

## ‘Frankly and Robustly National’: Padraig Pearse, the Gaelic League and the Campaign for Irish at the National University

Part Two: The establishment of the National University and the campaign for compulsory Irish for matriculation<sup>1</sup>

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A critical factor in the establishment of the National University of Ireland in 1908 was the view of the Catholic hierarchy that their community deserved a university that was distinctly Catholic in character. The main impetus behind the decision to found a Catholic university originated in Rome. When the Sacred Congregation issued its condemnation of the Queen's Colleges in 1845, it recommended that ‘the Bishops of Ireland...take steps to have erected...a Catholic University on the model of that established by the Bishops of Belgium in the city of Louvain’.<sup>1</sup> Young Catholic laymen and women were also anxious to see a university established that would reflect the separateness of their Catholicism, which by the beginning of the twentieth-century often assumed a distinctly political character.<sup>2</sup> This educated and articulate generation were anxious to identify their future position in post-Home Rule Ireland.

The claim by early students of the Catholic University that the college should be ‘distinctly Irish’ reflects the influence of the revival movement at the time.<sup>3</sup> Others had expressed their views on the position of Irish at various colleges before the Royal Commission on University Education (1902). Reverend H. Laverty, president of St Malachy's College, Belfast, submitted that, were his college to have a lecturer of Eoin MacNeill's stature ‘there would be no dearth of disciples’.<sup>4</sup> Reverend J F Hogan, Professor of Modern Languages and Literature at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, testified that the Irish lectures at the seminary were ‘very well attended’, adding that Irish was compulsory for all students in the junior classes.<sup>5</sup> Fr William Delany SJ,

president of University College, St Stephen's Green, commented that a new university would be 'incomplete without a Professor of Celtic'.<sup>6</sup>

Eoin MacNeill argued that the new university should not be another English institution in Ireland such as he regarded Trinity College, but should be Irish in ethos and tone.<sup>7</sup> The issue assumed significance beyond simply that of the place of Irish in the new university and came to encompass the anti-British feeling fermenting in nationalist circles at the beginning of the twentieth-century. Writing in *The Irish Nation* in January 1909, an unnamed correspondent opined that for centuries the Irish language had been 'proscribed, banned and crushed' and that, recently, 'State teaching and anglicised education has been tolerated in a step-motherly spirit'.<sup>8</sup> A contributor to the *Limerick Leader* argued that education in Ireland was little more than a tool for assimilation: 'England's wish is the destruction of the Irish language and the destroying and breaking down of every barrier that stands between Ireland and complete Anglicisation'.<sup>9</sup> The editor of *Sinn Féin* submitted that 'the proposal that Irish should be non-essential in a University governed by Irishmen and styling itself "national" is simply a proposal that Ireland should herself proclaim to the world her inferiority to England'.<sup>10</sup>

The Catholic University, St Stephen's Green, John Henry Newman's 1854 foundation (largely reorganised as the Jesuit-led University College, under the provisions of the Royal University, but continuing to exist, now largely as a juridical body), did not escape criticism. At a meeting of the Tralee Branch of the Gaelic League in April 1909, a letter from Cardinal Moran in Australia referred to it as 'the grand failure of Cardinal Newman's life...he (Newman) proposed [...] to develop an English University in Ireland and to mould the mind in accordance with English ideas'.<sup>11</sup> Pearse also questioned Newman's vision, which, without rancour, he described as representing a desire to see Ireland become a 'cultured English province'.<sup>12</sup>

### **Pearse's vision of the university and his critics**

Pearse was exacting in his demands regarding the new university: 'we take it for granted', he wrote in February 1908, that 'from the outset Irish would be a compulsory subject at the Matriculation Examination'.<sup>13</sup> While a university should 'train the intellects of its students' and 'lead them to a high degree of culture', the NUI must, nonetheless, meet Irish needs and interests; otherwise it would replicate the failure of the school system.<sup>14</sup> That system, 'shaped and moulded to a British pattern', had resulted in 'the intellect of our people'

being 'directed in the wrong channel', hence Ireland remained devoid of industry and science, handicapped by an education system that did not suit the needs of the country.<sup>15</sup>

Not all language revivalists shared Pearse's urgency. In December 1908, the general secretary of the Gaelic League, told a meeting at the Catholic University that the League would be satisfied 'if it was decided that Irish should be made obligatory at the end of four years'.<sup>16</sup> Very Reverend Canon McAlpine, parish priest of Clifden, County Galway, wrote in *The Irish People* that, while Irish should, of course, be offered in the new university, 'Rome was not built in a day...by this time, at least, we should have learned the evils of the policy of "*divide et impera*"'.<sup>17</sup> Nor did all parties share Pearse's rather narrow vision of the nature and purpose of university education. Other commentators held that any new university should contribute to the economic, as well as the intellectual, life of the country. F. Cruise O'Brien argued in *The Leader* in August 1908 that the Royal University did little more than yearly produce 'a certain number of, perhaps educated, but certainly uneconomic persons...more or less useless to the community'.<sup>18</sup> O'Brien saw little connection between 'training in Ireland' and 'the whole condition of the country', concluding that, if the new university was possessed of a 'true spirit of Nationalism', then its graduates would 'live in Ireland with a crust rather than...in India on two thousand a year'.<sup>19</sup>

Eoin MacNeill was anxious to stress that the new university could not simply be a place of mere instruction in the language, which, he submitted, was the work of the schools. Rather, it should endeavour to encourage and facilitate scholarly research. He pointed out that provision for the various branches of Irish Studies in itself could not impart a national spirit to the institution, observing that the 'self-same group of studies will be carried on in universities outside of Ireland'.<sup>20</sup> Others were against compulsion. A letter from a Dr McWalter to the *Freeman's Journal* in January 1909 reflected the views of many: 'Liberty demands that if a student wishes to take Irish he must be free to take it and get credit for it in the same way as Greek, or French or German'.<sup>21</sup>

In September 1909, *The Leader* called for a re-consideration of the value of university education. While supportive of the efforts of a Catholic university, the paper argued that 'what the country wants is practical men... industrialists...men who will make a living to other people's benefit, and not at other people's expense'.<sup>22</sup> Three years previously, in 1906, Fr Delany

had insisted, before the Royal Commission on Trinity College Dublin and the Royal University of Dublin (Fry Commission), that Ireland needed 'education in the applied sciences – education in agriculture, education in commerce' and ... 'higher training in technics and in applied science ...'<sup>23</sup>

Evidently there were differences of emphasis between interested parties on the type of provision the new university might offer. Certainly, Ireland had not benefited in the same way as mainland Britain from the advances of nineteenth-century industrialisation, and remained predominantly reliant upon agriculture both as a means of subsistence and for the generation of income. But it was James Connolly and Jim Larkin, not Pearse, who articulated the economic weaknesses of British policy in Ireland.

### **Revivalist representation in university governance**

Pearse was anxious that language revivalists were adequately represented on the governing body of the new university. Hence his exasperation in 1903 when the *Report of the Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland* had made no mention of representatives of 'the people', as Pearse referred to the Gaelic League and its sympathisers.<sup>24</sup> Pearse's vision of this new university might be defined as an institution that contrasted with Trinity College in atmosphere, ethos and curriculum. 'Ireland', he wrote in 1904, had no use for another 'British institution as Trinity College is...we want an *Irish University*'.<sup>25</sup> Douglas Hyde, the president of the Gaelic League, whom Pearse cites, defined its demands as follows: 'We press now for a University that shall be Irish in the fullest and broadest sense of the word... It must recognise that Ireland is a separate entity...with a separate national life, language, literature and history... the only hope of a new University doing good to Ireland will be to have it frankly and robustly national'.<sup>26</sup>

Pearse agreed, arguing that the League would support any proposal that 'secured' the 'interests of Irish-Ireland'.<sup>27</sup> The form of the new university was of little consequence; his sole concern was securing adequate representation of the revivalist movement on its senate. He understood that, if Irish became compulsory for matriculation, it would have far-reaching consequences for the language at school level. If a new university was to be established, Pearse proposed that three bodies be represented on the senate: the Roman Catholic hierarchy; the county councils and county boroughs; and the graduates.<sup>28</sup> This, he believed, would reflect an adequate cross-section of national interests.

When Birrell's Irish University Bill came before the House of Commons

in March 1908, Pearse praised it as 'an honest Englishman's honest attempt'.<sup>29</sup> His main reservation was the proposed composition of the governing body of University College, Dublin. Five of the thirty-five members of the body were to be elected by graduates. Undergraduate students were to have no representation (unlike Queen's University, Belfast). The composition of the governing bodies of the individual colleges also concerned Pearse, as the bill did not allow for adequate control by the 'hands of Young Ireland'.<sup>30</sup>

The proposed senate was not unsympathetic to the language revival and included several of its supporters, but it was not to have any authority in drawing up the statutes of the new university or have any involvement in the appointment of the first body of professors.<sup>31</sup> The bill proposed that a statutory commission be appointed to perform this task. It would comprise seven members, three appointed by the crown and four by the senate. Pearse objected on the grounds that, as the crown appointed the senate, the government retained too much authority. Such an arrangement might not guarantee the place of the Irish language. Regarding the proposals for the senate of the National University, he complained that only one woman had been included. The anomaly went against his democratic instincts: 'Is one woman – would even two women or for that matter six women – be sufficient representation of the interests of what is, after all, the more important half of Ireland's population?'<sup>32</sup>

In May 1908 the Irish Universities Bill was given its second reading in the House of Commons and forwarded to Grand Committee. Pearse urged that this was the time to secure modifications. To encourage Irish Studies, the bill should be amended to ensure that the NUI provided scholarships, studentships and fellowships in Irish. A course in Irish Studies should be offered, a faculty of Irish established in each college, and provision made for the education of native speakers in their own tongue. Pearse hoped to see the university become a bilingual institution in time and therefore suggested that a date be fixed 'after which none should be eligible for professorships, or other offices, unless able to conduct teaching, or other business of their offices, in Irish'.<sup>33</sup>

In May 1908, draft charters for the three colleges in Galway, Cork and Dublin were published, while Pearse continued to express reservations about the proposed make-up of the governing bodies. He complained that there was no certainty regarding fixity of tenure for professors after their first probationary period and he disputed the claim that the names nominated for

the governing bodies of the three colleges represented a significant number of Irish-Ireland sympathisers.<sup>34</sup>

### **The campaign for compulsory Irish**

While the University Bill was before the statutory commission, the view was expressed that making Irish compulsory for matriculation to the new university was an act of coercion.<sup>35</sup> Pearse's response was unconvincing. Arguing that nearly every action of our daily lives was 'more or less compulsory', he failed to make a cogent counter claim,<sup>36</sup> even though a point he made later, that it was 'no more tyrannical' to make Irish compulsory than 'Latin, English, Logic, Algebra', was not unreasonable.<sup>37</sup> Compulsion was imperative because the new university would serve as a 'nerve-centre for the whole educational system of Ireland'.<sup>38</sup> The urgency Pearse brought to bear on the debate was considerable. He insisted on the right of Ireland to operate its own national university and the tone of his argument was unflinchingly political: 'Intellectual freedom must precede political or national freedom; the first care of every race struggling to maintain their national existence is to educate their people on national lines and through the medium of their own language'.<sup>39</sup>

Pearse believed that, were Irish compulsory for matriculation, it would encourage schools to implement the bilingual system, which 'as yet' they had 'not touched'.<sup>40</sup> Intermediate schools would begin to provide for Irish in a meaningful way and National Schools would follow. If Irish were not compulsory, even those schools that were working hard to promote it would find it difficult to continue attracting pupils to the language. If the proposed university would not make Irish compulsory, then it should be treated as a foreign institution: 'the people will no longer willingly acquiesce in a campaign of mind murder, nation murder, which is the end aim of West-British education'.<sup>41</sup>

A mass meeting was held at the Rotunda, Dublin, in December 1908 to call attention to the issue. Similar gatherings were held in Belfast and Cork. The meeting was called in response to remarks made by Fr Delany one week earlier.<sup>42</sup> He was a prominent member of the Gaelic League but opposed Irish as a compulsory matriculation subject.<sup>43</sup> He did not believe that a university could claim to be national, if it excluded the majority of the population by imposing on them the onus to matriculate in a subject they knew little or nothing of.

Delany was an important figure in the wider debate and, drawing on his own experience as president of University College, he wrote in a letter to the Irish bishops that approximately 90% of students there generally chose to present in a language other than Irish. Speaking of Pearse's lectures on elementary and advanced Irish at the college during 1905-6, he reported that 'attendance was very unsatisfactory and considerable expense was incurred'.<sup>44</sup> A series of lectures by Eoin MacNeill the following year suffered from similarly low attendances. Delany also argued that a compulsory Irish requirement would drive students into Trinity College or to Belfast and was therefore potentially injurious to faith and morals.<sup>45</sup>

Nonetheless, the campaign for compulsory Irish for matriculation won widespread popular support and assumed a symbolic significance. Large meetings were held throughout the country including one of more than 10,000 in Tuam, County Galway. Douglas Hyde reflected the mood, stating that, 'as the Irish language did not die naturally but was killed by force...a little gentle pressure is necessary for its restoration'. Only its being made compulsory, he argued, would convince 'the Gaelic Irishman [that] after 300 or 400 years of oppression is he at last ceasing to be the underdog in Ireland'.<sup>46</sup> The campaign culminated in a demonstration by more than 100,000 people in Dublin in September 1909 and represented the zenith of the influence and popularity of the Gaelic League. In the same year, Pearse resigned as editor of *An Claidheamh Soluis* to concentrate upon his work at St Enda's.<sup>47</sup>

The campaign for compulsory Irish for matriculation bore fruit in 1910, when the Senate of the National University of Ireland announced that Irish would be obligatory for entrance, effective from 1913. It was a famous victory for Pearse and the League and the announcement was greeted with celebrations in many parts of the country.<sup>48</sup> But, perhaps prophetically, *The Times* in London suggested that the poor of Ireland were 'eminently shrewd ...they want their sons to be barristers or solicitors, doctors or engineers. They will ask what use Irish will be to their children in such pursuits or in anything?'<sup>49</sup> The campaign, which had come to represent nationalist aspirations, had caused tensions within the League. Many members objected to such a strenuous fight on an issue that, arguably, concerned so few people. Those who opposed compulsion felt that the League had wasted much of its energy and many found that their commitment to the language revival was now questioned. Pearse's own growing involvement in nationalist politics from 1912 meant that the cultural revivalism championed by the Gaelic League seemed less urgent.

### Pearse's legacy

By the mid nineteenth-century Irish had been almost forgotten. There was no significant interest in preserving it. Irish was not the language of the 1798 rebellion or of the campaign for Catholic emancipation or the repeal of the Act of Union. O'Connell had addressed his 'monster' rallies in English.<sup>50</sup> However, Pearse had never envisaged an all-Irish-speaking nation. At best he hoped for a bilingual Ireland and insisted that Irish children be accorded the right to learn the language. His editorship of *An Claidheamh Soluis* coincided with and fostered the language revival. Frustrated with conventional politics in post-Parnell Ireland, many idealistic young men and women gave their energies to the League and achieved impressive results. From the late nineteenth-century, language revivalists had secured the teaching of Irish at National School level as an extra and an ordinary subject and Irish had been included as an extra subject in Intermediate education since its inception in 1878.<sup>51</sup> Due to the Gaelic League's campaign, Irish became compulsory at matriculation for those seeking to enter the National University of Ireland.

The League had overseen the development of a network of evening classes throughout the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries.<sup>52</sup> It had established a number of colleges to provide for those who wished to train in teaching Irish. By 1910, only seven of these had been granted recognition by the National Board: the Four Masters College, Letterkenny; the Ulster College, County Donegal; the Connacht College, County Mayo; the Munster College, County Cork; the Ring College, County Kerry; the Belfast College, County Antrim; and the Leinster College, Dublin.<sup>53</sup> By 1915, this figure had risen to seventeen and, by 1919, there were twenty-three such colleges.<sup>54</sup>

By 1920, a network of twenty-three recognised training colleges had been established for teachers wishing to learn Irish.<sup>55</sup> A bilingual programme had been sanctioned in *gaeltacht* and bilingual regions, representing a significant step toward preserving the vernacular of those areas. A renewed interest in both Irish language and history had been generated and both had come to have political significance in the early twentieth-century. Finally, by 1926, when the first census under an independent government took place, it was found that the percentage of Irish speakers had risen from 17.6% in 1911 to 18.3%. The rise was small but significant, because it represented the first increase since 1881.<sup>56</sup> We have not considered here the work of Pearse and the Gaelic League in ensuring the presence of Irish in the National and Intermediate school systems. But, without their work on its behalf, the

language would have failed to find any home within the NUI in the early decades of independence.

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Cited in Vincent Alan McClelland, *English Roman Catholics and Higher Education 1830-1903* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p.87.
- <sup>2</sup> See Senia Pašeta, *Before the Revolution, Nationalism, Social Change and Ireland's Catholic Elite, 1879-1992* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), Epilogue.
- <sup>3</sup> See *St. Stephen's, A Record of University Life*, 1 June 1909. *St Stephen's* was the first of a number of increasingly radical student papers to be produced at University College Dublin in the first two decades of the twentieth-century. See Donal McCartney, *UCD A National Idea, The History of University College Dublin* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1999), p.58.
- <sup>4</sup> *Irish in University Education, Evidence Given Before the Royal Commission on University Education, 1902*, p. 44. (Gaelic League Pamphlet No. 29).
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46. On provision for Irish at St. Patrick's, Maynooth see below.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Freeman's Journal*, 4 January 1908, 8.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Irish Nation* (vol. 1), 16 January 1908.
- <sup>9</sup> Cited, *ibid.* in *The Irish Nation*, 16.1.1908.
- <sup>10</sup> 'The language in the university', *Sinn Féin*, 9 January 1909.
- <sup>11</sup> 'An Irish university of future failure', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 24 April 1909, 11.
- <sup>12</sup> 'The university crises', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 1 May 1909, 9.
- <sup>13</sup> 'Irish Ireland and the university question', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 8 February 1909, 9.
- <sup>14</sup> 'The new university: Irish essential for matriculation', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 22 August 1908, 9.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> *The Irish People*, 2 December 1908. Writing in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, the Bishop of Elphin Dr John Joseph Clancy concurred, pointing out that Intermediate schools would need time to adapt to the new rule and suggested a preparation period of 'four or five years' (2 January 1909).
- <sup>17</sup> *The Irish People*, 9 January 1909.
- <sup>18</sup> 'After the Universities Bill', *The Leader*, 1 August 1908.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

- 20 See Eoin MacNeill, *Irish in the National University of Ireland* (Dublin: An Cló-Cumann Ltd, 1909). MacNeill was invited to sit on the Senate of the NUI in May 1908. See TDS, MS 10886 Irish Office in London to Eoin MacNeill 5 May 1908, Eoin MacNeill Papers, NLI.
- 21 *The Freeman's Journal*, 2 January 1909.
- 22 'The plague of B.A.s', *The Leader*, 18 December 1909.
- 23 *Royal Commission on Trinity College, Dublin, and the University of Dublin, First Report of the Commissioners, Dublin 1906*, Minutes of Evidence, Rev. William Delany, SJ, LL.D., President of University College Dublin, p. 271, 4302.
- 24 'The University Commission Report', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 28 March 1903.
- 25 'The university question', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 30 January 1904, 4. (Emphasis in original).
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid. The power of the county councils meant that Pearse was anxious to court their support. In January 1909 they threatened to withhold scholarships unless Irish were made compulsory for matriculation and this added considerable weight to the wider campaign. See Donal McCartney, *UCD A National Idea*, p. 51; also, Fathers of the Society of Jesus, *A Page of Irish History: Story of University College, Dublin 1883-1909* (Dublin: Talbot, 1930), p. 499.
- 29 'The University Bill', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 11 April 1908, 9. The reference is to Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland, who had pioneered the bill.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 These included Douglas Hyde and Mary Hayden, later an extern lecturer at St Enda's. See *The National University of Ireland. Act of Parliament Charter and Statutes*, X. The Senate (2), pp. 29-30 (HMSO, Dublin 1908). See also *The Leader*, 2 May 1908.
- 32 'Gael's and the University Bill', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 25 April 1908, 9. Pearse's feminist sympathies remain unexamined. Certainly, he was close to women such as Eveleen Nicolls and Mary Hayden, who held strong feminist views. On at least one occasion he spoke at a meeting of the Irish Women's Franchise League, sharing the platform with Mr A J Nicolls, who spoke on 'Women and social reform.' See TD MS 21053, Hon. Secretary of Irish Women's Franchise League to Patrick Pearse, 28 July 1910 Pearse Papers, NLI.
- 33 'The new Dublin university: what we want', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 16 May

1908, 9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> The accusation is uncited by Pearse. See 'The new university: Irish essential for matriculation', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 22 August 1908, 9. Indeed, the Irish liberal thinker Francis Sheehy-Skeffington (1878-1916) regarded the campaign for compulsion as 'a virtual confession of weakness...an admission that the Gaelic League (had) failed adequately to arouse the enthusiasm of the country...and that it must resort to the weapon of despair – coercion'. (Cited in *The Irish People*, 26 December 1908).

<sup>36</sup> 'The new university: Irish essential for matriculation', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 22 August 1908, 9. The same argument was employed by Reverend P J Moran CC in *The Freeman's Journal* 2 January 1909: in effect, it could be argued that he was 'coerced' into learning Latin as a seminarian or 'coerced' into going 'to the Missions'.

<sup>37</sup> 'Irish as an essential: the why and the wherefore', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 19 December 1908, 9.

<sup>38</sup> 'The university and the schools', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 23 January 1909, 9.

<sup>39</sup> 'The new university: Irish essential for matriculation', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 22 August 1908, 9.

<sup>40</sup> See 'Irish in the new university', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 5 September 1908.

<sup>41</sup> 'The issue unchanged', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 5 June 1909.

<sup>42</sup> He had attended the inaugural meeting of the Irish Society in November 1908. A paper by T.P. Nowlan entitled 'The relation of Irish to the new university' was read in the absence of the author and concluded that Irish should be an 'integral part of any National University curriculum'. This claim was supported by a number of speakers. When Eoin MacNeill, who was presiding at the meeting, asked Fr Delany if he wished to speak, he did so, in order that his silence might not be construed as supporting Nowlan's claim. See *A Page of Irish History*.

<sup>43</sup> See Thomas J Morrissey SJ, *Towards a National University*, William Delany SJ (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1983), p 329. Delany's view caused considerable controversy. *The Gaelic American* referred to him and 'other forces of Anglicisation' as representing those hostile to the language, who 'under the guise of religion and spurious utilitarianism', sought to 'hoodwink and rob the Irish people of the blessings and benefits which would accrue from a truly Irish and National University' (Cited in 'Press opinions', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 16 January 1909, 7). While Delany told the Royal Commission on University Education (1902) that he could not envisage a new university without a professor of Celtic, it does not follow

that he should support compulsory Irish for matriculation. See *Irish in University Education. Evidence Given Before the Royal Commission on University Education, 1902*, p. 49, 'William Delaney SJ, LL.D., President of University College, Dublin examined.' (Gaelic League Pamphlets No. 29).

<sup>44</sup> Morrissey SJ, *Towards a National University*, p 330.

<sup>45</sup> An anonymous letter to *The Leader* pointed to the contradictory nature of the Hierarchy's concern regarding Catholic student's entering Trinity in the event of compulsory Irish at NUI colleges; 'the ban against Trinity...will... still hold whether Irish is compulsory or not' (13 March 1909).

<sup>46</sup> Cited in Pádraig O'Fearáil, *The Story of Conradh Na Gaeilge* (Dublin: Clódhanna Teoranta, 1975), p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p 39.

<sup>49</sup> See O'Fearail, *The Story of Conradh Na Gaeilge*, p 39. In 1855, the National School inspector Patrick Keenan visited a number of islands off the west and southern seaboard and subsequently reported that the islanders wanted to learn English. 'This passion', he noted was due to their seeing 'that prosperity has its peculiar tongue as well as its fine coat'. See *The Twenty-Third Report of the Commissioners of National Education, 1856*, [2304] H.C. 1857-8, IV. Appendix B, General Reports, No. 1. General Report by Patrick Joseph Keenan, Head Inspector, p. 143, Table 56. On the relationship between the English language and social mobility, see also T Crowley, *The Politics of Language in Ireland 1366-1922* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 134.

<sup>50</sup> See Maureen Wall, 'The decline of the Irish language' in Brian O'Cuiv (ed.) *A View of the Irish Language* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1969), pp. 88-89. See also Reg Hindley, *The Death of the Irish Language – A Qualified Obituary* (Dublin: Dáil Uí Chadhain, Dublin, 1991 – Routledge, 1990), p. 14. Indeed, even the Proclamation of Independence of 1916 was printed (and proclaimed) in English.

<sup>51</sup> See Brendan Walsh, *Boy Republic: Patrick Pearse and Radical Education* (Dublin: The History Press, 2013), chapter 3.

<sup>52</sup> The estimated number of people learning Irish at schools belonging to the Christian Brothers, at Gaelic League courses and at night classes in 1904, was approximately 200,000. See Donnacha Ó'Súilleabháin, *Cath na Gaeilge sa Chóras Oideachais, 1893-1911* (Dublin: Conradh na Gaeilge, 1988), p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> *The Seventy-Sixth Report of the Commissioners of National Education, 1909-10*, [Cd. 5340] H.C. 1910, Table 51, p. 40.

- <sup>54</sup> See *The Eighty-First Report of the Commissioners of National Education 1914-15*, [Cd. 8369] H.C. 1916, Table 55, p. 30, and *The Eighty-Sixth Report of the Commissioners of National Education, 1919-20*, [Cmd. 1476] H.C. 1920, Table 35, p. 29.
- <sup>55</sup> See *The Eighty-Sixth Report of the Commissioners of National Education, 1919-1920*, [Cmd. 8369] H C 1901, p. 9 (3), Grant to Special Irish Colleges.
- <sup>56</sup> See *Saorstát Éireann, Census of Population 1926 Vol. VIII. Irish Language*, Dublin 1932, p. 1, Table 2: Irish Speakers as Percentage of Total Persons in Each Province of *Saorstát Éireann* at Each Census from 1851-1926. However, the total number of Irish-only speakers had fallen by 18% since 1891.

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