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Children of the revolution

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Nora Connolly O'Brien

Máirtín Ó Catháin



Figure 10 Nora Connolly O'Brien

A true revolutionary must never count the cost, for he knows that a revolution always repays itself, though it cost blood, and through it life be lost and sacrifice made. He knows that the flame of the ideal which caused the revolution burns all the more brightly, and steadily, and thus attracts more men and minds, and because of the life-blood and sacrifice becomes more enduring.¹

This seeming embrace of the Asian life, death and re-birth cycle known as *Samsara* more temptingly bracketed as 'blood sacrifice' in the Irish context, does not mark out Nora Connolly O'Brien as a Pearsean republican any more than it defines her as a Buddhist or Hindu. It does, however, reflect the musings of a young twenty-three-year-old writing months after her beloved father had been executed for his part in the Easter Rising. Its meaning is not timebound though and it may be fair to say that a similar sentiment springs from the pages

of Nora's final book as she approached her eighties. It is a tiresome cliché that people, especially perhaps political activists, experience several 'ages' in their lives distinct as they are contingent. Radicals of the left have not escaped this template and nor have many been undeserving of such an approach. Indeed, it has been said that narrative form in biographical work generally tends to 'move between different "time perspectives" as they reflect on the past, contemplate the present and rehearse the future.'² Nora Connolly O'Brien's resistance of the temporal pull in this regard may not make her unique in a milieu that was after all renowned for individuality if not idiosyncrasy, but her life and politics provide a pallet of diverse and ordinarily conflicting shades of red and green.

Nora (or 'Nono', her pet name as a child), was born in 1893 at 6 Lothian Street, Edinburgh, the second child of James Connolly and Lillie Reynolds who had married in April 1890. It's not clear where the name came from, though the 1911 census adds an initial 'M' to her name, which may possibly have been 'Margaret' after her aunt Margaret Reynolds, who lived in Edinburgh around the time of the child's birth.³ By comparison with the upbringing of her father in the impoverished Irish quarter of the Cowgate in the 1870s, Nora's years in Lothian Street were relatively comfortable and corresponded with a slight rise in the fortunes of the young Connolly family at a time when many of the Edinburgh Irish were beginning to move out of the ghetto. These were famously remembered by Lillie as her happiest years in spite of their financial hardship, while James was but a short stroll from the closes of the Cowgate, the genteel bookish world of the university surroundings, and the bear-pit of the Meadows public speaking pitches. Although Nora spent only a brief period at the knee of Connolly's local comrades during regular meetings of the Edinburgh Scottish Socialist Federation in their home and remembered nothing of her earliest years, it is not difficult to discern in her later writings and friendships an affinity and fondness for the place of her birth.⁴

Nora's formative years were spent in Dublin, New York and Belfast, though the last, remarkably given her later alignments with militant Irish republicans, and while important in her political development, seems to have had the most marginal influence on her later life and politics. From the age of three to the age of eleven, she grew up amid increasing poverty in various parts of the inner city of Dublin and life for the family was a struggle barely alleviated by the various stints of work her father got. As she told MacEoin in the years before her death:

My first memory of Dublin is therefore of a tenement room and great poverty in Queen Street, a street of decaying Georgian houses near Arran Quay. That is where I recount the story of how daddy staggered in after spending a day wheeling barrows of clay upon a building site somewhere. He was unused to it and quite unable to do the work, but he had to take the first job that came as his

meagre political funds had run out. We were then near the starvation limit and there were no social services to help us. Mother could light the fire only at night time, and we were reduced to two slices of buttered bread each for breakfast.⁵

It has often been remarked how James nurtured the education of his daughters, instilling in them a sense of the necessity and righteousness of women's equality.⁶ Lillie similarly played an important role, something which has been overlooked by many historians, as indeed has Lillie herself, if not depicted as the 'great coper' of the household.⁷ Apparently attending school aged three just behind her sister, Mona, who was five, and impressing the teacher with an ability to read that saw her quickly bypass the infants' class, Nora attributed her rudimentary skills to her mother's tutelage. Lillie, who had been a governess for a time for a wealthy Dublin family, gave the same coaching to her own children. Famously within a few short years at school, Nora was given the nickname 'common noun' by a teacher because of an early aptitude for grammar and writing. This erudition no doubt enabled and sustained her later written work which with all its occasional eccentricity shows a solid grounding in rich and clear descriptive language.⁸

James Connolly's sojourn in the United States between 1903 and 1910 was prefaced by an event that probably had a profound effect on Nora's place within the family and relationship to her father. On the day of departure for Lillie and the children to meet her husband in New York, Mona was burned to death in an accidental house fire at her aunt's. James learned of the death on the New York quayside when he finally met Lillie and the (remaining) children.⁹ Although Nora had, like the others, spent time around her father in Dublin and even travelled with him to Scotland for a visit in 1898 and a tour in 1902, her relationship deepened after the death of Mona. It may be that she long retained a sense of preferment or favouritism by her father for many years and the occasional sibling rivalry with her sisters and brother may have been part of this process. Certainly, as time went on and through her writings and public speaking she became the effective guardian of her father's name and legacy, though how this exactly fell to her is difficult to establish. In the United States, she was an eager spectator and eventually participant in much of her father's activism and Roddy remembered how Nora 'appeared to exert considerable influence over all the other Connolly children.'¹⁰ The strange third person narrative adopted in *Portrait of a Rebel Father* with its many intimate father-daughter moments and the use of her pet name throughout certainly speaks of a great personal love and devotion to James as well as a slightly egotistical and forceful personality. Once when Connolly said to his daughter that she didn't require his approval, she replied 'I'll always want your approval.'¹¹ Within moments of his death she recalls comforting her mother and gathering her brother and sisters in the early light of the morning announcing to them that their father was dead and proceeding to read to them his smuggled

address to the court martial.¹² The narrative of his final moments dramatically culminating in the tragic parting and the bequeathal of the 'last words' document made Nora the personal caretaker and leading relative of the Connolly mystique, but equally placed her at the heart of events that ultimately in some ways led to the creation of the state. Whatever challenges this may have held for the wider family circle, it posed even greater political dilemmas both for Nora and for her friends and foes at every point on the ideological spectrum for years to come.

The years in the United States and the discussions with her father ripened Nora's political education even if she wasn't by her own admission keenly aware of the ideological and personality fissures involved in the split with Daniel De Leon.¹³ A rough appreciation of the syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World clearly comes across in her writings and she defined their approach as not of the 'conventional Marxist' type, but it is difficult to know how much of this was learned at a later stage when she toured the United States herself.¹⁴ She at least had her first opportunity to engage in various types of political activities in the United States, began work in a millinery store, though against the wishes of her father, and read a great deal. The family were better off than they had been in Dublin but things were still precarious and the move from New Jersey to New York and a room in the Bronx was difficult for Lillie and the children who felt a greater sense of isolation in the big city. The foundation of the Irish Socialist Federation (ISF), however, created a milieu for them and for Nora it seems to have served as a virtual presence of her father when he had to be elsewhere. It also bestowed upon her the first political 'job' as grandly titled 'business agent' for the ISF paper, the *Harp*. She attended every meeting in spite of the onset of puberty and a growing interest in boys, music and dancing, but famously recorded that she still 'found it an easier thing to confess a missed Mass than a missed meeting'.¹⁵

The family's move back to Ireland was universally welcome and Nora was particularly excited about the return home. The young eighteen-year-old listed in the 1911 census return for 70 South Lotts Road in Ringsend gave her occupation as 'dressmaker' but as she remembered 'it was not long until the reality of Irish conditions hit us. I was unable to get a suitable job in Dublin so I went to Belfast, where I got a job in a factory making blouses'.¹⁶ Her father was there before her, lodging with Belfast socialist, Danny McDevitt. Soon after, in the wake of Connolly's appointment as an Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) organiser, the whole family moved north, taking up residence at Glenalina Terrace on the Falls Road.¹⁷ Nora had her first taste of public speaking on the steps of the Belfast Custom House: 'I went over the things I had just been talking over ... about the languages spoken in New York. I elaborated it a bit, and they liked it. That was the only speech meeting I spoke to at that time'.¹⁸

It was also the only time her father had asked her to speak and in some ways it marked her graduation into political activism. From around this time, Nora's

political life was very much associated with the republican left, and often only the republicans. She had with her sister Ina (whom she referred to as 'Aghna'), and with whom she did piecework in a Belfast factory, started to associate with the Belfast Fianna Éireann, which was forced to admit them and other women and the 'Betsy Gray' *sluagh* emerged. Nora recalled a summer's meeting at their 'huts' ahead of the Twelfth of July celebrations: 'It was felt by the Fianna that something should be done to show that the Nationalists and Catholics were not cowed by this greatest of all Orange demonstrations, but consciousness of their youth and their small number made it difficult to decide what to do.'¹⁹

After consulting with Nora's father, the Fianna littered the parade route with a leaflet referring not entirely accurately to the *Te Deum* sung in the Vatican on the order of Pope Alexander VIII in the wake of the victory at the Boyne. Despite the incident's sectarian touch, Nora and her sister saw themselves as quite apart from the Hibernianism of Belfast Catholics. 'We're a puzzle to the girls at the works', she recalled. 'The Unionist ones know that we're opposed to them and the Ulster Volunteers, and are nationalists and papishes; and the Catholics know that we don't look upon Redmond as our leader and we've no love for the Hibs.'²⁰ In spite of their place among the young militants of the Fianna, they were still thought of as outsiders not fully cognisant of the possible impact of partition, with one of the boys declaring to Nora:

'You have no idea what it'll mean. You haven't lived here long enough. I'll tell you some of the things it has meant without partition.' And Nono heard tales she'd heard from their mothers, their fathers, uncles and brothers; of unmerciful beatings; of battles with cobblestones; of men driven from work in fear of their lives merely because they were Papish; and on the Island at the shipyards, where there were never more than three thousand Catholics and always more than twenty thousand Orangemen, and where Catholics even though they were working, worked in danger of their lives; tales of weights falling, and pails of paint and red hot rivets dropped on Papishes ... Aw, what's the use of talkin'? You've got to live through it to understand.'²¹

A one-dimensional image of the situation in Ulster emerges from Nora's writings, and her understanding and appreciation of the Protestant working class of the North seems to have been perpetually myopic if not disdainful.²² This is in contrast in many ways to the more nuanced perception of her father, but it is noticeable that her period in Belfast does appear to mark the emergence of a drift away from the more labour-focused activism which she was involved with alongside him. This may reflect a shift in Connolly senior's own focus away from open political organisation towards conspiracy rather than the influence of the sectarian world of Belfast politics.

Although she continued to be based in Belfast for a considerable period of the 1913 Lockout, and looked after the younger children to allow her mother to visit James in Mountjoy Prison, Nora organised solidarity work with the local

trinity of separatist organisations with which she was now centrally involved. The Fianna, Cumann na mBan and the 'Republican Party' with overlapping memberships all gathered funds and supplies to aid the locked-out workers, though Nora was struck by the degree of diffidence in Belfast towards the dispute.²³ She did spend some time in Dublin during 1913 and 1914, first helping Constance Markievicz in the Liberty Hall food kitchen and later attending the funerals of those killed in the Bachelor's Walk shootings.²⁴ She also began to take on the role of courier for the republican movement, attended training camps with the Fianna and began marksmanship classes with Cumann na mBan on Cave Hill.²⁵ This intensification of republican activity continued into the dramatic years of 1914 to 1916 and saw Nora at the centre of three dramatic, and indeed, pivotal events. The first of these was the return to Ireland of Liam Mellows who was effectively under house arrest in England after his deportation and during which Nora was able to utilise the Glasgow contacts, particularly with the Glasgow Fianna who had developed important links with Belfast, helped by pre-existent Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) ones.²⁶

The final major event of the period was her involvement in the relay of two very significant messages whose import has probably not been fully appreciated given Nora's silence on the issue throughout her life and a scepticism about her written accounts.²⁷ In December 1914, she couriered a secret message to the United States detailing, it has been suggested, one of two things – the IRB's intention to stage a rebellion during the war or communications to the Germans about Belfast shipbuilding.²⁸ We know she met Roger Casement in New York, and Nora's statement on the trip referring to the people she met and the promise made to 'the leaders' does point towards some foreknowledge of the Rising.²⁹

The second message relayed after an exhaustive trip from Tyrone, where Nora had remained to help organise the rebellion in Ulster, concerned the willingness of the Northerners to join a renewed attempt after Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order scuppered hopes of a decent rising on Easter Sunday. Nora had journeyed to Dublin to meet with a despondent father and Military Council to consult on what was to be done:

Tears came into his eyes, and he said, 'If we don't carry this off, Nora, the only thing left to do is to hide our heads in shame and pray to God to send an earthquake or a tidal wave and hide us under the waters. It would be such a disgrace to our generation. My father said that he had heard the Northerners were not ready to fight. I told him this was not true. 'Daddy', I said, 'don't believe it' (I only called him 'Daddy' when I was very stern you see. It was 'Pop' I would call him when I was not being formal). And I told him about the men and the weapons I had seen in Coalisland. I said he could ask the girls who were waiting outside, and they would tell him the same ... So it was then that he decided to call them together ... I stayed in the building that Easter Sunday while the seven members of the Council were meeting ... then at three o'clock in the afternoon, my father came down and said, 'It's alright, Nora, we're going to go ahead tomorrow'.³⁰

The drama of this encounter and the decision made in the secret conclave obscures slightly the fact that Nora's report, although it proved ultimately to be wildly optimistic, did have a potentially critical bearing on the decision to go ahead with the insurrection. For her part, and in spite of the hope of her father that she would remain in Dublin, Nora returned to the North, a decision that marks her growing maturity and independence from this point onwards.³¹ Confusion and timidity allied to what Nora regarded as a misplaced loyalty to McNeill saw the mobilisation fall apart and Nora again made the arduous trip to Dublin in the company of her sister Ina. The girls arrived in time to witness the dying embers of Easter week and then attended to their wounded father, Nora leaving some of the most memorable last moments of any leading figure in the 1916 rising which has remained, along with responsibility for his last statement to convey to the world and posterity.³² The particularly harrowing manner of Connolly's execution became the exemplar of British misgovernment in Ireland and a powerful weapon in the hands of propagandists.

In the years after the Rising, Nora dedicated herself to the cause for which she believed her father had died, even if at times it seems clear that she didn't fully understand any more than many others what exactly that was.³³ Until the 1920s, she interpreted it mainly as republican and threw her weight and name behind Sinn Féin, though during a brief interlude prior to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty she aligned herself with the Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI) and aided its short-lived transformation into the Communist Party of Ireland alongside her brother, Roddy.³⁴ Just prior to the Civil War, she married a republican activist, Séumas O'Brien, and adopted the surname whilst retaining her own, undoubtedly not merely for feminist reasons. She came to prominence again after her service with her husband in the Civil War and imprisonment in Kilmainham Jail, where she played an important role in helping organise the welfare of the women prisoners as well as an Easter Commemoration in the stone-breaker's yard where her father had been shot dead.³⁵

After release from prison on the issuing of a writ of habeas corpus declaring her arrest to have been unlawful, 'NCOB' (as she signed telegrams in Liberty Hall) slowly resumed her activism, moving from socialist to republican to socialist and again to republican organisations in a pattern established prior to the First World War. For Nora, like her father, there were often no ostensible reasons why labour and nationality should be in conflict and she consistently gave evidence to her inculcation of that idea by a persistent attempt to wed the two forces into a single republican socialist party. Short of that goal her strategy was to concentrate on influencing the IRA and this led to the first serious conflict with her brother Roddy, whose attempts to seek Comintern affiliation for the Workers' Party of Ireland and advice to abandon armed struggle in the years after the Civil War were characterised as 'treachery'. In a newspaper correspondence between them, Roddy accused Nora of

regressing from Marxism towards republicanism.³⁶ The contours of this political disagreement re-emerged during the tortuous fracture in the Republican Congress in 1934. By then, the broad frontism of Peadar O'Donnell and George Gilmore had lost its appeal for Nora and the more ambitious aim of a worker's republican party led to her withdrawal from the Congress with Mick Price and others. She did, however, maintain a commitment to conspiratorial advances and served on the Army Council of the revived Irish Citizen Army (ICA), her brother Roddy serving in likewise capacity on a rival ICA. Both bodies soon fell apart and Connolly versus Connolly moved into a new phase though marking similar dissonant territory in the ranks of the Labour Party.³⁷ These years were characterised by a more suburban atmosphere and a slight withdrawal from public life. She did find time, perhaps stung by Communist Party of Great Britain influence over the Republican Congress, to correspond with Leon Trotsky, reaching out in the summer of 1936 and offering to keep him apprised of the 'National Revolutionaries' of the IRA and the forlorn hope of the Labour Party taking 'the leading role in the revolutionary movement in Ireland'.³⁸

Nora found employment first with the ITGWU when she worked as a business correspondent and statistician, and during the 'Emergency' she made the short trip from Liberty Hall to the General Post Office to help staff the telephone exchange.³⁹ She served on the Spanish Aid Committee during the Spanish Civil War though not a particularly high profile activist during this time.⁴⁰ She and her husband left the Labour Party after the excision of a commitment to a Worker's Republic from the party constitution, something that, as in the Republican Congress, she was always anxious to foreground, believing that this would appeal to Northern Protestants.⁴¹

A brief involvement with *Córas na Poblachta* in the early 1940s did not translate to what some see as its successor, *Clann na Poblachta*, and Nora appears to have drifted until De Valera personally sought her presence in the Seanad in 1951.⁴² She does not seem to have baulked at this invitation despite Dev's wartime persecution of republicans, merely reminding him when he asked her, that she did not belong to his party.⁴³ Her time in the Seanad between 1957 and 1969 saw her make just twenty-one contributions, mostly once or twice a year and usually of short duration though experience seems to have given her greater confidence, and there are slightly more towards the end of her career as a senator. Her first contribution was on hospital charges⁴⁴ and thereafter on emigration and co-operative farms as a means of tackling the exodus;⁴⁵ opposition to the abolition of proportional representation;⁴⁶ army pensions for 1916 widows;⁴⁷ landlord improvements to property and resultant tenancy charges;⁴⁸ confinement of girls on probation within the Magdalen system;⁴⁹ the election of a woman *Leas-Chathaoirleach*;⁵⁰ the 1961 Official Secrets Bill;⁵¹ the registration of business names where she took issue with the exclusivity of the description 'Christian names';⁵² the registration of

care homes;⁵³ abolition of the death penalty;⁵⁴ pensions;⁵⁵ the rights of ministers to close rights of access during an animal disease outbreak;⁵⁶ the 1967 censorship of publications bill;⁵⁷ animal care at marts;⁵⁸ redundancy settlements;⁵⁹ and support for the retention of proportional representation.⁶⁰ It was a varied platform, and gave no indication of Nora's later critical support for the Provisional IRA and more especially for the Irish Republican Socialist Party, which she wrote later in life of as the closest inheritor of her father's ideals.⁶¹ This is all the more surprising given the increasing glow from the campfires of northern radicals in the late 1960s. She made a number of trips north of the border, unveiling a monument in north Belfast to the IRA fallen in 1976 and attending anti-H-Block rallies and meetings.⁶² She supported the banned Dublin Easter Commemoration of 1976 organised by Sinn Féin, narrowly escaping arrest and launching a booklet in collaboration with the party, *James Connolly Wrote for Today* (1978) where she referred to the 'present fight in the North of Ireland [as] the continuation of the battle for which he [Connolly] died'.⁶³ Her dictated 1981 work, the final book she produced, has been described by White as 'polemical' but much of it is merely a reprise of *Portrait of a Rebel Father* and its entree, *The Unbroken Tradition* (1918), with additional musings on the Congress episode, anecdotal reminiscences and a relatively uncomplicated irredentist reading of the Troubles.⁶⁴

Asked to recall Nora, Éamonn McCann, who met her on several occasions, could only offer 'she had white hair and wore glasses'.⁶⁵ Such may be less about the vagaries of memory than an indistinctiveness about the ideological position of probably the most prominent and certainly the most forceful of the Connolly clan. Her personality and politics took command of the family narrative, patented the James Connolly formula, and laid claim to the mantle of the Worker's Republic. Connolly himself did not fully trust his daughter's interpretation of events and discouraged others from an uncritical assessment.⁶⁶ Her mother, however, we are told by Nora, received her 1935 *Portrait* with tears and an astonishment at its accuracy, something endorsed in some ways by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington but challenged by reviewers and others, such as Jack Carney at the time and many critical academic perspectives since.⁶⁷ Inaccuracies or literary invention aside, Nora Connolly O'Brien's writings remain the key repository of her ideas and values. Therein we see an at times irascible and judgemental individual never far from the naive and rather vague republican socialist politics of her youth and someone more often described by contemporaries, and indeed by her obituarist in the *Irish Times*, as a republican committed to 'national freedom and social justice'.⁶⁸ As such and given her post-Republican Congress opposition to communism, her eschewal of legitimist or purist republicanism, acceptance of the southern State's sovereignty and Seanad contributions among other things, she fits more readily into a republican labourist position and essentially a person 'in search of a party'⁶⁹ (and vicariously perhaps for her father) that she never found.

Notes

- 1 Nora Connolly, *The Unbroken Tradition* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 195.
- 2 Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), p. 124.
- 3 Uinseann MacEoin, *Survivors* (Dublin: Argenta Publications, 1980), p. 205. The names chosen for the children reflect in some ways the Irish-Scots heritage with Mona, Nora, and Aileen reflecting Irish roots and Ina, Máire (often written Moira), Roderic and Fiona pointing to the Scots background.
- 4 MacEoin, *Survivors*, p.184; C. Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1972), pp. 43, 45; Bernard Aspinwall and John McCaffrey, 'A comparative view of the Irish in Edinburgh in the nineteenth century', in Graham Swift and Sheridan Gilley (eds), *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 144. Nora visited Scotland many times over the years and maintained close friendships with some of the leading Scots émigré figures including Margaret Skinnider and Séamus Reader.
- 5 MacEoin, *Survivors*, pp. 184–5.
- 6 Lawrence William White, 'Nora Connolly O'Brien', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Charlie McGuire, *Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), p. 9.
- 7 This was recognised by Nora in the MacEoin interview and an in-house publication of the Workers' Party, Carol Murphy, *The Life and Times of Lillie Connolly* (Dublin: Citizen Press, 2006).
- 8 MacEoin, *Survivors*, p. 186.
- 9 Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, p.182; Samuel Levenson, *A Biography of James Connolly* (London: Quartet Books, 1977), pp. 107, 117. Mona had originally been chosen by Connolly to join him in New York before the rest of the family though this proved impractical.
- 10 Dónal Nevin, *James Connolly: A Full Life* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005), p. 6; MacEoin, *Survivors*, pp. 187–8; McGuire, *Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland*, p. 10.
- 11 Nora Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait of a Rebel Father* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1995), p. 172.
- 12 Nora Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again* (London: Mosquito Press, 1981), pp. 37–8.
- 13 Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, pp. 93–4.
- 14 MacEoin, *Survivors*, p. 191.
- 15 White, 'Nora Connolly O'Brien'; Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, pp. 86–8, 96–101.
- 16 Household Census of Ireland, 1911, entry for 70 Lotts Road, South (Pembroke West, Dublin); MacEoin, *Survivors*, p. 191.
- 17 Levenson, *Biography of James Connolly*, p. 197.
- 18 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 7–8.
- 19 Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, p. 139.
- 20 Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, p. 163.

- 21 Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, p. 165.
- 22 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 106–7. Loyalists are constantly referred to by Nora as merely 'renegade Irishmen' who only oppose republicanism because they have been fed 'scare stories' which mean 'Protestants have been led astray about the question of Irish unity'.
- 23 Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, p. 159.
- 24 Connolly, *Unbroken Tradition*, pp. 2–3, 15–16; Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, pp. 151–3.
- 25 Nevin, *James Connolly*, p. 591; Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1989), pp. 104–6; Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics 1890–1940* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), pp. 110–12; Karen Steele, 'Constance Markievicz and the politics of memory', in Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds), *Irish Women and Nationalism: Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hags* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), p. 70; Sinéad McCool, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years, 1900–1923* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2004), p. 26.
- 26 Connolly O'Brien, *Portrait*, pp. 50–82; MacEoin, *Survivors*, pp. 198–9. Connolly and Mellows's brother, Barney, slept through a German Zeppelin attack on Edinburgh which resulted in the deaths of several people.
- 27 Austen Morgan, *Labour and Partition: The Belfast Working Class 1905–23* (London: Pluto Press, 1991), p. 153 refers to Nora's memoirs as 'sentimentalised' and Richard English, *Radicals and the Republic: Socialist Republicanism in the Irish Free State 1925–1937* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 5, 37 and 188 describes them as 'propagandist', 'blurred' and 'hagiographical'.
- 28 White, 'Nora Connolly O'Brien'.
- 29 MacEoin, *Survivors*, p. 196. Nora does not mention this trip to Dublin in any of her other books and the point is not taken up substantially by Ward, Urquhart, McCool or by Ann Matthews in the otherwise excellent, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900–1922* (Dublin: Mercier, 2010). Ruth Tallion, *When History Was Made: The Women of 1916* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 1996), pp. 20–1, 35–7 also gives weight to Frank Robbins' suggestion that Nora's December 1914 visit to the United States was to inform the Germans that the Belfast shipyards were engaged in work to sabotage their U-Boats operating out of the Zeebrugge Canal.
- 30 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 20–2.
- 31 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 23–24; Connolly, *Unbroken Tradition*, pp. 98–101.
- 32 MacEoin, *Survivors*, pp. 200–1; Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, p. 25; Connolly, *Unbroken Tradition*, pp. 142–73, 180–7.
- 33 Nora Connolly O'Brien and Eibhlín Ní Sheidhir, *James Connolly Wrote for Today* (Dublin: Irish Freedom Press, 1978), p. 1; Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 63–5.
- 34 White, 'Nora Connolly O'Brien'; Lawrence William White, 'Roderic James (Roddy) Connolly', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); McGuire, *Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland*, pp. 113–14.

- 35 Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, pp. 183, 192–3; McCoole, *No Ordinary Women*, pp. 90–1, 119–22.
- 36 Emmet O'Connor, *Reds and the Green: Ireland, Russia and the Communist Internationals 1919–43* (Dublin: University College, Dublin Press, 2004), pp. 50–2; McGuire, *Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland*, pp. 13, 123, 125.
- 37 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp.71–3; O'Connor, *Reds and the Green*, p. 202; McGuire, *Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland*, pp.151–6, 220–2; Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, pp. 230–1.
- 38 Letter dated 28 April 1936 from Nora Connolly O'Brien to Leon Trotsky and reply dated 6 June 1936 from Leon Trotsky to Nora Connolly O'Brien, from www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/ireland-fi/norac.htm#nora, accessed 31 March 2011. Nora also seems to have been the main contact for Trotskyist exiles from Britain moving to Ireland after the outbreak of the Second World War, see Niamh Puirseil, *The Irish Labour Party, 1922–73* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007), p. 83.
- 39 White, 'Nora Connolly O'Brien'; Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 59–61.
- 40 Michael O'Riordan, *Connolly Column* (Torfaen: Warren & Pell, 2005, orig. 1979), p. 36.
- 41 *Irish Times*, 18 June 1981; Patrick Byrne, *The Irish Republican Congress Revisited* (London: Connolly Publications, 1994), p. 31.
- 42 R. M. Douglas, *Architects of the Resurrection: Ailtirí na hAiséirghe and the Fascist 'New Order' in Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 80.
- 43 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 61–2.
- 44 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.48 No.4* from, Public Business, Health and Mental Treatment Bill, 1957 – Second Stage, 19 June 1957. All debates were accessed at www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie.
- 45 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.49 No.3*, Central Fund Bill, 1958 – Second Stage (Resumed) and Subsequent Stages, 27 March 1958.
- 46 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.50 No.6*, An Bille um an Tríú Leasú ar an mBunreacht, 1958 – An Dara Céim (Atógáil), Third Amendment of the Constitution Bill, 1958, 5 February 1959.
- 47 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.51 No.4*, Army Pensions Bill, 1959 (Certified Money Bill) – Second and Subsequent Stages, 15 July 1959.
- 48 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.52 No.16*, Rent Restrictions (No. 2) Bill, 1960 – Committee Stage, 21 June 1960.
- 49 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.52 No.19*, Criminal Justice Bill, 1960 – Second Stage, 13 July 1960.
- 50 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.55 No.2*, Election of Leas-Chathaoirleach, 3 January 1962.
- 51 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.55 No.17*, Official Secrets Bill, 1962 – Committee Stage, 28 November 1962.
- 52 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.57 No.3*, Registration of Business Names Bill, 1963 – Committee and Final Stages, 4 December 1963.
- 53 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.57 No.4*, Health (Homes for Incapacitated Persons) Bill, 1963: Committee Stage, 11 December 1963.

- 54 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.57 No.7*, Private Business – Criminal Justice Bill, 1963 – Second Stage, 26 February 1964.
- 55 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.57 No.12*, Pensions (Increase) Bill, 1962 – Second and Subsequent Stages, 10 June 1964.
- 56 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.60 No.12*, Diseases of Animals Bill, 1965: Committee Stage, 2 February 1966.
- 57 Seanad Éireann Debate, *Vol.63 No.8*, Censorship of Publications Bill, 1967: Report and Final Stages, 5 July 1967.
- 58 Seanad Éireann Debates, *Vol.63 Nos.13, 15 & 17*, Livestock Marts Bill, 1967: Committee Stage, Tuesday, 1 August 1967, Resumed debate, Thursday, 3 August 1967 and Report and Final Stages, 9 August 1967.
- 59 Seanad Éireann Debates, *Vol.64 Nos.2 and 4*, Redundancy Payments Bill, 1967: 29 November, 6 December 1967.
- 60 Seanad Éireann Debates, *Vol.65 Nos.12 and 16*, An Bille um an Tríú Leasú ar an mBunreacht, 1968: An Dara Céim (Atógáil), Third Amendment of the Constitution Bill, 1968, 18 July 1968.
- 61 Connolly O'Brien, *We Shall Rise Again*, pp. 14–16.
- 62 *Irish Times*, 18 June 1981; Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN), Physical Memorials of the Troubles in North Belfast, 'PIRA, Ardoyne and Ligoniel Fallen Volunteers', http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/viggiani/north_memorial.html, accessed 12 February 2012.
- 63 Donnacha Ó Beacháin, *Destiny of the Soldiers: Fianna Fáil, Irish Republicanism and the IRA, 1926–73* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2010), p. 362; Connolly O'Brien and Ní Sheidhir, *James Connolly Wrote for Today*, p. 1.
- 64 White, 'Nora Connolly O'Brien'.
- 65 Email from Éamonn McCann, 19 January 2012.
- 66 Dónal Nevin (ed.), *Between Comrades: James Connolly, Letters and Correspondence, 1889–1916* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2007), pp. 67–8.
- 67 MacEoin, *Survivors*, pp. 184–5; Unseann MacEoin, *The IRA in the Twilight Years 1923–1948* (Dublin: Argenta, 1997), p. 357; *Irish Times*, 28 December 1935, 3 January 1936; for academic criticism see English, *Radicals and the Republic*, p. 4, and Morgan, *Labour and Partition*, p. 153. Carney's position towards Nora, like that of other Irish communists, was one of suspicion and distrust for what they perceived to be her reactionary anti-communism and certainly she comes close in *We Shall Rise Again* to describing the Soviet Union as state capitalist (pp. 96–8). There is more about Carney in Emmet O'Connor, 'Jim Larkin and the Communist Internationals, 1923–9', *Irish Historical Studies*, 31:123 (May 1999), p. 364.
- 68 *Irish Times*, 18 June 1981.
- 69 MacEoin, *Twilight Years*, p. 229.