918, declared that its record of sixteen articles outlining "serious outrages" upon life and property pointed to breaches of the law which could not be dissociated from the movement "which boasts of its readiness to drive British authority out of Ireland by force of arms."[40] A later editorial accused Sinn Féin of satisfying "private grudges ... in the name of public sedition," and of creating an "in-

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Irish Times' Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook (Dublin: The Irish Times Ltd., 1917) it primarily documented eyewitness accounts of the Easter Rising, official lists of casualties, punishments accorded to the rebellion's 'leaders', records of deportees, despatches of Sir John Maxwell and Viscount French, the proceedings of the Hardinge and Simon Commissions of Inquiry, and names of the prisoners released under general amnesty. Throughout the publication, Sinn Féin is portrayed in a very negative light.

[40]Irish Times, 29 January 1918, p.2.

tolerable life" for law-abiding citizens throughout Ireland. Charges were made that such actions were committed by Sinn Féin because it realized that its "policy" had been "utterly discredited" and consequently, it was trying "to create a state of affairs in which men will not dare to think at all."[41] Some comfort was taken, however, when South Armagh refused to elect the Sinn Féin candidate in the face of such unmitigated terrorist tactics:

> South Armagh was invaded by hordes of 'Sinn Fein's' janissaries, and drilled and uniformed men executed military evolutions in the streets of Dundalk and Newry. No doubt, some of the electors were impressed, but South Armagh, as a whole, refused either to be stampeded ... or to be deceived by the trickery to which the professed champions of purity in the public life of Ireland did not hesitate to stoop.[42]

Unfortunately, South Armagh's opinions were not universally held throughout Ireland.

Reports of lawlessness continued to dominate the columns of the Irish Times. The incidents themselves were no less incredulously regarded than government inaction to curtail their occurrence. An editorial of 23 February 1918 lectured:

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[41] Ibid., 2 February 1918, p.6.

[42] Ibid., 4 February 1918, p.4.

> The 'Sinn Feiners' have decided to drag the law in the mud, and nobody tries to stop them. A regular system of terrorism prevails in certain counties. ...The elements of disorder are a small minority of the people. They flourish only on terrorism, and are strong now only because the Government is weak. They will become weak from the moment when the Government decides to be strong.[43]

Such leadership eluded the government and editorials continued to vent frustration about this apathy. Sinn Féin was accused of "rowdyism," "vulgarity," "cheap heroics," and of turning a court of justice into a "beargarden."[44]

When it appeared likely that the government would introduce conscription into Ireland, an editorial of 8 April warned that officials had better be prepared to enforce the law. The Irish Executive, it charged, had already permitted Sinn Féin to become "a formidable nucleus of disorder"; should it introduce conscription but fail to enforce it, the government would lose every "last shred of its authority." Furthermore, the editorial predicted, Sinn Féin would capitalize on the government's weakness and boast that "while the Nationalist party was

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[43] Ibid., 23 February 1918, p.6.

[44] Ibid., 21 March 1918, p.2. The incident in question occurred when some Sinn Féiners were brought before the magistrate. They shouted the magistrate down and refused to remove the caps they wore. The editorial suggested: "Since the 'Sinn Fein' leaders and their clerical allies are unwilling or unable to undertake the task, the law must become a teacher of decent manners."

unable to keep conscription off the Statute-Book, 'Sinn Fein's' threats were able to prevent it from being enforced."[45] The paper did not quite seem to be prepared for the ensuing public outcry against conscription and expressed some surprise when the I.P.P. and the Roman Catholic clergy supported Sinn Féin's resistance to conscription. This very act by the Nationalist Party would determine its survival on the Irish political scene, it prophesied, unless it rescinded its position.[46] The uncovering of "a German plot" made it even more imperative, the paper said, that the Nationalists disassociate themselves from Sinn Féin if they wished to continue as the major political party in Ireland. The "German plot," the argument went, could only provide "a great impetus to recruiting."[47] Indeed, this new evidence would achieve another desired effect: the establishment of a calm throughout the country made possible by swift deportations of suspects involved in this alleged plot.[48] There was no better time for the Nationalist Party to restore its tarnished reputation.

Despair permeated the editorial of 21 May 1918. The topic was the I.P.P.'s criticism of government

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[45] Ibid., 8 April 1918, p.2.

[46] Ibid., 29 April 1918, p.2.

[47] Ibid., 18 May 1918, p.4; 20 May 1918, p.3.

[48] Ibid., 20 May 1918, p.2.

handling of the alleged German plot. That the Nationalists should accuse the government of enforcing deportations simply "to discredit and disrupt Ireland's united resistance to conscription" could be interpreted as nothing less than "a vote of confidence in 'Sinn Fein'" by the I.P.P. The editorial concluded that such an accusation was not only an appeal by the Nationalists "to the worst prejudices of the most intolerant Irishmen" but also "a repudiation of Ireland's duty in the war." It was an occasion for "decent Irishmen of all parties" to "hang their heads for shame."[49] Henceforth, the fortunes of the Nationalist Party were doomed as far as the Irish Times was concerned. Its fate had been irrevocably sealed and all that remained was its gradual absorption by Sinn Féin.[50] The results of the election in East Cavan further supported this prediction.[51] Meanwhile, incidents of lawlessness continued to plague Ireland.

Infractions upon personal liberties and property eventually led the government early in July, to proclaim Sinn Féin as a "dangerous" organization. To the Irish Times, the government's declaration was not an act of

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[49]Ibid., 21 May 1918, p.2.

[50]Ibid., 7 June 1918, p.2.

[51]Ibid., 22 June 1918, pp.5-6. The results revealed the Sinn Féin candidate, Griffith, with 3,785 votes compared to 2,581 polled by the Nationalist candidate, O'Hanlon. It was a clear victory for Sinn Féin.

suppression but rather "a warning of the gravest kind." A 4 July editorial hinted that there was still time for the Nationalists and the Roman Catholic Church to separate from Sinn Féin, even though these two forces had to accept the greater part of the responsibility for making Sinn Féin "an insuperable obstacle to any settlement of the Irish question."[52]

While a satisfactory handling of "the Irish question" seemed increasingly more remote, an end to the European conflict was not as elusive. As Allied victories increased the possibilities of an armistice, attention focussed on that turn of events and reports about Sinn Féin activities occupied less space in the newspaper.[53]

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[52]Ibid., 4 July 1918, p.2.

[53]Between 4 July 1918 and 31 October 1918, six references to Sinn Féin appeared in the Irish Times. Of those six references, one was a report on Sinn Féin meetings disbanded in Dublin (16 August 1918, p.3); one appeared in the column "From 'The Times' of To-day" and took the form of a prediction that Sinn Féin would win 52-56 seats in the upcoming General Election (15 August 1918, p.3); four were editorials (4 July 1918, p.2; 9 September 1918, p.2; 30 October 1918, p.4; and 31 October 1918, p.2.) The September editorial dealt with a display of Sinn Féin rowdyism towards a Royal Air Force officer. The 30 October editorial bemusingly reviewed Sinn Féin's belief that at the impending Peace Conference, the Allies, whom Sinn Féin had refused to support by vocalizing a policy of anti-conscription, would "go out of their way to settle Ireland's 'wrongs'." The editorial warned that Sinn Féin would be in for "a sharp awakening" as regards this expectation. The editorial of 31 October underlines the same idea. Although, the editorial concedes, Sinn Féin will no doubt win a majority in the General Election, its policy has been developed and directed "by men for whom the world of affairs outside seems to have no existence." It accuses Sinn Féin leaders of being

However, once the armistice had been signed, Sinn Féin preparations for the upcoming December General Election were copiously noted in the columns of the Irish Times. By 28 November, Sinn Féin's coming victory at the ballot boxes had become an accepted fact. The paper could only take comfort in its prediction that the real troubles of Sinn Féin would become evident once it had secured its election victory:

> It will be compelled to substitute some sort of policy for its present orgy of mere emotion, and from the first day the new scheme of abstention will take heavy toll of Ireland's agricultural and commercial prosperity. We may believe that 'Sinn Fein' stands at this moment at its highwater mark of success.[54]

Subsequent editorials held that its lack of constructive policy would have severe repercussions for its showing in future General Elections and would mark a "débâcle" even more grand than its success at the polls of 1918.[55] That Sinn Féin's overwhelming success in the 1918 General Election had been nothing less than remarkable could not be denied. Yet Healy's final editorial for 1918 provided a harbinger for the misfortunes awaiting Sinn Féin and the duped Irishmen and women who had so resolutely supported

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"dreamers and enthusiasts" who may not be wholly ignorant of the facts of world politics but are "at least contemptuous of them."

[54]Irish Times, 28 November 1918, p.4.

[55]Ibid., 10 December 1918, p.4.

this new political party. Sinn Féin's giant electoral success would necessitate the need for it "to divert attention from the collapse of its main programme (which will soon be obvious) by dramatic action in Ireland." That dramatic action could take the form of strikes, continued disorder and lawlessness, or the summoning of a "Constituent Assembly" which would bring it into conflict "with the forces of the law." Either way, Sinn Féin's republic, it unequivocably stated, would never materialize: Sinn Féin could only hope to make the Irish people "forget the failure of its promises by plunging them into the barren and ruinous excitements of bankruptcy and Bolshevism." The truth of Sinn Féin and the folly of its policy would soon be experienced by Irishmen:

> When that time comes 'Sinn Fein', having gone up like a rocket, will come down like the stick, and Ireland will be ready to repair the losses of her insane experiment.[56]

Such was the lesson to be learned because a government had inadequately suppressed Sinn Féin after the Easter Rebellion of 1916. The British government had allowed Sinn Féin to mushroom into a force which swept the entire country. Sinn Féin might have been down, but Healy from 1916, maintained that it had never been defeated. Such was not the impression conveyed in the columns of The Times. One can but speculate as to the degree to which

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[56]Ibid., 31 December 1918, p.2.

British officials operated under certain illusions about Ireland, illusions reinforced by their reading of The Times which infrequently called for aggressive measures against Sinn Féin: where sedition had been successfully repressed, there was no need for further action.[57] Without access to Healy's dispatches to The Times, the responsibility for the picture of Sinn Féin related in the columns of England's most prestigious paper, cannot be attributed to either Healy or The Times with any degree of certainty. Healy may, indeed, have written reports which he felt would be most pleasing to the ears of loyal Englishmen. There exists, in the columns of the Irish Times, only one shred of evidence to refute this statement. An editorial published 17 October 1917 laments about how generally unaware the English were of the

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[57]While such speculation may seem meaningless, there is at least one recorded reference to politicians unaware of the real situation as it existed in Ireland. An editorial from the Irish Times of 16 November 1917, p.2 addresses a discussion between Lords Wimborne and Curzon. Lord Curzon was the former Viceroy and Governor General of India; Lord Wimborne was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Curzon had publicly commented that he felt Sinn Féin was losing ground. Wimborne countered that he did not regard the situation in Ireland as critical at all. The editorial attempted to contradict these impressions expressed by the Lords. It stated: "It is lamentably manifest that law and order are not being maintained in Ireland to-day. The forces of disaffection have been quick to realise that the sanctions of law have disappeared." Indeed, the distinct impression left by the editorial is that the Lords were living in another world and that the basis upon which their statements was based was nothing but pure fiction.

terrible state of affairs in Ireland,[58] One would think that Healy, as Irish correspondent to The Times and as a concerned Unionist, would have reported the deteriorating conditions which he so often addressed in his own paper. Perhaps Healy did not choose to wear a different hat in his submissions on the situation in Ireland to The Times; rather conditions in Europe may have influenced the editorial staff at The Times to select a more becoming style for him.

[58] Irish Times, 17 October 1917, p.4.