



College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences

## **Unit 2:**

## Irishwomen's Campaign for the Vote, 1870-1914

*Transition Year Project Book Part 2* 

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#### - Document J -

Extracts from the Irish Citizen (1912-1920) edited by Frank Sheehy-Skeffington and James Cousins



Irish Paper.

Vol. 1

DUBLIN, May 1912

The Duties of Citizenship

No. 1

6s. 6d. post free.

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#### **CURRENT COMMENT**

#### THE AIMS OF THE IRISH CITIZEN

On Saturday June 8th, 1912, the Irish Citizen editorial outlined its aims as follows: (a) to form a means of communication between Irish Suffrage Societies and their members.

(b) to provide a reliable source of publicity for suffrage activities in Ireland.

(c) to provide a means of cheap and effective propaganda."

To achieve these ends all responsible officers of societies will send reports of meetings and notices of forthcoming events; all suffragists should induce newsagents to display copies and posters, and those who have the power of expression will send us articles, notes and letters."

#### SUFFRAGE ACTIVITIES IN IRELAND

#### THE POLICE COURT PROCEEDINGS

The eight members of the Irish Women's Franchise League who initiated the militant protest in Ireland on Thursday June 13th, were arrested before six o'clock in the morning. They were kept in custody from that hour until two in the afternoon, when the cases were brought up in the police courts.

#### TWO OF THE WOMEN

Mrs Sheehy-Skeffington and Miss Margaret Murphy, were charged with having broken glass in Dublin Castle. The windows broken in were Ship Street Barracks, the property of the War Department. As in the other cases, the damage was done at about 5:30am. Constable 119B, said he saw Mrs Skeffington using a stick on the windows, and Miss Murphy throwing stones. Nineteen panes were broken, and the police values them at 30s; .... The constable swore that Mrs Skeffington said she did this 'for the purpose of showing up the Government'. Cross examined by Mrs Skeffington, he admitted that her exact words were 'as a protest against the action of the Government'.

#### "WHY WE THROW STONES AT GOVERNMENT GLASS HOUSES."

#### WOMEN WHO DID IT. Miss Marjorie Hasler writes:

You ask me to give the reasons why I broke windows. I have not admitted breaking any: but, if I have, may I ask you in reply, can you give me any reason why I should not? I, as one of the majority sex in this country, am allowed no say whatever in the making of the laws that the minority sex force upon us. Do you forget the fight of the Land League and the methods they used when compelled to live under laws which they considered were forced upon them? and the row the Ulster men are making, and the terrible threats loudly proclaimed at the bare prospect of being in a voting minority (in a Home Rule government)? We claim the vote as our right. We are getting impatient with the dull perception of men who cannot imagine that we mean to get this birth-right to all free women. We don't like smashing glass any more than men like smashing skulls, yet in both cases there is, I believe, a strong feeling that something must be broken before a wrong is changed into a right.



#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 12 DECEMBER 1912

"What is called the Votes for Women movement is but a side issue of a much greater and more far-reaching problem. It is true that the Votes for Women movement is the chief manifestation of feminism in these countries. Although public attention has been particularly focused on this one phase of feminism, the girl who first defied conventions by riding a bicycle . . . the poorest woman anywhere who is revolting against the conditions of her life and longing for a chance to relieve its monotony – all these are part and parcel of the great uprising amongst women." - Margaret Connery -

#### - Document K -

#### Extract from an article in The Leader about the IWFL actions in Dublin on 13 June

Owned and edited by Irish Irelander, D.P. Moran, the weekly newspaper was noted for its caustic commentary on public affairs.

# The Leader

#### A Review of Current Affairs, Politics, Literature, Art and Industry

#### Vol. XXIV - No. 19.

#### **DUBLIN, 22 JUNE, 1912**

Price One Penny

#### CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Suffers in Dublin are playing their little intimidation British game, and they have got some keenly desired notoriety by window smashing. So far as the silly Suffers in this country are concerned, they are the last persons that we would be inclined to add to the motley brigade of voters. Irish women are merely laughing at them, yet these Suffers, in the same document in which they use the word 'logically', claim to speak for Irish women. Of course, Irish women repudiate them. They go out and break windows.

How would they like it if some people went out and kidnapped their Mr Skeffy and cut off his whiskers? It appears that some silly Suffer unanimous resolutions were sent to all Irish Members [of Parliament] but not one of the latter took the trouble to acknowledge them. Ignoring the silly Suffers is evidently the unpardonable sin.

... Irishwomen repudiate these people and their attitude of amused contempt for them has probably developed into strong disgust since the window smashing escapade.

The manifesto of the selfstyled 'Irish Women's Franchise League' winds up with a pleasant threat: - "It (breaking GPO and other windows) it is but an earnest of what is in store if an Irish Constitution is set up without including women voters'. Citizens of Dublin, put up your shutters!



#### - Document L -

#### A cartoon entitled 'Votes and Violence' by W.K. Haselden published in the *Daily Mirror* on 2 July 1909

Although the IWFL described itself as 'militant', its members did not engage in militant activity until after 1912 when the 3rd Home Rule Bill was introduced. The English Suffragette Movement was more extreme in its tactics, even as early as 1909 when this cartoon appeared.

[Source: The British Cartoon Archive, WH0519]

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

### Document J -L

| 1.  | In your own words, what were the stated objectives of the <i>Irish Citizen</i> newspaper? (Doc J)            |
|-----|--|
| 2.  | According to the Irish Citizen, why were Ms Sheehy-Skeffington and Ms Murphy arrested? (Doc J)               |
| 3.  | What reason did Marjorie Hasler give for taking part on the militant protest in May 1912? (Doc J)            |
| 4   | What comparison does Ms Hasler make between the Suffragettes and the Land League? <i>(Doc J)</i>             |
| 5.  | What is Margaret Connery's opinion about the Votes for Women movement? (Doc J)                               |
| 6.  | Based on Document K, was D.P. Moran, editor of <i>The Leader</i> , in favour or opposed to women's suffrage? |
| 7.  | How would you describe the tone of the article in <i>The Leader</i> ? Give reasons for your answer. (Doc K)  |
|     |  |
| 8.  | What are the strengths and weaknesses of Document K as a historical source?                                  |
|     |  |
| Atl | us of the Trish Revolution Resources for Schools p. 5  |

Political Gartoon Analysis Worksheet

| <b>1. THE BASICS</b> | Document 1 | Document 2 |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Date                 |            |            |
| Publication          |            |            |
| Intended Audience    |            |            |

#### 2. OBSERVE

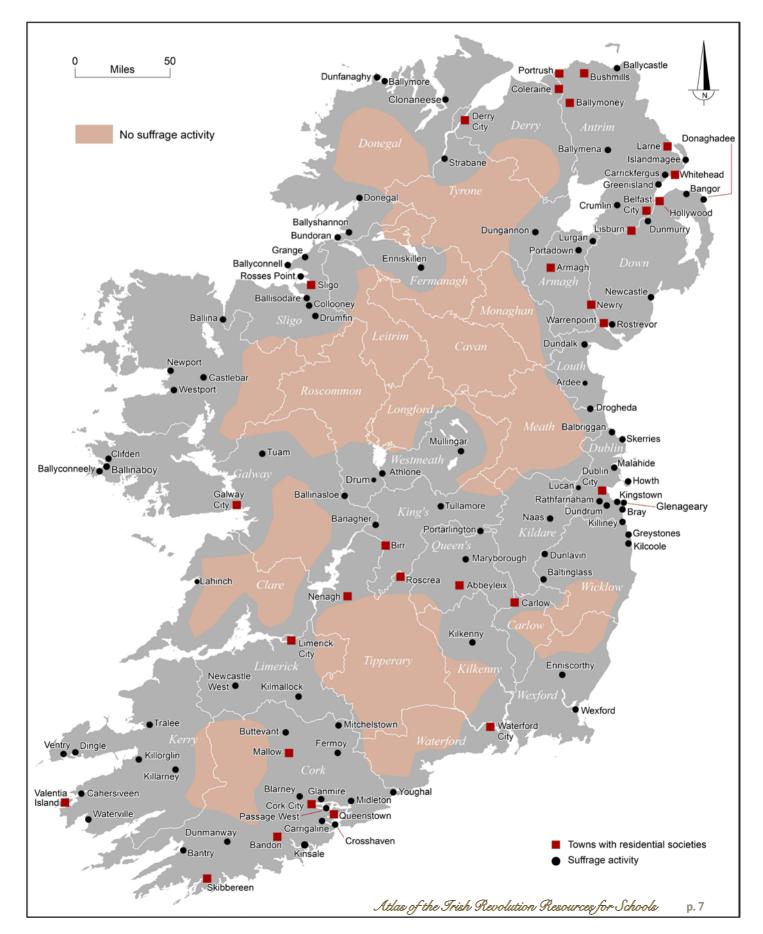
| 2. OBSERVE   | Document 1 | Document 2 |
|--|------------|------------|
| Identify the people<br>in the cartoon                      |            |            |
| List the objects in the cartoon                            |            |            |
| List the actions/<br>activities in the<br>cartoon          |            |            |
| Where/what/when<br>is the setting of the<br>cartoon?       |            |            |
| ls there a caption<br>or title?                            |            |            |
| Are there any other<br>words or numbers in<br>the cartoon? |            |            |

| <b>3. INTERPRET</b>   | Document 1 | Document 2 |
|---|------------|------------|
| How are the people<br>in the cartoon<br>depicted and why?                               |            |            |
| Are any of the objects<br>in the cartoon<br>symbols - if so, what<br>do they symbolise? |            |            |
| What do you think<br>the caption means?<br>Is it intended to be<br>humourous or ironic? |            |            |
| What 3 adjectives<br>best describe the<br>viewpoint of the<br>cartoonist?               |            |            |
| What is the main<br>message of the<br>cartoon?  |            |            |



#### - Document M -

Based on a map entitled **'The Suffrage Geography of Ireland'** published by the *Irish Citizen* on 17 May 1913 and the *Irish Citizen*'s 'Irish Suffrage Directory' (1913-14), this map shows the locations with active residential suffrage societies. It also shows the places where suffrage meetings took place 1913-14.



## THE IRISH GITIZEN AUGUST 15, 1914. -ONE PENNY VOTES FOR WOMEN NOW! DAMN YOUR WAR!

#### - Document N -

#### Poster issued by the Irish Women's Franchise League newspaper, the Irish Citizen at the outbreak of the First World War.

While all Irish feminists agreed on the core principle of parliamentary votes for women, tensions developed around class and the question of whether to prioritise getting the vote over the struggle for Irish independence.

After the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, feminist opinion was divided on the question of whether or not to support the British war effort.

[Source: National Library of Ireland, EPH B45]

#### - Document O -

Extract from a lecture delivered by Constance Markievicz to the Students' National Literary Society in Dublin, in 1909. It was also published as a pamphlet by Inghinidhe na hÉireann in the same year.



## WOMEN, IDEALS AND THE NATION

am not going to discuss the subtle psychological question of A why it was that so few women in Ireland have been prominent in the national struggle ... true, several women have distinguished themselves on the battlefields of 1798, we have the women of the Nation newspaper, the Ladies' Land League, also in our own day the few women who have worked their hardest in the Sinn Fein movement and in the Gaelic League ... but for the most part our women, though sincere, steadfast Nationalists at heart, have been content to remain quietly at home and leave all the fighting and striving to the men.

Lately things seem to be changing. As in the last century, during the sixties, a strong tide of liberty swept over the world, so now again a strong tide of liberty seems to be coming towards us, swelling and growing and carrying before it all the outposts that hold women enslaved and bearing them triumphantly into the life of the nations to which they belong ...

But I would ask every Nationalist woman to pause before she joined a Suffrage society or Franchise League that did not include in their Programmes the Freedom of their Nation. 'A Free Ireland with No Sex Disabilities in her Constitution'

should be the motto of all Nationalist women ... Ireland wants her girls to help her build up her national life.

Their fresh, clean views on life, their young energies, have been too long hidden away and kept separate in their different homes. Bring them out and organise them, and lo! you will find a great new army ready to help the national cause.

#### - Document P -

Once Home Rule was placed on the statute books on 18 September 1914, the IWFL moved to applying pressure for an amendment which would include a vote for Irish women

## QUESTIONS FOR Mr Asquith and Mr. Redmond

Home Rule is on the Statute Book. What about Home Rule for Women?

The "Charter of Liberty" has been granted to Irishmen: How is it that Irishwomen's rights are ignored therein?

Why is all voice in the election of the Irish Parliament denied to the women of Ireland, who had made so many sacrifices for the cause of Irish Freedom?

You say that you will give safeguards to the Ulster Minority: what about CITIZENSHIP FOR THE MAJORITY?

Why are the women of Ireland to be ranked with criminals, lunatics, paupers, and children - tortured in prison and hounded down as outlaws by a Government professing Liberalism?

Why do you not dare to admit women to your meeting? Are you afraid that their voices might be raised in protest against your policy of Coercion and Repression of Women?

Irishmen! do not forget the women of your land. Remember Fanny Parnell, Anne Devlin, the women of Limerick and the women of '48.

Put these questions at the Mansion House Meeting.

## VOTES FOR IRISHWOMEN! Irish Women's Franchise League

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

#### Document M -P

| 1.  | Why do you think that the <i>Irish Citizen</i> newspaper would have published a map such as <i>Doc M</i> showing the 'Suffrage Geography of Ireland' in 1913?                                      |
|-----|--|
| 2.  | What do you think the <i>Irish Citizen</i> might have meant by (a) 'Residential Suffrage Societies' and (b) 'Suffrage Activity'? ( <i>Doc M</i> )  |
| 3.  | <ul> <li>(a)</li></ul>   |
| 1   | What was the closest place to your school where suffrage activity took place? <i>(Doc M)</i>   |
|     |  |
| 5.  | Based on Document N, what was the position of the Irish Women's Franchise League regarding the British War effort?   |
| 6.  | Based the lecture given by Countess Markievicz in 1909, do you think she would have agreed with the IWFL's slogan "Suffrage First – Before All Else"? Give reasons for your answer. <i>(Doc O)</i> |
| 7.  | Comment on the effectiveness of the IWLF poster as a piece of propaganda for women's suffrage?   |
| Art | us of the Trish Revolution Resources for Schools p. 10   |

The Press, both National and Conservative, official Sinn Fein, the clergy on the whole (organised religion generally) were opposed to the militant movement, primarily because revolt of women for their own emancipation is always frowned upon by ... males, and partly because the Church are opposed to any change. Organised Labour wanted women to help them press for Adult Suffrage ridiculing Women's Suffrage as 'Votes for Ladies' ... So from Right and Left Wing there were critics - even the Quakers, though usually receptive, were opposed to 'violence'.

Extract from 'Reminiscences of an Irish Suffragette' by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington included in a pamphlet entitled, Votes for Women: Irish Women's Struggle for the Vote, 1975

## Your Task

There were very strong opinions about women's suffrage on both sides between 1879 and 1914. On the next page you will find a series of quotes expressing some of those opinions.

- Step 1: Your teacher will divide the class into teams of four. Each team should cut out the individual quotes and discuss whether they express a pro or anti-suffrage opinion. Once agreed, place the quotes in the appropriate part of the graph on the next page.
- *Step 2:* As a class you should discuss the placements of the quotations and be ready to justify your placement when asked. Your teacher will also lead a discussion on about why the particular people you have identified might have been pro or anti-suffrage.
- *Step 3:* The last step in this task involves preparing and preforming a role play. Each group of four should choose one student to take on the role of one of the people in the anti-suffrage column, and another student to take on the role of one of the people in the prosuffrage column. The other two students will work as researchers and help the actors to prepare the scene.

The scene may take place anywhere you choose, but must include a debate between your two chosen characters.

*Step 4:* In the next class each group will perform their scene. Before the actors begin, one of the researchers should explain the chosen setting and the background to the conversation. After each performance, the other members of the class should prepare two of the following responses.

An observation about the credibility of the actors' performance

A comment about evidence of research and preparation

A suggestion what about what might have happened next

A question about the team's chosen characters

## **CONTRARY COMMENTARY**

"Allowing woman the right of suffrage is incompatible with the Catholic ideal of the unity of domestic life and would fare ill with the passive virtues of humility, patience, meekness, forbearance and self-repression looked upon by the church as the special prerogative of the female soul."

- Fr D Barry, Irish Ecclesiastical Record, 1909 -

"'Votes for Women!' is the shrill cry of a number of discontented ladies who seem to have missed the best of life. And it is well-nigh useless to repeat the plain truth that Woman was and is destined to make voters rather than to be one of them."

- Novelist Marie Corelli, 1<u>907 -</u>

"Down with the suffragettes"; "We will never forget the hatchet"; "Burn them"; "Throw them in the river."

- Calls from a crowd at a suffrage meeting in Beresford Place, after a hatchet was thrown into Prime Minister Asquith's carriage by a protester, July 1912 -

"It would be ludicrous, were it not shameful, to find nationalists, whose history is a record of success gained by the use of violence and lawbreaking and damage to property, condemning the smashing of a few panes of glass as if it were an unheard of and unpardonable outrage."

- Irish Citizen newspaper, 1912-

"A man comes home at present from political turmoil and finds calm and quietness which would be impossible if his wife was an active participator in the same contest ... it must be the duty of Irishmen ... to stand at the threshold of their homes to keep them inviolate from such influences'.

- Pastoral letter of Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, 1912 -

'If women did gain the vote, it would mean that most voters would then be women. What would be the effect of this on the government? ... What is the good of talking about the equality of the sexes? The first whiz of the bullet, the first boom of the cannon and where is the equality of the sexes then?

- Speech made in 1912 by Conservative MP, Lord Curzon -

"We were as keen as men on the freedom of Ireland, but we saw the men clamouring for amendments which suited their own interests, and made no recognition of the existence of women as fellow citizens." "The vote may be the hallmark of equality, but it is in our daily lives - in matters of education, in commerce ... and in the labour market that we really need liberty and equality."

- Editorial, Bean na hEireann, February 1909 -

"The [women's] movement in Ireland smacks rather of imitation of the English, and we do not regard it as a native and spontaneous growth."

#### - Editorial in the Leader, 1910 -

"Women's suffrage will I believe, be the ruin of our western civilisation. It will destroy the home, challenging the headship of man, laid down by God. It may come in your time - I hope not in mine."

#### - John Dillon, MP, circa 1912 -

"The worker is the slave of capitalist society; the female worker is the slave of that slave. In Ireland the woman's cause is felt by Labour men and women as their cause; the Labour cause has no more earnest and whole-hearted supporters than the militant women."

- James Connolly, The Reconquest of Ireland, 1915 -

"The women of Ireland want the Vote, but they don't want it at the expense of Home Rule - even if we have to wait three years! What are three years in the life of a nation?"

- Mary McSwiney, Home Rule supporter and co-founder of the Cork city Branch of Cumann na mBan in May 1914 -

"The movement ... developed a new camaraderie among women, it lifted social barriers ... it helped women to self-expression through service, calling forth that spirit of sacrifice strong in most women but this time, for the first time in history, not for a man's cause but their own."

- Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Reminiscences of an Irish Suffragette, 1975 -

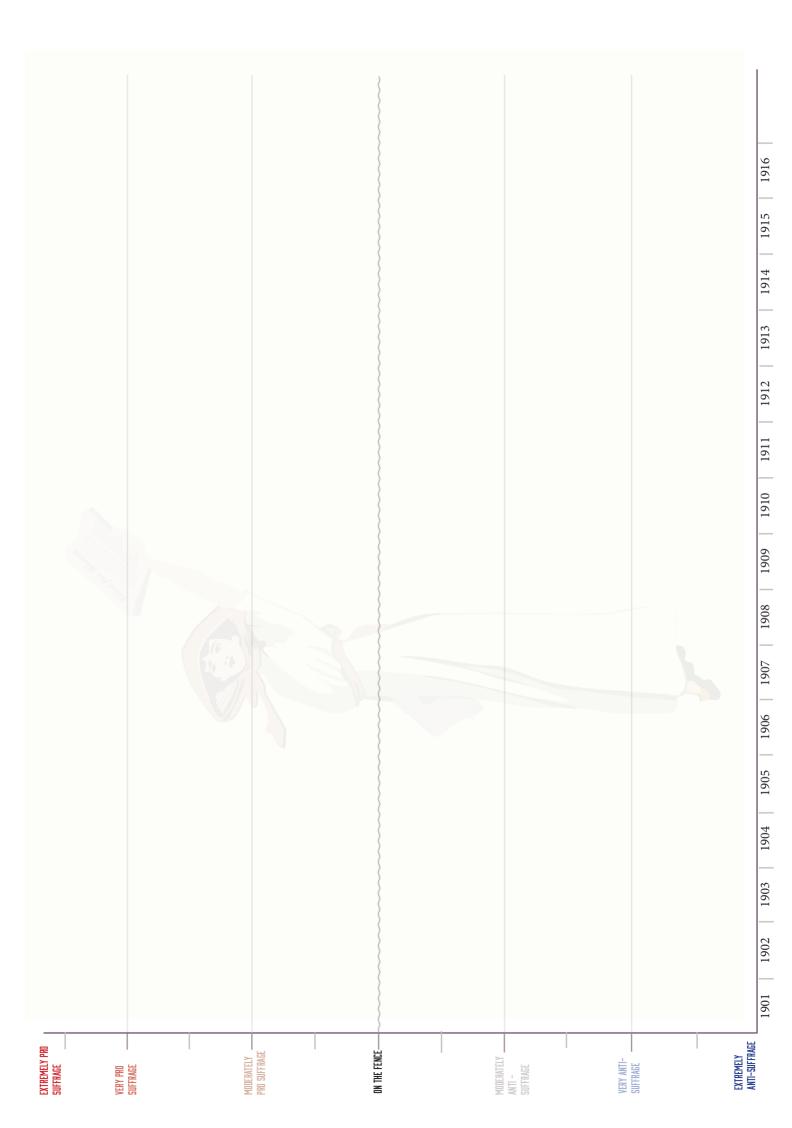
We have tried every way, but we have had contempt poured upon us. Violence is the only way that we have to get the power that every citizen should have."

- English Suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst speaking in 1912 -

"The old idea that a woman can only serve her nation through her home is gone, so now is the time; on you the responsibility rests. No one can help you but yourself alone; you must make the world look upon you as citizens first, as women after."

- Margaret Cousins, We Two Together (with JH Cousins), 1950 -

- Countess Markievicz, "Women Ideals and the Nation", 1909 -



### Cumman na mBan

From its earliest days, the IWFL was subject to accusations of disloyalty and criticised by those who felt that women's suffrage should not take priority over the nationalist cause. This tension threatened the stability of suffrage societies as many nationalist women abandoned the IWFL and its ideology of "Suffrage First – Before All Else". Many would join a a new women's movement which prioritised the establishment of an Irish Republic above all else.

Cumann na mBan (Irishwomen's Council) was founded at a meeting in Wynn's Hotel in Dublin on 5 April 1914. A small group of women attended the meeting presided over by Agnes O'Farrelly. The aims of Cumann an mBan were outlined in their constitution:

- To advance the cause of Irish Liberty
- To organise Irishwomen in furtherance of this objective
- To assist in arming and equipping a body of Irishmen for the 'Defence of Ireland'.
- To form a fund for these purposes to be called the 'Defence of Ireland Fund'

The first Provisional Committee of eight women included of Agnes O'Farrelly, Agnes MacNeill, (wife of Eoin MacNeill, the leader of the Volunteers); Nancy O'Rahilly, (wife of The O'Rahilly founding member of the Volunteers), Mary Colum, (a teacher in Patrick Pearse's school, St Enda's and wife of poet and Volunteer Padraic Colum); Jennie Wyse Power, (a veteran of the Ladies' Land League) and Louise Gavan Duffy (daughter of a Young Irelander and one of the first women to graduate from UCD in 1911).

Cumann an mBan raised money for the purchase of arms and ammunition for the Irish Volunteers by organising dances, concerts and other social events. This collection was known as the 'Defence of Ireland' fund. They adopted a green uniform and a slouch hat and their banner and badge carried the symbol of a rifle with the initials of the organisation intertwined.

From the beginning, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington was critical of Cumann na mBan for its 'subordinate' or secondary role to the Volunteers and its unwillingness to actively engage in, or discuss politics. The motives for this, however were understandable, as Cumann na mBan leaders were concerned that political differences might lead to a split in the new organisation. Gender stereotypes in 1914 meant that the nationalist women of Cumann an mBan had identified a role for themselves that was deemed appropriate for women - its primary purpose the arming of its male counterpart organ-

isation. The *Irish Citizen*, however, would continue to call the members of Cumann na mBan 'slave women'.

Membership of Cumann na mBan grew quickly and by October 1914 the women's organisation had sixty branches and a headquarters was established in Dublin.

#### -Document Q -

Extract from an article published in Irish Citizen about a meeting of Cumann na mBan in the Mansion House in Dublin on 2 May 1914



#### AWKWARD QUESTIONS AT CUMANN NA MBAN MEETING

The meeting opened with the skirl of Irish pipes on a warlike note. The generosity, the devotion and enthusiasm of Irishwomen were lauded [praised]; reference was made to the women of Limerick; we were reminded that 'our ancient Irish liberties' whatever they are) were in peril, and that delicately-natured women whom wild horses could not drag from the shelter of home and babies were flocking to the standard of Miss O'Farrelly, clamoring to hold collection boxes in the defence of home and motherland.

Suddenly a 'Volunteer' speaker (Mrs Sheehy-Skeffington) began to ask questions - awkward ones. Was the Irishwomen's Council to have a place in the (Volunteer) executive? What were the liberties that Irishwomen possessed? ... Uproar ensued as Mrs Sheehy Skeffington put these points; the men for whom rifles were to be procured at the sacrifice of 'fur coats' howled to have the insolent one put out: the chair(person) explained that the liberties of Irishwomen did not form a part of the constitution of the new society, and were entirely 'out of order'; that the only question of interest at present was the buying of rifles for men,



DUBLIN'S MANSION HOUSE

and that nothing else was of the slightest importance to the truly womanly – and the unwomanly in the audience smiled to themselves and thought deep thoughts on the nature of men who cannot buy a rifle unless a woman collects the money!

#### - Document R -

#### Edited Extract from an article by Mary Colum published in Irish Freedom in Sept 1914



**DUBLIN, SEPTEMBER 1914** 

It is now on all sides acknowledged that Cumann na mBan - the Irishwomen's Council- is the most vigorous and enterprising of all the movements that have grown out of the idea of arming and drilling the nation ... this organisation of women is a force to be reckoned with, that is growing with remarkable rapidity, for all the patriotic energies of the women of the country are rushing towards it.

The destiny of small nations always finally depends on their women. That is a truth that every leader of any movement must take into account... it is a truth perfectly accepted by the young captains and secretaries of the Volunteers who help us of Cumann na mBan to found our branches throughout the country ... now, at the moment of writing there are over half a hundred branches in Ireland and several in England ... and so slowly the movement grows and the spirit grows. Where the members of Cumann na mBan are the most numerous, the spirit of the Volunteers is best. What are recognised as the best drilled and most efficient regiments in the country are backed by the strongest force of women.

... From the start we of Cumann an mBan decided to do any national work that came within the scope of our aims. We could collect money or arms, we would learn ambulance work, learn how to make haversacks and bandoliers, we would study



the question of food supplies, we would practice the use of the rifle, we would make speeches, we would do everything that came our way - nothing is too high or too low for us to attempt, for we are not the auxiliaries or the camp followers of the Volunteers - we are their allies. We are an independent body with our own executive and our own constitution ...

#### - Document S -

#### This Manifesto from 1914 sets out the goals of Cumman na mBan

## MANIFESTO CUMANN NA MBAN

(IRISHWOMEN'S COUNCIL) THE WOMEN'S SECTION OF THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

At this time of national crisis we wish to make clear to our countrywomen the principles for which we stand.

We are the Women's Section of the Irish Volunteers, and have been working side by side with them from the beginning. We are the only women's organisation belonging to the Irish Volunteers, and our activities and aims are solely national. Our work already covers the ground mapped out by suggested societies. At the present juncture we are concerned that the food of Ireland shall be conserved for the people of Ireland, and so prevent a repetition of the Black Famine of '47.

We confidently depend on our Irish Volunteers, men and women, to help us in this vital work. We call on all Irishwomen who realise that our national honour and our national needs must be placed before all other considerations, to join our ranks and give us all the assistance in their power.

> GOD SAVE IRELAND. The Provisional Committee, CUMANN NA MBAN St.,

206, Great Brunswick St., Dublin, Aug. 8, 1914.

N.B. - The above Manifesto was issued on Aug. 8th, 1914 in all the daily papers.

#### - Document T -

Edited Extracts from Bureau of Military History Witness Statements submitted by members of Cumann na mBan

ROINN COSANTA

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21. STATEMENT BY WITNESS

Soon after the formation of the Volunteers, a branch of Cumman na mBan was started in Limerick City. The first meeting was held in the Gaelic League Rooms, and the majority of those in attendance were members of the Gaelic League ... From its inception, ours was a large and active branch .... Classes were immediately started for First Aid, Home Nursing, Drill, Signalling and for instruction in the care and use of arms. For military matters we had the services of Captain Monteith M.D. and other Volunteer officers, whilst we had four city doctors and two nurses who gave the First Aid and Nursing lectures voluntarily ...

We arranged lectures, Irish dances and concerts ... We always charged admission to these functions ... in this way we helped the Volunteer Arms Fund...

The friendships formed with the members of the Committee are most precious to me. We worked together as one, each one doing all possible to help the organisation and to forward the cause, whilst never counting the cost.



BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21. STATEMENT BY WITNESS

#### DOCUMENT NO. W.S., 541

#### Witness: Nancy Wyse-Power, daughter of Jennie Wyse-Power

After the Volunteer split on the outbreak of the War, a convention of Cumann na mBan was held to determine the future of the organisation. There was a strong element which was anxious ... to remain neutral and to assist both Volunteer bodies. The contention, however, voted that the resources of the Society should be pledged to the Irish Volunteers ... Miss O'Farrelly resigned with a number of others and when the convention decision was conveyed to the branches, many members followed suit, whole branches disappearing in some cases.

I was not a member of Cumann na mBan at this time but was in and out of its offices a good deal ... as my mother had taken over the chairmanship. At this time the office was in D'Olier Street where a room had been provided by Sean MacDermott adjacent to the editorial office of 'Irish Freedom' for which he was responsible. When the Irish Volunteers secured premises in Dawson Street, the Cumann na mBan secured a room there.



#### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

#### Documenta Q -T

1. Who asked the awkward 'questions' at the Cumann na mBan meeting and what were those questions?

| (Q1)  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 2.  | 2. How did the chairperson respond to these questions?   |  |  |
| 3. What two words would you choose to describe the tone of the <i>Irish Citizen</i> article? Provide even the article to justify your choice. |  |  |  |
|   | (i) Reason:  |  |  |
|   | (ii) Reason:   |  |  |
| 4.  | What reasons does Mary Colum give for her optimism and positivity about Cumann na mBan in 1915? <i>(Doc R)</i> |  |  |
| 5.  | Is there any evidence in the article to suggest that Colum is responding to critics of Cumann na mBan?         |  |  |
| 6.  | 6. To what 'national crisis' do you think <i>Doc S</i> refers?   |  |  |
| 7.  | 7. For what purpose was <i>Doc S</i> created in August 1914, and what was its Target Audience?                 |  |  |
| Purpose:  |  |  |  |
|   | Target Audience  |  |  |

8. According to Madge Daly's witness statement, what were the main priorities of the Limerick Branch of Cumann na mBan?

9. According to Nancy Wyse Power, how did the split in the Volunteer Movement in September 1914 affect Cumann na mBan? 10. Which of the four sources, Q-T above would you consider the most valuable to historians? Give two reasons for your answer. 11. Using the Venn diagram below, identify the similarities and differences between Cumman na mBan and the Irish Women's Franchise League. Eumann na mBan **Srish Women's Franchise** League



Personal Assessment Sheet: History Module

| Name:  | Date Presented:            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Project Title:                                 |                            |
| Group Members:                                 | Group Roles:               |
|  |                            |
|  |                            |
|  |                            |
| Briefly describe the project undertaken by yo  | our group:                 |
|  |                            |
|  |                            |
|  |                            |
| Describe in detail your input into the project | :                          |
|  |                            |
|  |                            |
|  |                            |
| What did you do well as part of your group?    |                            |
|  |                            |
| What skills did you use while working on this  | s project?                 |
|  |                            |
| What would you do differently if you were to   | undertake this task again? |
|  | -                          |
|  |                            |
| What were the strengths and weaknesses of y    | your group's project?      |
| Strengths:                                     |                            |
| Weaknesses:                                    |                            |