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Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish Revolution

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During armed conflicts, women’s bodies become battlefields. Did this apply in the period covering the War of Independence and Civil War or was Ireland’s revolution an *exception*? Traumatic events that occurred in this divisive period of Irish history were subsequently submerged in the memory of the new State. Peter Burke has stated that anthropologists became aware of the problem of “collective amnesia”:

...in investigating oral traditions, while historians encountered it in the course of studying events such as the Holocaust or civil wars of the twentieth century in Finland, Ireland, Russia, Spain and elsewhere. The problem is not a loss of memory at the individual level but the disappearance from public discourse of certain events...These events are in a sense ‘repressed’ not necessarily because they were traumatic, though many of them were but because it has become politically inconvenient to refer to them.²

Violence perpetrated against women during this phase of Ireland’s revolution certainly disappeared from public discourse for decades after the Civil War ended as did any kind of serious discussion of sexual abuse perpetrated more generally in

society. Conservative attitudes to women, sex and sexuality in the new State combined with a desire to forget the worst atrocities of the wars of Independence and Civil War, and the absence of a subsequent truth or reconciliation process, ensured any violence perpetrated against women during the revolution was not addressed. As contemporary Ireland enters a new phase of centenary commemorations a glimpse into the more horrific aspects of our wars of Independence and Civil War is anticipated. Women's experience must also be considered. Work in this area has been sporadic and slow to emerge in Ireland, with some scholars recently suggesting the Irish revolution may have been exceptional when it comes to gender based violence – that is, the transgressive violence women typically experience in violent conflicts and civil wars elsewhere was not as significant an issue or problem and there is very little evidence of it occurring.³ The framing of 'true' violence as predominantly militaristic, perpetrated by men against men, was the established framework for decades in Irish revolutionary studies. Violence suffered and indeed *witnessed* by women (resulting in *psychological* violence and trauma) was at best given cursory mention in key volumes.

Some scholars, however, did suggest that serious forms of violence were perpetrated against women in this period. Sociologist Louise Ryan wrote a ground breaking article in 2000, entitled “‘Drunken Tans’: Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War.” Ryan applied the idea that war is a highly gendered experience to cases of sexual violence during the War of Independence, reported in the *Irish Bulletin* periodical and the press.⁴ This analysis was largely met with silence at the time. Some ten years later in 2010, Ann Matthews again drew our attention to these issues:

One aspect of the war missing from the historiography of the War of Independence is the issue of ‘the war on women’ (by both sides) in the form of physical and sexual abuse. This has not been adequately addressed and has never been discussed in a historical context, perhaps because public discussion of sexual assault and rape in war is a modern phenomenon. While being careful not to place the context of the modern world onto this period, it is necessary to record that women and their families suffered a terror that was not confined to armed conflict. Caught between the violence of the reprisals perpetuated by the IRA and the Black and Tans, the lives of women within the population descended into a living nightmare.⁵

In 2013, Charles Townshend noted that:

Women were targeted less often, though dozens of members of republican families or of Cumann na mBan had their hair cut off with scissors or razors – in mirror images of Volunteer assaults on women who were seen with policeman or soldiers. Many more were verbally abused and intimidated, usually deliberately, though of course any night raid was inescapably alarming to the women who experienced it.⁶

The figure of ‘dozens’ is elusive, however, and no evidence is provided to back up the claim women were targeted less than men. The fact that (1) women were a much smaller percentage of those killed during the War of Independence and the Civil War; (2) combined with how difficult it is to quantify the level of attack and sexual assault towards women in small-scale societies like Ireland; (3) a lack of clarity on what actually constitutes gender based and sexual violence; and (4) an assumption that the more common forms of violence and control inflicted on Irish women were lenient and separate, rather than interconnected, has supported recent suggestions that women suffered less brutality than men during the Irish revolution. However, such an assumption has not been *proven* and it really depends on what is considered or included in the category ‘violence,’ in the first place.

Violence is strongly associated with gender. Evidence that violence perpetrated against women in this period may have been a serious matter during the War of Independence and Civil War has only belatedly been acknowledged one hundred years after the revolution and nearly twenty years after Louise Ryan published her pioneering article. In the context of the second phase of the State led ‘Decade of Centenaries’ programme (2012-2022) reviving interest in the Irish revolutionary period, however, the issue of gender-specific violence has been revisited by a number of scholars. Lindsey Earner Byrne, Julia Eichenberg, Conor Heffernan, Thomas Earls Fitzgerald, Justin Dolan Stover, Gemma Clark, T.W. Wilson, Marie Coleman and Brian Hughes, for example, have addressed either the coercive practice of forced hair cutting and/or the incidence of sexual assault.⁷

Forced hair cutting is now generally accepted as a widespread gender-specific practice in the Irish revolution but different conclusions have been arrived at on the incidence, scale and definition of sexual violence, including rape.⁸ Hughes, for instance, following Wilson, Clark and Coleman, acknowledges the prevalence of hair

cutting but finds little evidence of rape in one official source (a snapshot of incidents compiled by the RIC):

“There are no reports of rape or sexual violence against women among the précis and, notwithstanding reticence in reporting such crime, it seems to have remained relatively rare during the Irish revolution.”⁹

However, this paper argues that sources which document the micro stories of women who *did experience* such violence require greater consideration before such a definitive conclusion can be arrived at. In addition, particular forms of violence against women are not divided. Hair cutting, for instance, did not neatly occur as a separate or discrete practice in isolation from other acts of violence and terror perpetrated against women. The ‘living nightmare’ encapsulated by Matthews was more typically contained in the private world of Irish women’s lives rather than recorded in official archives or made public. Moreover, the phenomenon of rape ‘as a weapon of war’ does not just mean ‘mass rape’/rape focused units. War time rape can also occur on a more isolated and individual basis depending on the extent and structure of a conflict. Community norms, victim blaming and concern about negative propaganda for both sides in the conflict would have resulted in rapes being covered up, concealed, never reported and few prosecutions. A tendency to explain rates of rape through the presumed controlled behaviour of men as combatants in armies that were motivated by protecting their reputation, rather than locating sexual violence in the wider social, cultural and political context in which women lived their lives and in which wars evolve, is evident in historiographical perspectives that downplay the extent of rape. Meta-analysis of rape victims over time suggests that in the region of 60% of victims do not acknowledge even to themselves they were raped, a known response to trauma, also caused by lack of surety that what happened was rape and the immense shame and responsibility women felt.¹⁰ A different kind of perspective which addresses the complex interconnection between power, war and gender based violence is deployed in this paper, to shed further light on existing and new evidence documenting women’s *experience* of violence in Ireland’s revolution.¹¹ The analysis of sexual violence in Ireland’s revolution is complicated by the fact that rape tends to crop up unexpectedly as a subject in the middle of an otherwise, seemingly unrelated source, as this paper will demonstrate. Compilation of variegated and disparate pieces of data across different sources is therefore necessary and advanced. In agreement with D’Cruze:

“If questions as to the historical incidence of sexual violence prove so difficult to answer, other ways of using such sources must be devised which can nevertheless yield a meaningful interpretation of sexual violence in the past.”

Contextualising Gender Based Violence in Ireland’s revolution

Several questions concerning the treatment of women in Irish revolutionary studies have emerged, in recent years.¹² First, did women escape the worst of the brutalities of war, particularly during the War of Independence and Civil War, based on a militaristic interpretation of the presumed constrained behavior of male combatants within the IRA’s structure of command combined with a concern for preventing the negative propaganda that could arise from such attacks on the British side, in this period?¹³ Was rape, for instance, a very rare feature of conflict in Ireland throughout this period, as a result? In this paper, I will argue that the assertion that sexual assault was ‘rare’ both during the War of Independence and Civil War has not been adequately proven yet; it is in part based on conjecture and comparison to conflicts and wars in other countries where there is better evidence preserved on this issue and where different circumstances were at work. In addition, given the fact that rape is both difficult if not impossible to always identify when a physical attack on a woman occurs and accurately quantify in the form it arises in different revolutionary contexts, is this a valid question? The legal and cultural premise in Irish history, that a woman was culpable in her rape unless she could prove otherwise, is also a consideration. There was little incentive for a woman to publicise or subsequently pursue a violation – her respectability and future prospects were at stake. Women who lost chastity likewise were ‘fallen’ and blamed for the condition, irrespective of the circumstances. In agreement with D’Cruze: “Consequently historical study of this topic (perhaps more than most others) is necessarily a discourse on and around the surviving evidences, not an unmediated description of ‘what happened’.”¹⁴

An additional question that arises is, how is gender based and sexual violence being *defined* in Irish revolutionary studies? There is very little conceptual clarification available on this and little or no reference to feminist analysis of the relationship between sex and war evident in numerous publications internationally (such as, Joanna Bourke’s extensive treatise of rape).¹⁵ Likewise there are few references to studies of similar forms of violence in other conflicts (such as the Spanish Civil War)

or other decolonizing situations, where some parallels might potentially be drawn with what Irish women experienced in the period of revolution. In 2010, T.K. Wilson compared the level of rape in one region in Ireland (Ulster) with another partitioned region in Eastern Europe (Upper Silesia 1918-22), which overall experienced on a different scale more intense violence and hence more transgressive sexual violence, it is argued.¹⁶ Although the Irish sources used to explore gender based violence were narrow and based just on Ulster, this 2010 study is still used to inform a view there was little or no rape in Ireland's revolution as a whole.¹⁷ Wilson's analysis also preceded the subsequent emergence of evidence documenting additional individual and hidden cases of sexual violence and attacks on women in Ireland from this period, which merit further consideration. More qualitative sources also need to be interpreted from the perspective of social history, women's history and feminist theory, alongside police and State data, in order to advance research in this field. Liam A. Brady, active in Derry/Ulster, for instance, recalled in his witness statement:¹⁸

On the 19th October 1920, the Irish Catholic Bishops at Maynooth passed a resolution condemning the present British Administration in Ireland as characterized by terror and failure. They declared outrages had been connived at and encouraged, if not organised, not by obscure or irresponsible individuals but by the Government. They alleged that men had been tortured with barbarous cruelty and that there are cases where young women were torn undressed from their mothers at the dead of night.

The macro scale of rape in Ulster may have been utterly different to Upper Silesia but such witness accounts and micro stories of abuse merit further investigation. The transgression of gender norms that occurs during all revolutionary outbreaks produces different outcomes, in a given context, and can encompass different levels and kinds of humiliating, damaging and patriarchal practices (such as hair cutting), apart from and in addition to the extremity of mass rape as a weapon of war. Rape in the context of smaller scale, guerilla wars can involve more private transgressions than episodes of mass rape. Additional focus on understanding more of the known cases that did occur instead of emphasising those that apparently did *not* (on a mass scale or otherwise) represents a more fruitful way of understanding the particular context in which gender based violence occurred during Ireland's revolution.

The availability of wider evidence specific to Ireland from this period (including statistics recorded in the Carrigan Report of 1931) suggests an otherwise sharp rise in prosecutions for sexual abuse in the twenty-six counties of the Saorstát in the 1920s compared with pre-war Ireland, which must also be considered.¹⁹ The tendency to blame women and British troops for causing the reported rise in misdemeanors was noted by Keating:

...there are however figures that indicate prosecution rates for sexual crime rose in Ireland by 25% in the pre to post World War 1 period (Finnane, 2001). The Deputy Commissioner was clear as to where this perceived state of affairs had found its genesis, namely, in the “pro-British women of Ireland” who “made heroes of their soldiers and...fools of themselves” as the soldiers, due to the morally corrupting influence of the war, “reverted to the passions and appetites of the primitive and demand created supply”.²⁰

The sexual assaults recorded were framed as fraternizing (non-Republican) women *culpable* in their violation rather than Irish women as *victims* of rape as a weapon of war. Discourses of ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ women are therefore critical in understanding how sexual violence was viewed and addressed in the context of Ireland decolonizing.

In this paper, I make the case for building further on the pioneering work of Louise Ryan and later intervention of Ann Matthews in order to develop a deeper and expanded scholarship on the policing of women’s bodies, sexual violence, physical violence, psychological trauma and harassment of women in the Irish revolution. The case for better and combined use of new sources available (including witness statements, pension applications and references to violence against women in revolutionary papers) and more appropriate interpretive/theoretical frameworks that considers gender based violence ‘constitutive’ of the Irish revolution, rather than as a peripheral or separate issue that can be simplistically ‘measured’, is made. In particular, I critique the tendency to isolate certain gendered behaviours (such as hair cutting) from others and consider them more ‘lenient’ than rape and ‘lethal violence’ (the killing of mostly men, by men). Hair cutting *is* a form of sexualised or ‘sexual’ violence that is not ‘lenient’ symbolically, psychologically or physically. Forcibly cutting hair is a bodily violation that involves unwanted physical contact/bodily touching between aggressors and victims, and it is intrinsically *sexual*. Historically a woman’s hair has long been regarded as a potent symbol of her sexuality. Forcibly

cutting and taking hair by attacking the head also physically breached women's bodily autonomy and consent, as the woman was generally 'taken,' escorted, captured or physically held down by men. Sexualized assaults on women in Ireland (including, hair cutting, rape and other violations) occurred in the context of a wider cultural and symbolic system of sex, sexuality, gender and violence. An interconnected spectrum of gender based violence is evident in the individual stories of Irish women's experience of violence during the revolution ranging from: (1) 'sexual harassment' (for instance, a woman could reportedly be labelled a 'soldiers totty' and 'molested' if she walked on the same side of the street as British soldiers in Dublin)²¹ and rough searching; (2) hair cutting, cropping, shearing or "bobbing"; (3) hair cutting combined with other physical injury/assault/harassment; (4) physical attack and injury (such as a beating or assault with a rifle/implement/fists); (5) sexual attack involving rape or gang rape; (6) to murder combined with some or even all of the above.

Individual women (revolutionaries and civilians) clearly experienced attacks and intimidation on an ongoing basis and to varying degrees in their homes and going about their daily business, throughout the period of revolution. A sustained analysis of the violence Irish women experienced cannot be confined to just well-known and very shocking events or to one type of violence – a continuum of gender based violence over time and space applies and is evident in the realm of *experience*. As Coleman demonstrated, violence experienced by women can also incorporate psychological violence, caused for example by harassment and intimidation or from witnessing killing or transgressive violence towards others, including loved ones.²²

Cases referred to in this paper will demonstrate how physical violence, sexual violence and psychological violence interacted in the targeting of women at the broader level of the conflict but could also combine in different ways in individual attacks. In short, evidence exists to suggest that women were labelled, humiliated, disciplined, stigmatized, controlled, hurt and even killed in different ways throughout this period, through the symbolic and physical realm of their bodies and sexuality. The rest of this paper will demonstrate how, methodologically, continued recovery work and close reading of micro histories 'from below' can provide a wider interpretation of the violence women experienced in the Irish revolution.

Hair

Women's hair is remarkably significant in understanding how gender and sexuality shaped the Irish revolution. Forced shearing of women's hair was practiced widely. Reference to it crops up in numerous archival and popular sources.²³ Conor Heffernan describes a scene from Ken Loach's 2006 film, 'The Wind that Shakes the Barley':

Troops storm into the house and forcibly evicting those inside. Screams of terror emanate from the house, growing louder and louder with each moment. Soon the house will be set on fire. In the melee that ensues, troops single out a woman known for collaborating with the enemy. Held down at gunpoint, her head is shaved. In the distance, fighters from the other side look on as she wails.²⁴

Similarly, the fictional character of Rose in the 1970 film 'Ryan's Daughter' also had her hair sheared by a mob for having an extra marital affair with a British officer. Repeating what Louise Ryan established in 2000,²⁵ Heffernan writes that Loach's depiction touched upon seldom-discussed events in the revolution, especially during the years 1919 to 1921: "atrocities were committed on both sides and subsequent generations have yet to fully examine them. Intimidation and head shaving are just one example of Ireland's past that historians have yet to discuss adequately."

The social and political meaning of the act of forcibly shearing women's hair lacks historical and sociological specification in Irish studies and yet it is a deep rooted practice in many cultures over time and place. Forcible shearing of hair also occurred with some regularity later during 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland, in the context of 'tarring and feathering,' and reportedly in agrarian conflict of the nineteenth century. Coerced hair shearing was and is a serious assault. Frequently, it hurt because of the force involved in cropping a woman who may be dragged and held down.

Mary/Mollie Alleway,²⁶ for example, active in the Youghal branch of Cumann na mBan, described how she was beaten by British troops and had her hair cut off, while her house was raided several times. The public humiliation of having a scalped head within the community followed.²⁷ The hair could also be pulled and roughly handled with other injuries inflicted at the same time (such as cuts from razors or shears combined with physical assault, beatings, shouting, touching and mob behaviour by the perpetrators). As Pergament demonstrates, hair on the head is a physiological phenomenon but it also has important social functions that are gendered.²⁸ Hair, she writes, is an object of intense elaboration and preoccupation in almost all societies

and cultures throughout time. In many cultures, hair played an important role in the development of social constructs of the body, power and sexuality. Past uses of hair as a means of social control and dehumanization have influenced the meaning of ‘hair taking’ by states.²⁹ Some cultures believe that a link remains between the individual and the severed hair, allowing the person who gained possession of the locks to exert power. Hair also often serves in different cultures as a symbol of women’s virgin state – power and sexuality are implicated. Pergament notes that, in keeping with this symbolism, when legislating for damage to different parts of the body, the *fueros* (local codes of law and custom in the Iberian Peninsula) listed penalties for seizing a woman by the hair. These codes suggest that the ‘violation’ of hair was seen as a violation of the woman’s honor.³⁰

Enforced cutting of hair in the dehumanization and sanctioning of women was conducted by both sides in the conflict in Ireland – Crown forces and IRA. Hair taking was systemically used to sanction Irish women who were considered overly familiar with the enemy or informers and it was also inflicted by both sides to assert power and dominance over the ‘native’ population and community. Women’s hair therefore served as a site of symbolic power that could be transgressed and abused by all sides in the conflict.

How did this compare to the practice elsewhere? Hair cutting/shaving of women on a systematic scale is prevalent in many historical and contemporary conflicts. At the end of World War II, over 20,000 French people accused of collaboration with Germany endured a particularly humiliating act of revenge: their heads were shaved in public.³¹ Nearly all those punished were women and this episode in French history continues to provoke shame and unease. In 1944-45, photographers like Robert Capa and Carl Mydan documented the terrible brutality to women accused of sexual collaborations with the Germans. The question arose, would historians have subsequently believed this happened if it was not photographed so extensively? French women accused of sleeping with German soldiers were publicly humiliated by having their heads shaved. According to Duchen, ‘les femmes tondues,’ or ‘the shorn women,’ were paraded through the streets bald and stripped to their slips with swastikas painted on their chests and foreheads, oftentimes with their own lipstick.³² Thousands of women were reported to have committed ‘collaboration horizontale.’ Sadly, she writes, what is absent from these reports is whether or not these women

consented to their crimes — meaning that many women may have been punished and shamed for their own rapes.³³

As Kristine Stiles demonstrates, the French were not alone in shaving the heads of women who allegedly slept with the enemy.³⁴ Similar proprietary national interests regarding the sexuality of German women were recorded by Bertolt Brecht in his poem entitled *Ballad of Marie Sanders, the Jew's Whore*, 1934-36. Brecht wrote that Marie Sanders, a woman from Nuremberg, was "driven through the town in her slip, round her neck a sign, her hair all shaven..." Her crime, it is stated, was to have slept with a Jew who "...ironically, had he been Hasidic, might have insisted upon shaving her head after marriage":

The community gathered in French towns and villages to shear her head with animal clippers and then smear the sign of the swastika in soot on her bald forehead. The citizens judged her a "horizontal collaborator" for having sex with German soldiers during World War II. Denigrated and denounced as a whore, she was even stripped naked sometimes before being paraded through town, a token of the emblematic territories, defamations, and controls of war. She remained solitary amidst the molesting, persecuting assembly, exiled in a particularly sordid historical moment in a throng of her countrymen and women.³⁵

Forced head shaving is also widely documented in the Spanish and Greek Civil Wars, for instance, and in other more contemporary wars.³⁶ In Spain, female relatives of executed socialists also suffered the humiliation of public soiling by being forced to ingest castor oil as well as head shaving and rapes. Julia Eichenberg also demonstrated that the cutting, shearing and shaving of hair was a form of violence frequently used in both Ireland and Poland, especially following accusations of alleged sexual and political betrayal:

Similar excesses occurred in Belgium, where head-shaving was used to punish women who had become involved with Germans. After the Second World War shearing was taken up in several countries to humiliate and punish women 'traitors'. One significant distinction in Ireland and Poland lies in the category of victims. In Ireland, the victims were almost exclusively women. Women were shorn on suspicion of spying, passing on information and betraying the new state. It was sufficient to be seen with the wrong men (members of the Crown forces, sons of well-off Protestants, or ex-soldiers of the British army). Men

were shorn infrequently, and often in connection with more drastic forms of violence, as in the example of Timothy Mangan in County Kerry, who had his head shorn and his ear(s) cut off by 'armed and masked men' for being an alleged spy. Other forms of violent intimidation were used against men suspected of treason, such as tarring. The shearing of women therefore bears an explicit gendered, if not sexual connotation. Since women symbolised the fertility and the future of the young nation, their liaisons with the 'enemy' could not be tolerated.³⁷

Victim accounts reveal how hair was not only sheared or shorn symbolically – it was also physically pulled, used as a mechanism to drag women (often in nightclothes or after being stripped), and shearing was likewise combined with other kinds of verbal and physical assault, abuse and intimidation. Ultimately, this was *humiliating* and *degrading* for girls and women in a context where female bodies were usually covered up. Reports in newspapers detail numerous occasions when Irish rebels were the ones inflicting this punishment.³⁸ Eileen Barker, for instance, had her head shaved at gunpoint by members of the IRA – for allowing British troops to stay in her hotel. According to Heffernan:

Head shaving was a deliberate violation of victims' femininity. Whilst the cutting itself was painful, the aftermath could be worse as the shaved woman became a symbol of betrayal and a warning to others. Newspaper reports suggest that in most instances the attack took place at night, as was the case for Julia Goonan who was taken at midnight by her attackers, hung up by her hair and shaved. Occasionally shavings took place in fields, when, finally exhausted from fleeing her pursuers, women were run to ground. Spurred on by the cheers of their compatriots, the attackers shaved the women's heads as punishment for their perceived indiscretions.³⁹

Swithin Walsh refers to a case in Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny. John Curran, a miner, brought a successful case to a Kilkenny court requesting compensation for the forced haircutting of his daughter Mary and his niece Julia Tobin on 25 May 1921:

The girls were accused by the local IRA of 'keeping company with the Black and Tans.' On the night in question, at home around 11.00 pm, 19-year-old Mary was sitting at the fireplace of her home with her two brothers and sister when a knock was heard at their door. There were around twelve armed men outside who told Mary's parents they 'wanted her for a moment.' They took her

down the road where she was joined by her cousin Julia, who had been required to get out of bed to go with the men. Both women were then blindfolded and brought ‘a considerable distance’ through fields. At a location that was unknown to them, they were informed of the charge and penalty...their hair was cut. Both women were brought back to their homes at around 1.00 am.⁴⁰

Such evidence from the ‘Bureau of Military History 1913-21’ suggests that unlike later instances of hair cutting in Europe, including those that occurred in public in France after World War II, head shavings in Ireland were often performed in isolated locations away from the masses and those who could intervene. The public/private divide in the performance of sexualised violence during Ireland’s revolution is therefore an important issue in understanding its comparative scale and nature. The sexual justification for ‘bobbing’ the hair of women considered fraternizing with British soldiers was also described in the witness statement of Leo Buckley, member of the Cork no. 1 Brigade, IRA, 1918-1922:

I remember at the time, young girls from Cork going out to Ballincollig to meet the British soldiers. We curbed this by bobbing the hair of persistent offenders. Short hair was completely out of fashion at the period and the appearance of a girl with “bobbed” hair clearly denoted her way of life.⁴¹

Whether or not the women bobbed were working prostitutes or just labelled for befriending soldiers is not clear but the ‘way of life’ remark suggests policing women’s sexuality motivated the hair shearing. In another incident, a young woman had her hair cut off for passing on information to an RIC man. Michael Higgins of Belclare, Galway (member of Sylane Company, Tuam Battalion 1917-21) recalled:⁴²

I remember (although I cannot remember the date or the year) going to Barnaderg Company area with Thomas Hussey and Brigade O/C Con Fogarty and shearing the hair off the head of a young girl. She had written to an R.I.C. man giving him information about Volunteer activities and the letter was captured in a raid on the mails. We brought the letter with us and Brigadier Fogarty read it for the girl and her people when we arrived at the house, which we were shown by one of the Dunleavy brothers of Barnaderg who were all officers in the Volunteers. The girl admitted writing the letter. Brigadier Fogarty gave them a lecture on the gravity of the offence and said she was being treated leniently in having her hair cut off. There was a scene. The girl was crying and her people were sprinkling holy water on her and on us. She was a

very beautiful girl before her hair was sheared and I pitied her although I knew I should not in the circumstances.

The assault in this instance was witnessed by the family rather than a whole community.

Hair cutting is mentioned in numerous witness statements submitted by men and women in the military archives. Elizabeth Bloxham, a Cumann na mBan activist, for instance reported in her statement of 1951: “These were the days when girls were roughly searched and had their hair cut off by British soldiers.”⁴³ Peg Broderick-Nicholson from Galway described how she was called out from her bed and had her hair cut “...to the scalp with very blunt scissors.”⁴⁴ For decades, historians of the Irish revolution either completely omitted discussion of this widely documented practice or considered it ‘lenient’ punishment worthy of a footnote or passing reference. This is in stark contrast to the histories of obviously much larger wars conducted in Belgium, France and Germany but also smaller scale civil wars elsewhere, where the head shaving of women has sparked immense debates about the sexual, gender and power relations exhibited by this form of punishment. A body of literature examining this practice in other European civil wars exists.⁴⁵ Ireland’s contribution to this form of debate internationally has been sparse in contrast, with the received analysis of the Irish revolution focusing mainly on the deaths, disappearances and fate of male combatants primarily. Prominent texts on the War of Independence and Irish Civil War by Bill Kissane, Peter Hart, and David Fitzpatrick, for example, did not give any sustained attention to such attacks on women in the period.⁴⁶ Kissane developed comparative theories of civil war and has analysed the historical amnesia characteristic of many civil wars, including in Finland, but no detailed analysis of this kind of gender based violence in the Irish case is provided – a vast omission when you consider how gendered and familial civil wars often *are*. The shearing of women’s hair was not a benign act at the individual or collective level – it constituted a form of symbolic, physical *and* sexualized violence that singled out women as sexual transgressors and traitors and could terrorize them, depending on the nature and duration of the assault inflicted. Moreover, hair cutting could be combined with other forms of transgressive violence inflicted on a woman/women in a single event and it cannot be therefore considered ‘individually separate’ or distinct from other kinds of gendered violence performed in the Irish revolution.

Sexual Violence in Ireland's Revolution

An Irish exceptionalism view apparently exists when it comes to sexual violence in this period. As demonstrated above, a paucity of statistical or documentary evidence has been cited to confirm there was very little rape in 1919-1923 period especially when compared to the many thousands of rapes that occurred during other large scale wars or civil wars in other parts of Europe.⁴⁷ However, the situation is more complex in Ireland and scholars using different methodologies and sources depart from this view. Townshend, for example, adopted a more cautious approach in confronting evidence:

There must also have been sexual violence, though it was much less well attested. There were undoubtedly cases of rape, probably more than the few that were formally reported – which may indeed be ‘surprisingly few’, certainly by the depressing standards of the contemporary world...The truth remains obscure: as the Cork Gaelic Leaguer Caroline Townshend said, ‘it is very difficult to get facts about such cases.’ In November 1920 Lady Gregory heard from her doctor in Galway that ‘the family of the girls violated by the Black and Tans wish it to be hushed up,’ and ‘another case of the same sort in Clare’ was also ‘to be kept quiet’.⁴⁸

Brian Hanley similarly has remarked:

It has been generally believed that instances of sexual violence were rare in this period but they may in fact have been understated. I know of at least two more, one involving the Free State army in Kerry and the Special Constabulary in Armagh...In June 1922, B-Specials raided a pub in south Armagh, seeking its owner, republican activist James McGuill. During the raid, women were beaten, McGuill’s wife raped and a servant sexually assaulted.⁴⁹

Rape has always been under reported or never reported in Irish history – and this remains the case even today. It is by definition a *hidden crime/atrocity* ‘to be kept quiet’ and covered up. Local doctors often quietly dealt with the physical or psychological impact of such attacks on women and girls, which suggests the techniques of social history, medical history and women’s history must be combined with the received observations from military history to understand sexual violence in Ireland. The shame of being a fallen woman/a single mother after a rape or considered a woman of dubious morality would have taken precedence over seeking justice and accountability. As D’Cruze points out “...a woman forfeited her respectability

merely by the fact of having been raped.”⁵⁰ The suppression of the Carrigan Committee’s findings in 1930-31- including statistics indicating increasing levels of sexual assault mainly of women and children but also some men and boys, in the Saorstát from the period before the First World War up to the 1930s – is also of relevance in contextualizing the incidence of sexual violence during Ireland’s revolution.⁵¹ Finola Kennedy summarised the closed cultural attitudes to the sexual abuse of children just seven years after the Civil War ended, estimating only the region of 15 per cent of abuse cases were prosecuted:⁵²

The findings of the Carrigan Committee, which reported on 20 August 1931, was the following...: “That there was an alarming amount of sexual crime increasing yearly, a feature of which was the large number of cases of criminal interference with girls and children from 16 years downwards, including many cases of children under 10 years; That the police estimated that not 15 per cent of such cases were prosecuted, because of 1) the anxiety of parents to keep them secret in the interests of their children, the victims of such outrages, which overcame the desire to punish the offenders; 2) the reluctance of parents to subject their children to the ordeal of appearing before a public Court to be examined and cross examined; 3) the actual technical embarrassments in the way of a successful prosecution of such offenders owing to a) the difficulty of proof, from the private nature of the offence, usually depending on the evidence of a single witness, the child; b) the existing law, or the rule of practice in such cases, requiring corroboration, or requiring the Judge to warn the Jury of the danger of convicting the accused upon the uncorroborated evidence of the witness” (Carrigan, 1931:14).⁵³

The Government’s reaction to the report, which was quashed and never released, also demonstrated a stated desire to protect the reputation of men and perpetrators and pointed out ways in which women and children could have provoked sexual assaults through their behaviour or imagined them, in the case of children.⁵⁴ Cover up and denial was the hallmark of the State and society’s attitude to sexual abuse for decades. As will be demonstrated here, it is apparent that some rapes were suppressed during the revolutionary period as well as never reported to the authorities. Rare investigations uncovered into alleged perpetrators (British and IRA soldiers) were typically marked ‘secret’ and closed with no punishment indicated.⁵⁵ Some files outlining inquiries into such assaults remain withheld. Perpetrators who were soldiers

were generally not named or documented in records if sanctioned internally in secret IRA courts. Context and culture is therefore extremely important in arriving at a better understanding of the scale of rape in the Irish revolution. In agreement with Joanna Bourke:

Rape and sexual abuse are common, even if we do not actually know how many women and men are raped every year. Sexual assault eludes statistical notation. It is not simply that the statistics are collected in a consistent or reliable manner. They cannot exist.⁵⁶

Perpetrators consistently got away with rape in a society and culture that protected them and put an inordinate burden of proof and blame on victims. Bourke points out: “there is no crime more difficult to prove than rape and no injured party more distrusted than the rape victim.”⁵⁷ Any suggestion that there are only a handful of cases in military archives or other public sources (such as, the press) therefore appears premature as a definitive reading of the true scale of sexual violence in Ireland’s revolution.⁵⁸ Cover up was the default position. Calling out a rape within a victim’s family never mind in public, in a community or among combatants was clearly an infrequent occurrence, which cannot be definitively conflated with deducing rape was *completely rare* in revolutionary Ireland.

Rape was not completely rare in the period 1919-23. A “Return showing no. of serious crimes reported to the Gardaí during the six months from July 1st 1923 to 1st December 1923 in Saorstát Éireann” document records evidence of sexual assault:

Return showing no. of serious crimes reported to the Gardaí during the six months from July 1 st 1923 to 1 st December 1923 in Saorstát Éireann ⁵⁹			
Nature of Crime:	No. reported:	Cases in which members of the National Army were:	
		Guilty	Suspected of being Guilty
Rape	9	5	1
Indecent Assault	9	3	-
Other Sexual Assault	6	5	-

Claims made by male combatants in witness statements are also instructive and require further investigation. James Maloney from Bruff, Co. Limerick, for instance, stated: “I.R.A. men’s sisters and other girls had to go ‘on the run’ fearing rape. The I.R.A. gritted its teeth and showed little mercy to the tans after such outrages.”⁶⁰ The

women's movement at the time was not silent either. The *Irish Citizen* reported on hair cutting 'outrages' and Hannah Sheehy Skeffington issued a "Statement of Atrocities against women."⁶¹

Victim narratives in Irish history are also slowly coming to light in new sources and require detailed and appropriate analysis. Other potential sources, such as the records of doctors who treated sexual assault victims for injury or trauma, must also be identified and examined. The rape of 'Mary M.' in 1923 was documented by Lindsey Earner-Byrne in a groundbreaking 2015 article that challenges rape myths in Irish revolutionary studies:

May it please your grace to spare me a few moments of your most valuable time. To each other we are perfect strangers but I appeal to your charity to listen to my pitiful tale and beg your forgiveness if I seem to intrude.

During the Political trouble when looting and robbing and raiding were carried on to such an extent in our country district my trouble began. In January 1923 a party of men armed to the teeth and calling themselves Republicans forced their entrance into our house where in three people resided. My Aunt who is totally blind and is over 70 years, my Uncle 70 and I their niece an orphan. The object of their visit was money or lives. When I strove to save my Aunt from being dragged from her bed and they were furious when they did not get money one brute satisfied his duty passion on me. I was then in a dangerous state of health and thro' his conduct I became Pregnant. Oh God could any pen describe what I have gone thro'.⁶²

Mary M. wrote this letter upon giving her son up to an orphanage – the record of this rape during the revolution was not found in official crime or military records, nor spoken about publicly. The term 'rape' is not used, in keeping with the evasive and contextualized language used at the time, though it is clear that in contemporary parlance this is what occurred. Instead this assault, which had a 'dangerous' effect on Mary's health and obviously injured her, was buried in the institutional records of unwanted, stigmatised and secret children - which is where additional hidden evidence on sexual violence in Ireland's revolution also lies. Lindsey Earner Byrne's acute eye as a historian underpins her use of the correct kind of intensely *private* source (a letter giving up a child) to ask different questions to the 'rape wasn't all that common in Ireland' perspective.

Reports of rapes in the military archives are also evident. Séamus Fitzgerald from Cobh, a TD in the first Dáil, recalled:⁶³

I have been asked if I had collected any evidence of rape by Crown Forces. I regret to say that I had two such cases. One, an already middle-aged pregnant woman was raped in Blackpool by Black and Tans, and in the same locality another middle-aged woman successfully resisted a similar attempt.

The contention that women suffered less brutality in Ireland than in other conflict zones must therefore be considered with caution – it is premature given the need for further research of the forensic kind conducted by Earner-Byrne.⁶⁴ Arguments about the so called limited scale and nature of sexual violence in Ireland should also be toned down for another very important reason as they could be used to diminish the experience and voice of those very few women who did actually step forward, report an assault or document it in a private letter, for instance, as Mary M. did – it is *they* who were the exception rather than the rape.

Much of this abuse is by definition hidden and covered up including sometimes in archival collections that do not release such records to the public for fear of traumatizing the relatives in later generations. In the context of revolutionary Ireland its scale was inevitably going to be underreported and indeed kept ‘secret’ as is noted on the top of a file containing a Court of Inquiry in lieu of Inquest report of 1921.⁶⁵ Kate Maher was found murdered in Dundrum, Co. Tipperary on the 21st of December 1920 after spending an evening in the local pub with a group British soldiers from the Lincolnshire regiment, including a Private Bennett. Kate was an unmarried mother of one, aged 45 at the time of her death, and worked as a servant for a local farmer. Extensive vaginal wounds were recorded in the investigation file and nobody was ever found guilty for her murder:

Secret

Finding

The court declares...

- (3) That the cause of death of the said deceased was fracture at the base of the skull accelerated by hemorrhage from and around of the vagina...
- (5) That such wounds were caused by some person or persons unknown...and that such person or persons unknown are guilty of manslaughter...

I concur. There is no direct evidence to connect Pte Bennett or any other soldier with this woman's death except that he was found near her and other officers had been seen in her company. Signed...5/1/21.”⁶⁶

The file also records how the local doctor, Dr. Daniel McCormack, who attended to Kate concluded “...both wounds were probably caused by some blunt instrument.”

Another documented example of sexual assault is the case of pregnant Norah Healy in Cork city who was raped by a drunk British soldier in her home in April 1921.⁶⁷

Norah documents her rape in detail in a letter. When she went to report the case the next day to a Sergeant Normoyle, he encouraged her to say nothing when she encountered head on the perpetrator at the local barracks - “never mind, don’t say anything now.” Her husband had himself served as a solider in the British army during World War I and was present in the house when the attack occurred.

Another documented rape, that interconnects hair cutting and rape, was written into a diary of activities of the Manchester Regiment (based in Ballincollig, Co Cork) entry for 29 November 1920:

A young woman was held up by two uniformed men near Ballincollig at 21.00 hrs and raped. As she had been threatened with “bobbing” (hair cut short), this is thought to be the work of the rebels.⁶⁸

Examples of how hair cutting was inflicted as a warning more severe violence would follow also exist. Bridget Noble from Castletownbere, for instance, was shorn before she was ultimately killed by the IRA in March 1921.⁶⁹ Several recently released online files from the Military Service Pension Collection document the danger women experienced.⁷⁰ Katherine Collins application in February 1939 documents her activities in Co. Clare from 1917-23, and the file refers to “the outrage” she suffered in February 1921 as well as other raids/incidents. Another case documented in a military pension file released in May 2018 is that of Margaret Doherty in Foxford, Co. Mayo, a victim of a gang rape in 1923.⁷¹ Documents show her case and her perpetrators were also dealt with in ‘secret’. The file relates to her mother Catherine’s receipt of a partial dependents’ gratuity of 112 pounds and ten shillings sterling in 1937 under the Army Pensions Acts in respect of her daughter, Cumann na mBan Intelligence Officer Margaret Doherty. Margaret’s death on 28th December 1928 “in the Mental Hospital” in Castlebar was deemed attributable to her service with Cumann na mBan. It is stated, with accompanying medical evidence, that on a night in May/June 1923 Margaret Doherty was taken from her family home, dragged

outside by three masked National Army members and stripped naked away from the house. Her hands were tied, she was held at gunpoint and “outraged” (raped) by them in succession. In this file, the word rape is explicitly used. Margaret (Maggie) never recovered psychologically or physically and was institutionalized until she died prematurely a young woman in 1928.⁷² Prior to this she was in good health and had served extensively with Cumann na mBan from 1918 to 1923, including during the War of Independence and Civil War. According to a letter signed by Maggie’s brother (Patrick) dated 16 September 1935, a sworn inquiry by “Officers of the Free State Army” was held into the attack. Neither the exact date, the perpetrators names, or the file documenting the result of this inquiry have been released. Another such attack in June 1922, involved the horrific gang rape of a Protestant woman in Dromineer, Co. Tipperary by four young, local, anti-Treaty IRA men, Mrs. Eileen M. Warburton Biggs.⁷³ Eileen subsequently fled to England with her husband and was awarded a large sum of compensation, documented in an Irish Grants Commission file that remained closed until 1980.⁷⁴ Her husband had a nervous breakdown after the incident, in which she was reported to have been ‘outraged’ on eight or nine different occasions, and Mrs. Biggs mental and physical health never recovered.⁷⁵ Moulton suggests there are other cases of sexual assault ‘in veiled language’ in Irish Grants Commission files, which require further investigation.⁷⁶

Such transgressive violence towards women has been analysed more extensively in other contexts. John Horne and Alan Kramer have observed that wartime rape was a ‘three-way relationship’ – between the perpetrator, victim and the victim’s male compatriots. The them and us opposition in military conflict is subverted by the common/shared violent treatment of women on both sides when this occurs.⁷⁷ Group rapes, it is argued, tend to increase during war and there is at least some evidence of group rapes in Ireland’s revolution. Joanna Bourke and others reiterate that such gang rapes in militarised contexts can be particularly violent because the leader of the gang normally has to continually prove he is more powerful than the others, often ending in death of the victim as a result (reminiscent of the horrific death Kate Maher experienced and what Margaret Doherty experienced).⁷⁸

More numerous references to very frightening raids where women are injured, roughly treated (often in their night clothes) or undressed but where it is not explicitly stated that a sexual assault occurred are apparent.⁷⁹ According to Joyce, three masked Free State army officers beat two young women Flossie and Jessie McCarthy with

their belts, and rubbed dirty motor oil in their hair, in an attack in Kerry on 2nd June 1923 that became known as “the Kenmare incident.”⁸⁰ A major row was caused in the cabinet and it led to the resignation of the senior officer allegedly involved, Major General Paddy O’Daly, who had escaped any official sanction when eight republican men were horrifically executed when they were tied to a mine that was detonated at Ballyseedy. The two girls, daughters of a local medical practitioner Dr. Randal McCarthy, were dragged out of their beds, badly beaten, whipped and had their hair and faces covered in dirty grease.⁸¹ Two investigations undertaken by both the Gardaí and a Dublin Military Court of inquiry into the assaults recommended court proceedings. Neither was acted upon by the Minister for Defence Richard Mulcahy and the President of the Executive W.T. Cosgrave, who stated some allegations concerning the case were under consideration. Dominic Price provides a detailed account of the political dynamics: “The way in which the Dublin Guards and National Army GHQ dealt with the Kenmare scandal followed the same procedural cover-up used in the aftermath of the Ballyseedy atrocity.”⁸² Ernest Blythe in his witness statement referred to the young women as ‘tarts’:

Apparently, the girls were dragged out of their beds and beaten with belts. No great harm was done to them and the outrage was more an indignity to them than anything else...I did not agree personally with O’Higgins in feeling particularly revolted, at what seemed to me to be merely a case of a troupe of tarts getting a few lashes that did them no harm.⁸³

However, as Price outlines, the true reason for the outrage, alleged to include the rape of both women, was revenge and in reality it was terrifying incident.⁸⁴ Captain Niall Harrington had previously written to Minister Higgins informing him of O’Daly’s generally transgressive conduct in Kerry. Captain Harrington and his friend Lieutenant Michael Higgins had begun to call on sisters Florence and Jessie McCarthy in Kenmare. The two women were, however, subsequently invited by O’Daly to the Kerry Command dance but they rejected him as a ‘murderer’. The attack followed.

A family in Bandon, West Cork experienced a vicious raid early in the morning. The statement of one of the women, Mary Walsh from Kilbrittain, illustrates the spectrum of violence that could occur in one incident (sections of the original statement were typed in capital letters):⁸⁵

Victim's Statement

"On Monday morning, May 9th, about 7 a.m., fifty soldiers, under an Officer, surrounded our house. A number of these rushed upstairs, entering the bedrooms of my father and sister, who were both in bed. The Officer asked them to get up but my father was unable to do so. They then searched the rooms."

"My mother and I were having our breakfast in the kitchen, and one soldier seized my cup of tea and drank it off immediately. The other soldiers were moving about, and my mother noticed on taking eggs from a box in the dairy. We went towards the dairy door and saw some of them drink and spill cream, and they also took about six pounds of butter. My sister called the attention of the Officer in charge to the looting and he denied it. Just then a soldier came along with a capful of eggs; the cap dropped from him as he was passing the Officer, and the eggs got broken. That was sufficient proof, and the officer said: "If you will keep your b..... mouth shut I will pay for them."

"THE OFFICER THEN TOLD ME TO GO UPSTAIRS AND GET MY CLOTHES ON AS I WAS UNDER ARREST. I DID THIS AND WAS FOLLOWED BY TWO SOLDIERS, AND FOR THAT REASON I CAME DOWNSTAIRS AGAIN WITHOUT CHANGING MY CLOTHES."

"My sister went to work as usual outside, and when feeding the pigs was held up by two soldiers who twisted her arms behind her back. They told her they wanted her up the road for some time; but she told them they should take her as she refused to go willingly with them....

"WHEN MY SISTER SAW MY MOTHER UNCONSCIOUS IN THE YARD SHE RAN TO HER ASSISTANCE. SHE ALSO SAW ME BEING CHOKED BY A SOLDIER: SHE CAUGHT HIS ARM BUT WAS BEATEN BY ANOTHER WITH SOMETHING HARD..."

Ardener has stated that women have been described as a 'muted' group in history, only able (in many times and places) to express their ideas through the dominant language of males.⁸⁶ Is this still the case in Irish revolutionary studies? Are women still a muted group in Irish history, particularly when we look at the suppression or minimization of gender based violence in the revolution over the last century, without full acknowledgement it must have and did occur with some degree of regularity? Difficult questions demand difficult histories and the decade of commemorations (in

the plural) should present an opportunity for a new debate about neglected narratives in Irish revolutionary history. Part of this relates to recognizing the legacy of transgressive violence as it applied to women's lives in the period 1919-23.

Addressing the persistence of sexual and gender based violence as a serious problem in contemporary societies must start with acknowledging it was also a problem in *our past*. As Brett Shadl argues, however, studying the history of sexual and gender based violence against women continues to have real political reverberations.⁸⁷ The suggestion that Irish Republicans may have turned on their fellow Irish women in this way as well as on men/their 'brothers' during the Civil War may be considered unpalatable at this time. In addition, a high standard of proof and verification is generally demanded from experts in the field of gender based violence to assure Irish historians and other scholars that this really was a problem during the revolution – even though it is known there is a documented reluctance to report, publicize and record rape, historically in Ireland. We will never know exactly how many women were raped or sexually assaulted in Ireland during the revolution – there is no official register, there cannot be. Rapes are more commonly concealed than recorded/publicized especially in smaller-scale societies like Ireland characterized by close communities and patriarchal attitudes. Instead, it is important to identify and consider the emerging stories and evidence for those who *were* sexually assaulted and who consented to testifying this (or their families did) in archival sources that are increasingly becoming available today. In the 1970s, the women's movement in Ireland did much to transform our knowledge of how hidden gender based violence and rape was and is in society by establishing rape crisis services. Likewise, it was also then claimed that rape was not a major problem in society but evidence based research and victim testimonies, including by those abused in Church/State run institutions throughout the twentieth century, has sadly proven otherwise.

If we examine the complexity of sexual violence in women's lives, therefore, the revolution is not just a distant memory of the past – the analysis required has barely begun. A series of laws and policies introduced after the State was founded in 1922 limited Irish women's rights and role in several ways, resulting in revisionist historians proposing that women were simply used by nationalist movements in the fight for independence and then quickly 'discarded.' Women were certainly 'useful' as members of Cumann na mBan and in numerous other supportive roles as revolutionaries but they likewise exercised enormous political agency in the

revolution, and in significant numbers, as we can see from existing work in women's revolutionary history and in the new archival sources now available. What has received less attention, however, is the traumatic effect the revolution and revolutionary activity had on this generation of women as revolutionaries and civilians. The violence of the revolution generated a legacy of trauma for women that co-existed alongside the patriarchal agenda of the new Irish State.

Conclusion

In May 2018, the Military Service Pensions Collection project began publishing new files in relation to 1,442 people online. Some new evidence documenting violence against women (such as doctor's assessments/notes) are included in the online files released. Additional stories of explicit sexual violence are also reported to exist in these records but have not been publicly released yet for 'ethical' reasons. Sections of some newly available files are also stated as 'closed' for no given reason or have redacted sections. The witness statement of Patrick Dunphy from Kilkenny for instance excludes the name of a perpetrator:

Another incident which I recall as taking place time was the arresting of a man named [*name is left blank/redacted*] for an attack on a girl. He was tried by a court of Volunteer officers and was identified by the girl. He was sentenced to be tied to the chapel gates at Clough on the following Sunday where he would be seen by the people attending Mass.⁸⁸

Other examples redact the names of women attacked. A statement by Michael Collins of Monegay, Co. Limerick states:

About two days after holding up the postman, while I was in Hartigan's, it was raided by R.I.C., Tans and military...It had been thought that two girls named <*names are left blank/redacted*> who lived in a labourer's cottage nearby, were responsible for the raid on Hartigan's. They were keeping company of Tans. Martin Conway and six members of the company raided their house one night and took the two girls out. They cut their hair and tarred them.⁸⁹

Another story concerning an attempt to kill a female informer, from early 1920, has the woman's name blanked out and is detailed in the same statement:

While I was in the locality, Mrs. McCormack, wife of John McCormack, paid a visit to the Women's Employment Exchange in Limerick looking for a maid. She got a girl by the name of <*name is removed/left blank*> who started to work

for her...I spoke to Benson who told me that the girl was a pal of the Tans and that her real name was *<section left blank.>* *<Name blank>* had been in the ‘Union’ in Tralee after *<details removed/blank>*. It was rumoured at the time that she had died there. It afterwards transpired that it was an illegitimate child of hers that had died there. She and her mother left their home near Ardfert, Co. Kerry, a short time later and went to reside in Limerick City where they assumed the name of *<name blanked out.>* ...A girl of Kiely’s brought me to the Master of the Union...He immediately, upon seeing the photograph and reading a description of the girl, confirmed that she was *<name is blanked out>*. He told me that if we did not have the girl executed, that some members of the local company there would come to Killonan and shoot her. In the meantime, a guard had been placed on the girl but before I got back, Mrs. McCormack facilitated her escape by opening a back window through which she managed to gain her freedom and return to Limerick.

In the newly available online records, there also appears to be a further unexplored link between violence, women, institutionalisation and the revolution – asylums, institutionalisation and nervous breakdowns feature in a number of pension applications made on behalf of women. Three examples include the files relating to Mollie O’Shea (from Kilflynn, Co. Kerry),⁹⁰ Margaret Doherty (referred to above) and also Delia Begley (from Ennis, Co. Clare).⁹¹ Delia suffered a nervous breakdown after attending men who were wounded while making explosives in 1919 and which later saw her in the care of the Sisters of Charity religious order. “Miss Begley had no estate, in fact, she was destitute, she fought bravely for her country, but when she became helpless no one wanted her, not even her relations,” Reverend Mother Sr. Paschaline wrote in support of her pension application.⁹²

Mollie O’Shea, another vibrant young woman in the Cumann na mBan Kerry no. 1 brigade, suffered lifelong insanity after the revolution. Mollie suffered a nervous breakdown after her brother was killed in what is considered the Civil War’s worst atrocity, the blowing up of eight anti-Treaty prisoners by Free State troops in Ballyseedy, Co Kerry in 1923.⁹³ A number of executions took place during the Irish Civil War and a cycle of atrocities developed. From November 1922, the Free State government embarked on a policy of executing Republican prisoners in order to end the war. Many of those killed had previously been allies, and in some cases close

friends, during the War of Independence. Such executions left a lasting and bitter legacy.⁹⁴

A guerilla campaign was notably intense in Kerry during the Civil War. Mollie O’Shea was an active agent in the major incidents at this time. Yet a pension application submitted by Mollie’s brother in 1952 referred to her as “a person of unsound mind” and a ward of court. The file details the trauma suffered by Mollie during the Civil War, including an “outrage,” as well as the psychological impact of the dangerous work she did in very risky conditions:

April 1921-to May 1921

Did scout work for IRA. Carried dispatches regularly. Was in line of fire at Shannow ambush. Helped to dress wounded. Was alone at home one evening Tans raided my house. They beat her and stole gold watch and chain and books. Applicant was very ill after this outrage. This actually happened on the day of the truce.

1st July 1922 - 31st March 1923

Carried despatches frequently. Did useful intelligence work with regards to the movement of Free State soldiers. Cooked and washed for those in the flying column. Collected and supplied smokes and comforts as well. Had charge of supplying dugout where wanted men were. Jack Shannahan, George Shea (her brother who was killed at Ballyseedy), Jim Twomey (also killed at Ballyseedy), Leo Lyons and Stephen Fuller. The dug out was at Glena Ballysna Wood. These men were kept in supplies by applicant and she had to go there each night after dark. The journey was long and lonely. Her sufferings about this time were very great her worst could not be estimated subsequent events at Clashmullen and Ballycudy unnerved her. She was taken to a mental home late in 1923. Her brother Dan brought her home a harmless lunatic in 1925 and has kept her at home since. She is harmless but all the time mentally affected and hopelessly insane.”

Mollie was “very ill” after the stated “outrage” of May/June 1921. Likewise Maggie Doherty never recovered physically and mentally from the sexual abuse and associated injuries (physical and mental) she suffered in 1923 and was institutionalised until her premature death in 1928. Her file states “she was totally incapacitated from 31/5/23 until death” and she was never ill prior to this event. Her

mother was an invalid and completely dependent on her up to the attack, which underpinned her application for a pension.

Did Ireland of the 1920s lock away, conceal and institutionalise the trauma of the revolution suffered by women? Is this where some more stories of the hidden history of atrocities experienced by women in the revolution lie? Was institutionalisation for life and mental illness not a ‘lethal’ outcome for living women who were victims of assault or life altering trauma in the revolution – or just a product of the ‘lenient punishment’ considered to be exclusively meted out to women? The widespread incarceration of ‘fallen’ women and children in institutions is reflected in recent State inquiries and related scandals involving abuse – the roots of which quite clearly must lie, at least in part, in the period encompassing the Irish revolution and its aftermath. The documented impact of trauma on women that is currently emerging provides a very different kind of narrative to the analysis of sectarianism, ethnicity and community conflict which has dominated the masculinist historiography that has prevailed to-date. The war against women in this period is a matter that merits due recognition if the forthcoming commemorations 2019-2023 are to seriously address the most difficult questions of the past, inclusively understood. The question of the scale of violence against women, when compared to large scale or world wars, is a moot point in this regard. Gender based violence happened in Ireland, there was a context, women suffered in different ways and this is worthy of further investigation. Men and boys can also of course be *victims* of sexual violence in conflict situations. Evidence of the incidence of sexual violence against males in wars and conflicts is not equivalent to the more widespread, systemic violence perpetrated against females recorded in history. But research into sexual violence against men and boys in conflict zones has been conducted in some contexts.⁹⁵ We might consider how placing sexual violence and sexual humiliation against men and against women in the same analytical frame could complicate and advance future research in Ireland should any new evidence come to light on this issue. Such an analysis will also broaden the analysis of violence between men beyond mere focus on guns, warfare and killing to looking at other kinds of bodily punishment, terror and humiliation performed. For now, there is ample evidence that sexual violence did occur during the Irish revolution and it occurred with enough regularity in women’s lives to indicate it was neither entirely rare nor unknown. My aim in this paper has not been to numerically quantify all such overt violence across the island in this tumultuous period but to

write back into the current revolutionary narrative some of the hidden stories of Irish women impacted by this and to provide a close reading of new evidence emerging. Many women's stories are lost and will never be revealed but it is important that we remember and respect those that have survived. Further research is necessary to uncover additional testimonies, memoirs, diaries, letters, political documents, medical records that document physical and psychological injury after attacks, and institutional records (including for asylums and mother and baby homes). Interviews with the families of women impacted by the violence of the revolution can also uncover intergenerational memory and generate more data. All these approaches combined have the capacity to build up further new evidence and insight into an issue that has been hidden, silenced, suppressed and *denied* for too long.

Notes

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² Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Oxford: Polity, 2005), p.11.

³ For a discussion of these issues, see: Sarah Benton, "Women disarmed: the militarization of politics in Ireland 1913–1923," *Feminist Review*, 50 (1995), pp.148–72; Gemma Clarke *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.186; T.K. Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia 1918–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Marie Coleman, "Violence against Women During the Irish War of Independence, 1919–21," in Diarmaid Ferriter and Susannah Riordain (eds.), *Years of Turbulence: The Irish revolution and its aftermath* (Dublin, UCD Press, 2015); Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation Not a Rabble: The Irish revolution 1913–1923* (London: Profile Books, 2015), p.198, p.210, p.241.

⁴ Louise Ryan, "Drunken tans: representations of sex and violence in the Anglo-Irish war, 1919–21," *Feminist Review*, 66 (2000), pp.73–92.

⁵ Ann Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900–1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010), p.266.

⁶ Charles Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), p.170.

⁷ Lindsay Earner Byrne, "The Rape of Mary M.: A Microhistory of Sexual Violence and Moral Redemption in 1920s Ireland" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24, 1, (2015); Coleman, "Violence against Women During the Irish War of Independence, 1919–21"; Gemma Clarke *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014); Justin Dolan Stover, "Families, Vulnerability and Sexual Violence During the Irish revolution," in Jennifer Evans, and Ciara Meehan (eds.), *Perceptions of Pregnancy from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p.59; Julia Eichenberg, "The Dark Side of Independence: Paramilitary Violence in Ireland and Poland after the First World War," *Contemporary European History* 19, 3 (2010), pp.231–248; Thomas Earls Fitzgerald, '...and that created terror'. *The dynamics of civilian-combatant interactions in County Kerry, 1918–1923* (Trinity College Dublin, School of Histories and Humanities, HISTORY, 2018); Brian Hughes, *Defying the IRA? Intimidation, coercion, and communities during the Irish revolution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016); Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence*.

⁸ Hughes, *Defying the IRA*, pp.138-141 concluded rape seemed to remain relatively rare during Ireland's revolution while the most common act of violence carried out against women by the IRA was the cutting of hair.

⁹ Hughes, *Defying the IRA*, pp.138.

¹⁰ Christine Ro, *Why most rape victims never acknowledge what happened*, 6th November 2018: [www.bbc.com/future/story/20181102-why-don't-rape-and-sexual-assault-victims-come-forward](http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20181102-why-don-t-rape-and-sexual-assault-victims-come-forward)

¹¹ Shani D'Cruze, "Approaching the history of rape and sexual violence: notes towards research," *Women's History Review*, 1, 3 (1992), pp.377-397.

¹² Julia Eichenberg, "The Dark Side of Independence: Paramilitary Violence in Ireland and Poland after the First World War"; Matthews, *Renegades*; Niall, Whelehan, "The Irish revolution, 1912–23," in Alvin Jackson (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.621-639.

¹³ See Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War*; Coleman, "Violence against Women During the Irish War of Independence, 1919-21,"; Coleman, "Violence against women during the War of Independence," for a discussion.

¹⁴ D'Cruze, "Approaching the history of rape and sexual violence: notes towards research," p.379.

¹⁵ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present* (London: Virago, 2012). For an extensive discussion of the sociology of violence see: Sylvia Walby, "Violence and society: Introduction to an emerging field of sociology," *Current Sociology*, 61, 2 (2012), pp.95-111.

¹⁶ T.K. Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence*.

¹⁷ Julia Eichenberg, "Review of Frontiers of Violence: conflict and identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918-1922," *Irish Historical Studies*, 37, 147 (May 2011), pp.499-500.

¹⁸ Liam A. Brady, BMH 676.

¹⁹ See: Mark Finnane, "The Carrigan Committee of 1930-31 and the 'Moral Condition of the Saorstát,'" *Irish Historical Studies*, 32, 128 (Nov., 2001), pp.519-536: "Computing a prosecution rate for these offences suggests a significant increase in the twenty-six counties of the Saorstát in the 1920s (36.73 per million) compared with pre-war Ireland (27.83 per million), a difference of some 25 per cent." For an overall assessment of cultural and political attitudes to sex, sexuality and sexual abuse in Ireland in the twentieth century see: Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (London: Profile books, 2009); Tom Inglis, *Lessons in Irish Sexuality* (Dublin: UCD Press, 1998).

²⁰ See Tony Keating, "Women, Their Own Worst Enemy: Police Culture, Sexuality and Sexual Crime in the Irish Free State, 1929," (2014):

https://repository.edgehill.ac.uk/5979/1/Women_their_own_worst_Enemy_Sex_crime_in_the_Free_State.pdf; See also: Mark Finnane, "The Carrigan Committee of 1930-31 and the 'Moral Condition of the Saorstát'."

²¹ Margaret Keogh, BMH WS 273, referred to how British soldiers could only walk on the Post Office side of O'Connell Street, Dublin due to efforts to save Irish girls from them: "A decent girl could not walk down the Post Office side without being molested. Then such girls got the name of a 'soldier's totty.'

²² For a discussion see: Marie Coleman, "Violence against women during the Irish War of Independence, 1919-21."

²³ Louise Ryan, "Drunken Tans."

²⁴ Conor Heffernan, "Head Shaving during Ireland's War of Independence," *Doing History in Public*, December 3, 2015: <https://doinghistoryinpublic.org/2015/12/03/head-shaving-during-irelands-war-of-independence/>

²⁵ Ryan, "Drunken Tans."

²⁶ Mary Alleway, MSP34REF37069.

²⁷ Madge Daly first President of the Limerick Branch of Cumann na mBan, BMH WS 0855, for instance stated: "We were raided regularly, our business place was set on fire, and our furniture seized for unpaid fines imposed by courtsmartial. My sister was dragged out of the house one night, her hair was shorn off and her hand cut with a razor" p.9. Mrs. Geraldine Dillon, BMS WS 424, from Galway (a sister of Joseph M. Plunkett executed in 1916) remarked in her statement that in Co. Galway in 1920: "Certain houses had practically daily raids...Four girls had their hair cut off, which was more of a tragedy than it would be now" p.10. Seán Broderick, BMS WS 1677, from Galway stated: "The following night, my sister Peg was taken out by Black and Tans who cut off her hair to the scalp and attempted to burn down our home after doing a considerable amount of damage" p.5.

²⁸ Deborah Pergament, "It's Not Just Hair: Historical and Cultural Considerations for an Emerging Technology," *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, 75, 1 (1999), p.44.

²⁹ Pergament, "It's Not Just Hair."

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- ³⁰ Pergament, "It's Not Just Hair."
- ³¹ Ann Mah, "This Picture Tells a Tragic Story of What Happened to Women After D-Day," *Time* June 6th, 2018.
- ³² Anthony Beevor, "An ugly carnival," *The Guardian*, Friday 5 June, 2009:
"As we mark the 65th anniversary of the D-day landings, Antony Beevor describes a dark side to the liberation parties: the brutal head-shaving and beating of women accused of collaboration."
- ³³ Claire Duchen, *Women's Rights and Women's Lives in France 1944-1968* (London: Routledge, 1994).
- ³⁴ Kristine Stiles, "Shaved Heads and Marked Bodies: Representations from Cultures of Trauma," *Strategie II: Peuples Méditerranéens*, Paris (1993), pp.95-117:
https://web.duke.edu/art/stiles/shaved_heads.html
- ³⁵ Stiles, "Shaved Heads and Marked Bodies."
- ³⁶ See Paul Preston, "Violence against Women in the Spanish Civil War," *The Volunteer* August 23rd 2018: "Throughout the rebel zone, many women were murdered and thousands of the wives, sisters and mothers of executed leftists were subjected to rapes and other sexual abuses, the humiliation of head shaving and public soiling after the forced ingestion of castor oil."
- ³⁷ Eichenberg, "The Dark Side of Independence."
- ³⁸ Ryan, "Drunken Tans."
- ³⁹ Heffernan, "Head Shaving during Ireland's War of Independence."
- ⁴⁰ Eoin Swithin Walsh, *Kilkenny: In Times of revolution 1900-1923* (Kildare: Merrion Press, 2018), pp.274-275.
- ⁴¹ Leo Buckley, BMH WS 174.
- ⁴² Michael Higgins, BMH WS 1247.
- ⁴³ Elizabeth Bloxham, BMH WS 632.
- ⁴⁴ Margaret M. (Peg) Broderick-Nicholson, BMS WS 1682, p.4.
- ⁴⁵ See for instance: Katherine Stafatos, "The Psyche and the Body: Political Persecution and Gender Violence against Women in the Greek Civil War," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 29, 2 (2011), pp.251-277.
- ⁴⁶ Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies*; Fitzpatrick, *Terror in Ireland*.
- ⁴⁷ See Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War*, pp.186-188 for a discussion.
- ⁴⁸ Townshend, *The Republic*, p.170. See also Margaret MacCurtain, "Women, the Vote and revolution," in Margaret MacCurtain and Donnchadh O Corrain (eds.), *Women in Irish Society* (Dublin 1978), pp.34-6. Cumann na mBan, *1918 Convention: Report* (Dublin 1918), q. Aideen Sheehan, 'Cumann na mBan: Politics and Activities', in David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *revolution? Ireland 1917-1923* (Dublin 1990), p.88.
- ⁴⁹ Brian Hanley, "'Moderates and Peacemakers': Irish Historians and the Revolutionary Centenary," *Irish Economic and Social History*, 43, 1 (2016), pp.122-3.
- ⁵⁰ D'Cruze, "Approaching the history of rape and sexual violence," p.389.
- ⁵¹ Finname, "The Carrigan Committee of 1930-31."
- ⁵² Finola Kennedy, "The Suppression of the Carrigan Report: A Historical Perspective on Child Abuse," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 89, 356 (Winter, 2000), pp.354-363.
- ⁵³ William Carrigan, (1931). "Report of the Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Acts (1880-85), and Juvenile Prostitution." (Chairman, William Carrigan, KC). A small number of copies of the Report were printed by the Stationery Office, but it was never released to the public.
- ⁵⁴ See: Colman Cassidy, "An Irishman's Diary," *Irish Times*, 10th January, 2001:
<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/an-irishman-s-diary-1.268515>
- ⁵⁵ The file "Death of Kate Maher, 22nd December 1920, Dundrum, Co. Tipperary" was initially closed for 29 years. The National Archives, Kew: WO 35/155B/4. Dr. Marie Coleman kindly sent me an electronic copy of this file.
- ⁵⁶ Bourke, *Rape*, p.15.
- ⁵⁷ Bourke, *Rape*, p.16.
- ⁵⁸ For a discussion see: Marie Coleman, "Violence against women during the Irish War of Independence, 1919-21," p.141.
- ⁵⁹ Earnest Blythe Papers, UCD Archives, P24/323(4). Thanks to Dr. John Borgonovo for bringing this document to my attention.
- ⁶⁰ James Maloney, BMH WS 1525, p.21.
- ⁶¹ Margaret Ward, *Hannah Sheehy Skeffington: Suffragette and Sinn Féiner Her Memoirs and Political Writings* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2017), pp.182-6. The "Statement of atrocities on women in Ireland made and signed by Mrs. Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington," highlighted the atrocities committed by the Black and Tans against women and children.

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- ⁶² Earner Byrne, “The Rape of Mary M.,” p.75.
- ⁶³ Séamus Fitzgerald, BMH WS 1737.
- ⁶⁴ Earner Byrne, “The Rape of Mary M.,” p.76.
- ⁶⁵ Kate Maher, WO 35/155B/4.
- ⁶⁶ Kate Maher, WO 35/155B/4.
- ⁶⁷ See John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the “Anti-Sinn Féin Society”: The Intelligence War in Cork City, 1920-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).
- ⁶⁸ Tameside Central Library; Local Studies and Archive Centre MR 1/2/4 Diary of activities of Manchester Regiment (based in Ballincollig, Co Cork) entry for 29 November 1920. Dr. Andy Bielenberg provided me with a copy of the original entry.
- ⁶⁹ See Andy Bielenberg and James S. Donnelly, *Cork’s War of Independence Fatality Register*: <http://theirishrevolution.ie/1921-123/#.XDE6c2V8Pdk> : “At one point, after she had returned from a hospital visit, her hair was ‘bobbed’ or shorn, as a punishment ordered by the local IRA battalion. Subsequently, her house was searched (after a military raid) by order of the captain of the Ardgroom Volunteer Company, and in this search part of a letter from the RIC head constable in Castletownbere was found, along with five half-torn letters from other RIC members and two photographs of RIC men.” See also: Andy Bielenberg, “Female Fatalities in Co. Cork during the Irish War of Independence and the Case of Mrs. Lindsay,” in Linda Connolly (ed.), *Women and the Irish Revolution: Feminism, Activism, Violence* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, forthcoming 2019).
- ⁷⁰ Katherine Collins, MSP34REF34414.
- ⁷¹ Margaret Doherty, DP2100.
- ⁷² Margaret Doherty, DP2100.
- ⁷³ See John Dorney, *The Civil War in Dublin: The Fight for the Irish Capital, 1922-1924* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2017); Padraig Yeates, *A City in Turmoil – Dublin 1919-1921: The War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2012); Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War*, pp.186-7.
- ⁷⁴ Mrs. E.M.W. Biggs, Irish Grants Commission, National Archives [London], CO 762/4/8. Thank you to John Dorney, Pádraig Yeates and Padraig Ó Ruairc for sharing documents.
- ⁷⁵ Yeates, *A City in Turmoil*; National Archives [London], CO 762/4/8.
- ⁷⁶ Mo Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.212: Thomas John Day Atkinson and Mrs. Cicely Helen Burrington Atkinson (assault, possibly sexual), CO 762/32/26; Mrs. Margaret Fox (sexual assault), CO 762/17/22.
- ⁷⁷ John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
- ⁷⁸ Bourke, *Rape*, p.131.
- ⁷⁹ Mrs. Bridget Doherty, BMH WS 1193, p.4 indicated women were implicated: “They arrived at 5 o’clock in the evening. I was put into a room in my house where I was undressed by two female searchers.”
- ⁸⁰ Joe Joyce, “July 24th, 1924: From the Archives: Three masked Free State army officers beat two young women with their Sam Browne belts and rubbed grease...” *Irish Times*, 24th July 2012.
- ⁸¹ See Padraig Yeates, *A City in Civil War – Dublin 1921-1924: The Irish Civil War* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2015); Tom Doyle, *The Civil War in Kerry* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2008), p.309; John M. Regan, *The Irish Counter-revolution 1921-1936: Treatyite Politics and Settlement in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1999).
- ⁸² Dominic Price, *We Bled Together: Michael Collins, the Squad and the Dublin Brigade* (Cork: the Collins Press, 2017).
- ⁸³ Ernest Blythe, BMS WS 939, p.182. See also statements: Cahir Davitt, BMH WS 1715, pp.94-95; Kevin O’Sheil, BMH WS 1770.
- ⁸⁴ Dorney, John, *The Civil War in Dublin*, chapter 18. Another rape case in Claremorris is also referred to.
- ⁸⁵ Mary Walsh, BMH WS 556.
- ⁸⁶ Shirley Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women* (London: Malaby Press, 1975).
- ⁸⁷ Brett Shadl, “The Politics and Histories of Sexual and Gender Based Violence,” *Journal of Women’s History*, 26, 1 (2014), pp.185-194.
- ⁸⁸ Patrick Dunphy, BMH WS 1271.
- ⁸⁹ Michael Collins (member of Irish Volunteers, Monegay, Co. Limerick 1913-1921), BMH WS 1301, pp.4-5.
- ⁹⁰ Mollie O’Shea, BMH WS 733.
- ⁹¹ This case was first highlighted by Niall Murray, “Role of Women Detailed in Pension Files,” 11 May 2018, *Irish Examiner*.
- ⁹² Delia Begley, MSP34REF32794.

⁹³ Michael O'Regan, "Stories of the revolution: Ballyseedy and the Civil War's worst atrocity," 11 December 2015, *Irish Times*: "On March 7th, nine anti-Treaty prisoners, one of them with a broken arm, another with a broken wrist, and one, John Daly, unable to walk from spinal injuries, were taken by lorry to Ballyseedy Cross about two miles from Tralee. The hands of each prisoner were tied behind him. Each was tied by the arms and legs to the man beside him...A rope was passed completely round the nine men so that they stood in a ring facing outwards. In the centre of the ring was a landmine... The soldiers who tied them took cover and exploded the mine. The remains of the prisoners killed were flung far and wide, bits of bodies hung from trees in the wood that bordered the roadside."

⁹⁴ O'Regan, "Stories of revolution," cites Eoin Neeson's book *The Civil War 1922-23* (Cork, Mercier Press, 1966 and Dublin, Poolbeg Press, 1989) which vividly described the brutal environment leading up to the Ballyseedy atrocity: "'When they were taken, they were liable to summary execution, torture or death without the formality of trial,' he wrote. Old comrades tortured and shot one another in cold blood."

⁹⁵ See: Élise Féron, "Wartime Sexual Violence Against Men: The Hidden Face of Warfare," 28 Nov 2018: <https://www.rowmaninternational.com/blog/wartime-sexual-violence-against-men-the-hidden-face-of-warfare>