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Nationalism in Transformation: Local Government in Co. Tipperary, 1912-1920

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Tipperary was renowned as a major rebel county in the War of Independence, chiefly because of the large number of I.R.A. activists which the county produced. Much is known of these activists; their mindset, political ideas and motivations are well accounted for in the writings of and about Dan Breen, Sean Treacy and countless lesser known Volunteers, most notably in the pages of this Journal. But, unfortunately, there is little analysis of the political motivation of the broader county community during this period, whose contribution to the Irish revolution was no less significant than that of Dan Breen and the Tipperary I.R.A.

The chief political revolution of this decade was unquestionably the displacement of the Irish Parliamentary Party by Sinn Féin as the dominant nationalist organisation in the country. This transformation was brought about electorally at the 1918 general election and it therefore expressed the views of the wider political community in Ireland. Why did this transformation take place? What motivated provincial nationalists to shift their allegiance away from the Irish Parliamentary Party (which had, apparently, served them so well since the 1870s) and to adopt instead the more extreme separatist nationalism of Sinn Féin?

The object of this article is to analyse the ways in which this transformation occurred in county Tipperary, focussing in particular on the records of Tipperary county council (both ridings). Although the county council was democratically elected, there were only two such elections to this body in the period – in 1914 and (because the 1917 election was postponed in 1917, 1918 and 1919) in 1920. For this reason the political views of the county council cannot be seen as representative of the county more generally, especially after 1917.

However, the records of the county councils provide crucial insights into the nature of Home Rulers' nationalism and, after 1920, into the different nationalist strategies and ideals of Sinn Féin as understood in county Tipperary. By distinguishing between the two versions of Irish nationalism it is possible to suggest what was perceived as defective in the Irish Parliamentary Party's policies by the nationalist voters in Tipperary at the elections of 1918 and 1920, and therefore to explain why Sinn Féin replaced the Party as the dominant nationalist organisation in the county.

The Irish Parliamentary Party had the apparently unconditional support of both Tipperary county councils between 1912 and 1916. In May 1914 North Tipperary county council unanimously passed the following motion:

"We . . . hereby express our admiration and whole hearted approval of the magnificent and tactful manner in which the cause of Home Rule has been conducted so successfully and triumphantly through the British House of Commons by our faithful and unselfish Party, so ably led by Ireland's trusted son, Mr. John E. Redmond . . . we are now on the eve of final victory".¹

Indeed, between 1912 and 1916 twelve separate motions of confidence in Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party were passed by North and South Tipperary county councils, six of



them in 1914. However, in a sense these resolutions reflect a mounting neurosis regarding the Home Rule Bill rather than the sanguine state of affairs which they ostensibly suggest. In 1913, the political debate around Home Rule had quietened considerably, so much so that South Tipperary county council could spend the bulk of their February quarterly meeting discussing a site for the proposed county sanatorium (often quite heatedly) and tag on to the end of the meeting in routine fashion a resolution congratulating Redmond on the passage of the Home Rule Bill through its third reading in Westminster.²

It was only when Home Rule became threatened by partition, and when the question of supporting voluntary recruitment divided the provincial Home Rule movement, that this political issue regained centre stage in the discourses of local authorities. The resolution quoted above indicates the manner in which expressions of confidence were born more of a sense of political crisis than of political self-confidence, as the rest of the resolution reads:

“We emphatically support our leaders in the declaration that no more concessions can be entertained. We therefore call on Mr. Redmond and the Irish Party to resist any further attempt to delay or mutilate the Home Rule Bill, which, we are confident, will soon be placed on the Statute Books”.³

The expression of “whole-hearted” support in the Party was as much a statement of what was required of the Party if it was to maintain this support, as a confirmation of ongoing allegiance to the Party’s policies.

Yet the Party did retain its support in the county councils, despite dissension over certain key issues, up to 1920. This was partly because of provincial nationalists’ faith in consensus nationalism. If England was to give Ireland a measure of self-rule nationalists believed that they needed to maintain a united front in order to demonstrate that there was widespread support for such a measure. This belief was articulated by Mr. Fogarty at a meeting of South Tipperary county council in March 1917: “I think we should support one Parliamentary Party. There is no room for several parties”.⁴

For this reason the county council laid down a policy that the Irish Party should not be criticised by councillors under any circumstance:

“It was their duty to give voice to the confidence which they had in their leader, and show their contempt of the criticisms of those unworthy foes and unfriendly critics who were always carping against the leaders of the people. They should show these people . . . that they had full confidence in their leaders”.⁵

Criticism of the Party from within the nationalist movement was seen as more heinous a crime than Unionist opposition to Home Rule, as the chairman of South Tipperary council indicated in June 1915: “An honest Unionist was something, because he had the courage of his convictions, but those who were now out for criticism and attack had no convictions ever, and never would have them”.⁶ Given the councillors’ contempt for Edward Carson, this was condemnation indeed of the embryonic Sinn Féin movement, and indicates the lengths to which the county council was prepared to go to in order to protect the good name of the Irish Parliamentary Party and uphold its policies in the provincial context.

However, political developments from 1914, and particularly the Party’s adoption of policies which appeared to be inimical to nationalists’ aspirations, placed a considerable strain on the county council’s unconditional allegiance to the Party. By June 1917 the chairman of South Tipperary county council, Michael Slattery, was prepared to admit this in an attempt to define his nationalism to the county council, saying:



"If . . . I am asked to approve of everything the Irish Party do, I say no. They are open to criticism . . . There was many an Act passed for this country that ought not to have been passed, and things left undone that ought to have been done".

Yet he remained loyal to the Party, continuing, "there was no reason why they should withdraw their allegiance from him [Redmond]".⁷ What distinguished Slattery and his colleagues from the nationalist electors in the county was their determination to support the methods and the policies of the Irish Parliamentary Party no matter what. Among the nationalist community more generally those political developments which merely tested the loyalty of councillors to the Party served to undermine fundamentally the support of lesser mortals for Home Rule and to create the conditions in which an alternative political manifestation of Irish nationalism would, in all likelihood, be highly favoured.

Redmond's tacit acceptance of the principle of partition was just such an issue. In June 1914 an amending Bill allowing for the temporary exclusion of parts of Ulster was introduced in the Commons and, as noted above, the county councils politely requested that there should be no "mutilation" of the Home Rule Bill. Indeed, half of the resolutions expressing confidence in Redmond and the Party from both Tipperary county councils in 1914 also demanded that there be no part of Ireland excluded from the operation of the Bill.

Underlying this conviction that Ireland should not be partitioned was a belief, current in contemporary nationalist circles, that Ulster Unionists should not be taken too seriously. In Tipperary this belief was expressed with a mixture of defiance and humour. At one level, Carson was perceived as a figure of almost limitless hilarity. In January 1914 Alderman Condon read a speech by Carson from the *Irish Times*, much to the amusement of his fellow councillors: "Gentlemen . . . Sir Edward Carson declares he has an adequate force, and he intends to prostrate himself before the King asking him to save them! Comment would spoil it! (laughter)".⁸

However, this ridiculing of Carson was underpinned by a more aggressive view, evidenced in a speech made by Michael Slattery on the U.V.F. in June 1913: "they were not in dread of the wooden guns of the North. The Northern Nationalists would finish off the Orangemen before they had an opportunity to leave that province, and God help them if any of the survivors reached the South".⁹ Despite the misplaced optimism that Unionist threats were in reality bluff, and that the U.V.F. possessed only wooden guns, these views reflect nationalists' perception at Unionist opposition to Home Rule as verging on the irrelevant.

Thus Redmond's compromises to the apparently hot-headed but weak-kneed Unionists were incomprehensible to Tipperary county councillors and precipitated polite yet defiant opposition to Redmond's handling of the crisis. In June 1917 Slattery discussed the position he would take as the council's representative at the coming Convention and stated unequivocally that "the Government could settle the Irish question on constitutional lines by applying the majority rule . . . I won't go for the partition of Ireland. Ireland is small enough without dividing it up. There are many other points on which we might give and take, but not on partition".¹⁰

However, Redmond stood by partition and Slattery reluctantly stood by the Irish Parliamentary Party. The complexity of Redmond's political position of bargaining at Westminster for Irish nationalist aspirations and at the same time being forced to accept the demands of other interest groups in parliament placed a strain on the Home Rulers of Tipperary county council and presumably on the national electors of the county. As yet the tensions which Redmond's political manoeuvring at Westminster created in the loyalty of Irish



nationalists to the Irish Parliamentary Party were insufficient to initiate a fundamental re-questioning of the Party's capacity to come up with the political goods. However, the changed circumstances inaugurated by the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 heightened the tensions within the Party and forced county councillors to re-evaluate the wisdom of Redmond's policies, particularly regarding voluntary recruitment.

In September 1914 he made a key speech at Woodenbridge, county Wicklow, pledging the support of the Irish National Volunteers to the British war effort and encouraging them to join the [British] army. Over a year later in December 1915 the waves created by this controversial but, from Redmond's point of view, necessary statement hit South Tipperary county council and initiated a debate which revealed the tensions which support for the British war effort created within Irish nationalism. A proposal was put to the council by a visiting recruitment officer, Captain Loftus, to form the county council into a local recruiting committee in order to encourage the young men of South Tipperary to join the colours.

The chairman, Michael Slattery, opposed the proposal (much to the chagrin of the more imperialist Home Rulers in the council) on the basis of a conversation he had had with the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin regarding the underlying purposes of such committees. Recruiting committees were, according to the Lord Lieutenant, intended "to be in touch with the local people and . . . [to] point out the men who were shirkers" and, having done so, "to take very good care that they would have to go".

Slattery was outraged at the accusation that Irishmen had shirked their responsibility in the War, especially because so many volunteers had recruited; and the condescension inherent in the Lord Lieutenant's remark elicited a defiant and nationalist response, in which he defended the valour of the volunteers, noted the brutality which had in the past characterised England's relations with the Irish, and defined himself as firmly against attempts to conscript Irishmen informally. This speech indicates the crisis which the War created within Irish nationalism.

Nationalists were only prepared to give so much to the British war effort, and attempts by the Government to take too much only served to threaten the precarious but significant level of trust which had been built up between the two nations since the 1880s. When this trust was perceived as being abused by the British or taken for granted, the ease with which nationalist rhetoric reverted to recollections of English injustices in Ireland was remarkable, and Slattery's speech on this issue is a superb illustration of this tendency:

I am a Nationalist since I was born, and I approve of the action of John Redmond and John Dillon today. Have we Irishmen given of every class of society a better proportion than England has given to beat the Germans? Seventy out of 130 have enlisted from the National Volunteers in Fethard . . . Are they shirking? I pointed out to the Lord Lieutenant that we could show him in Tipperary . . . a place where 40 years ago there were 200 homesteads, and I could show him the battering-ram that levelled the homes of the people, and sent them to America. I told him that we haven't the men because they had been exterminated. Let them take every farmer's son between 20 and 30 years of age, and let them exterminate them if they like. Their argument is that we are shirking, and they ask us to appoint a recruiting committee. They simply say that I must go to my neighbour's house and say: 'There is Johnnie, take him' . . . I will be no party to putting in the thin end of the wedge of conscription.¹¹

The War, and particularly the postponed enactment of Home Rule, tried the patience of Home Rule county councillors in Tipperary even further. At a meeting on 26 August in Clonmel Mr. P. Hickey could barely conceal his irritation with the sluggishness of the political process, suggesting that the council "should ask Mr. Redmond to make either a hog or a dog of



it, and to pass it or throw it out".¹² Evidently it was the tantalising way in which Irish demands for political independence were left hanging on a string that Hickey found most frustrating.

The Party became by this postponement utterly dependent on the British government and could do nothing but wait for the war to end. In order to alleviate the sense of deflation which postponement must have generated, and in an attempt to make the Irish Parliamentary Party's almost success appear more tangible, Mr. E. Anglim asserted in September that "Mr. Redmond was really if not technically, Prime Minister of Ireland, and the Irish people should look upon him as such."¹³

This rhetoric would, if believed, disentangle the Party from the ever more complex web of British politics within which Home Rule had become ensnared after 1912, and might enable the Party to stand triumphantly on its own, far away from the popular belief that, yet again, England had not kept faith. On the other hand, such statements were potentially suicidal; was Redmond, as Prime Minister, to be held responsible for the heavy-handed British military response to the Rising?

The county councillors said No; but increasingly Tipperary nationalists said Yes; the association of an Irish nationalist party with the government which was responsible for such unjust treatment of the Irish after 1916 highlighted the anomalies of Redmond's position and made the contradictions within the Irish Parliamentary Party more difficult to resolve. County councillors' responses to the Rising and the British reaction which it elicited indicate their acute perception of these contradictions and their attempts to find a political position which might hold the contradictions together within an ever increasingly precarious unity.

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On 17 May 1916, at the first meeting of South Tipperary county council since the Rising, the following motion was passed unanimously:

That in common with the overwhelming majority of the Irish people we condemn the recent outbreak in Dublin, which we regard as the natural outcome of the tactics adopted by Sir Edward Carson and his followers in 1914;

That the continuance of executions in dealing with the Rebellion would only tend to madden the people and make the administration of the law repugnant to the feelings of the Irish Nation;

That in our opinion an immediate change in the administration of Irish affairs is essentially, not alone in the interests of Ireland but also for the successful prosecution of the present war;

That we believe the wishes of Redmond in regard to the victims of the revolt should operate as if he were actually in a position similar to that occupied by Botha in the Government of South Africa.¹⁴

As Home Rulers, the councillors were forced to condemn the Rising as a threat to their political position as the rightful leaders of the Irish race; as nationalists, they were also obliged to condemn British military policies, which resonated with the historically manufactured depiction of England as unrelentingly malevolent and unfailingly deceitful in her conduct of Irish affairs. Mr. Anglim perceived that the post-Rising policies of the Government profoundly threatened to re-invent Irish perceptions of the English in this way and thereby to tear asunder the delicately woven web of trust, the *quid pro quo* which was the unique achievement of the Irish Parliamentary Party in Westminster.

"It was a bad time now, when the bitterness between the two peoples was nearly over, to have shootings and arrests. It would not allay the bitterness of Irishmen".¹⁵ His frustration with the Rising, and the tragic political developments for the Irish Party which it engendered,



caused him to depict the events of April and May as being born of a kind of madness: "He thought they [the rebels of 1916] were mad – unquestionably they had proved themselves mad. Apparently, their madness was like hydrophobia – contagious – for the Government took it and the Government went mad, and men were arrested, imprisoned and shot without trial".¹⁶

But how could madness, once it had been unleashed into Anglo-Irish political discourse, be stopped and replaced by the polite and rational politics of the Irish Party? The first step for Michael Slattery was to provide a rhetorical cold-shower for the revolutionary nationalist rebirth which the Rising pronounced itself to be. His perception of the Rising and Tipperary's limited role in it was probably shared by the majority of nationalists in the county at the time; he "was proud that Tipperary had taken so little part in it – very proud . . . It was sad to think that any of their countrymen would lend themselves to such a thing".¹⁷

However, the councillors needed reassurance from their M.P., Mr. John Cullinane, to enable them to regain their faith in the Party. At a meeting in June 1916 where the actions of the British Commander-in-Chief General Maxwell were universally condemned, Mr. Cullinane agreed with the council and added that "an Englishman does not understand Ireland, and their action could not lead to law and order, and in carrying out foolish policy in the interest, as they thought, of England and Empire they were doing the reverse". The Party, said Cullinane, "had done everything in their power to bring things to a satisfactory conclusion".

Mr. D. F. O'Meara found that Cullinane's explanation of the Irish Parliamentary Party's attempts to put an end to military rule enabled him to distinguish between the Party and the government: "The statement of Mr. Cullinane had cleared the air a great deal. He and others might find fault with the Irish Party on certain occasions and he was proud now to hear what Mr. Cullinane had said".¹⁸ Redmond was thus drawn out of the tangled events of April and May 1916 and rehabilitated by the county councillors, as a figure who was trying to get Irish claims heard rather than a pro-English conspirator.

Tipperary councillors' Home Rule nationalism could therefore remain intact and their sympathy with the brave, yet misguided, nationalist rebels of 1916 indicates this. In May, Mr. Anglim, a devoted Home Ruler, noted that "no matter how wrong they [the rebels] had been, or how strongly they condemned them, they, Irish Nationalists, must admit that, from their own point of view, they fought a clean, brave fight, no matter how wrong it was".¹⁹ Home Rulers dusted themselves down after the trauma of the insurrection, absolved the Party from any responsibility for the harshness of British post-Rising policies and maintained their self-defined nationalist sensibilities.

Could this attempt by councillors to uphold the Irish Parliamentary Party over other nationalist strategies which were imbued with the madness released by the Rising succeed? More fundamentally, would the nationalist community outside the county council accept the councillors' perception of the Party as their best hope for political independence?

In the years between 1916 and 1920 the political views of Tipperary county councillors became increasingly marginalised in the county as the more extreme nationalist organisation Sinn Féin captured the imagination of provincial nationalists. At the annual meeting of South Tipperary county council in June 1917 Mr. N. Ryan voiced this dilemma.

Before they proceeded with the election of a chairman he would like to know what power they had there at all. They had been elected for three years, and that time had expired long ago. They represented nobody but themselves. What power had they to elect a chairman, make payments, or pass proposals?²⁰

Yet the council continued to exist as constituted in 1914 up to 1920. How did the councillors



cope with the political crises which followed the Rising, and how did their constitutional nationalism survive the dual onslaught from popular Sinn Féin nationalism and British policies, which further undermined their political position, up to 1920? The majority of the county councillors held fast to the orthodoxies of the Irish Party and vigorously opposed what they perceived as pro-Sinn Féin motions in the council. A minority became converted to Sinn Féin – two members from the North Riding and three from the South Riding of Tipperary county council – and were re-elected to the new Republican councils in June 1920. One figure emerges as a fascinating exception to the rule: Michael Slattery, the chairman of South Tipperary county council, who pursued a policy which imaginatively avoided being strictly pigeon-holed into either camp.

As a nationalist Slattery had lived through previous divisions within the nationalist movement, particularly the Parnell Split, so his chief concern was with healing the rifts, as they had been healed in the past, rather than with perpetuating them through bitter comments and bad blood. In this vein he opposed a motion to withdraw the council's advertising from the *Kilkenny People*, a Sinn Féin paper, in March 1917, saying that

"while he did not agree with the politics at present of the *Kilkenny People* he could not forget what it had done in the past . . . Mr. Keane, the editor, was an old Parnellite . . . Because they did not agree with his politics now was no reason why they should try to starve an Irishman. They might be wrong themselves. There was a younger generation growing up which would express its opinions in no toadying fashion, and they as Irishmen should bury the hatchet, and all unite".²¹

This might be perceived as a manipulative attempt by a Home Ruler to persuade Sinn Féiners to integrate themselves into the old nationalist organisation; after all, under which political banner or ideology did Slattery envisage all the nationalists of Ireland uniting? However, a later speech clarifies this point. At the annual meeting in June 1918 Patrick Keating, a Sinn Féin councillor, warned Slattery that he would not be chairman of the council for much longer. Slattery replied: "I am one who does not see eye to eye with them [Sinn Féiners]. But I am prepared to give full adherence to the majority, and let them see if they can do better than we have done in the past. When our time comes if we seek the suffrage of the people and are rejected I will not growl. I believe that we will never get anything in Ireland until we have unity and majority rule. I am satisfied to abide by majority rule".²²

Slattery seems to have been prepared to accept that the methods and principles of Sinn Féin might be more successful than those of the Irish Parliamentary Party in securing a measure of political independence for Ireland; this throughout all was his chief concern. Ultimately Slattery could not bear to see Irish nationalists wasting their energy on internal disputes, and was sufficiently high-hearted to accept that in the higher cause of Irish nationalism his position of local influence as chairman of the county council was less important. But, if Slattery was persuaded that Sinn Féin might be the future of Irish nationalism, why did he not join them, as some of his colleagues (Patrick Keating, P. P. Moloney and D. F. O'Meara) did?

In 1917 and 1918 specific Sinn Féin policies filtered into the provincial mind very slowly and were often vaguely expressed. For a man like Slattery, who had lived through the early years of Sinn Féin, the new nationalism must have been more confusing still. Before the Rising Sinn Féin meant something quite different from what it came to mean in 1917-19. This confusion is expressed by Slattery in June 1917, and used in part to explain why he was not a Sinn Féiner:

"I support Mr. Redmond and his policy now. Then I am asked what is a Sinn Féiner. Sinn Féin came into being some time ago to foster the Irish language and Irish industries. Then I am a Sinn Féiner. But if Sinn Féin is as what we know it to be within the last few years – to free the country through



physical force – it is absurd, and, to my way of thinking, is not worth giving consideration to. If, on the other hand, I am asked to approve of everything the Irish Party do, I say no . . . [yet] there was no reason why they should withdraw their allegiance from him [Redmond], and they could ask any honest opponent who would they put in place of the Irish Party? . . . There is no use in abusing Count Plunkett [elected on an abstention from Westminster ticket at the North Roscommon by-election in February 1917]. As far as I can see, he is not for physical force. Then how can Sinn Féiners claim him? If I ask any man what a Sinn Féiner is he cannot tell me. Therefore I am not a Sinn Féiner".²³

This confusion, as to exactly what Sinn Féin did signify in concrete political terms, probably characterised popular nationalist understanding of Sinn Féin, particularly in the first half of 1917, when it signified an emotion rather than a strategy. However, by mid-1918 Sinn Féin had carved out distinct strategies and political ideas for itself, demands to the post-war Peace Conference and an attempt to construct an alternative political and legal system within Ireland in order to make British government impossible.

Sinn Féin, while boosted by its (spurious) connection with the Rising, took care in its campaigning for the general election to depict itself as a respectable, organised and moral force party. So why did Slattery not succumb, when it became evident what Sinn Féin stood for and that it did not openly advocate physical-force agitation? It is possible that despite the increasing arbitrariness of British policy in Ireland before the general election, culminating in the so-called German Plot of May 1918, Slattery still did not believe that there was a viable alternative to the Irish Parliamentary Party's methods.

In the late nineteenth century, when Slattery received his formative political education, nationalists were either moral or physical force, or a wily combination of both in the case of Parnell. In the context of moral force, the established political strategy was constitutional agitation at Westminster for Home Rule. Sinn Féin broke this mould by establishing itself before 1920 as a moral force movement outside Westminster, and it is likely that Slattery believed this strategy had little hope of success without recourse to political violence.

In addition, Home Rulers in the county councils appear to have been very reluctant to change their political spots; after a lifetime of constitutional agitation, they could not quickly re-adjust to a new and strange (from their point of view) nationalist organisation. As a motion passed by South Tipperary county council in February 1918 stated: "the constitutional movement was the only one that did any good for the county during the past forty years, and they would stick to it".²⁴ Home Rule county councillors resisted the political transformation which swept Ireland after 1918, and their intransigence cost them their positions. Meanwhile, nationalist Ireland had almost unanimously adopted Sinn Féin as the Irish Parliamentary Party's successors.

But what exactly did Sinn Féin stand for? The resolutions of the new county councils elected in June 1920 suggest the ways in which Tipperary Sinn Féiners understand their nationalism. The first step for the new councils was to withdraw from the British Local Government Board and to affiliate themselves instead with the Local Government Department of Dáil Éireann, thus echoing the action of the Sinn Féin M.P.s in 1919 who refused to sit in the House of Commons and instead established their own distinctly Irish government, Dáil Éireann.

Thus both North and South Tipperary county councils passed the following motion in June 1920: "We . . . hereby acknowledge the authority of Dáil Éireann as the duly elected government of the Irish people, and undertake to give effect to all decrees duly promulgated by the said Dáil Éireann in so far as same effects this council".²⁵ The Sinn Féin councillors of Tipperary, unlike their Home Rule predecessors, rejected any links with the British political system, which they believed to be untrustworthy, arbitrary and, occasionally, barbarous.



A resolution of South Tipperary county council of November 1921 reflected this perception of the English. With regard to the ill-treatment of Irish prisoners in English jails, the council declared: "we regard these things as relics of a system of punishing political views by torture which distinguished the more barbarous ages of the past".²⁶ Partly, the councillors' anti-Englishness was constructed from a sense that British politicians had deceived and manipulated Irish nationalism, and that Britain could not be trusted to keep her word.

In August 1920 North Tipperary county council called the "attention of the governments of Europe and America . . . to the attitude taken up by the British government in regard to the Irish Republicans now in English prisons. Those men are being slowly done to death for advocating the same principles for which it is alleged the late war was fought, and we wish to point out to the civilised world the hypocrisy and double-dealing of the power which pretends to sympathise with and support self-determination elsewhere and has nothing for the Irish Republican supporters of the same doctrine but the dungeon and the bullet".²⁷

The resentment of the English, which evidently characterised the Tipperary councillors after 1920, was also extended in part to the English language. A resolution of June 1920 made Irish, in a rather limited manner, the official language of the council: "That all minutes and other documents of this council be signed by the chairman in Irish, and that on and after August 1st 1920 all Pay Orders of this council be printed in the Irish language".²⁸

The Sinn Féin councils thus differed fundamentally from their predecessors. Home Rulers had accepted that a close relationship with Britain was a prerequisite for the achievement of some level of Irish independence, and had then struggled to define themselves as nationalists in a climate when misguided British policies threatened to discredit their constitutional strategies. Sinn Féin on the other hand liberated themselves from the tensions involved in attempts to please British politicians and Irish nationalists at the same time and, as a response to the arbitrary and apparently deceitful British policies of 1916-20, devised mentalities, policies and methods which rejected the British connection and radicalised Irish definitions of nationalism.

This was the crucial transformation in Irish nationalism of the revolutionary decade; a transformation that was mirrored in the proceedings of Tipperary county council in 1912-20.

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ABBREVIATIONS

"co. co." = county council;
"min. bks." = minute books;
"N. T." = North Tipperary;
"S. T." = South Tipperary;
"C.N." = *Clonmel Nationalist*.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.T. co. co. min. bks., 20-5-1914.
2. S.T. co. co. min. bks., 5-2-1913.
3. N.T. co. co. min. bks., 20-5-1914.
4. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 28-3-1917 in C.N., 28-3-1917.



5. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 25-3-1914 in C.N., 25-3-1914.
6. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1915 in C.N., 16-6-1915.
7. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1917 in C.N., 16-6-1917.
8. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 20-1-1914 in C.N., 21-1-1914.
9. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 11-6-1913 in C.N., 11-6-1913.
10. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1917 in C.N., 16-6-1917.
11. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 26-8-1914 in C.N., 26-8-1914.
12. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 26-8-1914 in C.N., 26-8-1914.
13. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 30-9-1914 in C.N., 30-9-1914.
14. S. T. co. co. min. bks., 17-5-1916.
15. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 17-5-1916 in C.N., 17-5-1916.
16. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1916 in C.N., 14-6-1916.
17. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 17-5-1916 in C.N., 17-5-1916.
18. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1916 in C.N., 14-6-1916.
19. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 17-5-1916 in C.N., 17-5-1916.
20. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1917 in C.N., 16-6-1917.
21. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 28-3-1917 in C.N., 28-3-1917.
22. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 14-6-1918 in C.N., 15-6-1918.
23. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 27-2-1918 in C.N., 2-3-1918.
24. Report of S. T. co. co. meeting held on 27-2-1918 in C.N., 2-3-1918.
25. N. T. co. co. min. bks., 14-6-1920; S. T. co. co. min. bks., 21-6-1920.
26. S. T. co. co. min. bks., 30-11-1921.
27. N. T. co. co. min. bks., 18-8-1920.
28. Ibid., 14-6-1920.

