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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: New Histories of the Irish Revolution

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The centenary of the Irish Revolution has just concluded, with 2023 marking the hundredth anniversary of the 'dump arms' order which ended, albeit ambiguously, the civil war of 1922–3. European history has been accustomed to marking centenaries during the past ten years, from the First World War which overturned a global order, to the Russian Revolution which created a new one, to the post-war national reverberations which created revolutions of their own. The enthusiasm with which these have been marked across Europe has varied considerably, with the sombre *ne plus jamais* tones of the centenary of the First World War giving way rapidly to the muted if not entirely absent commemorations of the October Revolution in Russia. The island of Ireland has perhaps been more wedded than elsewhere in Europe to the relentless treadmill of centenaries, with the Irish state formally dating its existence to the vanguardist rebellion, popular mandates and political institutions that occurred between 1916 and 1922, and Northern Ireland being dated to 1920. The 'Decade of Centenaries', as it is known in Ireland, has been unfolding according to a carefully arranged schedule since 2012; the end, marking the ambiguous conclusion of the Irish Civil War, is finally upon us. The implications of the 'Decade' for public history, for the position of professional historians within and outside the academy, and for the broader understanding of the revolutionary decade are significant and have generated their own critical literature.[1]

The Irish Revolution is unusual (although not unique) in the history of revolutions: an anti-colonial revolution within Europe; contemporaneous with but ultimately resistant to the influence of socialist revolution after 1917; part of the 'shatter zone' of empires after 1918 yet with Ireland itself still implicated in British imperial expansion and administration for decades after 1922–3. Despite a comparatively low death toll by European standards, the divisions engendered by partition, civil war and the sundering of the revolutionary movement continue to reverberate in Irish political life across the island down to the present day. Yet, notwithstanding the immense public and scholarly interest vested in the Irish Revolution over the last ten years, its historiography has continued to be overshadowed, at least until very recently, by the 'revisionism' controversy, which has seen furious scholarly and public debates whirling around the legitimacy of political violence, especially in light of Northern Ireland's ongoing peace process. As a result, new historical methodologies have been relatively slow to be adopted or adapted, and much of the existing scholarship has continued to operate in a particularist mode and to see (often high) politics as the most important lens through which to view the Irish Revolution, with layers of detail being added to what often feels like an essentially static picture. As we approach the end of this centennial decade, what new approaches, insights and methodologies have Irish historians generated in their analysis of the revolutionary decade? Moreover, what can

[1] See Sara Dybris McQuaid and Fearghal McGarry, eds., 'Special Issue: Politics and Narrative in Ireland's Decade of Commemorations', *Éire-Ireland*, 57, 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2022), 8–24; Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, 'Historians and the Decade of Centenaries in Modern Ireland', *Contemporary European History*, forthcoming; Éoin Flannery and Eugene O'Brien, 'Special Issue: Critiquing Crisis and Commemoration', *Irish Studies Review*, 30, 4 (2022), 375–86; Mary Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan, eds., *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007); Roisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Meaning, Memory and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013); John Horne and Edward Madigan, eds., *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution, 1912–1923* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013).

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the history of the Irish Revolution offer to European history? This special issue aims to address both those questions and to offer a new framework for approaching the history of the revolution in Ireland, with implications, we believe, for historians beyond our field.

What all of the articles in this special issue have in common, beyond their overlapping themes that are detailed below, is their approach: the use of primarily political sources to write what might be considered cultural history. The late Peter Hart commented that the Irish Revolution was 'the best documented in the world' and the digitisation initiatives that occurred during the Decade of Centenaries have made those documents globally and freely accessible in an unprecedented and perhaps unparalleled way.[2] The contributors to this special issue each interrogate these political sources – military correspondence, paramilitary personnel files, pension records, witness statements, political correspondence, surveillance documents – to explore questions of revolutionary participation, legacy and memory, the dynamics of transnational networks and the long-overlooked spatial dimensions of revolutionary violence. In doing so, they offer a model for historians of other revolutions and political conflicts of all sorts for a new history bridging politics and culture, which gets closer to answering the question of how the revolution was experienced, and how it continued to resonate in the lives of participants, survivors and victims throughout their lives.

An Irish Revolution?

What, and when, was the Irish Revolution? 'If revolutions are what happens to wheels', wrote the historian David Fitzpatrick in 1974, 'then Ireland underwent a revolution between 1916 and 1923 . . . social and political institutions were turned upside-down, only to revert full circle on the establishment of the Irish Free State.'[3] This characteristically pithy *bon mot* in his landmark revolutionary study, *Politics and Irish Life* (discussed in greater depth below), encapsulates some of the scepticism with which historians have often treated the radical claims of Ireland's path towards independence. Although the term 'the Irish Revolution' is by now well embedded in both academic and popular discourse, the degree to which events in Ireland between 1912 and 1923 (or 1916 and 1923, or 1919 and 1923) constituted a 'proper' revolution by European and/or global standards has been the subject of some debate and occasionally some soul-searching among Irish scholars. The 'unfinished' nature of Ireland's achievement of independence from the United Kingdom in 1922, with the partition of the island in 1920 remaining in place and the retention of the British Crown as head of state in Dublin until 1937, has led some scholars to question whether there was a revolution at all.[4] Others have identified a radical revolution stymied and smothered by a counter-revolutionary backlash after 1921 (or, as R. F. Foster suggests, after 1917).[5] Others still have seen a 'long revolution', stretching from the beginnings of agitation for land reform in the 1870s to the achievement of partial independence in 1922.[6] Marc Mulholland has recently explored both the genealogy and taxonomy of the term 'Irish

[2] Peter Hart, *The IRA At War, 1916–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5–6; Hannah K. Smyth, '"Permanent Reminders": Digital Archives and the Irish Commemorative Impulse' in Sara Dybris McGarry and Fearghal McQuaid (eds), 'Special Issue: Politics and Narrative in Ireland's Decade of Commemorations', *Éire-Ireland*, 57, 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2022), 166–88.

[3] David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921: Provincial Experiences of War and Revolution* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977), 232.

[4] Aidan Beatty, 'An Irish Revolution Without a Revolution', *Journal of World Systems Research: Special Issue: Ireland in the World System*, 22, 1 (2016), 54–76. Note also the question mark in David Fitzpatrick's edited collection *Revolution? Ireland 1917–1923* (Dublin: Trinity History Workshop Publications, 1990).

[5] John M. Regan, *The Irish Counter-Revolution, 1921–1936: Treatyite Politics and Settlement in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2000); R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890–1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2014).

[6] Recently, Terence Dooley has returned to this thesis, arguing for a bifurcated revolutionary process in Ireland that revolved around land redistribution: an initial wave in the 1880s and 1890s, and a resurgence of 'land hunger' serving as a driving force for social radicalisation and mass mobilisation in the 1920s. Terence Dooley, *Burning the Big House: The Story of the Irish Country House in a Time of War and Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2022). See also Fergus Campbell,

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Revolution', suggesting that the label was relatively belatedly adopted (after the benign nature of the colour revolutions of the 1980s stripped the term of its frisson for centrists, and after 'left-liberals' recast revolution as a 'festive anticipation of contemporary cultural ideals').[7] By Mulholland's measure, the Irish Revolution fell short on nine defining characteristics of revolution, from class conflict and mass mobilisation to the mutually radicalising spirals of revolutionary and reactionary ideologies. Instead, he argues, Ireland and Britain fought a 'small international war', albeit one that had fleeting 'revolutionary potential'.[8] Mulholland's stringency is, however, rare in the field and more of a piece with the second generation of revolutionary sociology – particularly the restrictive model proposed by Theda Skocpol – than its more recent incarnations.[9] But measuring Ireland's revolution alongside the three great revolutionary models of France, Russia and China, with wholescale social and structural transformations alongside a transfer of political sovereignty, is to set a formidable bar to be reached, rare in human history.

If we are to reject narrow definitions, what are we left with? Charles Tilly, in an influential formulation that was repeated across a large body of work, offers an alternative, more expansive definition:

> A revolution is a transfer of power over a state in the course of which at least two distinct blocs make incompatible claims to control the state, and some significant portion of the population subject to the state's jurisdiction acquiesces in the claims of each bloc . . . We can usefully distinguish between revolutionary situations and outcomes. A revolutionary situation consists of an open division of sovereignty, while a revolutionary outcome entails a definitive transfer of power.[10]

This distinction between a revolutionary situation and a revolutionary outcome goes some way to addressing the objections of scholars who emphasise the reactionary nature of Irish governments in (semi-)independent Ireland, as well as those who interpret this as a result of Ireland's lingering post-colonial condition. Peter Hart, perhaps the scholar who did most to advance the scholarly agenda of the Irish Revolution after the initial early steps of the 1970s, followed Tilly's looser definition of revolution, although he also emphasised the revolutionary process, or struggle, as an essential component of the definition.[11] Since Hart's body of work, and reflecting his influence, the term 'Irish Revolution' has become increasingly dominant in describing the events between 1912 and 1923, displacing older terms such as the 'Anglo-Irish War' or the 'Tan War' and enveloping constituent events such as the Easter Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War.[12] The ambiguity encapsulated by the 'revolutionary situation' is also useful in relation to the northern part of the island: in what became

Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–1921 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) and D. George Boyce, *The Revolution in Ireland, 1879–1923* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988).

[7] Marc Mulholland, 'How Revolutionary was "the Irish Revolution"', *Éire-Ireland*, 56, 1 & 2 (Spring 2021), 143–79.

[8] Ibid., 178.

[9] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); John Dunn, *Modern Revolutions: An Introduction to the Analysis of a Political Phenomenon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Jack Goldstone, ed., *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*, 2nd edn (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

[10] Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834* (London: Routledge, 2005, first published 1995), 237.

[11] Peter Hart, 'Defining the Irish Revolution', in Joost Augusteijn, ed., *The Irish Revolution, 1912–1923* (London: Springer, 2003), 17–33.

[12] Recent surveys in the *Princeton History of Ireland*, the *Oxford Handbook of Irish History* and the *Cambridge History of Ireland* have used the term 'the Irish Revolution', albeit without always reflecting on its suitability. An exception is Fearghal McGarry's chapter in the *Cambridge History of Ireland* which ascribes the adoption of the term 'revolution' to an 'acknowledging not only the radical nature of the process by which a transfer of political sovereignty was brought about by violence, but also the extent to which it was bound up with wider strands of sectarian, agrarian and intra-communal conflict'. Fearghal McGarry, 'Revolution, 1916–1923', in Thomas Bartlett, ed., *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Vol. 4: 1880 – Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 259–60. See also Hart, *The IRA at War*, 10–14.

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Northern Ireland, a highly successful counter-revolution was waged, with an even more substantial counter-mobilisation than the would-be revolutionaries managed, accompanied by a coldly pragmatic use – or tolerance – of counter-revolutionary violence at the highest political level. Recent scholarship on the turbulent birth and early years of Northern Ireland has avoided the cardinal error of 'partitionism', emphasising the entangled nature of violence north and south of the border, while allowing due scope for the specific form that sectarian urbanised violence took in Northern Ireland.[13] The extent to which including the six Ulster counties in histories of the Irish Revolution might trouble, destabilise or transform the interpretative frameworks long established by Irish historians largely remains to be grappled with, notwithstanding some important work on gendered violence touched on below. Nevertheless, the complications inherent in taking the island of Ireland as the unit of analysis remain a useful reminder for historians of Ireland – and beyond – to be wary of neat labels when it comes to explaining the dynamics of revolution.[14]

Looking more broadly, David Motadel's recent *Revolutionary World* offers a fruitful framework to consider the Irish Revolution as part of an overlapping revolutionary ecosystem, straddling multiple revolutionary waves, each with their own ideological character.[15] The Irish Revolution challenges the conventional temporal structure which overlays the ideologically demarcated history and geography of revolutions. In its emphasis on its own revolutionary tradition it had roots in the Atlantic revolutions of the eighteenth century and the Young Europe movements of the nineteenth century. Its beginnings were similar to constitutional revolutions occurring roughly simultaneously across Europe's major empires, but it gained momentum (and sought to position itself) as part of the global Wilsonian moment. Irish socialists staged their rebellion a year before the Bolshevik revolutions and the Irish Revolution as a whole anticipated the widespread anti-colonial revolutions that spread globally after 1945. One could even make a case that the clericalism which characterised independent Ireland was akin to the Islamist revolutions of the 1970s and 1980s. As such, the Irish Revolution is not *sui generis*; rather it mirrors, echoes and anticipates the global history of revolution. It stands as a hinge between the secret societies of the nineteenth-century radical tradition and the mass mobilisations of the twentieth century.

The question of whether Ireland underwent a revolution between 1912 and 1923 is not merely one of political science taxonomy, however. Underlying it are more recent substantive debates, including the degree to which debates over Ireland's (possibly) revolutionary past were played out in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, as the Northern Ireland Troubles dominated politics on the island. If there had indeed been a revolution in Ireland in the 1910s and 1920s, even one short-lived or strangled at birth, then those claiming to carry on that revolutionary tradition in the 1970s and 1980s would, the argument went, be boosted. As John Regan has argued, the emphasis on the 'constitutional' (as distinct from the revolutionary) tradition in Irish political history in the same period was one part of these broader epistemological battles over Ireland's past and Ireland's present.[16] This was frequently a coded, allusive debate, encapsulated by the terms identified by Charles Townshend as preferred alternatives to the word 'revolution' in this period: 'struggle for independence', 'rebellion', 'takeover',

[13] Robert Lynch, *The Partition of Ireland, 1918–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). See also the excellent public history work of Kieran Glennon, available at https://thebelfastpogrom.com/ (last accessed 12 May 2023) and Paddy Mulroe, available at https://theborderkitchen.blog/ (last accessed 12 May 2023).

[14] David Fitzpatrick's, *The Two Irelands, 1912–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) is a sparkling but rare example of a whole-island approach.

[15] David Motadel, ed., *Revolutionary World: Global Upheaval in the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[16] John M. Regan, 'Southern Irish Nationalism as a Historiographical Problem', *The Historical Journal*, 50, 1 (Mar. 2007), 197–223. See also Evi Gotzaridis, *Trials of Irish History: Genesis and Evolution of a Reappraisal, 1938–2000* (London: Routledge, 2007) and Margaret O'Callaghan, 'Genealogies of Partition: History, History-Writing and "the Troubles" in Ireland', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 9, 4 (2006), 619–34. See also Alvin Jackson, 'Irish History in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries', in Alvin Jackson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2014), 3–21.

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'violence and separatism', 'Troubles', and 'war'.[17] The growth of the term 'revolution' in the historiography from the 1990s onwards, then, coincides with the beginnings of the peace process in Northern Ireland, a not immaterial coincidence. But there were other factors explaining the increasing frequency of the term from the 1990s: the growing availability of personal papers associated with the revolutionary period following the establishment of the University College Dublin Archives Department and the lapsing of the convention, associated with the professionalisation of the Irish historical profession, that a thirty-year rule was best applied to historical subjects as well as to state papers (for scholars could not write about the one without the other). One of the lasting implications of this is that the writing of contemporary history in Ireland has been relatively slow to develop and disproportionately the preserve of those working in politics or sociology departments. For our purposes, the consequences of this for the historiography of the revolution were stark: from the beginning of the professionalisation of Irish history writing in the 1930s, the Irish Revolution was not in scope according to the rules the profession set itself. Memoirs, journalistic accounts and literary interpretations of course emerged, but it was not until the 1970s, as we shall see, that the Irish Revolution was the subject of historical research in the way we understand it today.

A Revolutionary Situation

The narrative of the principal events of Ireland's revolution is easily traced. By 1914, the long campaign of mainstream and moderate Irish nationalism appeared to have achieved its goal, with the passage of the Third Home Rule Act through parliament. This act, which granted a limited measure of devolved self-government to Ireland – crucially, financial, foreign policy and defence remained with Westminster – was then shelved for the duration of the First World War, after a formidable campaign of extra-parliamentary opposition was mounted by Ulster unionists, in collaboration with members of the Conservative Party. In the eighteen months before the war, Irish politics was paramilitarised on all sides: Ulster unionists formed a Ulster Volunteer Force to oppose Home Rule; moderate Irish nationalists formed a Irish Volunteer Force to defend it; and 'advanced' Irish nationalists worked within the Irish Volunteers to subvert it to their own, more extreme, ends of a state independent of the United Kingdom.[18] In the midst of this polarisation, which came perilously close to civil war, the outbreak of conflict between Britain, France and Russia, on the one hand, and the Central Powers, on the other, paradoxically afforded some breathing space as well as an alternative front to carry on domestic politics. Irish recruitment to the war effort was thus at least partly framed as a demonstration of loyalty to the Home Rule project and the bona fides of the soon-to-be devolved Ireland within the Empire; Ulster recruitment, conversely, served to demonstrate loyalty to King and Country above and beyond the betrayals of Westminster politicians.[19]

In April 1916, a small group of rebels – comprised of the minority of Irish Volunteers who had split from the parent body over its support for the war effort, along with the socialist Irish Citizen Army and the revolutionary secret society the Irish Republican Brotherhood, in conjunction with the women's auxiliary organisation, Cumann na mBan – staged a short-lived rebellion in Dublin. It was less substantive than they had hoped: German arms failed to materialise, internal confusion

[17] Charles Townshend, 'Historiography: Telling the Irish Revolution', in Augusteijn, *The Irish Revolution*, 1–16.

[18] There is much excellent scholarship on the Third Home Rule/Ulster Crisis. See D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day, eds., *The Ulster Crisis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006); Paul Bew, *Ideology and the Irish Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); James McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013); and Timothy Bowman, *Carson's Army: The Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910–1922* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

[19] Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta, eds., *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All'?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); John Horne, ed., *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008); Fionnuala Walsh, *Irishwomen and the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

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resulted in a countermanding order that set the plans back by a day and resulted in a chaotic mobilisation and, despite earlier plans for a national rising, action was largely confined to Dublin. With Ireland's capital city in ruins, the rebel leadership surrendered 'in order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin civilians'.[20] The leadership was executed after brief field court-martials, fifteen shot at dawn in the fortnight that followed. The sixteenth, Roger Casement, was hanged in London in August. Rank and file rebels were deported to prisons or internment camps in England and Wales, along with a large number of suspected radicals. Before long, the Rising was dubbed the 'Sinn Féin Rebellion', after a small political party founded in 1907. Up to then, Sinn Féin was best known for its founder's advocacy of the 'Austro-Hungarian model' which proposed to reframe the relationship between Britain and Ireland along the lines of a dual monarchy, rather than a republic. But in the aftermath of the Rising, more extreme Irish nationalism began to regroup around the Sinn Féin label and something of an internal takeover ensued. With Rising veterans in key leadership positions in the party, and with the paramilitary Irish Volunteers also reorganising after widespread prisoner releases in 1917, Sinn Féin won three Westminster by-election victories that year. Capitalising on war-weariness, widespread hostility to the threat of British-imposed conscription and public sympathy for the executed and imprisoned rebels, Sinn Féin won a landslide victory over the moderate home rulers in the Westminster election of December 1918, with the expansion of the franchise, including women for the first time, also in their favour.[21]

Having stood on a platform of abstaining from the illegitimate Westminster parliament and instead appealing to the post-war peace conferences for recognition of the Irish right to self-determination, the elected Sinn Féin members were true to their word: on 21 January 1919, an underground parliament, Dáil Éireann, met for the first time at the Mansion House in Dublin. There, a Declaration of Independence was made, along with the adoption of a Democratic Programme, a nod to a more socialist-leaning Irish republicanism that was ultimately more honoured in the breach than the observance. On the same day, a unit of the Irish Republican Army – the name the Irish Volunteers increasingly applied to themselves – attacked and killed two Royal Irish Constabulary policemen in County Tipperary. These events signalled the beginning of the Irish War of Independence, but the impression they projected of a unified politico-military strategy and campaign was misleading, as the timing was coincidental. Indeed, the relationship between the political and military leadership of the Irish revolutionary movement was at times opaque and strained.[22] The political leadership's principal aim was twofold: to establish a viable 'alternative government' in British Ireland, sapping the British ability *de facto* to wield military, legal and financial control, and to win over international political opinion to, in turn, pressurise the British to grant Ireland the right to unfettered self-determination. In the first of these, they enjoyed some success: successive local election results in 1920 showed a sustained transfer of popular support to the republican movement, along with the associated collection of rates; the Dáil courts almost entirely replaced the British justice system in Ireland by the autumn of 1920; and the boycott campaign that targeted the police, followed by the wave of IRA attacks on the security personnel, saw the British policing presence, once so dominant across rural Ireland, substantially reduced and confined to the towns. As for the second, the record was mixed. Despite an energetic diplomatic and propaganda campaign, with considerable money and effort devoted to securing US support in

[20] The shelf of books on the Easter Rising is vast and has grown substantially since 2016. For two authoritative overviews, see Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Penguin, 2006); and Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising: Easter 1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). For essential background, see Foster, *Vivid Faces*.

[21] James McConnel, 'The Franchise Factor in the Defeat of the Irish Parliamentary Party, 1885–1918', *The Historical Journal*, 47, 2 (2004), 355–78; Martin O'Donoghue, '"Ireland's Independence Day": the 1918 Election Campaign in Ireland and the Wilsonian Moment', *European Review of History*, 26, 5 (2019), 834–54; Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party 1916–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 122–68.

[22] For more on this, see Charles Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence* (London: Allen Lane, 2013) and Maryann Valiulis, *Portrait of a Revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the Foundation of the Irish Free State* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1992). There are many useful maps and much statistical information to be found in John Borgonovo et al., eds., *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017).

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particular for Irish independence, the Irish separatists failed to secure an audience for their claims at the Paris Peace Conference, and the much hoped-for intervention from Woodrow Wilson did not transpire.

The military strategy was in part aligned with the political one but depended heavily on local initiative, from arms raids to gun-running to ambushes. For much of 1919, the Volunteers in the Irish Republican Army focused on making up for their lack of weaponry, obtaining guns from demobilised soldiers and raiding the more formidable police barracks dotted across Ireland. The conduct and response to these raids grew increasingly violent and soon IRA units were launching ambushes against Crown forces wherever they could find them. RIC ranks were depleted by a wave of resignations (as well as those killed in action) and their reinforcement from March 1920 with hastily recruited forces made up of veterans from the First World War introduced two formidable groups to the Irish context: the Black and Tans, named for their haphazard uniforms, and the Auxiliaries, mostly ex-army officers.[23] The arrival of these two counter-insurgency forces was explosive – bolstering not only Crown forces but also the republican narrative of a war of liberation against a foreign occupier – and moved the conflict up a gear. The word 'reprisals' entered the lexicon: the collective punishment of the civilian population, shootings, burnings and lootings, as well as the economic destruction of cooperative creameries, in retaliation for IRA attacks on Crown forces. The reprisals policy, tolerated and sanctioned at an official level, was a core part of the British state response to the Irish Revolution. This was not just hotheads running amok, enraged by the deaths of their comrades (although that may have been part of it); it was also a deliberate strategy to make clear to civilians the price of silence and giving aid to the 'enemy'.[24] As conditions deteriorated across Ireland in the summer of 1920, 'normal' justice ceased to function, along with the capacity of the British judicial system to apprehend and convict IRA members.[25] Shooting 'known Sinn Féiners', as the phrase went, thus often ran alongside sacking and burning a town. Crown reprisals, however, only worked up to a point. In a world of increasing connectivity, with active publicity/propaganda campaigns being carried out by the republican shadow administration and foreign correspondents aplenty visiting Ireland, the brutality of reprisals was politically counter-productive and had a major impact on British public opposition to the campaign in Ireland, as well as on international opinion. It also was financially costly: at a time when Britain was facing imperial overstretch, the conflict in Ireland tied up 80,000 troops and was estimated to cost the British £20 million a year.[26]

The declaration of martial law in the winter of 1920–1 in a number of counties in the south of Ireland signalled the essential collapse of the British civil administration in Ireland, while military courts and internment camps extended across the whole of the country. Dublin remained an epicentre, particularly of IRA intelligence activity, culminating in the stunningly effective Bloody Sunday operation of 21 November 1920, when fourteen British intelligence agents were killed in their homes at dawn. In retaliation, Crown forces opened fire later that afternoon on a crowd watching a sports match at Croke Park, the home of Gaelic games, killing fourteen civilians. However, despite the perception of widespread state breakdown, there were significant variations in the levels of violence across Ireland. Much depended on local initiative and, despite efforts to professionalise the IRA by its GHQ in late 1920, generating an enormous array of reports, communiques and general orders for future historians, there remained an uneasy tension between the command structures of a traditional army and the autonomy of a locally-rooted, 'men of the soil' revolutionary vanguard. Attempts to

[23] David M. Leeson, *The Black and Tans: British Police and Auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence, 1920–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[24] For a close analysis of the dynamics of some of these reprisals, see James S. Donnelly, '"Unofficial" British Reprisals and IRA Provocations, 1919–20: The Cases of Three Cork Towns', *Éire-Ireland*, 45, 1 (2012), 152–97.

[25] On Dáil courts, see Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution: Dail Courts, 1920–1924* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994). For the broader context of how the republican movement engaged with British justice, see David Foxton, *Revolutionary Lawyers: Sinn Féin and Crown Courts in Ireland and Britain, 1916–1923* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008).

[26] International public and political opinion, especially in the United States, was a key battleground. See Maurice Walsh, *The News from Ireland: Foreign Correspondents and the Irish Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

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resolve the similarly strained relationship between political and military wings of the movement were only partially successful: the adoption of the Dáil oath from August 1919, where IRA Volunteers swore allegiance to the underground parliament, was decidedly haphazard and it was not until April 1921 that the Dáil formally accepted responsibility for the IRA's military campaign.[27] The mutual suspicion between 'politicians' and 'military men' would have significant consequences in the years that followed.

The British strategy for dealing with 'the Irish question', as it has been euphemistically known since the early nineteenth century, may appear more coherent in retrospect than it was at the time. The Lloyd George coalition government in London remained nominally committed to some form of all-Ireland home, but the problem of Ulster unionist opposition remained. Moreover, the government coalition also contained members of the Conservative Party who had encouraged Ulster unionists in their near-rebellion against the pre-1914 British government. Unwilling to countenance a republic, or to concede the legitimacy of the IRA campaign by treating the violence as an intra-state 'war', the British government positioned violence in Ireland as primarily a problem of law and order, a policing matter to be dealt with by policing methods – hence the uneasy middle ground of further militarising the RIC via ex-military recruits, but avoiding full-throttle military methods and giving primacy to the army, as had been the case after the Easter Rising.[28] Simultaneously, a political strategy emerged via the Government of Ireland Act, also known as the Fourth Home Rule Act, which partitioned Ireland into Southern Ireland and Northern Ireland – the twenty-six and six county entities which still exist today – establishing two devolved parliaments in Belfast and Dublin.[29] No Irish MP of any political persuasion voted for the scheme and the republican movement dismissed it as an irrelevance, but Ulster unionists proved willing to work the(ir) resulting Belfast institution, comfortable with the parliamentary arithmetic that granted them a healthy two-thirds majority over the Catholic nationalist minority. Despite the non-cooperation of the nationalist minority and the continuation of serious inter-communal violence in the new Northern Ireland in 1921 and 1922, the polity remained largely politically stable for three generations, perhaps unsurprisingly so, given its demographically engineered status.[30]

From the British perspective, the Government of Ireland Act allowed for the settlement of the 'Ulster problem' (regardless of the concerns of minorities left on either side of the border that was drawn through the island of Ireland and the objections of nationalists to the dismemberment of the nation), thus allowing the government to move on to dealing with the bigger 'Irish question'. Despite the bellicose public statements of the prime minister – the British government would never do a deal with a 'murder gang' who were 'terrorising' the Irish people – behind the scenes, a pragmatic group of British civil servants in Dublin Castle were exploring peace terms.[31] The truce, declared on 11 July 1921, took many in the republican movement by surprise, unaware as they were of the perilous nature of weapons and ammunition stocks. Selling the truce to the rank and file, many of whom had believed they were on the cusp of victory, meant emphasising the ceasefire as a temporary measure, a

[27] See Arthur Mitchell, *Revolutionary Government in Ireland: Dáil Éireann, 1919–1922* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1995) for a thoughtful discussion of this. See also Charles Townshend, 'The Irish Republican Army and the Development of Guerrilla Warfare, 1916–1921', *English Historical Review*, 94, 371 (1979), 318–45 and Peter Hart, 'The Geography of Revolution in Ireland, 1917–1923', *Past & Present*, 155, 1 (1997), 142–76.

[28] Kevin Matthews, *Fatal Influence: The Impact of Ireland on British Politics, 1920–1925* (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2004).

[29] See Patrick Maume and Cornelius O'Leary, *Controversial Issues in Anglo-Irish Relations* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004) and Colin Reid, *The Lost Ireland of Stephen Gwynn: Irish Constitutional Nationalism and Cultural Politics, 1864–1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 178–82.

[30] Bryan Follis, *A State Under Siege: The Establishment of Northern Ireland, 1920–1925* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). See also various essays in Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, Marie Coleman and Paul Bew, eds., *Northern Ireland 1921–2021: Centenary Historical Perspectives* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2022).

[31] These initiatives are ably charted in Michael Hopkinson, ed., *The Last Days of Dublin Castle: The Mark Sturgis Diaries* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999). See also Ronan Fanning, *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution, 1910–1923* (London: Faber, 2013).

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period of retraining, re-arming and preparing to re-engage in a renewed round of hostilities in the winter. This messaging meant that the implied compromise inherent in the exchange of letters between leaders of both the British and Irish republican governments was not widely grasped. Negotiations between the two sides revealed further imbalances: the Irish delegation were inexperienced compared to their British counterparts – fresh from rounds of imperial and post-war conferences, they famously did not include President Éamon de Valera, who remained in Dublin, and they were unclear as to their mandate and their red lines (whether or not they had full plenipotentiary powers turned out to be highly significant). In addition, where the British delegation were on familiar territory in London, the Irish were away from home and frequently exhausted from all-night travel back and forth to keep the rest of the cabinet in Dublin fully informed. The British side prioritised sovereignty and the Empire above all else; the Irish, in the end, were instructed to prioritise unity of the island of Ireland, but failed to decisively press this home. The Treaty, signed on the morning of 6 December 1921, settled on an Irish Free State, with an oath of allegiance to the Crown as head of state and a constitutional status akin to the dominions of Canada, South Africa and Australia – far less than the Irish Republic, proclaimed in 1916 and reaffirmed in 1919, had proclaimed, but far more than had been promised by home rule in 1914.[32] Northern Ireland would remain outside the Free State, but a boundary commission would be established to determine territorial transfer between the two. This, the Irish delegation believed, would transfer enough territory to make Northern Ireland politically and economically unviable and would provide the mechanism for the eventual reunification of the island.

All of this proved a compromise too far for many within the republican movement. Although the Treaty was narrowly passed by sixty-three votes to fifty-seven after a series of acrimonious Dáil debates, the gulf between pragmatists and purists remained vast. Both political and military wings of the movement were split: De Valera famously declared that 'the majority had no right to do wrong' and, despite assiduous efforts by Michael Collins and senior officers to hold the IRA together, the army also split decisively at a heated army convention in March 1922. With the 'mutineers' or 'Irregulars' occupying key buildings in the capital – such as Dublin's Four Courts – from April, the scene was set for confrontation.[33] This took longer to arrive than might have been expected as renewed intercommunal violence north of the new border offered a possible vehicle for reconciliation between the two wings of the IRA. But a planned joint IRA offensive against Northern Ireland failed to materialise and Collins was forced to move decisively against the anti-Treaty IRA in the Four Courts after a series of tit-for-tat kidnappings of senior officers on both sides and, crucially, the assassination of the former Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir Henry Wilson in London by two Irish republicans.[34] Under the threat of a British ultimatum and with British-supplied heavy artillery, the newly formed Free State National Army began bombarding the Four Courts on 28 June 1922. The Civil War had begun. Initially the odds appeared stacked against the pro-Treaty side: many of the most active and experienced IRA brigades had gone anti-Treaty, the new Free State army was full of new and untrained recruits and the anti-Treaty IRA controlled large swathes of territory across the western and southern part of the country.[35] But, through the conventional 'military' phase of the Civil War, the Free State National Army gradually made its financial and weaponry advantage tell, through a grinding fight down to Limerick and then a daring series of amphibious

[32] Recent useful scholarship on the Treaty includes Charles Townshend, *The Partition: Ireland Divided, 1885–1925* (London: Penguin, 2021); Gretchen Friemann, *The Treaty* (Dublin: Sandycove Press, 2021); Sean Donnelly, 'Ireland in the Imperial Imagination: British Nationalism and the Anglo-Irish Treaty', *Irish Studies Review*, 27, 4 (2019), 493–511.

[33] Liam Weeks and Michael Ó Fáthartaigh, eds., *The Treaty: Debating and Establishing the Irish State* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2018); Townshend, *The Republic*.

[34] Matthew Lewis, 'The Fourth Northern Division and the Joint-IRA Offensive, Apr.–July 1922', *War in History*, 21, 3 (2014), 302–32. See also Darragh Gannon and Fearghal McGarry, eds., *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, Civil War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2022) for a vivid account of the turbulent events in the run-up to and first six months of the civil year.

[35] On the Civil War, see Bill Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Gavin Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics, Class, and Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014); and Gemma Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

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landings on the south and west coast, trapping the anti-Treatyites in a pincer movement. The conventional phase over, a guerrilla campaign ensued, with assassinations, executions, sabotage, arson and widespread imprisonment. The increasingly beleaguered anti-Treaty IRA forces were nonetheless on the backfoot and surrendered in April 1923, although over 10,000 remained in prison and internment camps.[36]

Writing the Irish Revolution

Irish historians have often lamented the supposed lack of methodological sophistication in the study of Ireland's past.[37] The all-consuming nature of the 'revisionist' controversy, which cast a long shadow over work in the field from the 1980s onwards, meant that historical methodology was often approached through the lens of a political, or politicised, debate about the importance and nature of history in national and public life.[38] But this special issue contends that recent history writing about the Irish Revolution has continued the tradition of methodological innovation that has been a hallmark of the field since it was first established in the 1970s. In the same decade that many of the generation who participated in the revolution were finally passing away, the beginnings of a new field began to emerge. The decade saw the publication of important scholarly work by historians such as George Boyce, Charles Townshend and – most significant for our purposes – David Fitzpatrick.[39]

Described on his death in 2019 as 'the most original and influential Irish historian of his generation', Fitzpatrick's career spanned over forty years, in which he made important and often path-breaking contributions to a broad and eclectic range of Irish topics, including minorities and political demography, diasporic history, First World War studies and literary biography. But a strong argument can be made for the case that it was his 1977 book, titled *Politics and Irish Life: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution*, that was arguably his most influential.[40] The year before Fitzpatrick died, Roy Foster observed of *Politics and Irish Life* that, looking back from the present day, 'it now seems to mark an important moment in Irish historiography . . . representing a new way to write about the upheavals of 1916–23: astringent, impartial, alert to contradiction and paradox . . . widening the comparative and theoretical perspective on Irish experience . . .'.[41]

Indeed, according to another historian of a later generation, Fitzpatrick's book 'stood like a colossus above the rest of the literature' for many of his contemporaries, who regarded it, at the time and long afterwards, as 'the bible of the Irish Revolution'.[42] In large part, this was because it constituted such a 'challenge to orthodox Irish historiography [up to the 1970s] . . . with its [conventional] emphasis on personalities and process'.[43] 'The emphasis' until then, as another reviewer noted in 1980, had 'tended

[36] The intensity of the experience of imprisonment during the Irish Civil War is captured in Diarmaid Ferriter, *Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War* (London: Profile Books, 2021).

[37] See, for example, Aidan Beatty's review of Conor Morrissey's *Protestant Nationalists in Ireland, 1900–1923* in *American Historical Review*, 126, 1 (2021), 386–7. An illuminating assessment of this trope is to be found in Alvin Jackson, 'Irish History in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries', in Alvin Jackson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2–21.

[38] The classic accounts of the revisionist debates are to be found in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day, *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London: Routledge, 1996) and Ciarán Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938–1994* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994).

[39] David George Boyce, *Englishmen and Irish Troubles: British Public Opinion and the Making of Irish Policy 1918–1922* (London, 1972); Charles Townshend, *Britain's Campaign in Ireland, 1919–2: The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1977).

[40] John Borgonovo, '*Kilkenny: In Times of Revolution, 1900–1923* (Newbridge, 2018)', by Eoin Swithin Walsh, *Études Irlandaise*, 44, 2 (2019), 161.

[41] *Irish Times*, 30 Mar. 2019.

[42] Fergus Campbell, 'Land and Revolution Revisited', in Fergus Campbell and Tony Varley, eds., *The Land Question in Modern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 154.

[43] Jim Smyth, '*Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Dublin, 1977), by David Fitzpatrick', *Fortnight*, 171 (1978), 14–15.

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to be on the politics at the top'.[44] A review essay of research on the period 1914–70 published in the leading Irish history journal *Irish Historical Studies* at the start of the 1970s bears this out. While it showed that some valuable work had recently been undertaken on 'Ireland's revolutionary years' (spurred on in part by the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising), looking back from the perspective of five decades, the review suggests that the Rising itself, along with its associated personalities and organisations, had somewhat overshadowed the revolution qua revolution.[45] In fact, as already noted, *IHS* itself had actively helped to shape this historiography. After all, it was only in 1948 (ten years after the journal's inauguration) that it amended its constitution to allow scholarly articles to cover subjects up to 1910, thereby excluding the years of the revolution. It was another sixteen years (1964) before *IHS* resolved to publish articles that considered Irish politics up to 1925.[46] Even then, it was not until 1971 that it published an article about a key revolutionary event, and relatively few articles on revolutionary topics featured in its pages before the end of the decade.[47]

Fitzpatrick's 1977 book is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it combined a 'history from below' approach (or what he termed the experience of the 'plain people') with a micro historical one.[48] In focusing on just one of Ireland's thirty-two counties, Fitzpatrick not only eschewed the aforementioned preoccupation with high politics, but also adopted a broad-spectrum approach, in which he sought to understand the dynamics of and interplay between the 'New Politics' and the 'Old Order' during the revolutionary years.[49] Indeed, one of his key findings was that 'there was a thick strand of continuity' in terms of the provincial political leadership and the methods they employed connecting the pre-war nationalist establishment and the revolutionary movement that displaced it.[50]

The second important aspect of Fitzpatrick's book was its methodology, which reflected his approach to the revolution more generally. Driving around County Clare in the 1970s, he undertook 'fieldwork' on the ground (of a kind perhaps more associated today with sociologists or anthropologists than historians), collecting the personal 'testimony' of aged local activists and veterans of the revolutionary period, and gaining access to private archives in homes and garages. This qualitative evidence was underpinned by a statistical rigour (and a commitment to outcomes over inferred motives) that was to characterise his work for the rest of his career. Although Fitzpatrick himself linked his approach to the influence of his father, the Australian socialist historian and journalist Brian Fitzpatrick, various commentators have situated it more directly in relation to wider European and Irish historiographical currents of the era.[51] Indeed, Alvin Jackson has presented Fitzpatrick's work in terms of the contemporaneous emergence of Irish revisionism, the 'efflorescence of [Irish] social and economic history' in the 1960s, and the 'influences of continental European scholarship, as communicated through the Annaliste School and other sources'.[52] As an undergraduate, Fitzpatrick had certainly engaged with the Marxist-inflected *Annales Historiques de la Révolution française*, 'the premier journal of record for French Revolutionary

[44] A. C. Hepburn, '*Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution*, by David Fitzpatrick', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 7, 1 (1980), 119–21.

[45] T. W. Moody and Helen F. Mulvey, 'Thirty Years' Work in Irish History (IV)', *Irish Historical Studies*, 17, 66 (1970), 151–84.

[46] *Irish Historical Studies*, Committee of Management, Minutes of Meeting, 19 Mar. 1948, T.W. Moody Papers (TWMP), Trinity College Dublin Archive (TCDA), MS8549/96; Constitution of *IHS*, TWMP, MS8554(a)/3, TCDA. The authors would like to thank Colin Reid for these references.

[47] Michael Laffan, 'The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917', *Irish Historical Studies*, 17, 67 (1971), 353–79. Also see John O'Beirne-Ranelagh, 'The IRA from the Treaty to 1924', *Irish Historical Studies*, 20, 77 (1976), 26–39; John McColgan, 'Implementing the 1921 Treaty: Lionel Curtis and Constitutional Procedure', *Irish Historical Studies*, 20, 79 (1977), 312–33.

[48] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life*, xiv.

[49] Ibid., xi.

[50] Ibid., 116.

[51] *Irish Times*, 21 Oct. 2015; Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921*, xiv.

[52] Alvin Jackson, 'Irish History in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries', in Alvin Jackson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 11.

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historiography'.[53] Indeed, he later claimed that it was this introduction 'to unfamiliar models of historical analysis that influenced my later work on Ireland'.[54] Moreover, even before he left Australia for Cambridge University in 1971, he had already resolved to undertake a local study of the Irish Revolution 'in the hope of applying the anthropological method of the Annalistes to a fairly unstudied but obviously crucial episode in European history'.[55] Once in Cambridge, Fitzpatrick read deeply not only into modern Irish history, but also works on European revolutions and 'history from below'.[56]

Whether Fitzpatrick can be described as a '"fellow traveller" of Annales' is open to debate, but there are certainly recognisably Annaliste elements to his early work, especially in relation to what Peter Burke has termed the school's 'second phase'.[57] While Fitzpatrick focused on a modern political 'event' that lasted just eight years, rather than early modern structures over decades or centuries, his focus on a region, emphasis on underlying continuities and enthusiasm for quantitative methods can all be viewed as owing a debt in some form to earlier French models. Fitzpatrick's receptivity to interdisciplinary methodologies may also owe a debt to the Annales School, though his adoption of fieldwork approaches owed more to the work of US anthropologists such as Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball of the 1930s Harvard Irish Survey.[58] As for his lifelong enthusiasm for cliometrics, this reflected an early facility for mathematics that was enhanced by his time as a postdoctoral researcher at Nuffield College, Oxford. Although Fitzpatrick's 1977 study was in some respects foundational for the study of the Irish Revolution, this does not mean that the historiography thereafter was explicitly influenced by European history writing or methods. Indeed, initially at least, few scholars of the period followed Fitzpatrick's example, either in studying the revolution or in adopting new approaches. Thus, while important work on the period did emerge in the 1980s (the late Michael Hopkinson's work on the civil war, for example), it tended not to adopt Fitzpatrick's methods towards questions of scale, the use of quantitative data, or history from below. This may be attributable to the 'biblical', or rather canonical, status his study quickly achieved. But it was also surely a function of the fact that few historians possessed his particular research skills. As a consequence, it was to be more than a decade before a new generation of scholars began to build more systematically on Fitzpatrick's pioneering study and to take the field in new directions.

But, since the mid-1990s, three groups of historians have engaged in different ways with Fitzpatrick's arguments and methods. One group of scholars has taken up the 'county model' and applied it to other parts of Ireland. Marie Colemen (Longford), Fergus Campbell (Galway), Michael Wheatley (five Midland counties), and Fergal McCluskey (East Tyrone) have all published important work that engages (and often disagrees) with aspects of Fitzpatrick's study of Clare.[59] Unlike Fitzpatrick, this work has focused almost exclusively on the nationalist experience of the revolution, concerning itself either with accounting for the decline and defeat of the old nationalism or the emergence and radicalisation of the revolutionaries after 1916. In approach, this work also differs from Fitzpatrick's Clare study because of both the passing away of the revolutionary generation by about

[53] Gary Kates, 'Introduction', in Gary Kates, ed., *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies* (London: Routledge, 2005[1997], 2nd edn.), 2.

[54] David Fitzpatrick, *Afterthoughts II* (unpublished manuscript), quoted in Georgina Fitzpatrick, email to authors, 24 Apr. 2022.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929–2014* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 24, 27.

[58] Anne Byrne, Ricca Edmonson and Tony Varley, 'Arensberg and Kimball and Anthropological Research in Ireland', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 23, 1 (2015), 22–61.

[59] Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish Revolution, 1910–1923* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003); Fergus J. M. Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland, 1891–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party: Provincial Ireland 1910–1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Fergal McCluskey, *Fenians and Ribbonmen: The Development of Republican Politics in East Tyrone, 1898–1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

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2000 and the emerging availability of newly accessible (often digitised) sources. Nonetheless, taken together, the work of these scholars has sketched out a multiplicity of local political experiences across provincial Ireland in these years, thereby re-situating Fitzpatrick's Clare as only one of a range of possible revolutionary trajectories. A second cluster of publications has a more genealogical relationship with Fitzpatrick's study of Clare. In 2012, the Dublin-based publishing house Four Courts Press produced the first of a planned thirty-one county studies in its series 'The Irish Revolution, 1912–23'. Intended for a general audience, these county studies (of which eighteen have been published to date) share a common chronology, chapter structure and indicative word length. Although the quality of the authors lifts many of these works above the category of local studies for local people, their boundaried nature has tended to discourage macro analysis or inter-county comparison. Indeed, it is not yet clear if the series will be more than the sum of its parts. Efforts to understand the national through the local (and underline the value of county as a meaningful unit of study) have been undertaken by a third set of historians, more closely aligned with Fitzpatrick himself, who have sought to account for the local variations in revolutionary mobilisation in a more holistic manner. The Dutch historian Joost Augusteijn spent time working with Fitzpatrick in Dublin in the late 1980s and early 1990s; his 1996 study carefully selected five county case studies to explore the experience and radicalisation of 'ordinary' members of the IRA during the revolution and again combined fieldwork methods with quantitative approaches.[60] Augusteijn's work, alongside that of Fitzpatrick's most well-known (and controversial) PhD student Peter Hart, arguably catalysed the study of the Irish Revolution, setting the agenda for the study of Ireland's revolution in the new century.

The contribution of Hart (Canadian born and so, like Fitzpatrick and Augusteijn, an outsider) stood out for its combination of broad quantitative and deep qualitative methods, his enthusiasm for developing a new research agenda for the history of the revolution, his personal appetite for bold, sometimes provocative, statements and for the controversy that still surrounds some of his work. Writing in the early 2000s, Hart called on scholars to undertake a 'new revolutionary history' of Ireland. Hart claimed not only that the Irish Revolution was the 'best-documented modern revolution in the world' but also that Ireland's revolution had 'helped to inaugurate an era of mass movements, citizens' revolts and guerilla wars of liberation' across the globe. His manifesto for the new history he advocated included the consideration of 'gender, class, community, elites and masses, religion and ethnicity, the nature of violence and power, [and] periodisation and geography'.[61] Notwithstanding the progress Hart personally made in advancing this agenda before his untimely death in 2010, the progress of his new revolutionary history was also at times significantly overshadowed, if not derailed, by the controversies his work precipitated. Hart made original but highly controversial claims in relation to two episodes during the Irish Revolution that he contended were paradigmatic of wider events in Ireland during the period 1918 to 1923. The first occurred in the aftermath of the iconic IRA ambush of Crown forces at Kilmichael in County Cork in November 1920, in which he alleged that the IRA flying column summarily executed the surviving British paramilitary policemen it had taken prisoner.[62] The second related to the allegedly deliberate targeting of Irish Protestant civilians in Dunmanway, County Cork, by local republicans over a three-day period in late April 1922, in which eighteen people were killed. Hart claimed that, in conducting these systematic killings, the IRA were not primarily hunting for spies and informers as they claimed; instead, they were motivated by 'ethnic intolerance' and that this episode was indicative of a wider phenomenon seen elsewhere in Ireland that bore some of the characteristics of 'ethnic cleansing'.[63]

In the late 1990s and the first decade of the new century, Hart's claims in relation to Kilmichael and Dunmanway provoked strong criticism not only from some academics but also amateur historians and

[60] Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerilla Warfare: The Experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the War of Independence, 1916–1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996).

[61] Hart, *The IRA at War*, *passim*.

[62] Hart, *The IRA and Its Enemies*, 21–38.

[63] Ibid., 273–92.

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political activists, who – against a backdrop of republicans participating in the new Northern Ireland executive and assembly from 1999 onwards – framed his work in terms of a presentist, anti-republican revisionism. These debates continued to rage even after Hart's death in 2010 and have generated their own extensive literature.[64] The battle lines in these long-running disputes are largely known after twenty-five years, though Hart's death removed a key protagonist. Yet, with the passage of time and the production of a considerable body of critical work, it is also possible to see these controversies from a different perspective. Indeed, both his own work and that of his critics can also be viewed, albeit with the benefit of hindsight, as contributing to a much more rigorous discussion about methodology. The current special issue seeks to broaden this beyond the somewhat narrow parameters of revisionism versus anti-revisionism by highlighting some of the ways that modern historians have sought to develop new approaches to the study of the Irish Revolution in recent years.

One field of revolutionary history has seen significant advances in recent years: women's history, and gender history more broadly. The centenary of the Easter Rising in 2016 was notable for an unprecedented focus on the contributions of female revolutionaries and activists to that rebellion, visible in official commemorative practices and both popular and scholarly literature. Building on foundational texts such as Margaret Ward's *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, historians of Irish women have written women's history into our revolutionary history: Senia Pašeta's 2012 study of Irish nationalist women stands out as a particularly important landmark integrating women's history with the historiographical mainstream and demonstrating the radical approach to gender equality that was fundamental to the early revolutionary movement's genesis and appeal.[65] Women's participation in revolutionary organisations, their contributions to revolutionary intelligence activities and their central role in revolutionary propaganda and publicity, particularly outside Ireland, have all formed part of this new body of work.[66] Although women's history, like the rest of the revolutionary historiography, has been imprinted by the popularity of biographical treatments, Constance Markievicz aside, there has not been a notable 'Great Irish Women' school of revolutionary historiography.[67] Notwithstanding the bottom-up nature of much of women's history on the Irish Revolution – which is in part a reflection of feminist methodologies – the integrationist promise of Paseta's work has not been taken up more broadly, and too often women's history has been treated as a reparative bolt-on to existing interpretative empirical frameworks (and commemorative practices) rather than fundamentally deconstructing these.

An important exception to this is around violence against women. Despite the radical rhetoric around gender equality and the determination of many dedicated female activists to claim liberation

[64] The Kilmichael ambush (and Hart's claims) have recently been subjected to a forensic study by Eve Morrison, *Kilmichael: The Life and Afterlife of an Ambush* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2022). See also Niall Meehan, 'Examining Peter Hart', *Field Day Review*, 10 (2014), 102–47; David Fitzpatrick, 'Protestant Depopulation and the Irish Revolution', *Irish Historical Studies*, 152 (2013), 643–70; Andy Bielenberg, John Borgonovo and James S. Donnelly, '"Something of the Nature of a Massacre": The Bandon Valley Killings Revisited', *Éire-Ireland*, 49, 3–4 (2014), 7–59. On the historiographical significance of all of this, see Ian McBride, 'The Peter Hart Affair in Perspective: History, Ideology, and the Irish Revolution', *Historical Journal*, 61, 1 (2018), 249–71.

[65] Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1983); Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[66] See, for example, Ann Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women, 1900–1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010); Louise Ryan, '"Furies" and "Die-Hards": Women and Irish Republicanism in the Early Twentieth Century', *Gender & History*, 11 (1999), 256–75; Joanne Mooney Einacker, *Irish Republican Women in America: Lecture Tours, 1916–1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003); Mo Moulton, '"You Have Votes and Power": Women's Political Engagement with the Irish Question in Britain, 1919–23', *Journal of British Studies*, 52, 1 (2013), 179–204.

[67] The most significant recent work on Markievicz is Lauren Arrington, *Revolutionary Lives: Constance and Casimir Markievicz* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). For reflections on the biographical trend in Irish history, see Michael Hopkinson, 'Biography and Irish History', in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis, eds., *Politics and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland, 1750–1850: Essays in Tribute to Peter Jupp* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2007), 194–208.

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alongside their male counterparts, we now know that, during the Irish Revolution and both north and south of the border, women and girls were subjected to particular forms of revolutionary violence. The work of Linda Connolly, Mary McAuliffe and Lindsey Earner-Byrne, among others, is breaking down some of the most enduring historiographical myths: that the Irish Revolution was a 'clean fight' not characterised by high levels of violence against women, unlike contemporaneous conflicts in other parts of Europe.[68] While it is important to uncover these episodes of home invasion, hair-cropping, sexual assault and rape, it remains to place these incidents within a broader comparative historiographical context. The silence around – or historians' failure to listen to – women's accounts of their experiences at the hands of soldiers from all sides during the Irish Revolution, republican, Treatyite and British alike, is undoubtedly significant in establishing the narrative myths surrounding the revolution itself: 'it was a clean fight', 'our boys were noble', 'it was not so violent as that', and the like. But explaining why levels of violence against women during the Irish Revolution did not reach the depths of contemporary Europe might tell us something equally important about Irish society. Such a task remains. The answer probably lies partly in the history of masculinity during Ireland's revolutionary period. Important work has been started in this respect by Aidan Beatty, Rebecca Mytton and Jane McGaughey, and a vibrant research network on Irish revolutionary masculinities has illuminated the multiple ways in which hegemonic conceptions of masculinity during the revolution shaped the construction of revolutionary identity, propaganda, patterns of violence and, in turn, revolutionary memory.[69] Gender history in the Irish revolutionary historiography has thus become a dynamic and expansive field.

Looking beyond Ireland

According to one authoritative assessment of 2017, historians of modern Ireland have, until relatively recently, been wary of exploring Ireland's experience of the twentieth century in relation to contemporary Europe.[70] One notable and early exception in the use of European comparators to make sense of Ireland's modern history was J. J. Lee, whose landmark 1989 survey, *Ireland, 1912–1985: Politics and Society*, situated Ireland in relation to a range of small European states, including Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Hungary and – perhaps most prominently – Finland. Lee invoked Finland not only as a comparator in terms of its economic, demographic and political history but also in terms of its experience of political violence. Indeed, Lee noted that the 'most apposite analogy' for Ireland's civil war of 1922–3, which book-ended Ireland's revolution, was Finland's civil war of 1918.[71] The study of the comparative trajectories of Ireland and Finland as 'transitional states' after the First World War was later taken up by the political scientist Bill Kissane, in the context of his wider interest in civil wars, democratisation and comparative constitutionalism.[72] More recently, a special issue of *Irish Historical Studies* has been devoted to the comparative histories of the two countries (including during

[68] Linda Connolly, 'Sexual Violence in the Irish Civil War: A Forgotten War Crime?', *Women's History Review*, 30, 1 (2021), 126–43; Mary McAuliffe, 'The Homefront as Battlefront: Women, Violence and the Domestic Space during War in Ireland, 1919–1921', in Linda Connolly, ed., *Women and the Irish Revolution: Feminism, Activism, Violence* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2020), 164–80; Lindsey Earner-Byrne, 'The Rape of Mary M.: A Microhistory of Sexual Violence and Moral Redemption in 1920s Ireland', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 24, 1 (2015), 75–98.

[69] Aidan J. Beatty, *Masculinity and Power in Irish Nationalism, 1884–1938* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016); Rebecca Mytton, 'Revolutionary Masculinities in the IRA, 1916–1923', PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2020; Jennifer Redmond, ed., 'Special Issue: Irish Masculinities in Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary Ireland', *Irish Studies Review*, 29, 2 (2021).

[70] Alvin Jackson, 'Foreword – Ireland and Finland: Mr Gladstone, National and Transnational Historiographies', *Irish Historical Studies*, 41, 160 (2017), 163–5.

[71] J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 69.

[72] Bill Kissane, 'Democratisation, State Formation, and Civil War in Finland and Ireland: A Reflection on the Democratic Peace Hypothesis', *Comparative Political Studies*, 27 (2004), 969–85; Bill Kissane, 'Victory in Defeat? National Identity after Civil War in Finland and Ireland', in John A. Hall and Siniša Malešević, eds., *Nationalism and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 321–40; Bill Kissane, 'On the Shock of Civil War: Cultural Trauma and National Identity in Finland and Ireland', *Nations and Nationalism*, 26, 1 (2020), 22–43.

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the revolutionary decade), while Robert Gerwarth's current ERC project examines the Irish and Finnish civil wars alongside those of Russia, Spain and Greece.[73]

While scholarly interest in Finland has been particularly strong in recent years, the phenomenon is indicative of the way that historians of Ireland, especially during the 'decade of centenaries', have sought to broaden their horizons and their frameworks, with the study of the Irish Revolution providing a catalyst and a focus for a good deal of this new work.[74] This 'global' turn in the historiography is, of course, reflective of broader trends in our discipline and, in common with other fields, historians of Ireland have begun to explore what 'decolonising' Irish history might entail.[75] The recently concluded Global Irish Revolution project sought to place the Irish Revolution in dialogue with the histories of contemporaneous global movements and move beyond the diasporic lens that dominated transnational Irish history for so long. Drawing on groundbreaking work on transnationalism in Irish history – notably, Fitzpatrick published an article entitled 'We Are All Transnationalists Now' – the Global Irish Revolution project has juxtaposed Irish revolutionary activists with Russian, African-American, Korean and Caribbean political movements, and explored how revolutionaries in Algeria, another liminal colonial space on the edge of Europe messily integrated into a great European metropole, continued to reinterpret the message of the Irish Revolution across their own long struggle for national liberation.[76] Despite these prevailing globalising crosswinds, the 'Europeanness' of the Irish Revolution merits a reappraisal. While scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s located the Irish Revolution firmly within the Anglosphere, with brief forays into the history of the British Empire, the 1990s and 2000s saw an increasing emphasis on the connections between Ireland and other European polities experiencing political crisis in the years after the First World War. From this perspective, the conflict in Ireland appeared far from *sui generis*, fitting instead into a broader picture of the rise of ethno-nationalism, the demands for self-determination of small European nations and the collapse of multi-ethnic empires in the aftermath of the 1918 Armistice. These 'shatter-zones' of empire, as Robert Gerwarth and John Horne put it, all experienced paramilitary violence, intense political and social conflict, and the foundation of new nation-states.[77]

While true comparative histories of the Irish Revolution remain rare – Tim Wilson's study of Ulster and Upper Silesia is a notable exception – the increasing engagement of historians of the revolution with European parallels has decisively advanced our field, in particular in analysing the meaning and impact of political violence. The recent *Dead of the Irish Revolution*, which meticulously details every fatality from 1916 to 1921, lays bare the intimacy and cruelty of much of the revolutionary violence in Ireland, but the helpful table and charts in the appendices also reveal the relatively low fatality rate overall.[78] Even adjusting for the exclusion of much of the violence north of the border in 1922 – which was particularly intense – and that of the entirety of the civil war, the Irish Revolution still had a death toll low by contemporary European standards. Notwithstanding this, the bitterness engendered by the latter conflict was intense, and civil war divisions and legacies continue to shape the Irish political system. Here again, the comparison with Finland is instructive: although the Finnish civil war of 1918 was a far shorter but much bloodier conflict, with a death toll of some 36,000, the successive conflicts during the Second World War provided an alternative national narrative around which social

[73] Richard McMahon and Andrew G. Newby, eds., 'Introduction – Ireland and Finland, 1860–1930: Comparative and Transnational Histories', *Irish Historical Studies*, 41, 160 (2017), 166–79; available at https://www.ucd.ie/artshumanities/newsandevents/professorrobertgerwarthwins25mercadvancedgrant/ (last accessed 25 Nov. 2022).

[74] See, for example, the recent special issue of *Irish Historical Studies* on the Irish revolution and global history. Enda Delaney and Fearghal McGarry, 'Introduction: A Global History of the Irish Revolution', *Irish Historical Studies*, 44, 165 (2020), 1–10.

[75] Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid et al., 'Round Table: Decolonising Irish History? Possibilities, Challenges, Practices', *Irish Historical Studies*, 45, 168 (2021), 303–32.

[76] Patrick Mannion and Fearghal McGarry, eds., *The Irish Revolution: A Global History* (New York, NY: Glucksman Press, 2022).

[77] Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[78] Eunan O'Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2020).

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and political cohesion could emerge. With Ireland remaining neutral during the Second World War, and as one of the small number of non-belligerent European states that did not experience occupation, the revolutionary period and its ending in disillusionment and recrimination continued to form the dividing line in Irish politics. Here, perhaps, Ireland does stand apart in European history with, as the journalist Fintan O'Toole has suggested, profound implications for civic society as well as attitudes towards our past.[79]

As well as offering an illuminating comparator for analysing the scale and nature of violence in Ireland in the period after the First World War, Finnish historiography also suggests an alternative methodology for approaching what we are terming a new cultural history of the Irish Revolution. The scholarship emerging from the Centre for the History of Experience at Tampere University presents the history of experience as a multi-dimensional framework for, among other subjects, writing a cultural history of nationalism and the construction of nationhood. As Josephine Hoegarts and Stephanie Olson have observed, the history of experience 'is concerned with embodied engagement with social, cultural, political and material contexts, in order to understand lived experiences through these engagements'.[80] This history centres the 'ways in which living was real in historical terms': spanning emotional, sensory, material, embodied, and remembered dimensions.[81] It allows for both individual and collective sensibilities, and insists on the social constitution and cultural mediation of individual and collective experiences. In the Finnish context, it has produced scholarship on romantic relationships intertwined with national renewal, childhood experience of the Finnish civil war, the transmutation of individual experience of sickness into a larger collective narrative of national suffering, the construction of a distinct Finnish D/deaf community, and the lingering impact of wartime experiences on a nation's subconscious.[82] We suggest that this methodology offers a potentially rich route away from the largely familiar terrain of Irish revolutionary historiography, eschewing disputes about causation and responsibility, and instead beginning to explore what it was like to live through and after Ireland's revolutionary years.

A Cultural History of the Irish Revolution

This special issue signals the possibilities offered by such a cultural history of the Irish Revolution and frames its methodological intervention along three interlocking strands: space, emotion and memory. Firstly, we suggest that the history of space offers a suggestive new lens to examine the dynamics of violence as it affected both rural and urban parts of Ireland. Importantly, this provides a way to move beyond the Irish county as a unit of political analysis only and instead to reflect on the relationship of revolutionaries with the spaces around them. Environmental humanities have begun to shape Irish history writing in recent years, with innovative work emerging on the nineteenth century in particular.[83] As new histories of the imperial conquest of early modern Ireland are being written, the transformation of the colonised landscape is featuring more prominently in work on later periods. Thinking environmentally about the Irish Revolution, then, places the history of modern Ireland in fruitful dialogue with other histories of the Anthropocene. As one of the earliest guerrilla campaigns, the role of place in those campaigns has long been noted, but less frequently analysed. While Ernie O'Malley's lyrical invocations of the blues and the greens of the Knockmealdown mountains of counties Tipperary and Waterford have attracted some literary analysis, Justin Dolan Stover's article goes

[79] Fintan O'Toole, *Ship of Fools: How Stupidity and Corruption Sank the Celtic Tiger* (London: Faber, 2009), 215.

[80] Josephine Hoegaerts and Stephanie Olsen, 'The History of Experience: Afterword', in Ville Kivimäki, Sami Suodenjoki and Tanja Vahtikari, eds., *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000* (Chichester: Palgrave Open Access, 2021), 375.

[81] Rob Boddice and Mark Smith, *Emotion, Sense, Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 23.

[82] All these chapters are contained in Kivimäki, Suodenjoki and Vahtikari, eds., *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland.*

[83] Matthew Kelly, ed., *Nature and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019).

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farther to ask precisely how that topography affected the dynamics of revolutionary violence and how revolutionary violence in turn changed the topography of rural Ireland.[84] The landscape of revolutionary Ireland could be a site of transformation, of excitement and of destruction, but it also could be a site of frustration. Máirtín Seán Ó Catháin's article on failed ambushes asks us to consider the Irish landscape as a place where more typically nothing happened. Histories of revolution understandably focus predominantly on dynamics of change, on moments of high drama or episodes of intimate violence. Looking more closely at ambushes that did not occur draws our attention to, as Ó Catháin points out, an equally prominent aspect of the revolutionary experience, but one which gets written out of many revolutionary histories. Waiting, in the dusk or in the dark, in damp clothes or in cold temperatures, was a different type of revolutionary experience to the thrill of an ambush, but one equally rooted in the landscape. In exploring these revolutionary non-events, fraught with emotional and sensory memories, Ó Catháin tells an embodied history of Ireland's revolutionary landscape.

The spatial dimensions of the Irish Revolution did not, of course, just occur in Ireland, as we have learned from innovative work on the global and transnational. Both Maurice Casey and Brian Hughes explore transnational revolutionary and post-revolutionary histories. Moreover, revolutionary spaces – within and outside Ireland – also produced particular forms of revolutionary emotions, the second of the themes this special issue explores. In his study of loyalist relief networks in Britain, Hughes shows how these networks mobilised emotional responses to the plight of loyalist refugees to harness support for a political cause. The counter-revolution in Ireland was an essential part of the revolutionary dynamic, whether in the form of political strategy or counter-revolutionary insurgency, but Hughes asks us to look beyond these institutional narratives to the grassroots initiatives to support those left on the wrong side of the revolutionary settlement. The success of the southern Irish loyalist appeal in Britain underscores the entangled nature of Ireland's revolution within and across the United Kingdom. Casey shifts our gaze further, presenting the Irish Revolution as a space for transnational radicalism, border-crossing political activism and global romantic connection. The near coincidence of revolution in Ireland and in Russia, as well as the well-established diasporic links between the Russian Empire and Edwardian Ireland, created a sense of common endeavour, particularly among socialist republicans and the cosmopolitan Russian intelligentsia. Tracing the romantic history of one Irish–Latvian married couple, Casey tells an intimate history of transnational revolution, uncovering a network of similar figures for whom Dublin, London, Moscow and St Petersburg were all backdrops for a radical reimagining of political, cultural and social orders. Love, of course, was just one of the revolutionary emotions in ferment in Ireland in the 1910s and 1920s. While the history of emotions in revolutionary Ireland is yet to be written, Anne Dolan explores the limits of that methodology for explaining the dynamics of post-revolutionary experience. In tracing the emotional and psychological histories of a group of veterans of a particularly notorious ambush – the Bloody Sunday operation – Dolan argues that histories of trauma too frequently essentialise and pathologise what might be short-lived traumatic responses or episodes of poor mental health. In doing so, she challenges historians to reflect more carefully on how they interpret the admittedly rich sources in Ireland's revolutionary archives and suggests a history of mundanity, of coping, recovering and carrying on, of forgetting or of suppressing, might be just as historiographically significant as a history of life-changing trauma. A focus on revolutionary and post-revolutionary emotions – love, nostalgia, pain, grief, horror, boredom – offers, our contributors suggest, an alternative way of exploring what it meant to live through and after those tumultuous years.

The evolving legacies of revolutionary participation are also the subject of Gavin Foster's article, which explores the contours of revolutionary post-memory through the methodology of oral history. Tackling the civil war, the most challenging component of the Irish Revolution for a cohesive national(ist) narrative, Foster excavates the hidden transmissions of civil war memory within families and

[84] O'Malley's classic work includes two memoirs of the Irish Revolution, *On Another Man's Wound* (Dublin: Three Candles, 1936) and *The Singing Flame* (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1978). See Derek Gladwin, 'Topobiographical Inquiry: Lived Spaces, Place-Based Experiences, and Ecologies', *Éire-Ireland*, 55, 3–4 (2020), 129–49.

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communities – a counterpoint to the somewhat cliched narrative of 'civil war silence' that dominated the historiography for so long. Alongside recent scholarship by Síobhra Aiken, Foster builds on the intellectual foundations laid by Guy Beiner to show that this myth of silence was just that.[85] Memory, as shown by the contributors to this special issue, continues to offer one of the richest and most complex ways to explore the legacies of revolution. The counter-hegemonic memories which were preserved and transmitted outside state-sponsored memorialisation processes have bubbled up as the Decade of Centenaries reaches its end, unsettling the narrative certainties which seemed to triumph earlier in the period. Taking seriously the history of memory in the Irish Revolution means confronting apparent silences, ellipses and omissions, from the role of state violence to the widespread violence against women, to the violence accompanying and following the partition of Ireland.

Taken together, the articles in this special issue are constitutive of the new cultural history of the Irish Revolution that we propose. We wish to emulate those like Fitzpatrick who pioneered comparative and methodologically original approaches, while embracing the more inclusive potential of transnationalism and the history of experience. Through such an approach as outlined here, we believe that historians of Ireland, but also elsewhere, can more meaningfully explore the lived revolutions of the twentieth century.

[85] Síobhra Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony and the Irish Civil War* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2022); Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

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