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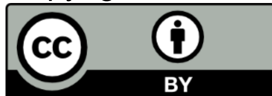
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Exile, Dual Belongings, and Long-Distance Nationalism: The Role of the Irish Diaspora Within the Irish Independence Movement, 1919-1921

By

Joseph Duffy

Abstract

This paper examines long-distance Irish nationalism between 1919-1921 and argues that the Irish diaspora played an instrumental role in the formation of the Irish state. The sources considered reveal the symbiotic nature of Irish long-distance nationalism, as well as how the Irish nation was conceived by actors who thought globally and looked outward, both to Ireland's diaspora and to an interconnected world. Long-distance Irish nationalists employed a broad definition of belonging to the global Irish nation that allowed for dual allegiances to the homeland and host country – an elasticity which benefitted the nationalist movement. This loose sense of attachment was connected by feelings of generational loss, exile, and dispossession. This cohering sense of exile was strongly linked to Ireland's experience of imperialism and led the leaders of the Irish diasporic movement to position themselves between the American and British empires.

About the author

Joe Duffy is a MA student in Global History at the Humboldt-Universität & Freie Universität Berlin. Originally from Manchester in the UK, Joe completed his BA in History at the University of Cambridge where he focused on Labour history, the history of socialism, and decolonisation. Joe has continued this focus during his studies in Berlin, as well as developing a specialist interest in Irish history. Joe's political commentary articles have been published by UK-based news outlet Novara Media.

In February 2021, the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, wrote an article to commemorate the centenary of Irish independence. He referred to how the Irish diaspora in the years preceding 1921 sought to express their resistance to British imperialism:

> through exerting political pressure from engaged emigrant populations in the United States … Most resorted to available strategies of escape through emigration, or survival within the empire, with a widespread, if suppressed, anger over humiliation experienced or remembered.[1]

The role of the Irish diaspora in the formation of the Republic of Ireland is the focus of this paper, which examines long-distance Irish nationalism between 1919 and 1921. It analyses two primary source bases: the documents adopted by the first meeting of the Irish Parliament –the *Dáil Éireann*– in January 1919, and three speeches recorded by Éamon de Valera in 1921 during a tour of the US. These sources reflect the instrumental role that the Irish diaspora played in the formation of the independent Irish Republic and reveal the symbiotic nature of Irish long-distance nationalism, in which the homeland and diaspora drew strength from one another.

De Valera's speeches posited a broad definition of belonging to the global Irish nation that allowed for dual allegiances to the homeland and host country – an elasticity which included attempts to draw connections between Irish and American culture. This loose sense of attachment was connected by feelings of generational loss, exile, and dispossession. As Higgins identified 100 years later, feelings of 'anger' and 'humiliation' were a persistent feature of the Irish diasporic experience.

This cohering sense of exile was strongly linked to Ireland's experience of empire and, coupled with their global mindedness, led the leaders of the Irish diasporic movement to position themselves between one ascendant (American) and one embattled (British) empire. The 1919 Dáil documents reveal how the Irish nation was conceived by actors who thought globally and looked outward, both to Ireland's diaspora and to an interconnected world.

This paper argues that whilst the Irish are rightly not considered a 'classic diaspora', strong similarities can be drawn between the nationalisms of classic diasporas and Irish long-distance nationalism. Finally, conclusions are offered regarding the 'Wilsonian moment', the nature of long-distance nationalisms, and the global origins of the Independent Republic of Ireland.

Defining the Irish Diaspora

Studies of Irish migration and its diasporic nationalism have greatly benefitted from a conceptual broadening of the definition of diaspora. Lawrence McCaffrey was the first to speak of the Irish diaspora in a 1976 study of the American Irish.[2] In subsequent decades the term has been expanded from the unique scattering and settlement of Jewish people to include a wide range of major involuntary and voluntary historical dispersions.[3]

The position of the Irish diaspora within this extended field remains contested. In Robin Cohen's five-part typology of diasporas, which includes labour, trade, imperial and cultural, the Irish are categorised within the 'victim diasporas' alongside Jewish, Palestinian, African, and Armenian diasporas.[4]

This paper explores how feelings of exile, departure, and loss contributed to long-distance Irish nationalism in the build-up to independence, and especially how this experience of diaspora was engaged with by its political leaders and reflected in the fledgling independent state. In this sense, Cohen's categorisation is useful, especially when considered in tandem with the seminal study of the American Irish diaspora by Kerby Miller.[5] Miller's central argument, based on an extensive study of letters by members of the Irish diaspora, is that "the Irish consistently regarded emigration as exile", and that "Irish and Irish-American newspapers and orators characterized those who left Ireland as 'exiles', compelled to emigrate, either directly or indirectly, by 'English tyranny'".[6] Miller draws on the work of Thomas Brown, who in the 1960s highlighted the loneliness, alienation, poverty, and prejudice inherent in the Irish diasporic experience.[7]

Donald Akenson's influential comparative studies of the global Irish diaspora developed a reassessment of Miller's thesis. Akenson not only challenged the Catholic-centric focus of previous historiography, but also disputes the notion that the Irish were forced to leave their homeland, or that they suffered disproportionately on arrival to America.[8] Akenson instead stresses that "the Irish diaspora was an overwhelmingly voluntary phenomenon" which, due to the cost involved of travelling across the Atlantic, invariably involved economically stable Irish citizens seeking better lives.[9] Building on Akenson's critique that Miller's focus on exile robs migrants of their agency, Mary E. Daly criticises Miller for implicitly perpetuating the "conspiracy theory" of Irish nationalists that blames the British empire for mass Irish migration and subsequent population decline.[10]

This study does not seek to replicate Miller's argument in its entirety. For instance, Miller's dismissal of labour historians, particularly Eric Foner, does not allow for useful consideration of working-class and trade union culture and organisations within Irish migrant communities. Yet Miller's conception of the exiled Irish diaspora remains valuable when considering long-distance Irish nationalism. As Miller puts it,

> not all Irish emigrants regard themselves as exiles, or as victims of English oppression, or even as acutely homesick. Yet large numbers of them certainly did so, and their letters suggest why the image offered so pervasive and unifying a sentiment to the politics of Irish-American nationalism.[12]

Sentiments of exile and dispossession are not always based on a reality of hardship and are therefore possible even within the more affluent and privileged Irish migrant communities identified by Akenson. Rather than attempting to impose an empirically grounded category of diaspora backwards through time, it is more important to prioritise how members of the Irish diaspora conceived of their own experience. This is especially the case when considering how leaders of the Irish diaspora engaged with long-established feelings of exile that were particularly prevalent in the build-up to Irish independence.

The notion of exile is a central feature of what Nina Glick-Schiller termed 'Long-Distance Nationalism', defined as "a set of identity claims and practices that connect people living in various geographical locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral home".[13] Kachig Tölölyan developed a valuable concept of 'exilic nationalism', caused either by violence or severe economic pressures, in which "not living in the homeland is regarded as a loss, a deficiency, as painful distance from a centre".[14] This has particular resonance for the Irish diaspora, whose nationalism was shaped by a preoccupation with martyrdom, dispossession, and exile. Similarly, in a study of classic diaspora nationalisms, Anthony Smith identifies four 'pillars' of cultural resources:

> myths of origins and ethnic election, idealised territorial attachments and memories, vivid traditions of ethnohistory with their heroes, saints, sages and golden ages, and ideals of sacrifice and martyrdom in the face of oppression, persecution and exile.[15]

Whilst Smith rightly does not consider the Irish as a whole to be a classic diaspora, a consideration of the sources in this paper indicates that this definition of transnational nationalism can be applied to the Irish in the US in the build-up to Irish independence.

Some scholars, notably Alan O'Day, have sought to downplay the significance of the Irish diaspora to the domestic nationalist movement.[16] O'Day argues that the Irish "diaspora … never advanced, and, on the whole, did not seek to advance beyond the designated role as an adjunct to the main movement".[17] Yet O'Day's argument fails to appreciate the interrelation between the diaspora and the homeland, which have been increasingly recognised by scholars of global history. Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier see the period of 1800-1930 as a time of "increasingly entangled political struggles around the globe" in which political disputes were "fought with concepts that carried explicit global connotations".[18] Similarly, in their study of Chinese migration during the late nineteenth century, Conrad and Klaus Mühlhahn argue that "it was the process of mobility and migration that particularly affected the global discourse on what it meant to be a nation".[19]

This global mindedness is especially evident in the Irish experience, as recognised in the recent growth of global studies of the Irish Revolution, spearheaded by a 2020 special edition of *Irish Historical Studies.* In the edition's introduction, Edna Delaney and Fearghal McGarry argue that

> the history of the revolution should not be confined to the island of Ireland … [which] flattens out the complexity of this global revolutionary movement … Such an approach would impose ahistorical boundaries which few contemporaries would have recognised or understood.[20]

David Fitzpatrick has gone as far to say that Irish historiography has always had a "transnational" focus, as "the lingering fact of British rule has always made it impossible to write about modern Ireland's political history from an 'insular' perspective".[21] There is some truth to this assessment, especially when one considers the many global histories of Irish nationalism by Kevin Kenny, Howard Lune, and Ely Janis – to name but a few.[22] This paper applies this transnational focus to the years directly preceding Irish independence.

Dual Belongings and Transnational Martyrs

Between June 1919 and December 1920, Éamon de Valera, the self-proclaimed yet largely unrecognised President of the Irish republic, toured the United States. His visit took him from coast to coast during which he directly addressed the Irish diaspora in continuous speeches and interviews. As recorded by Darragh Gannon, meetings with de Valera in his New York hotel were referred to by local press as interviews with the "'President of the Irish Republic' in the 'Irish White House'".[23]

From the outset of his visit, de Valera made a concerted effort to draw connections between Irish and American culture. As an American-born Irish nationalist whose dual nationality helped him to avoid the death penalty for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising, de Valera encapsulates the diasporic identity of the global Irish independence movement. This was especially apparent in three speeches that de Valera recorded for the Nation's Forum, a project initiated by attorney and arts promoter Guy Golterman to collect and publish speeches by prominent Americans. A record of the speeches was available at the time to buy for $2, with royalties of 25 cents paid to the trustees of *Dáil Éireann*. Whilst the recordings were abridged due to the three-minute capacity of phonograph records, they condensed much of de Varela's speeches from his tour across the US. In the first address, a Saint Patrick's Day message recorded in March 1920, de Valera's appeal to the Irish diaspora is clear in the opening lines:

> Sons and daughters of the Gael, wherever you be today, in the name of the motherland, greetings. Whatever flag be the flag you guard and cherish, it is consistent with your highest duty to link yourselves together to use your united strength to break the chains that bind our sweet, sad mother.[24]

This evokes an imagined Irish family, with imagery of 'sons', 'daughters' and the 'mother' land conjuring the nationalist tropes of blood and soil. Later in the address, de Valera continues this with reference to "the scattered children of Éire".[25] As Glick-Schiller describes, such appeals to a shared ancestry were a common feature of long-distance nationalists between the First and Second World Wars, who "tended to evoke a now discredited concept of 'race', portraying each nation as 'racially' distinct".[26] This also speaks to an ever-present truth regarding the Irish in America, which is that it is impossible to imagine a non-white diaspora group obtaining the kind of political leverage enjoyed by the Irish diaspora. The considerable platform enjoyed by de Varela, evident both in these recordings and throughout his US tour, therefore reveals the avenues that are either open or closed to diaspora groups based on their immutable characteristics.

The opening of de Valera's address also reflects the hybridity of the Irish diasporic experience. The president of *Dáil Éireann* celebrated the duality of Irish Americanism, granting his listeners permission to "guard and cherish" a flag other than the Irish tricolour. This can be read as a recognition of the Irish nationalist movement's reliance upon the material and political engagement of the American Irish community. Indeed, by the 1890s,

more than $5 million a year was being remitted to Ireland via American postal money orders.[27]

Yet beyond this *realpolitik*, another attempt to appeal to American culture can be discerned with de Valera's assertion that "we [the Irish diaspora] can be the shaft of dawn for the despairing and the wretched everywhere".[28] It is likely that the "shaft of dawn" is a quotation from the poem 'Dawn' by popular Kentuckian poet Ella Higginson.[29] Couching an anti-imperialist appeal in the register of an American writer reveals another attempt to highlight the connections between Irish and American cultures. By appealing to these similarities, de Valera strengthened the claim of long-distance Irish nationalism by justifying support for the Irish cause in a way that aligned with American sensibilities.

The suffering implicit within the language of "despairing" and "wretched" is indicative of de Valera's invocation of Ireland's oppressive experience of the British empire. This is also apparent in de Valera's use of "chains" and "binds", as well as a later reference to the Irish as "the spear point of the hosts in political slavery".[30] This register of sorrow is reinforced with the assertion that Irish Americans are

> the children of a race that has endured for ages the blight of war and the disappointment of peace, who have had the cup of the fruition of hope dashed from our lips in every decade and have not despaired.[31]

This critique of the bondages of empire, combined with the rhetoric of family, demonstrates how de Valera engaged with the longstanding resentments of exile within the Irish diaspora that Miller identifies. The evocation of a resilient and martyred Irish 'race' also aligns with Tölölyan's definition of exilic nationalism, in which "the homeland is sacred" and its national identity "must be preserved in exile, must remain "pure" or "true" to their origins".[32]

This sense of loss within an imperial context is especially apparent in the second of de Varela's National Forum recordings, a memorial address for Terence MacSwiney. The Lord Mayor of Cork, MacSwiney died on hunger strike in Brixton prison on 25th October 1920. The international attention and sympathy for MacSwiney's suffering made his death an international *cause célèbre*, with actions of solidarity spanning from the United States to Catalonia.[33]

The memorial begins with another invocation of the global Irish family, as de Valera laments that "England has killed another son for Ireland to mourn".[34] This is followed by a revealing reference to a hero of American independence: "Tomorrow a boy, Kevin Barry, they ['the English'] will hang, and, Hale-like, he will only regret that he has but one life to give".[35]

Here, de Varela draws parallels between Kevin Barry, an 18-year-old IRA soldier executed by the British government just days after MacSwiney's death to great international contestation, and Connecticut militiaman Nathan Hale, who was executed by

the British in 1776, aged 21. When referring to Barry's martyrdom, de-Valera invokes Hale's iconic final words, that "if I have one regret it is that I have but one life to give to my country," in another appeal to the dual nationality of the American Irish diaspora. Indeed, de Valera also recalls Founding Father Patrick Henry's 1775 famous 'Give me liberty, or give me death' speech in his prorogation: "the glorious standards our comrades have set must be ours and in this last phase of Ireland's struggle … our motto must be theirs – the motto of victory, liberty or death".[36]

This duality has been identified by Chantal Bordes-Benayoun, who argues that diasporas "always tried to reconcile their relations, on the one hand with the society of settlement, and, on the other, with both the homeland, and the other parts of their scattered nation".[37] As well as the evocative technique of rooting Irish martyrdom in the American mythology of independence, de Valera's appeal speaks to the sense of loss and exile which was the defining feature of diasporic Irish nationalism. As Lune argues, "each campaign drew on the language, framing, and nationalist vision of the United Irishmen, often extolling the heroes and martyrs of past campaigns to motivate the latest campaign".[38] This is reinforced by de Valera's declaration that "Ireland dries her tears over the graves of her martyred ones".[39]

The strong sense of loss, dispossession, and exile apparent in de Valera's addresses acted as a glue to cohere the broad conception of diasporic belonging that allowed for dual national allegiances. Therefore whilst it was intentionally elastic and inclusive, the Irish nationalism outlined in de Valera's tour, predicated as it was on a strong sense of exile amongst its members, must be considered alongside the long-distance nationalisms of 'classic' diasporas.

Exiled Between Two Empires

The long-distance Irish independence movement conceived of itself along global lines and spoke to a sense of exile and dispossession derived from Ireland's colonial experience. As a result of this, its leaders sought liberation from the British empire by positioning themselves alongside another. This is alluded to by Akenson, who observed that "the Irish diaspora was intimately related to the two great English-speaking empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the British and the American".[40]

It is important to situate transnational Irish nationalism within the declining legitimacy of formal empires after WWI and President Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric of global self-determination, formalised in his '14 point' address to the US Congress on January 8th, 1918. Leaders of the Irish diaspora were intensely concerned with this context. As Bernadette Whelan has argued, securing Wilson's recognition for an independent Ireland was a primary aim of Irish nationalists prior to and during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and 1920.[41] As de Valera wrote from the US in a March 1920 letter to Arthur Griffith,

"It seems to me there is only one hope, and that is to get both sides pledged to the principle of recognition of the Republic … every nerve should be strained now to get resolutions urging recognition passed through Congress here".[42]

This appeal to a United States that was rhetorically positioning itself as a neo-imperial leader on the world stage is apparent throughout de Valera's three recorded speeches. For instance, during the St Patrick's Day address, he asserted that

> never before have the scattered children of Éire had such an opportunity for noble service. Today you can serve not only Ireland but the world. A cruel war and a more cruel peace have shattered the generous of soul.[43]

The emotive appeal to the "scattered children" of Ireland's diaspora engages with long-standing feelings of resentment that the British empire had dispossessed Irish migrants of an ancestral family. The description of a peace even crueller than a war which claimed millions of lives refers to President Wilson's ongoing refusal to recognise Ireland's independence and his administration's determination to leave the 'Irish problem' to the British to solve.[44] This is also apparent in the prorogation

> those of our race, citizens of this mighty land of America whose thought will help to mould the policy of the leader among the nations, how much the world looks to you … You have only to have the will … What would not the people of the old land give for the power which is yours?[45]

The duality inherent to de Valera's conception of the Irish diaspora is evident in the simultaneous reference to members of the Irish 'race' also being 'citizens' of America. This fluid binary allows for the powerful call to action, which indicates that a broad conception of diasporic belonging was a source of strength for the Irish nationalist movement. The primacy with which the leaders of the Irish nationalist movement held the Irish diaspora is evident with de Valera's insinuation that the diaspora possessed more 'power' than Irish nationalists in the 'old land.' This encapsulates the global dimensions of the Irish revolution and the symbiotic relationship between its diasporic and homeland nationalisms, which runs counter to O'Day's thesis of the weakness of long-distance Irish nationalism.[46]

The global mindedness of its leaders is even more apparent in the third of de Valera's National Forum speeches on the 'Recognition of the Republic of Ireland.' The speech is addressed as much to the American public as it is to members of the Irish diaspora, beginning with a vivid claim to Irish nationhood from the shadows of imperial possession:

> The Irish Republic exists. Its shackles serve but to make its reality the more concrete. It is not destroyed when individuals or nations plunge their heads into the sand and say they cannot see it. It is there, recognized or not, and it can be destroyed only by the power that brought it into being - the will of the Irish people.[47]

The notion of an Irish nation existing in the minds of its global citizenry strongly recalls Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' thesis that national belonging is forged through religious communities, print languages, and modern communication.[48] That this imagination came from a global 'Irish people' suggests that Anderson's theory need not be

limited by spatial specificity but can also exist across borders. Anderson tended to see long-distance nationalists as pernicious, including Americans who provided material support for violent Irish nationalists.[49] Yet de Valera's insistence that the Irish nation is brought into reality by the sheer will of its people suggests that long-distance nationalisms should not be overlooked within the imagined communities thesis. The example of the Irish diaspora therefore reveals the limitations of Anderson's focus on constrained public arenas in which the imagination of the nation can emerge. Global historians have rightly pushed against this tendency to downplay the 'translocal' origins of nations, and the strength of Irish long-distance nationalism reaffirms the importance of this global perspective.[50]

De Valera's reference to 'shackles' is another appeal to the legitimacy of Ireland's claim to nationhood from the oppressive legacy of imperialism, alongside the assertion that the Irish nation "is not destroyed when individuals or nations plunge their heads into the sand and say they cannot see it".[51] Here, Wilson's government is portrayed as the proverbial ostrich, denying Ireland the self-determination promised by his administration's rhetoric. This manipulation of the United States' professed anti-imperialism is even more apparent later in the recording, in which de Valera asserts

> Ireland's cause is not Ireland's cause only. It is the cause of the world. It is the cause of right, and of justice, and of true democracy everywhere. If I were an American, I would make it the supreme object of my life to win for my country the distinction of securing now for mankind, in peace, what millions have died for vainly in war. Ireland's claims furnishes America the opportunity.[52]

The global mindedness of Ireland's diasporic leaders is self-evident with the assertion that Ireland is the "cause of the world", although in this case the conceptual 'world' is very narrowly tailored to distinctly American ideals and nationalism. The direct appeal to non-Irish Americans speaks to de Valera's strategy of linking the Irish claims of independence to the emotive memory both of recent bloodshed in WWI and of American independence from the British empire. This is supported with the language of 'justice' and 'democracy' inherent to the American mythology of its founding fathers. De Valera ends the recording with a brazen willingness to drive a wedge between these values and the betrayal of the Wilson administration:

> This question of recognition is distinctly an American question … The Paris Peace Treaty, the international diplomats and the international financiers, have not answered these questions as the American people intended them to be answered. It is now a question for the American people to answer them for themselves.[53]

The willingness of de Valera to appeal directly to the American people suggests that the notion of a 'Wilsonian moment', as coined by Erez Manela, is a misrepresentation of the rise of nationalist movements that promotes American exceptionalism and erases the agency of diasporic nationalist leaders.[54] The post-WWI decline in the legitimacy of empire is best understood, not as a US-inspired shift away from colonialism, but rather as a turning point between formal and informal modes of Western-led capitalist domination. In his account of the 'Wilsonian moment', Manela attributes Wilson's rhetoric of self-determination as one of the key drivers of anticolonial nationalism.[55] Here, Wilson is

portrayed as "a millennial figure, a prophet of a new world order" whose impact was essential in the rise of anticolonial nationalism.[56]

To its credit, Manela's account recognises the limitations of Wilson's "illusory" global moment. Manela identifies the irony of Wilson's rhetoric inspiring independent movements that he neither anticipated nor approved, and that the vehemently racist US President had no intentions of applying his avowed principles in India, China, Korea, and Egypt. The importance of how Wilsonian self-determination as a discursive strategy was adopted and deployed by colonial independence movements is also emphasised.[57] Yet the very notion of a 'Wilsonian Moment' is fraught with American exceptionalism. As argued persuasively by Hussein Omar, freedom was not a concept that needed to be imported from the United States to colonised peoples.[58] Indeed, Lune traces the interrelation between American and Irish conceptions of freedom to centuries before Wilson's administration.[59]

The fact that De Valera was willing to speak, over the head of the American president, directly to the Irish diaspora and the American people undermines the validity of understanding the post-war wave of anti-imperial nationalism as the 'Wilsonian moment.' Rather than Manela's focus on one individual, de Valera's tour of the United States demonstrates the benefits of considering how diasporic nationalist leaders engaged with the declining legitimacy of formal empires after the First World War. His rhetoric also demonstrates how appeals to publics and popular sentiments could be leveraged against world leaders. This shows that the Irish diaspora's position between two empires did not only mean strategic allegiance with the US, but also implicit or threatened allegiance with other burgeoning anti-colonial and liberation movements that could be dangerous to America.

In the case of Irish long-distance nationalism, therefore, an elastic invocation of diaspora that enabled multiple allegiances and aligned with anti-colonial sentiments became a key weapon in the years preceding Irish independence.

The Global Origins of the Irish Republic

Taken together, de Valera's speeches reveal how the Irish diaspora was connected by a sense of loss and dispossession. These sentiments thus allowed for an ambiguous conception of the global nation that recognised and enabled a multiplicity of national allegiances. As its founding documents also illustrate, the Irish nation itself was constructed along global lines in a manner that was outward looking and reflected both the contribution and connection of its diaspora.

The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the *Dáil Éireann* at its first meeting in the Mansion House, Dublin on 21st January 1919. To underline its international scope, it was adopted in Irish, English, and French. The declaration made a direct global appeal that "we claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation in

the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter".[60] With this, the leaders of Irish nationalism again displayed a desire to link the struggle for independence to worldwide debates around self-determination and the declining legitimacy of empires.

The declaration repeatedly refers to "the Irish nation" and the "Irish People", such as in the assertion that "we, the elected Representatives of the ancient Irish people in National Parliament assembled, do, in the name of the Irish nation, ratify the establishment of the Irish Republic".[61] By invoking the 'ancient Irish people', the leaders of Irish independence were asserting a strong and legitimate claim to nationhood in a manner that was inclusive to the global Irish diaspora.

To support this claim, it is important to consider concurrent discourses around the Irish 'race.' Between 1881 and 1922, nine Global Irish Race Conventions took place – five in the US, with the others in Melbourne, Buenos Aires, Dublin, and Paris.[62] As Gerard Keown argues, these conferences were far from a linear display of global Irish unity and often reflected the splits in the Irish nationalist movement.[63] However, this global discourse of Irish ethnicity suggests a deep connection between the homeland and the diaspora – with Gannon going as far as describing Ireland as a 'transnational nation' in his study of the 1922 Paris Irish Race Conference.[64] This is supported by the fact that the fledgling Irish state was actively involved in establishing the conferences, and in 1921 sent missions to gain support for recognition of the Republic to Australia, the US, New Zealand, Russia, South America, and South Africa.[65] Whilst this global connection was never formalised, despite de Valera's failed efforts to establish the global organisation '*Fine Ghaedheal*', the prevalence of global debates regarding the Irish race indicate that the Irish nation was conceived along global lines and looked outward to the nation's diaspora.[66]

The notion of a global Irish nation was reaffirmed in the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, which was ratified by the *Dáil Éireann* in January 1919. The 1916 Proclamation was issued by the Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood during the Easter Rising of April 1916. It begins with the call that "in the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom".[67] The language of the global Irish family is again apparent here, as well as the appeal to past martyrdom as a Janus-faced symbol of both dispossession ('dead') and strength ('strikes'). The Irish diaspora is then directly referred to with the statement that Ireland's struggle is "supported by her exiled children in America".[68]

The motif of martyrdom and sacrifice is a recurrent theme throughout de Valera's speeches and the foundational documents of the Irish nation. This had a particular resonance for members of the Irish diaspora and in particular Irish Americans, whose political and social identity, as identified by Miller, overwhelmingly drew from the Catholic church.[69] Akenson, who rightly emphasises the Protestant diasporic experience,

links the nature of diasporic Irish nationalism to the biblical suffering of The Chosen People.[70] In addition, Lune outlines how the evocatively storied heroes and martyrs were used to mobilise subsequent generations of Irish nationalists, and it is clear that the religious imagery evoked by the recurrent appeal to and valorisation of self-sacrifice powerfully resonated with the predominantly Catholic Irish diaspora.[71]

This religiously imbued sense of exile and dispossession, which de Valera would articulate so frequently in his forthcoming tour of the United States, was also codified into the founding documents of the fledgling nation. In this sense, especially when considered in tandem with the Irish race conferences, the independent Irish nation was designed to belong to all its citizens around the world. This was an elastic sense of belonging that allowed for multiple national allegiances, yet one which facilitated a powerful interchange between diasporic and homeland nationalism.

This conception of strength through flexibility is supported by the *Dáil's* "Message to the Free Nations of the World". McGarry details how the media spectacle of the public session of Ireland's unofficial 'Day of Independence' on 21st January 1919 was "intended for an international, as much as domestic, audience".[72] The message begins with an appeal for global recognition of Irish independence at the upcoming Peace Congress:

> The race, the language, the customs and traditions of Ireland are radically distinct from the English. Ireland is one of the most ancient nations in Europe, and she has preserved her national integrity, vigorous and intact, through seven centuries of foreign oppression.[73]

As well as being a politically necessary attempt to garner sympathy for the Irish cause from a global audience, the fact that this sanctified ('intact') and dynamic ('vigorous') image of the homeland was targeted at Irish migrants across the world is indicative of the symbiotic relationship inherent to long-distance nationalisms. This relationship was based on an appeal to global notions of peace and freedom, which is also evident in the following section:

> Ireland to-day reasserts her historic nationhood the more confidently before the new world emerging from the War, because she believes in freedom and justice as the fundamental principles of international law … because the permanent peace of Europe can never be secured by perpetuating military dominion for the profit of empire but only by establishing the control of government in every land upon the basis of the free will of a free people.[74]

This firmly situates the Irish claim to independence within the context of declining empires, which enables the claims of a pure homeland to be developed even stronger in contrast to the perception of a violent, extractive, and profit-seeking British empire. This notion of a pure Irish homeland is intrinsically linked to the Irish diaspora, as persuasively argued by Tölölyan:

> In exilic nationalism, the nation-state must be maintained … not only because political sovereignty is a value in itself but also because the homeland is where diasporan identity, ever more precarious in the face of persecution or assimilation or hybridity, draws its strength.[75]

This is an apt summary of the home front of Irish long-distance nationalism. The three documents adopted by the Dáil Éireann in January 1919 reveal how the Irish nation was forged by actors who thought globally, both towards the Irish diaspora and within the context of shifting empires. They indicate how the concerns of the global Irish community were codified into the founding documents of the independent nation. Crucially, when considered alongside de Valera's subsequent tour of the United States, they also illuminate the ways in which the Irish diaspora and homeland nationalism drew their strength from one another.

Conclusion

The *Dáil Éireann* documents of 1919, coupled with de Valera's National Forum speeches, indicate that that the Irish diaspora played an instrumental role in the independence movement. They also reveal that this involvement was facilitated upon a flexible understanding of the Irish diaspora as a global nation, which allowed for dual allegiances, and that what connected this broad conception was a sense of loss that derived from Ireland's colonial experience.

That the duality and elasticity inherent to de Valera's conception of the Irish diaspora was a source of strength may appear counterintuitive. Yet by drawing connections between Irish and American culture, the leaders of Irish diasporic nationalism were able to launch an inclusive appeal to the dual status of Irish Americans and evoke long-standing feelings of dispossession and exile. If we return to Smith's four pillars of cultural resources that define classic diaspora nationalisms, it becomes clear that the Irish experience must be considered within this category. Smith talks of myths of national origins, idealised territorial attachments, vivid traditions of ethnohistory and ideals of sacrifice and martyrdom – which were the bedrock of de Valera's engagement with the Irish diaspora.[76]

The strength of the diaspora's contribution to Irish long-distance nationalism was reflected in the founding documents of the independent nation. The *Dáil Éireann's* publications were imbued with a global mindedness and consideration of the global Irish nation that aligned with contemporary debates of the Irish 'race'. The *Dáil's* anti-imperialist rhetoric and invocation of a global Irish community mirrored the feelings of exile within the Irish diaspora that would be so persistently engaged with by de Valera in his subsequent US tour. Taken together, this indicates a symbiotic relationship between homeland and diasporic Irish nationalism in which both sites of struggle drew strength from one another. Ultimately, the formation of the Irish Republic cannot be understood without a consideration of both the global context and the influence of "the scattered children of *Éire*".[77]

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