

# ‘Ireland’s sister nations’: internationalism and sectarianism in the Irish struggle for independence, 1916–22

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## Abstract

*Following the First World War, nationalists in several parts of the British empire amplified their calls for greater self-government. Activists in Egypt, India, and Ireland portrayed themselves as representatives of movements for national self-determination. Their opponents countered that religious divisions undermined these groups’ claims to nationhood, making the presence of an outside power necessary to protect minorities. Activists formed networks and positioned themselves as parts of a worldwide anti-imperialist movement. Their opponents used these ties in attempts to portray separatist movements as foreign-inspired and socialist. Irish republicans and their global counterparts also struggled with accusations of sectarianism as they advanced their independence claims. This article examines Irish republicans’ connections with international revolutionaries. The confluence of political and religious identities there and in other parts of the British empire provided a pretext for continued imperial engagement. Partition forced nationalists to adjust to new geographic and demographic realities in their post-independence states.*

**Keywords** anti-imperialism, Ireland, nationalism, sectarianism, socialism

## Introduction

The First World War and its aftermath saw a dramatic rise in colonized peoples demanding recognition as separate nations. Independence advocates around the world utilized contemporary discourses of nationalism and the Allies’ language of self-determination to articulate their demands. This was true in the British colonies of Egypt, India, and Ireland, where political divisions often intersected with confessional identities. The rhetoric of the separatists reflects a belief that secular nationalism could cut across religious divisions in their societies.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 4–5, 59–60, 119, 133, 143.

Throughout their campaigns, nationalist activists downplayed or ignored their countries' internal religious differences. They portrayed themselves as parts of an international, secular, anti-colonial movement, and built global networks to support one another materially and rhetorically. Faced with challenges throughout their empire, British authorities argued that these were not in fact unified nations. Emphasizing religious divisions in their colonies, they presented their government as a necessary neutral arbitrator in these societies, protecting religious minorities and guiding their peoples towards a more harmonious future.<sup>2</sup>

Many British legislators placed a high value on their empire's status as a guardian of religious minorities. They saw it as part of their history as well as a component of good governance necessary to maintaining moral authority. Edward Turnour, sixth Earl Winterton, reminded the House of Commons of 'the policy laid down by Disraeli ... in all parts of the Indian Empire – and the same applies to Egypt, Africa, and everywhere else – give them the fullest possible measure of religious toleration, and that we would never do anything which could be interpreted as an act of hostility towards their religion'.<sup>3</sup> The Irish loyalist Thomas Sinclair referred to 'the world mission of the British Empire in the interests of civil and religious freedom'.<sup>4</sup> Some within the government proposed that, if colonized peoples fulfilled the vague requirement of 'safeguarding and toleration of opposing views, the protection of the rights of minorities', they would be granted greater self-government.<sup>5</sup> Until then, the British empire must remain in its paternalistic governing role.<sup>6</sup>

Faced with this justification for the British presence in their countries, nationalist activists utilized secular rhetoric, insisted that they were religiously inclusive, and accused the colonial establishment of exacerbating religious divisions. This article will examine this dynamic among revolutionary groups within the British Empire after the First World War. The focus will be on Ireland, a society in which religion often combined with secular concerns to inform or reinforce an individual's political identity. Between 1916 and 1921, the combined efforts of the republican political party Sinn Féin and an insurrection by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) forced a renegotiation of the island's status within the United Kingdom. During these years republicans reached out to international revolutionary groups for monetary, military, and rhetorical support. They sought to place themselves within an international revolutionary movement, and at the same time tried to counter accusations of sectarianism in order to build support among a politically and religiously divided society.

Other restive territories within the British empire contained populations divided along religious and political lines. India's burgeoning nationalist movement drew support from both Hindus and Muslims, but the two groups organized themselves along confessional lines into the Hindu-majority Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League, and

2 Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marquess of Lansdowne, in 'Irish Free State agreement bill', *Hansard 1803–2005*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/> (consulted 27 June 2013), House of Lords Debates (henceforth *Hansard*, HL Deb), 15 March 1922, vol. 49, cols. 510–59; James Meston, Lord Meston, in 'Government of India bill', *Hansard*, HL Deb, 12 December 1919, vol. 37, cols. 974–1050.

3 Edward Turnour, Lord Winterton, in 'Egypt', *Hansard 1803–2005*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>, House of Commons Debates (henceforth *Hansard*, HC Deb), 20 March 1919, vol. 113, cols. 2348–93.

4 Thomas Sinclair, 'The position of Ulster', in S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Against home rule: the case for the union*, London: Frederick Warne, 1912, p. 173.

5 Edwin Montagu in 'India', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 14 February 1922, vol. 150, cols. 865–975.

6 *The Times*, 10 April 1912; Samuel Prenter, 'The religious difficulty under home rule (ii): the nonconformist view', in Rosenbaum, *Against home rule*, pp. 212–21.

Kris J. Manjapra has noted recurring instances of twentieth-century religious conflict, even within the nationalist movement.<sup>7</sup> However, the end of the First World War saw increasing demands from Hindu and Muslim nationalists for greater self-governance in India. Similarly, Egyptian nationalism found support among both the majority Muslim and the Coptic Christian populations. Imperial authorities countered nationalist arguments in Egypt, India, and Ireland in similar ways, by insisting that their presence was necessary to protect religious minorities.

The Irish republican movement provoked responses among each of these nationalist movements, providing inspiration for a passive resistance movement under the Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi and an insurrectionary plot in Cairo.<sup>8</sup> Complicating the picture of Ireland as divided between Catholics and Protestants was the participation of Irish Jews in the politics of the time. Irish republicans' international connections prompted accusations that they were socialists, damaging their credibility with the capitalist nations of Europe. While Sinn Féin and the IRA were trying to convince the world of their religious inclusivity, at the same time they had to confront intolerance within their ranks. Individuals within the republican movement sometimes made bigoted statements and the leadership struggled at times to frame the conflict in consistently pluralistic terms.

## Religion and politics in Ireland

Despite the success of the sixteenth-century Reformation in Britain, the majority of Ireland's population remained Catholic. An overtly Protestant British state denied Catholics inclusion in the political nation, and from 1691 this system was rigorously applied in Ireland, often through the native Protestant elite.<sup>9</sup> Thus, organizations working for Catholic political rights faced opposition from both the British government and many Irish Protestants. The Protestant-led United Irishmen began the 1790s as a lobbying organization for Catholic inclusion in the political nation, but ended the decade embroiled in a bloody revolt marred by sectarian conflict.<sup>10</sup> The Catholic nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell reached out to Irish Protestants during his campaigns for Catholic political rights in the 1820s and for repeal of the Act of Union in the 1840s. However, he also utilized language implying that he conceptualized the Irish nation as exclusively Catholic.<sup>11</sup>

Political controversy during the 1870s and 1880s centred on debates over whether Ireland would be granted home rule, or a domestic parliament within the United Kingdom. This galvanized opponents of nationalism across the island, gradually undermining political differences between Methodists, Presbyterians, and adherents of the Church of Ireland, thereby solidifying a Protestant loyalist political identity.<sup>12</sup> Opposition to home rule stemmed

7 Kris J. Manjapra, 'The illusions of encounter: Muslim "minds" and Hindu revolutionaries in First World War Germany and after', *Journal of Global History*, 1, 3, 2006, pp. 374–6.

8 *The Times*, 5 October 1920; V. V. Giri, *My life and times*, New Delhi: MacMillan Company of India, 1976, pp. 206–7.

9 Wendy Hinde, *Catholic emancipation: a shake to men's minds*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 1–10.

10 Kevin Whelan, *The tree of liberty: radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity, 1760–1830*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1996, pp. 99–129.

11 D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 149.

12 Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798–1998: politics and war*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, pp. 215–22.

from sentimental and economic bases, as well as a conviction that Irish separation would be the first step in the break-up of the British empire, an institution that loyalists revered.<sup>13</sup> It also had an overtly sectarian dimension: British and Irish unionists asserted that home rule would mean ‘Rome rule’ – or subjugation to the Catholic Church – for the island’s Protestants.<sup>14</sup> Bob Johnson also notes that twentieth-century nationalism was in part the result of a revival in ‘Gaelic’ or native Irish culture bereft of British influences.<sup>15</sup> While Protestants played a leading role in the ‘Gaelic revival’, this was not a culture with which loyalists would identify or which they would even consider positive.<sup>16</sup>

History records many examples of Protestant nationalists, Catholic loyalists, and long periods of peaceful coexistence between religious and political factions. However, the fact that most Catholics favoured altering Ireland’s connection to Britain, while the majority of Protestants wished to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom, set up a framework that defined ‘Catholic’ as ‘nationalist’ and ‘Protestant’ as ‘loyalist’.<sup>17</sup> Contemporary commentators sometimes removed the political aspect of these identities and interpreted Irish controversies as exclusively religious. During the home rule debate in 1918, W. Alison Phillips, an Englishman and history professor at Trinity College, Dublin, asserted that the responsibility rested on Catholic clergy to ‘remove the alarm at present felt by the Protestant minority in Ireland, and so to solve the whole Irish question, which is fundamentally one of religion’.<sup>18</sup> The Marquess of Lansdowne told the House of Lords in 1922, ‘The besetting sin of Irishmen is intolerance’.<sup>19</sup> Some elements in the press also insisted that Irish people were irrevocably bigoted and that the British government must maintain a presence in Ireland to prevent religious persecution of the Protestant minority.<sup>20</sup> During the War of Independence members of Sinn Féin felt it necessary to engage in a propaganda battle to refute the idea that their movement was religiously motivated.<sup>21</sup>

## International insurrection

The concept of Ireland as part of an international system of insurrection pre-dated the period of the War of Independence. Bulmer Hobson, an Irish republican and exponent of guerrilla war tactics, promoted uprisings throughout the British empire as early as 1909. He wrote, ‘Such a method may become the refuge of the minor peoples against the encroachment of the more

13 L. S. Amery, ‘Home rule and the colonial analogy’, in Rosenbaum, *Against home rule*, pp. 128–52.

14 *Home rule and Rome rule*, Westminster: Conservative Publication Department, 1892.

15 Bob Johnson, ‘Globalizing the Harlem Renaissance: Irish, Mexican, and “Negro” renaissances in *The Survey*, 1919–1929’, *Journal of Global History*, 1, 2, 2006, p. 162.

16 Paul Bew, *Ireland: the politics of enmity, 1798–2006*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 368; F. S. L. Lyons, *Culture and anarchy in Ireland 1890–1939*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, pp. 55–7.

17 Brian Walker, ‘1641, 1689, 1690 and all that: the Unionist sense of history’, *Irish Review*, 12, 1992, pp. 60–4.

18 W. Alison Phillips, ‘Ulster and Rome’, *The Times*, 9 May 1918.

19 Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marquess of Lansdowne, in ‘Irish Free State agreement bill’, *Hansard*, HL Deb, 15 March 1922, vol. 49, cols. 510–59.

20 *The Times*, 5 April 1904, 15 April 1912, and 16 January 1914; *Morning Post* (London), quoted in *Irish Independent* (Dublin), 7 April 1919; *Yorkshire Herald* (York), quoted in *Weekly Summary* (Dublin), 10 June 1921.

21 *Irish Bulletin* (Dublin), 2 June, 23 July, and 28 July 1920, and 10 June, 21 October, and 4 November, 1921.

powerful nations and may be used with effect ... wherever oppression goads a community into revolt against tyranny ... its simultaneous application in Ireland, India, and Egypt would break the power of the Empire.<sup>22</sup>

The idea that Irish nationalists should ally with other disaffected elements within the British empire found personal expression in migrants to Ireland. There was a small non-Christian immigrant population on the island, though it was often ignored in contemporary media, and historians have done little to address this omission. Following the 1911 census, the press only publicized results for the major Christian religions: Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians. These numbers account for 98.4% of the population, meaning that 1.6%, approximately 70,111 people, lived in Ireland and identified with none of the major Catholic or Protestant groups.<sup>23</sup> Many of these were members of minority Christian denominations such as Ireland's Quaker community; others professed no religion.<sup>24</sup> However, by the second decade of the twentieth century the island was also home to small but politically engaged Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim migrant communities.

Many immigrants to Ireland during this period came from other parts of the British empire to pursue their education. There were sizeable non-Christian student communities at the National University, Trinity College, and the King's Inns law school. The Irish Jewish doctor Bethel Solomons later wrote that Dublin's universities included 'representatives of all nations and rebellion was strong amongst them'. Solomons had strong Irish nationalist sympathies, and he also listed Indians and Egyptians as among the student extremists.<sup>25</sup> From 1913 the Indian nationalist community in Dublin included V. V. Giri, a future president of India, who identified with the island's nationalists from his arrival. He wrote, 'Fresh from India and deeply imbued with a passion to fight for my country's freedom, I experienced a complete sense of identity with the Irish cause.'<sup>26</sup> Not only was Giri already a convinced nationalist, but he also gravitated towards the violent side of the movement, citing the Irish republican insurgents Theobald Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet as inspirations.<sup>27</sup> Giri and like-minded Indian students did not confine themselves to ideological nationalism. They formed a group called the Anarchical Society, the members of which, 'professed belief in using violence and bloodshed ... and started learning the techniques of incendiarism and bomb-making to help us in the freedom struggle on our return to India'.<sup>28</sup>

One of Giri's teachers at the National University was Thomas MacDonagh, a republican planner of the 1916 Easter Rising, and Giri's memoir is replete with hints that he was friendly with other leading rebels.<sup>29</sup> After the failure of the Easter Rising, British authorities began to take an interest in Giri, and on 1 June 1916, General John Maxwell issued a deportation order

22 Bulmer Hobson, *Defensive warfare*, Belfast: West Belfast Branch of Sinn Féin, 1909, p. 21.

23 *The Times*, 27 May 1911.

24 Dermot Keogh, *Jews in twentieth-century Ireland: refugees, anti-semitism and the Holocaust*, Cork: Cork University Press, 1998, p. 73.

25 Bethel Solomons, *One doctor in his time*, London: Christopher Johnson, 1956, pp. 65–6.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

for him.<sup>30</sup> Despite this abrupt end to his Irish connections, Giri claimed that his experiences there continued to motivate him for the rest of his life. He wrote, ‘With the fervour inspired by the revolutionaries still fresh in my mind, I determined to return to India and take an active part in the political movement to secure the independence of my country.’<sup>31</sup>

The press erroneously associated the failed Easter Rising with the nationalist political party Sinn Féin.<sup>32</sup> However, Giri’s memoir notes the impact of the Sinn Féin founder Arthur Griffith’s non-violent ideas on Mohandas Gandhi. Griffith envisioned using the British electoral machinery to win seats in the Westminster parliament. His fellow nationalists would then abstain from sitting in the British assembly and set up their own legislature in Dublin. Griffith acknowledged that ‘occasional excursions into the domain of Active Resistance’ might be necessary to defend the new legislature, but a persistent violent campaign was not in his original programme.<sup>33</sup> Gandhi praised Sinn Féin’s commitment to passive resistance in a 1907 article in *Indian Opinion*: ‘Day by day, the *Sinn Fein* party is growing stronger ... without any violent struggle taking place the British would ultimately be obliged, or might agree, to grant Home Rule to Ireland, or would quit Ireland, and the Irish people would have an absolutely independent government.’<sup>34</sup> Gandhi utilized Hindu concepts in conceiving his ideas of non-violent resistance, but he regularly employed inclusive language. For example, he wrote in *Hind Swaraj* that ‘India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it ... The Hindus, the Mohammedans, the Parsees and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen.’<sup>35</sup>

Sinn Féin carried out the electoral part of Griffith’s plan between 1917 and 1918, as the party won 73 of Ireland’s 105 seats at Westminster, but in the same period the IRA escalated its violent campaign against Irish police and the British military.<sup>36</sup> This resort to force was not universally supported within Sinn Féin; some even accused militants of hijacking the movement.<sup>37</sup>

Gandhi eventually denounced Irish republicanism, but only after the IRA’s violent campaign superseded Griffith’s idea of passive resistance. The Indian leader wrote in September 1920, ‘This is an opportunity for distinguishing the Sinn Fein or the Egyptian non-co-operation movement from ours ... The Sinn Feiners resort to violence in every shape and form. Theirs is a “frightfulness” not unlike General Dyer’s ... our success depends upon our ability to control all the violent and fanatical forces in our midst.’<sup>38</sup> The reference to General Reginald Dyer invoked a British army officer of Irish background. In 1919 he was in

30 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 33–4.

32 *The Times*, 26 April 1916.

33 Arthur Griffith, *The resurrection of Hungary: a parallel for Ireland*, Dublin: Whelan and Son, 1918, p. 90.

34 Mohandas K. Gandhi, ‘Benefits of passive resistance’, *Indian Opinion*, 7 September 1907 in *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1962, vol. 7, pp. 213–14.

35 M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian home rule*, Madras: G. A. Natesan, n.d., pp. 38–9. This first appeared in *Young India* on 26 January 1921.

36 *The Times*, 30 December 1918; Brian Feeney, *Sinn Féin: a hundred turbulent years*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, pp. 109–10.

37 Darrell Figgis, *Recollections of the Irish war*, New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1927, pp. 216–22.

38 Mohandas K. Gandhi, ‘Assassination of a deputy commissioner’, *Young India*, 1 September 1920, in *The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1965, vol. 18, pp. 219–20.

command of a party of British troops who fired into a crowd of unarmed protesters at Amritsar, killing 379 people and wounding approximately 1,500.<sup>39</sup> Dyer's role serves as a reminder that, while Irish nationalists made common cause with their Indian counterparts, many Irish people were themselves involved in building and maintaining the British empire as soldiers and administrators, particularly in India.<sup>40</sup>

Gandhi's reformulation of Sinn Féin concepts through a total renunciation of violence resonated with Indian nationalists, causing many to abandon ideas of insurrection. Giri, who had entertained such thoughts himself, later wrote, 'we all came under the magic spell of Mahatma Gandhi and decided to follow only the path of truth and non-violence for winning political freedom'.<sup>41</sup> However, Gandhi's ascendancy over a non-violent Indian nationalism was far from certain in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Separatists were initiating violent outbreaks across the British empire: continuing discontent in Ireland after the Easter Rising morphed into the War of Independence, while in 1919 frustrated Egyptian nationalists initiated a wave of guerrilla-style violence against state infrastructure and British soldiers.<sup>42</sup> Irish republicans encouraged Indians to resist as well. Speaking to the Friends of Freedom for India in New York in February 1920, the Sinn Féin president, Eamon de Valera, told his audience, 'we of Ireland and you of India must each endeavour, both as separate peoples and in combination, to rid ourselves of the vampire that is fattening on our blood'. He concluded, 'Our cause is a common cause. We swear friendship tonight; and we send our common greetings and our pledges to our brothers in Egypt and in Persia.'<sup>43</sup>

Indian nationalist organizations reciprocated by expressing support for Sinn Féin and other international insurrectionists. An editorial in the *Independent Hindustan* (a San Francisco-based publication) declared, 'The world must be made to feel that the struggle of Ireland is not isolated. The same tyranny and the same trampling of human rights are going on everywhere – in India, Egypt, Persia, China and other countries.'<sup>44</sup> The February 1921 issue published a declaration of support for the Irish Republic from the Sikh League in Punjab.<sup>45</sup> However, this journal did not advocate a religiously exclusive Indian nationalism, consistently situating their movement as part of a worldwide anti-colonial movement.<sup>46</sup>

Sinn Féin and the IRA continued to work to identify their movements with this international milieu. Dáil Éireann, the republican parliament that met in Dublin from January 1919, conducted foreign policy through a number of unrecognized embassies. To obtain popular sympathy they established missions in localities with Irish diaspora populations, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, South Africa, and the United States. Republicans also tried to establish good relations with European countries, particularly Italy, Spain, and

39 Pierce A. Grace, 'The Amritsar massacre, 1919: the Irish connection', *History Ireland*, 18, 4, 2010, p. 25.

40 Michael Silvestri, *Ireland and India: nationalism, empire and memory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 5–6.

41 Giri, *My life*, p. 15.

42 Arthur Goldschmidt Jr, *Modern Egypt: the formation of a nation-state*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004, pp. 69–70.

43 Eamon de Valera, *India and Ireland*, New York: Friends of Freedom for India, 1920, p. 24.

44 *Independent Hindustan* (San Francisco), October 1920.

45 *Independent Hindustan* (San Francisco), February 1921.

46 *Independent Hindustan* (San Francisco), December 1920.

Switzerland.<sup>47</sup> Seeking weapons and international recognition they maintained contact with Britain's enemies, especially Germany and Soviet Russia.<sup>48</sup> For revolutionary support they courted malcontents of all nationalities. When representatives of the illicit Irish Republic travelled abroad, they often joined networks of international revolutionaries seeking moral and material support for their movements. Patrick McCartan, the republican representative in Moscow, numbered potential insurgents from China, India, Korea, and Persia among his acquaintances in the Russian capital.<sup>49</sup>

The office of Art Ó Briain, Dáil Éireann's London representative, became a hub for international revolutionary activity. He was particularly engaged with delegations of Indian, Egyptian, and Burmese nationalists visiting the British capital. The Burmese were anxious to learn all they could of the workings of Sinn Féin and the underground republican government. They confided to Ó Briain that, although they were in London to negotiate a reform of Burma's status within the British empire, they hoped that the talks would fail so that their compatriots would grow disillusioned with the British altogether.<sup>50</sup> Before the delegation left London in November 1920 they received word of increasing protests against the British government back home and wrote to Ó Briain that 'Burma has also gone Sinn Fein.'<sup>51</sup>

An Egyptian delegation visiting London in 1921 included the nationalist leader Zaghloul Pasha and his deputy, Makram Ebeid. The latter wrote to Ó Briain describing Ireland as the 'most heroic exponent of ideal freedom' and his own country as 'Ireland's sister nation'.<sup>52</sup> The two arranged for Zaghloul Pasha to visit Ireland and meet with de Valera in December. However, the negotiation of a treaty ending the Irish conflict and the ensuing political confusion in Ireland scuttled the arrangements.<sup>53</sup>

International contacts could lead to possibilities of cooperation. Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, the republican envoy in Rome, wrote of arms smuggling by 'our friends the Egyptians'. His reports to superiors in Dublin raised the possibility of using the same channels to import weapons into Ireland.<sup>54</sup> Several unsigned reports in the papers of Richard Mulcahy, the IRA's chief of staff, recount meetings with a doctor described as 'the representative of the Egyptian Revolutionary force'.<sup>55</sup> This might have been one of several of Art Ó Briain's London contacts who used the title 'doctor'.<sup>56</sup> The first report states that the Egyptian representative wanted his movement to

47 National Archives of Ireland (henceforth NAI), DE 4/4/2, Robert Brennan (Riobárd O Breandáin), 'Department of Foreign Affairs Report', 10 August 1921, reproduced in Catriona Crowe et al., eds., *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* (henceforth *DIFP*), no. 104, <http://www.difp.ie> (consulted 12 December 2012).

48 Patrick McCartan, *With de Valera in America*, Dublin: Fitzpatrick, 1932, pp. 2, 16.

49 Bureau of Military History (henceforth BMH), Witness Statement (henceforth WS), no. 766, Patrick McCartan, p. 35, <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie> (consulted 17 April 2015).

50 National Library of Ireland (henceforth NLI), Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8426/11, Art Ó Briain to Michael Collins, 2 October 1920.

51 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8461/13, Burmese delegation to Art Ó Briain, 8 November 1920.

52 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8428/32, W. Makram Ebeid to Art Ó Briain, 9 December 1921.

53 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8428/5, Art Ó Briain to Eamon de Valera, 6 December 1921.

54 NAI, DFA ES, Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh to Arthur Griffith (Dublin), Grand Hotel, Rome, 18 June 1920, reproduced in *DIFP*, no 40.

55 University College Dublin Archives (henceforth UCDA), Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/72, 'In accordance with instructions received ...', n.d.

56 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8426/27, Art Ó Briain to George Gavan Duffy, 8 July 1920.



initiate a violent revolt, progressing from assassination of government agents to guerrilla warfare in much the same way as the Irish conflict. The unnamed IRA officer suggested manufacturing explosives, ambushing and derailing troop trains, and organizing extensively among the civilian population. He added that Turkish or Indian Muslim officers would provide the best training, asserting that ‘Europeans would be available in plenty, but co-religionists would be more likely to have their heart in the work.’<sup>57</sup> In declaring that the religious affiliation of those who could offer help would influence Egyptian revolutionaries, this IRA officer made the same mistake that British officials did concerning the Egyptian and the Irish movements. This was particularly ironic given that Makram Ebeid, who would become Ó Briain’s closest Egyptian contact, was a Copt. The IRA member Conor Maguire later reported to Mulcahy that the Egyptians wanted Irish activists to travel to Egypt to train their forces. The project never materialized as the IRA chief of staff considered that they needed every fighter at home.<sup>58</sup> However, the fact that these appeals reached the IRA’s top strategist shows the seriousness with which the republicans took international cooperation.

In September and October 1920, British-supported Egyptian authorities made a series of arrests among revolutionary societies. *The Times* described prosecution of the movement there as ‘A Sinn Fein trial in Egypt’. The insurrectionists organized themselves in cells with macabre names such as The Black Hand, The Flame, and The Gun Society. Irish influence in the nascent organization was obvious, as *The Times* reported: ‘the accused have been shown in documents seized by the police to have exhorted the Society to adopt Sinn Fein tactics, and one of the accused is actually known to his fellow-members as “Sinn Fein”’.<sup>59</sup>

While Egyptians modelled themselves after Irish rebels, the IRA encouraged international revolt across an even wider field. In September and October 1921, during the uncertain truce between republican and government forces, the IRA journal *An t’Óglac* noted with glee the Moplah rebellion in south-west India, and speculated that British troops that might have been deployed in Ireland would be tied down there.<sup>60</sup> The IRA veteran Michael O’Donoghue recalled a conversation with a ‘Black and Tan’ (an English member of the Royal Irish Constabulary), during the truce. Referring to his own imminent demobilization, the constable asked, ‘Ain’t you Shinners out of a job too?’ O’Donoghue replied, ‘We are apparently, unless we go out to give the Moplahs a hand.’<sup>61</sup> Through organs such as *An t’Óglac* and the *Irish Bulletin* (a Dáil propaganda organ), guerrillas like O’Donoghue, despite rarely staying in one place and being regularly ‘on the run’ from government forces, could stay in touch with international revolutionary currents.

Also during the truce, an Indian nationalist identified only as ‘Mr. Bomanji’ approached the republican publicity chief Robert Brennan in Berlin with a plan for insurrection. The contact promised to use a joint meeting of the Muslim League and the Indian Congress Party to declare a provisional government, which would claim control of the country and ‘carry on on Sinn Fein lines’. Bomanji requested that the Irish organization send representatives to

57 UCDA, Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/72, ‘The note on Egypt ...’, n.d.

58 BMH, WS, no. 708, Conor A. Maguire, p. 24.

59 *The Times*, 5 October 1920.

60 *An t’Óglac: the official organ of the Irish Volunteers* (Dublin), 9 September and 21 October 1921; Philip Whitwell, ‘India as Greater Ireland’, *New York Times*, 19 March 1922.

61 BMH, WS, no. 1,741, Michael O’Donoghue, p. 199.

consult on how best to subvert British authority, as well as IRA officers to ‘train companies of selected men in the science of guerilla [*sic*] warfare’.<sup>62</sup> The IRA took this project as seriously as the Egyptian venture, and an officer prepared a memo on potential Indian militant organization and methods.<sup>63</sup> The London envoy Art Ó Briain arranged with staff at the IRA General Headquarters to send an officer to India, but the peace treaty upset these plans, just as it had the Egyptian visit. The intermediary between Ó Briain and nationalists in India was Shapurji Saklatvala, a Mumbai native and future British MP.<sup>64</sup>

## Countering revolution

Contemporary British newspapers and officials were aware of the possibility of international revolution – and it terrified them. In particular, British newspapers and officials took the threat of Indian and Irish cooperation seriously. Between 1920 and 1921 UK newspapers claimed that India’s non-cooperation movement was ‘imitating Sinn Fein methods’ and speculated that Gandhi would soon declare an Indian republic.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the Irish War of Independence coincided with a period of cooperation between majority Hindu and Muslim nationalist organizations, raising the possibility that the British could face a united, discontented populace in India while fighting a guerrilla war in Ireland.<sup>66</sup> In 1919 the chief of the imperial general staff, Henry Wilson (himself an Irish loyalist), reported to the cabinet regarding India that ‘one of the ominous signs reported by the Viceroy is the fraternization of Hindus and Mohammedans’.<sup>67</sup> To meet this threat, British officials offered political concessions that might placate many activists while keeping the overseas empire intact.

In December 1920, one month after the Burma delegation’s departure from London, the government decided to enact the same constitutional reforms there that they had in India in 1919. Part of the rationale for doing so was that the country was overwhelmingly Buddhist. C. M. Webb, chief secretary to the British government of Burma, reported to the Cabinet that the country was ‘free from those acute religious dissensions which militate against the co-operation of men of different creeds. Toleration of the scruples and prejudices of others is a ruling tenet in her religion.’<sup>68</sup> However, the reforms were criticized in Burma – as they had been in India – for not granting the country an acceptable measure of autonomy.<sup>69</sup>

While British authorities held that Ireland and India were hopelessly divided by religion, there was a debate in government circles over whether the movement for Egyptian independence should be considered a national or a religious one. An intelligence report

62 Robert Brennan, BMH, WS, no. 779 (Section 3), pp. 686–7; Robert Brennan, *Allegiance*, Dublin: Browne and Nolan, [1950], pp. 327–8.

63 UCDA, Richard Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/32, ‘Principles of Indian national action’.

64 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8429/3, Art Ó Briain to J. Emmet Dalton, 9 December 1921.

65 *The Times*, 18 July 1921.

66 Clair Price, ‘Gandhi and British India’, *New York Times*, 10 July 1921.

67 United Kingdom National Archives and henceforth TNA (UK), Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/78, Henry Wilson, ‘The military situation throughout the British empire’, 26 April 1919.

68 TNA (UK), Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/116, ‘Proposals of the government of India for a new constitution for Burma’, 2 December 1920.

69 TNA (UK), Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/116, ‘Telegram from Viceroy’, 5 December 1920.

submitted to the Cabinet by the Home Office in February 1920 asserted that the Copts were secretly pro-British, owing their wealth to the prosperity brought to the country by the empire. The report added that Egyptian Christians' apparent devotion to separatism was out of fear of their Muslim counterparts, noting that 'they know that they would have little voice in the administration of an independent Egypt which would be purely Mahomedan'.<sup>70</sup> By contrast, a special commission headed by Viscount Milner to investigate the causes of Egyptian discontent described what was happening there as 'a national movement backed by the sympathy of all classes and creeds among the Egyptian population, including the Copts'.<sup>71</sup> This recognition accounts in part for the granting of limited self-government to Egypt in 1922, years before the same came to India, and without a sustained guerrilla war as in Ireland.<sup>72</sup> This arrangement did not please everyone: Makram Ebeid assured Ó Briain that they would continue their struggle until Egypt severed all ties to Britain.<sup>73</sup>

Concessions to the nationalist movements in India and Ireland met with the most resistance among the British establishment, owing in part to an assumption that majority religions in both places would persecute minorities if granted independence. *The Times* employed the same religious analysis of both movements, predicting that India would be split by Hindu–Muslim feuds while Ireland would fracture along Protestant–Catholic lines.<sup>74</sup> Despite this moment of widespread unity between Hindu and Muslim nationalist organizations, some British lawmakers sought to attach a religious label to their most vehement opponents. Acknowledging Irish influences in Indian resistance to British rule, Francis Acland told the House of Commons, 'I believe it to be true that the "de Valeristas" of India to-day – those who are urging instant and total and violent separation from this country – are Moslems'.<sup>75</sup> Seizing on accusations of sectarianism during the Moplah rebellion, Arthur Russell, Baron Amptill, told the House of Lords that, without British oversight of India, the consequences would be 'that the Hindu will cut the throat of the Mahomedan or that the Mahomedan will cut the throat of the Hindu'.<sup>76</sup>

By contrast, British legislators portrayed their empire as an inclusivist melting pot. Some were particularly intent on mollifying the large Islamic contingent among its population. Legislators called the British empire 'the greatest Mahomedan power in the world', citing its 120 million Muslim inhabitants.<sup>77</sup> One interpretation of Muslim unrest after the First World War was that this was based not on unrealized political demands, but on the undermining of the Islamic caliphate with the break-up of the Ottoman empire. In 1919 the British Conservative MP and army intelligence officer Aubrey Herbert began circulating a petition stating, 'From 1914 till 1918 the Mussulmans of the Empire were loyal. India was actively loyal'. However, British foreign policy towards the Ottomans had eroded

70 TNA (UK), Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/98, 'A monthly review of revolutionary movements in foreign countries', 1 February 1920.

71 TNA (UK), Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/117, 'Report of the special commission to Egypt', 9 December 1920.

72 Manela, *Wilsonian moment*, pp. 146–7.

73 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8428/32, W. Makram Ebeid to Art Ó Briain, 23 November 1921.

74 *The Times*, 7 July 1920; *The Times*, 30 December 1920.

75 Francis Acland in 'India', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 14 February 1922, vol. 150, cols. 865–975.

76 Arthur Russell, Lord Amptill, in 'Situation in India', *Hansard*, HL Deb, 25 October 1921, vol. 47, cols. 11–80.

77 J. D. Rees in 'Near East', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 12 April 1922, vol. 153, cols. 491–509.

this loyalty.<sup>78</sup> *The Times* held that Egyptians were equally anxious about British policy towards the caliphate.<sup>79</sup> While some Muslims within British territories were, indeed, concerned about the status of the caliphate, attributing all Islamic unrest throughout the empire to this source robbed it of its political content, the implication being that, if the religious grievances of Muslims were addressed, their political demands would disappear.

Similarly, British administrators assumed that Irish nationalists would be guided by the dictates of the Catholic clergy. Throughout the conflict, British legislators criticized Irish priests and bishops for not denouncing Sinn Féin strongly enough.<sup>80</sup> One of Lloyd George's unofficial attempts to make peace with the republicans was through George Riddell, who told Art Ó Briain that the Catholic Church was 'the only influential power left in Ireland'.<sup>81</sup> In December 1920 the Bishop of Cork declared that anyone taking part in IRA activity was liable to excommunication, but the violence in the district did not stop.<sup>82</sup> Another unofficial envoy, the English Catholic Lord Derby, tried to get information on republican intentions from Cardinal Logue, the head of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The latter informed Derby, 'I am pretty much excluded from the counsels of Mr. De Valera and his party'.<sup>83</sup> Some Catholic clergy were members of Sinn Féin but they joined as individuals, not as representatives of the church.

Political activists in Egypt, India, and Ireland had to convince British authorities that their aspirations were not motivated by religious dogma. The *Irish Bulletin* countered charges of sectarianism by accusing British authorities of attempting to foment religious violence, particularly in the six counties that now comprise Northern Ireland.<sup>84</sup> The issue of 25 October 1921 asserted:

The British Government in much of its anti-Irish propaganda represented the unrest in Ireland as a religious war between the Catholics and Protestants .... There is no sectarianism in the Irish National movement. Religious intolerance is unknown wherever the Republic has a majority although the British Government has done everything in its power to turn the National struggle for independence into a war against the Protestant minority.<sup>85</sup>

Indian nationalists similarly accused British authorities of increasing hostility between the two major faiths there, and the British-supported Egyptian government faced accusations of religious partiality from its inception.<sup>86</sup>

While sympathy and cooperation existed between Irish and Indian political movements, not everyone in these countries identified as nationalists. Many Indians supported British

78 United Kingdom Parliamentary Archives (henceforth UKPA), Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/17/2/1, Edmund Talbot to David Lloyd George, 30 May 1919.

79 *The Times*, 14 March 1922.

80 Lord Denbigh, 'The state of Ireland', *The Times*, 28 November 1917.

81 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8429/12, Art Ó Briain to Michael Collins, 15 July 1920.

82 NLI, Florence O' Donoghue Papers, MS 31,148, Address of Bishop Daniel Cohalan, 12 December 1920.

83 UKPA, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/14/5/32, Michael Logue to Lord Derby, 1 September 1921.

84 *Irish Bulletin* (Dublin), 10 June, 2 September, and 24 November 1921.

85 *Irish Bulletin* (Dublin), 25 October 1921.

86 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of world history*, New York: John Day, 1948, p. 431; John Swan in 'Government appointments', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 4 May 1922, vol. 153, col. 1541.

rule, and loyalist emigrants found ways of expressing their allegiance during the War of Independence. Kahan Singh Chowdhury, a Trinity College law student from Rawalpindi in modern Pakistan, did so by offering to help government forces hunt down the Dublin IRA. In May 1920 Chowdhury wrote to the British Chief Secretary for Ireland, Hamar Greenwood, offering to become a government detective, ‘in which line I have a special taste and knowledge’. He never expounded on his qualifications but asked that ten police officers be placed under his command and wrote, ‘It is possible that an Eastern brain if joined together with the Western one, may be of great value.’<sup>87</sup>

Chowdhury claimed that he wanted no salary and was aware that undertaking detective work would endanger his life, but assured Greenwood, ‘if I will be murdered, I will save many other innocents or get many Rascals hanged, before I am shot’.<sup>88</sup> He was right to emphasize the dangers of government service. In the month before he sent this letter, the IRA had shot four Dublin Metropolitan Police officers in or near the city, three of them fatally.<sup>89</sup> With his correspondence Chowdhury included commendations from British Army officers in India noting his family’s help in recruitment during the First World War, and on their loyalty dating back to the 1857 mutiny. One of these noted his family’s recruitment efforts among ‘Punjab Musalmans’, indicating that he was a Muslim.<sup>90</sup> Despite Chowdhury’s enthusiastic faith in the British empire, the chief secretary declined his offer of help.<sup>91</sup>

## Irish Jews and accusations of socialism

While Indians and Egyptians were usually temporary migrants to Ireland, the Jewish community was a fixture in Irish life by the twentieth century. A small community largely made up of second-generation immigrants, many Irish Jews chose to become involved with Sinn Féin or the IRA. As immigrants, some Jews provided opportunities to contribute to the international revolutionary milieu with which the Irish republican movement tried to associate itself. For example, Robert Briscoe was the son of a Lithuanian who settled in Dublin to escape discrimination by the Russian empire. He lived at times in New York and Germany, where he worked for an international corporation.<sup>92</sup> During the War of Independence Briscoe returned to Ireland and joined the IRA. He took part in a number of the street ambushes, mail raids, arms seizures, and intelligence-gathering operations that characterized the war in Dublin.<sup>93</sup> In 1920 the underground army sent him to Germany to buy arms. Using the small fortune

87 K. S. Chowdhury, ‘To Sir Hamar Greenwood’, 10 May 1920, CO 904/196/50, in *Sinn Féin and republican suspects 1899–1921: Dublin Castle special branch files CO 904 (193–216)*, United Kingdom, Colonial Office record series vol. 1, Dublin: Eneclann, 2006.

88 *Ibid.*

89 *The Times*, 16 April, 17 April, 21 April, and 10 May 1920.

90 P. Young, ‘Sanad. In recognition of the loyal services rendered by Ch: labh Singh Kursi Nishin of Kohat’, 23 December 1918, CO 904/196/50, in *Sinn Féin*; K. S. Chowdhury, ‘To the honourable benchers and masters of the King’s Inns’, 7 May 1920, CO 904/196/50, in *ibid.*; ‘Office of R.O. for P.M.’s, Rawalpindi’, 17 October 1916, CO 904/196/50, in *ibid.*

91 G. G. G., ‘Chief Secretary’s Lodge, Phoenix Park’, 15 May 1920, CO 904/196/50, in *Sinn Féin*.

92 Robert Briscoe, *For the life of me*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1958, p. 27.

93 *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 51–5.

he had made in America, Briscoe bought several boats and successfully smuggled weapons to the IRA.<sup>94</sup>

While Briscoe was the most active Jew engaged in the violence of the War of Independence, a number of his co-religionists supported the republicans. Rabbi Isaac Herzog, the leader of Ireland's Jewish community, sheltered Eamon de Valera after the latter escaped from prison in 1919.<sup>95</sup> Estella Solomons, a Dublin Jewish artist, hid wanted IRA members in her studio. She also destroyed several portraits she had painted of republican leaders, as the likenesses might have been used to identify them.<sup>96</sup> The Dublin solicitor Michael Noyk, the son of a Lithuanian Jewish immigrant, played the role of Sinn Féin's clean-faced front man. He bought vacant premises in Dublin for Sinn Féin, the IRA, and the Dáil. As a lawyer, Noyk defended many republicans in court. Piaras Béaslaí, a staffer, at the republican general headquarters, described him as 'the one Dublin solicitor implicitly trusted by [Michael] Collins' and 'entirely in the confidence of the I.R.A.'<sup>97</sup> Like many other Irish people, Jews aided and abetted the IRA by allowing them to hide weapons in their homes or providing shelter for guerrillas.<sup>98</sup>

Irish Jews who supported nationalist politics often displayed an equal commitment to Zionism. Isaac Herzog moved to Palestine in 1937 and became chief rabbi there. His Dublin-born son Chaim became President of Israel in 1983.<sup>99</sup> Briscoe became interested in Zionism in the 1930s, partly because of the rise of anti-Semitic European fascism. He supported the Irgun, and met its founder, Vladimir Jabotinsky, during a visit to Ireland in 1937.<sup>100</sup> Briscoe claimed to have trained Jabotinsky in guerrilla warfare as practised during the Irish War of Independence.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, during this period Briscoe visited Egypt. He described political leaders there as potential comrades fighting colonialism, their hostility to Jewish settlers in Palestine carefully fostered by the British government. He also declared that Jews and Muslims would coexist peacefully without this foreign influence, just as Irish nationalists insisted that Catholics and Protestants would harmonize if left to their own devices.<sup>102</sup>

Catherine Hezser asserts that this conjunction of Irish nationalism and Zionism is even more evident in Irish Jewish literature. She attributes this to 'a double experience of colonialism and postcolonialism' in the foundational experiences of the Irish and Israeli states.<sup>103</sup> Commentators on Zionism note that tensions have always existed within this tradition

94 *Ibid.*, pp. 78–80, 93, 96–117.

95 Keogh, *Jews*, p. 77.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 61; Solomons, *One doctor*, p. 204.

97 Piaras Béaslaí, *Michael Collins and the making of a new Ireland*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926, vol. 2, p. 190.

98 BMH, WS, no. 956, George White, p. 5.

99 Keogh, *Jews*, pp. 112–14; *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York), 9 May 1983, <http://www.jta.org/1983/05/09/archive/herzog-inaugurated-as-israel-sixth-president> (consulted 17 April 2015).

100 Briscoe, *For the life of me*, pp. 263–4; *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York), 30 December 1937, <http://www.jta.org/1937/12/30/archive/first-revisionist-group-formed-in-ireland-briscoe-is-leader> (consulted 17 April 2015).

101 Briscoe, *For the life of me*, p. 264.

102 *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 295, 297, 306; *Irish Independent* (Dublin), 8 June 1918.

103 Catherine Hezser, "Are you Protestant Jews or Roman Catholic Jews?" Literary representations of being Jewish in Ireland', *Modern Judaism*, 25, 2, 2005, p. 183.

between those who view Judaism as central to the state and those arguing for a more religiously diverse political culture.<sup>104</sup> The Irish Jewish writer Con Leventhal states that he knew individuals of both strains, a claim borne out by the overtly religious attitudes of the Herzog family compared with Briscoe's more secular aspirations.<sup>105</sup>

Although most republican leaders tried to emphasize the non-sectarian character of their movement, bigoted statements during the War of Independence sometimes reflected the anti-Semitism rampant in Europe at this time. In a book on his prison experiences after the Easter Rising, the IRA officer W. J. Brennan-Whitmore described a plan by British officers to swindle money from republican inmates as 'worthy of an American Jew financier'.<sup>106</sup> During a speech in 1917, while fears that conscription might be introduced to Ireland were at their height, the IRA Commandant Thomas Ashe blamed the First World War on the 'tyranny of the Jews and moneylenders of London'.<sup>107</sup> Some years later, the Sinn Féin politician George Gavan Duffy complained in the Dáil that they were experiencing difficulties in getting international circulation for their newspaper the *Irish Bulletin* because of 'big Jew firms in London which had complete control of the first news wires in respect to Irish affairs'.<sup>108</sup> It is noteworthy that these quotations blame Irish problems on foreign, often British, Jews. The Sinn Féin motto of 'ourselves alone' led many activists to deride any external influence, to which these speakers added stereotypical anti-Jewish rhetoric.<sup>109</sup>

One republican's anti-Semitism led to a confrontation with the IRA's most active Jewish fighter. In January 1922 Charles Bewley, the recently appointed Irish consul in Berlin, began hearing rumours that Briscoe had stated that he was the official representative of the Irish government. One night in a beer hall, Bewley replied to one such inquiry by saying that Briscoe was not the Irish envoy and that 'it was not likely that a Jew of his type would be appointed'. According to Bewley, he offended a nearby German Jew and the proprietor asked him to leave.<sup>110</sup> Briscoe reported that the Irish consul was drunk and raged against the Jewish faith for several minutes before being thrown out. Bewley apologized to Briscoe but the latter asked that he be removed from his post, writing to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Gavan Duffy, 'Such behaviour on the part of a man holding an official position is not conducive to attaining the results intended, nor will it help to bring credit on the people of Ireland.'<sup>111</sup>

104 Hedva Ben-Israel, 'Zionism and European nationalism: comparative aspects', *Israel Studies*, 8, 1, 2003, pp. 91–104; Jehuda Reinharz, 'The conflict between Zionism and traditionalism before World War I', *Jewish History*, 7, 2, 1993, pp. 59–78.

105 A. J. Leventhal, 'What it means to be a Jew', *Bell*, 10, 3, 1945, p. 211.

106 W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, *With the Irish in Frongoch*, Dublin: Talbot Press, 1917, p. 79.

107 Thomas Ashe, *Oration delivered by commandant Thomas Ashe at Casement's fort, Ardferit, Co. Kerry, on Sunday, 5th August, 1917*, n.p., n.d., p. 7.

108 George Gavan Duffy in 'Publicity department report: discussion', 23 August 1921, Dáil Éireann Debate, vol. 5, no. 5, <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/dail1921082300007?opendocument> (consulted 17 April 2015).

109 For a definition of the Sinn Féin policy, see Máire de Bhuitléir, 'When the Sinn Féin policy was launched: musings and memories over the relic of an historic meeting', in *The Voice of Ireland: a survey of the race and nation from all angles, by the foremost leaders at home and abroad*, Dublin: Virtue, n.d., pp. 106–8. For examples of contemporary anti-Semitic rhetoric, see *The Times*, 8 May 1920.

110 NAI, DFA ES, Box 34, File 239, Charles Bewley, 'Memorandum by Charles Bewley on his relations with Robert Briscoe', Berlin, 28 January 1922, reproduced in *DIFP*, no. 229.

111 NAI, DFA ES, Box 34, File 239, Robert Briscoe to George Gavan Duffy (Dublin), Berlin, 21 January 1922, reproduced in *DIFP*, nos. 224–5.

Gavan Duffy, whose insensitivity to Jews has been noted, wanted the incident hushed up. He wrote that Bewley should ‘cause the matter to be forgotten’, and that ‘nothing should be said which would give offence in the quarter in which offence was taken’.<sup>112</sup> The last remark refers to the importance of Germany’s Jewish population, but also calls to mind the fact that republican propaganda emphasized their organization’s religious tolerance, which might be undermined if Bewley’s comments gained widespread publicity. Bewley held various diplomatic posts until 1939, when the Irish government removed him from his post as ambassador to Germany for submitting anti-Semitic reports vilifying his own superiors for what he saw as British-leaning policies.<sup>113</sup>

The confrontation between Bewley and Briscoe reflected widespread anti-Semitism throughout Europe that posed multiple problems for Sinn Féin. Anti-Semitism in this period often centred on tropes linking Jews with socialism. Winston Churchill’s opposition to Marxism in all forms is well known, but after the First World War he combined this with anti-Semitic rhetoric. He said of socialists, ‘They seek to exterminate every form of religious belief that has given comfort and inspiration to the soul of man. They believe in the international Soviet of the Russian and Polish Jew.’<sup>114</sup> The publisher Henry Hamilton Beamish put it more plainly: during a libel trial he insisted that ‘Internationalism and Bolshevism were one, and Bolshevism was Judaism.’<sup>115</sup> Sinn Féin opponents combined this assumption of Jewish socialism with republican overtures to British enemies – particularly Germany and Soviet Russia – to paint the movement as a new incarnation of the Bolshevik threat.

These allegations had little to do with the actual participation of Jews in the republican movement; instead they built on the assumption of Jewish socialism and republicans’ real connections to Germany and Soviet Russia, in an effort to combine these elements into a single anti-British conspiracy. The course of events seemed to validate the conspiracy theorists, when Patrick McCartan’s diplomatic efforts convinced the Moscow government to take the dramatic step of recognizing the Irish Republic. McCartan and Russian diplomats drafted a treaty in 1920 that pledged mutual military support in order to ‘co-operate in the interest of the advancement of the human race and for the liberation of all people from imperialistic exploitation and oppression’.<sup>116</sup> Neither the Dáil nor the Soviet government ratified this treaty, in part because the Russians initiated a policy of rapprochement with Britain over the next year.<sup>117</sup> Nonetheless, British forces captured a draft in June 1921 and published it to undermine support for Irish republicans.<sup>118</sup>

112 NAI, DFA ES, Box 34, File 329, ‘Extract from a letter from George Gavan Duffy to Charles Bewley (Berlin)’, Dublin, 13 February 1922, reproduced in *DIFP*, no. 243.

113 Eunan O’Halpin, *Spying on Ireland: British intelligence and Irish neutrality during the Second World War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 43–4.

114 *The Times*, 5 January 1920.

115 *The Times*, 6 December 1919.

116 NAI, DE, 2/245, ‘Draft of proposed treaty between the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic and the Republic of Ireland (copy)’, May 1920, reproduced in *DIFP*, no. 34.

117 NAI, DFA ES, Box 32, File 228, ‘Memorandum by Patrick McCartan on hopes of recognition of the Irish Republic from the USSR’, June 1921, reproduced in *DIFP*, no. 88.

118 *Intercourse between Bolshevism and Sinn Fein*, London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1921, in NLI, Florence O’Donoghue Papers, MS 31,143; *The Times*, 10 June 1921.



Ireland did have a socialist political party at this time; there were also convinced Marxists within the IRA and the broader republican movement. Organized Irish labour involved itself in the conflict, and activists sought aid from the Communist International in 1919. However, the republican upper echelons were decidedly anti-socialist and this ideology was never strong enough among the rank and file to redefine Irish republicanism as seeking social revolution.<sup>119</sup> The historian Adrian Grant asserts that Irish socialists subordinated their class ideology to nationalism, and depended on the broader republican movement to initiate meaningful action.<sup>120</sup> The Irish activists who appealed to the International did so on the grounds that the republican movement would accept help from any quarter, not that their island was ripe for social revolution.<sup>121</sup>

Nonetheless the association with socialism proved damaging for Sinn Féin. The Duke of Northumberland told both Houses of Parliament in July 1920 that both English labour and international Bolsheviks were supporting Egyptian, Indian, and Irish insurrectionists in a ‘world-wide conspiracy which now aims at the destruction of the British Empire’.<sup>122</sup> An anonymous note from the republican foreign ministry states that they were gaining little support in Switzerland owing to ‘an abject terror of Bolshevism with which English propaganda confounds S[inn] F[éin]’.<sup>123</sup> Toronto’s Orange Order newspaper, the *Sentinel and Orange and Protestant Advocate*, reminded its readers that ‘Both Sinn Feinism and Bolshevism were pro-German and anti-British during the war. The present Russian revolutionary government is the only one which has accorded an official recognition to the Sinn Fein Republic.’<sup>124</sup>

The historian Kate O’Malley has shown that, while socialist elements within both Indian and Irish nationalism were sympathetic to Bolshevism, national liberation remained the mainstream goal of both movements.<sup>125</sup> She adds that British officials’ focus on fighting against socialism shows that they prioritized the fight against this ideology as a means of preserving the empire.<sup>126</sup> However, the process also worked on a broader level. Labelling nationalist movements as socialist or portraying them as allied to Bolshevism could be used to define them as an ‘other’, thereby divorcing sympathy from them. While British officials might have been prone to viewing the socialist threat as ever-present, portraying it as such yielded tangible benefits in keeping the public on their side as they battled nationalist movements throughout the empire.

119 Tony Woods in Uinseann MacEoin, ed., *Survivors: the story of Ireland’s struggle as told through some of her outstanding living people*, Dublin: Argenta Publications, 1980, pp. 318–19; Richard English, *Armed struggle: the history of the IRA*, London: Pan Books, 2004, pp. 12–13.

120 Adrian Grant, *Irish socialist republicanism: 1909–36*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012, pp. 23, 32, 138, 165.

121 Emmet O. Connor, ‘Communists, Russia, and the IRA, 1920–1923’, *Historical Journal*, 46, 1, 2003, pp. 115–18.

122 *The Times*, 8 July 1920.

123 NAI, Gavan Duffy Papers, 1125/1, ‘Note on the need for a Foreign Press Bureau’, 1 August 1920, reproduced in *DIFP*, no. 45.

124 *Sentinel and Orange and Protestant Advocate* (Toronto), 14 December 1920.

125 Kate O’Malley, *Ireland, India and empire: Indo-Irish radical connections, 1919–64*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008, p. 47.

126 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

## Partition and its aftermath

Republican appeals to international insurrectionists took place against a backdrop of ongoing violence in Ireland. In northern cities, this often took the form of riots between nationalists and loyalists. While these were motivated by politics and competition for jobs, the fact that most Sinn Féin supporters were Catholics, whereas loyalists were mainly Protestants, intensified these outbreaks. Mob violence in Belfast, sometimes sparked by IRA actions, killed seventy-six people in 1920 alone.<sup>127</sup> Sinn Féin's propaganda organ, the *Irish Bulletin*, dismissed this troubling development as part of a British divide-and-rule scheme. It declared, 'in the twenty-seven counties in which Republicans are in the majority, the persecution of Protestants which the Belfast Pogroms were designed to bring about, has never occurred. The Irish Republic has decreed and insists upon absolute tolerance for all creeds.'<sup>128</sup>

Despite such comprehensive statements, Sinn Féin leaders rarely enunciated any concrete plans for incorporating loyalists into their new state. At times their statements could only alarm their political opponents. In 1917 Eamon de Valera told a pro-Sinn Féin crowd that 'if Ulster stood in the way of the attainment of Irish freedom Ulster should be coerced'.<sup>129</sup> Four years later he vaguely promised that 'we would be able to give them [loyalists] any safeguard which any reasonable person could say they were entitled to'. Yet he felt compelled to add that 'the claims of the minority are unreasonable; but, even so, unreasonable claims we will be ready to consider'.<sup>130</sup> Incomprehensible as he found his domestic opponents, de Valera was consistent in referring to them by their political identity as loyalists rather than their disagreements in religious terms. However, Sinn Féin never resolved the problem of how to mollify Protestant loyalists' fears that their confessional and political identities would be at risk in a state with a nationalist electoral majority.<sup>131</sup>

While republican rhetoric could damage their own cause, far more injurious were actions that could be interpreted as sectarian. Throughout the conflict republicans policed their local communities, disciplining or executing those whom they suspected of aiding the RIC or the British military. The most notorious incident was a series of killings in the Dunmanway area of County Cork in April 1922, after the conflict between the IRA and British forces had ended. IRA members killed thirteen civilians over three days, all Protestant. These killings seemed to confirm the worst fears of those who had characterized the Irish problem as a religious feud all along. British legislators referred to the victims variously by their religious identity as 'Protestants' and their assumed political identity as 'loyalists'.<sup>132</sup> *The Times* suggested that the killings might have been a reprisal for Catholic deaths during the Belfast riots.<sup>133</sup>

Historians fiercely debate who was responsible for these killings and what motivated them, particularly following the publication of Peter Hart's influential and controversial *The I.R.A.*

127 Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish war of independence*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, pp. 154–5.

128 *Irish Bulletin* (Dublin), 10 June 1921.

129 *Anglo-Celt* (Cavan), 21 July 1917.

130 *Nenagh Guardian*, 20 August 1921.

131 Oliver MacDonagh, *States of mind: a study of Anglo-Irish conflict, 1780–1980*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983, pp. 65, 69.

132 John Newman and Ronald McNeill in 'Murders, Cork', *Hansard*, HC Deb, 01 May 1922, vol. 153, c. 986.

133 *The Times*, 29 April 1922.

*and its enemies*. Hart argues that ‘Behind the killings lay a jumble of individual histories and possible motives. In the end, however, the fact of the victims’ religion is inescapable. These men were shot because they were Protestant.’<sup>134</sup> The finality of this last statement deprives the individuals of any political identity, therefore denying their killers a political motive. It also ignores the idea that at least some of the victims may in fact have aided government forces during the conflict. David Fitzpatrick asserts that Hart acknowledged this as a possibility.<sup>135</sup>

Andy Bielenberg argues that some but not all of those killed cooperated with the RIC and the military; others were presumably innocent but got caught up in the violence as they lived in the same houses as the suspects.<sup>136</sup> He adds that many Protestants left Ireland during or after the War of Independence, sometimes owing to IRA intimidation, religious or political.<sup>137</sup> British military documents captured by the republicans show that civilians regularly gathered intelligence on their behalf.<sup>138</sup> Paul McMahon asserts that the British military built an intelligence-gathering organization among loyalists during the First World War.<sup>139</sup> As loyalists were overwhelmingly Protestant, any republican violence against them on political grounds could be construed as sectarian. Patrick Malone, an Irishman representing Tottenham, ominously reminded Parliament in December 1921 that both markers of identity could carry grave implications. He claimed, ‘in the South and West of Ireland, as I know full well, we have no religious difficulty whatever. There no man has suffered on account of his religion. He may have suffered on account of his politics, but never on account of his religious belief.’<sup>140</sup>

The Westminster parliament had already put northern loyalists beyond what many of them considered the danger of nationalist governance. The 1920 Government of Ireland Act partitioned the island into two states. The new Northern Ireland encompassed six of the island’s thirty-two counties and included most of the traditional nine-county province of Ulster. The new state contained about 71.5% of the island’s total Protestants;<sup>141</sup> they lived alongside a substantial Catholic nationalist minority, comprising 33–4% of Northern Ireland’s population.<sup>142</sup>

Many legislators hoped that this partitioning of Ireland would be temporary. Others warned that complicated demographic realities in the two new states militated against such a possibility. Martin Morris, 2nd Baron Killanin and a Catholic loyalist from Galway, told the House of Lords: ‘there will be an accentuation of every cleavage that divides Irish society at the present time .... You talk of founding a Parliament for the North of Ireland and a Parliament for the South of Ireland. That is not geographically correct. What you are really

134 Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 288.

135 David Fitzpatrick, ‘Dr. Regan and Mr. Snide’, *History Ireland*, 20, 3, 2012, pp. 12–13.

136 Andy Bielenberg, ‘Exodus: the emigration of southern Irish Protestants during the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War’, *Past & Present*, 218, 1, 2013, pp. 210–11.

137 *Ibid.*, pp. 210–11, 214–16.

138 NLI, Florence O’Donoghue Papers, MS 31,223(1), ‘From Admiral Queenstown to Capt. Hall, Admiralty’.

139 Paul McMahon, *British spies and Irish rebels: British intelligence and Ireland, 1916–1945*, Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008, pp. 23–4.

140 Patrick Malone in ‘Irish Free State’, *Hansard*, HC Deb, 15 December 1921, vol. 149, cols. 133–258.

141 These figures are based on the 1911 census, summarized in Youssef Courbage, ‘The demographic factor in Ireland’s movement towards partition (1607–1921)’, *Population: An English Selection*, 9, 1997, p. 185.

142 P. A. Compton, ‘Religious affiliation and demographic variability in Northern Ireland’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 1, 4, 1976, p. 436.

doing is founding a Catholic Parliament and a Protestant Parliament.<sup>143</sup> According to Killanin, partition would exacerbate political divisions and provide an environment for their further consolidation as signifiers of confessional identity north and south.

As politicians prepared to open a parliament in Belfast, the loyalist leader Edward Carson appealed for religious tolerance in the northern state. He urged the Ulster Unionist Council in February 1921:

You will be a Parliament for the whole community. We used to say that we could not trust an Irish Parliament in Dublin to do justice to the Protestant minority. Let us take care that that reproach can no longer be made against your Parliament, and from the outset let them see that the Catholic minority have nothing to fear from a Protestant majority.<sup>144</sup>

King George V opened the Belfast parliament in June with a speech promoting an end to the conflict. The masses ignored the plea and marked the first months of governance in Northern Ireland with a fresh series of fatal riots.<sup>145</sup>

On 11 July 1921 the IRA and government forces declared a truce. Republican representatives entered into negotiations with British authorities aimed at solving the 'Irish question'. The Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed in December 1921 and ratified by Dáil Éireann the next month, ended the War of Independence. The agreement did not recognize an all-island republic but created the Irish Free State to govern the twenty-six counties excepting Northern Ireland, thus confirming the two-state settlement.<sup>146</sup> These measures angered many republicans as not conceding enough to a unified Irish nation, including President Eamon de Valera. He denounced the treaty a week after its signing.<sup>147</sup> Northern Ireland's prime minister, James Craig, thought the agreement conceded too much to the republicans. In particular, the requirement that Northern Ireland vote itself out of the Free State seemed to subordinate his government to that of Sinn Féin. Craig also denounced the treaty.<sup>148</sup> While treaty opponents spoke against partition and used this emotive issue to gain support during the Irish Civil War (1922–3) between pro- and anti-treaty Sinn Féin factions, they did not enunciate a workable alternative.<sup>149</sup>

Irish republicans' international comrades also denounced the treaty as a betrayal of nationalist ideology. The Egyptian nationalist Makram Ebeid wrote to Art Ó Briain, declaring that 'to be half free is to be half slave ... Ireland will and can and must be completely free for Ireland no longer belong[s] to herself but is the most glorious product of suffering humanity and her freedom is also precious to humanity as to herself.'<sup>150</sup> Shapurji Saklatvala wrote to Ó Briain on behalf of Indian and the Egyptian nationalists, calling the treaty 'a loud warning to

143 Martin Morris, Lord Killanin, in 'Government of Ireland bill', *Hansard*, HL Deb, 24 November 1920, vol. 42, cols. 513–626.

144 *The Times*, 5 February 1921.

145 *The Times*, 11 July, 30 August, 2 September, and 22 November 1921.

146 *Irish Independent* (Dublin), 7 December 1921.

147 *New York Times*, 9 December 1921.

148 *The Times*, 16 December 1921.

149 Eoin O'Duffy, in 'Debate on treaty', 4 January 1922, Dáil Éireann Debate, vol. T, no. 11, <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1922/01/04/00003.asp> (consulted 17 April 2015).

150 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8428/32, W. Makram Ebeid to Art Ó Briain, 9 December 1921.

these Eastern peoples that idealism is illegal, and decent submission, made comfortable and fine, is the only available course'.<sup>151</sup>

The international ramifications of the treaty became an issue in the debate over whether or not the Irish would accept it. The anti-treaty faction within Sinn Féin and the IRA criticized the pact as wilfully leading their country – which they saw as an independent republic – into the British empire. Anti-imperialist rhetoric featured prominently in their propaganda. One issue of the anti-treaty circular *Heads Up!* declared: 'Ireland and India and Egypt were beginning to be three big wars. By making a Provisional Peace with Ireland she could set 100,000 men free to crush the others.'<sup>152</sup> Sensitive to such criticism, the pro-treaty leader Arthur Griffith responded that he put Irish nationalism before revolutionary internationalism when he wrote, 'What about the poor Egyptians and the poor Indians? Well, I sympathise with these people, but I sympathise with my own countrymen first.' He added that Irish people would be far less likely to participate in empire-building under the treaty than they had been as an integral part of the United Kingdom. Griffith wrote, 'If we want to help the Egyptians and the Indians it is not by keeping on the present state ... but by ending the system by which Irishmen could be dragged away to fight England's battles.'<sup>153</sup>

Both sides of the argument had a basis in fact. As a result of the treaty the British army disbanded its Irish regiments, except those recruited from Northern Ireland.<sup>154</sup> On evacuating the rest of Ireland the Army Council ordered 3,542 of the almost 40,000 soldiers stationed there to proceed immediately to India, and another 489 to Egypt.<sup>155</sup> The peace agreement freed up these troops – and another 50,000 whom the Cabinet had planned to send to Ireland in the event of a renewal of hostilities – for assignment elsewhere.<sup>156</sup>

The disbanding of the Irish regiments and the British military evacuation highlights the extent to which republicans wished to dissociate themselves from empire-building. Michael Silvestri argues that the post-revolutionary Irish state valued its revolutionary character more highly than the long-standing tradition of Irish people contributing to the growth of the British empire, asserting that the contemporary Irish state's symbolic support for international anti-imperialist movements has displaced both the island's imperial legacy and the reality of contact and cooperation between revolutionaries of different nationalisms.<sup>157</sup>

## Conclusions

The presumed role of the British empire as a protector of religious minorities did not lead to reconciliation in any of the societies analysed here. In Egypt, India, and Ireland, maintaining

151 NLI, Art Ó Briain Papers, MS 8429/3, Art Ó Briain to Emmet Dalton, 10 December 1921.

152 *Heads Up!* (Dublin), 29 January 1922, in BMH, Contemporary Documents, 227/34/817.

153 Arthur Griffith, *Arguments for the treaty*, Dublin: Martin Lester, n.d., p. 30, in NLI, William O'Brien Papers, LO P102.

154 *The Times*, 11 February 1922.

155 TNA (UK), War Office files, WO/35/182A, H. J. Creedy to C. F. N. Macready, 8 December 1921; Charles Townshend, *The British campaign in Ireland, 1919–1921: the development of political and military policies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 175.

156 UK (TNA), Cabinet Papers, CAB/21/243, Laming Worthington-Evans, 'Ireland: memorandum by the Secretary of State for War', 22 October 1921.

157 Silvestri, *Ireland and India*, pp. 208, 210–11.

imperial ties deepened rather than eased religious tensions. Rather than erasing the religious characteristics of the two Irish states, the passage of time encouraged politicians to imbue their polities with an ever-stronger confessional identity. James Craig was still the prime minister of Northern Ireland when he declared in 1934, ‘in the South they boasted of a Catholic State. They still boast of Southern Ireland being a Catholic State. All I boast of is that we are a Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State.’<sup>158</sup> Eamon de Valera regained power in the 1930s, and his rhetoric remained as unappealing to Protestant loyalists then as it had been in his days as a revolutionary leader. During a radio address to the United States on St Patrick’s Day, 1935, de Valera asserted, ‘Since the coming of St. Patrick, fifteen hundred years ago, Ireland has been a Christian and a Catholic nation ... She remains a Catholic nation.’<sup>159</sup> Despite statements such as this, the constitution that de Valera’s government passed in 1937 not only recognized the ‘special position’ of the Catholic Church but also acknowledged the Church of Ireland, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, Jewish congregations, and other religious groups as crucial elements of Irish society.<sup>160</sup> From this we can see that the nationalist commitment to pluralism did not disappear altogether.

Irish republicans’ international comrades fared little better in promoting religious harmony in their countries. The British government granted Egypt home rule in 1922. Max Guirguis asserts that the state favoured Coptic Christians, and the government faced challenges from the armed wing of the Muslim Brotherhood until its overthrow in 1952. Thereafter, the country’s new rulers marginalized Copts, triggering a widespread exodus of this minority group.<sup>161</sup>

Cooperation between Hindu and Muslim nationalists in India eventually collapsed. The idea that British governance exacerbated religious tensions in India and then used these to justify colonial policy persisted. Referring to deficiencies in the 1919 Government of India Act, Baron Amptill said in 1924: ‘we witness, as the result of our well meant endeavours and our conciliatory offers, a sudden and bitter recrudescence of religious and racial antagonism’.<sup>162</sup> Three years later, Art Ó Briain’s old friend Shapurji Saklatvala repeated these accusations in Parliament. Responding to a speech by Earl Winterton, Saklatvala said: ‘the Noble Lord stands up here to-day and says, “We are ruling India because there are depressed classes of Mohammedans and minorities.” It is all bunkum and non-sense. The oppressors of India ape [sic] here. You are responsible as a country ... for all that ill-picture which has been painted of India.’<sup>163</sup> The sense of difference that some Muslims felt from other Indians gradually developed into full-fledged nationalism. In 1933 a group of London-based Muslims expressed a demand that their co-religionists in the five north-western Indian provinces in which they

158 James Craig, Lord Craigavon, in ‘Rights of the minority’, 24 April 1934, *Stormont Papers*, vol. 16, cols. 1095–6, <http://stormontpapers.ahds.ac.uk/stormontpapers/pageview.html?volumeno=16&pageno=1101#fwd-16-1093> (consulted 17 April 2015).

159 *Irish Press* (Dublin), 18 March 1935.

160 Gerard Hogan, ‘Foreword’, in Dermot Keogh and Andrew J. McCarthy, *The making of the Irish constitution, 1937: Bunreacht na hÉireann*, Cork: Mercier, 2007, p. 17.

161 Max Guirguis, ‘Islamic resurgence and its consequences in the Egyptian experience’, *Mediterranean Studies*, 20, 2, 2012, pp. 190–6.

162 Arthur Russell, Lord Amptill, in ‘India’, *Hansard*, HL Deb, 31 July 1924, vol. 59, cols. 127–86.

163 Shapurji Saklatvala in ‘Government of India Act’, *Hansard*, HC Deb, 25 November 1927, vol. 210, cols. 2215–98.

formed a majority should be recognized as a distinct nation called Pakistan.<sup>164</sup> Winston Churchill remarked on how closely the demand resembled that of Ulster loyalists for separate treatment in the 1910s and 1920s. After the Second World War, the former British Raj was partitioned into two states in 1947 and into three by 1971.<sup>165</sup>

In a 1984 comparative study of Ireland, India, and Palestine, T. G. Fraser argued that partition was in each case a last resort, never a preferred solution: ‘in allowing certain groups to realise their political aspirations, partition frustrated others’.<sup>166</sup> However, in none of these cases was political affiliation the sole dividing line of partition. Instead religion was made the defining marker of identity in these societies. However much nationalists might protest, the Republic of Ireland became defined and eventually defined itself as a Catholic state, and Northern Ireland as a Protestant state. Through partition and a significant post-independence population exchange, India became a state of Hindus while Pakistan became a state of Muslims.<sup>167</sup>

The revolutionary groups highlighted here might have unrealistically denied the extent of religious tensions in their respective countries, but they represent radical optimism that their secular vision of nationalism could overcome sectarian divisions. The Irish case and its parallels with Egyptian and Indian nationalists highlight this hopefulness. If nationalists’ secular rhetoric and aspirations failed to create lasting unity or even peaceful coexistence in these societies, so did the government-imposed solutions of prolonged imperial government and partition. The tactic of partition – creating political units in which one religious-political identity group is separated from another – resulted in hostile or internally divided states rather than long-term tranquillity. The antagonism between India and Pakistan, a deeply divided Egypt, and a three-decade civil conflict in Northern Ireland are imperial legacies as much as testaments to religious fervour. The confluence of political and religious identities continues to play a role in revolutionary movements around the world. External forces are often eager to tout one of these definitions over the other in attempts to legitimize their involvement in countries in the midst of revolutionary change.<sup>168</sup>

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164 Choudhary Rahmat Ali, ‘Now or never’, in G. Allana, ed., *Pakistan movement: historic documents*, Karachi: Nawa-i-Waqt, 1968, p. 115.

165 Deirdre McMahon, ‘The 1947 partition of India: Irish parallels’, *History Ireland*, 18, 4, 2010, pp. 40, 43.

166 T. G. Fraser, *Partition in Ireland, India and Palestine: theory and practice*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p. 192.

167 McMahon, ‘1947 partition of India’, p. 43.

168 Saba Mahmood, ‘Religious freedom, the minority question, and geopolitics in the Middle East’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 54, 2, 2012, pp. 418–46.