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# Saving 'Ireland's children': voluntary action, gender, humanitarianism, and the Irish White Cross, 1921–1947

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## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the Irish White Cross, a little-known voluntary organisation that through its Children's Relief Association provided support to children who had lost their 'breadwinner' during Ireland's struggle for independence. In 1921 American fundraisers drew up plans for relief in Ireland as humanitarian largesse spread in the aftermath of the First World War. This international context provides a framework for this article as it charts the evolution of the Irish White Cross organisation, exploring the impact of pre-war social activism and post-war internationalism in shaping its priorities during the interwar period. International discourses on children as 'future citizens', paternalistic views about women's welfare, and the wishes of the White Cross' American benefactors shaped the organisation's actions as it navigated its role in newly independent Ireland. Largely absent from wider histories of interwar humanitarianism, this Irish case-study highlights the influence of humanitarian organisations, like the Red Cross movement or Save the Children, even in the absence of direct humanitarian intervention, while emphasising the particular utility of a focus on children as depoliticised objects of attention in a nation emerging from civil war.

## KEYWORDS

Irish White Cross; voluntary action; social welfare; humanitarianism; twentieth century Irish History

## Introduction

By focusing on the activities of the Irish White Cross' Children Relief Association, and on the contribution made by Áine Ceannt as its secretary, this article analyses a lesser-known but vitally important element of the Irish struggle for independence, one that concerns voluntary action, gender, and the role played by women as both active agents and recipients of humanitarian aid. Despite the recent attention to women's participation in the revolutionary period in Ireland, their instrumental role in voluntary organisations and civil society has remained underexplored.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, histories of social welfare after the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922 have focused on the state's *laissez-faire* policies, particularly its harsh treatment of unmarried mothers and the moralising influence of the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> Understandings of welfare for widows and orphans of the Irish conflict has been limited to the Free State's payment of limited pensions for war

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widows. This article draws together these two strands of inquiry. It is framed around the international context for voluntary action, as American fundraisers drew up plans for relief in Ireland and humanitarian largesse spread in the aftermath of the First World War. It charts the evolution of the Irish White Cross and its relief efforts for children, from the establishment of the organisation in 1921 to the cessation of its activities in 1947. In this time it morphed from a humanitarian relief organisation which drew its rhetoric and practices from the international Red Cross movement to a national charity which relied on voluntary action and concentrated on the long-term creation of children as future citizens of Ireland. This shift in the focus and practices of the White Cross reflects the links and tensions between internal welfare provision and external humanitarian aid in post-war Europe.<sup>3</sup> Initially, the Irish White Cross provided humanitarian relief, concentrating on Irish women and children as the ‘innocent’ victims of the conflict in Ireland. But in the post-war period the organisation promoted its own vision of new Irish society, one which prioritised maintaining family units and moulding respectable citizens. Women dropped from its remit as objects of humanitarian attention, though in the increasingly restrictive Irish Free State the organisation provided an avenue for women’s voluntary action and involvement in Irish society and politics.

### **The forming of the Irish White Cross, American fundraising and focus on children**

Irish nationalist agitation against British rule had found its firmest expression during the 1916 rebellion. Anti-British feeling was harnessed by the political party Sinn Féin, who received an overwhelming majority in the 1918 general election. Now equipped with a popular mandate, Irish political figures refused to engage with the British government, establishing their own legal and political systems. Following an escalation in violent attacks, guerrilla warfare broke out in January 1919 between Irish nationalists and British troops. As the war continued, supporters of the nationalist cause in the United States, including many wealthy Irish-Americans, proposed schemes for providing humanitarian relief in Ireland. Following the British attack on Cork in December 1920, a group of wealthy Americans founded the American Committee for Relief in Ireland to fundraise in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Political fundraising was not a new activity within Irish revolutionary circles, but the American Committee for Relief in Ireland was distinct from efforts which had preceded it. It drew from the rhetoric and fundraising tactics of international humanitarianism, concentrating on alleviating the suffering of the civilian population in Ireland. Though established by sympathisers with the Irish cause in the war against Britain, the fund publicly claimed impartiality and neutrality in its relief provision.

In January 1921, the group approached the Quaker Dublin-based businessman James Green Douglas about the possibility of creating a separate organisation in Ireland which would receive the funds raised in the United States, named the Irish White Cross.<sup>5</sup> This name likely originated with the fugitive president of the Irish nationalist government, Éamon de Valera. De Valera had been engaged in talks to establish an independent Irish Red Cross Society while in New York the previous autumn. Though he retained a spectral role in the organisation, de Valera explicitly envisioned the White Cross as

acting as a surrogate for the Red Cross in Ireland.<sup>6</sup> He repeatedly insisted that the choice of wording be preserved as the 'Irish White Cross' to intentionally evoke similarities with the Red Cross.<sup>7</sup> The Red Cross movement had been transformed by the First World War, not least in the United States where, after the country's entry into the war in April 1917, its 'vigorous corporate leadership' saw the American Red Cross reach ever-greater success in raising funds and civilian humanitarian engagement.<sup>8</sup> De Valera saw the establishment of a distinctive Irish Red Cross as an expression of Irish sovereign independence from Britain, while simultaneously leveraging the respect and recognition of the Red Cross movement.

The American Committee for Relief in Ireland quickly attracted widespread support both in the United States and further afield. The American Red Cross donated \$100,000 to its relief fund, while Pope Benedict XV sent a personal donation of 200,000 lire.<sup>9</sup> In April 1921 President Herbert Hoover formally endorsed its fundraising efforts, marking the culmination of the organisation's popularity and reputation.<sup>10</sup> These funds were sent to Douglas for distribution in Ireland by the Irish White Cross organisation. Alongside relief channelled from the United States, the organisation collected and distributed its own funds at a parish level, often with the support of local religious leaders.<sup>11</sup> The White Cross issued these fundraising appeals in the name of 'common charity', and framed its work as an ecumenical opportunity, 'for men and women to forget their differences, religious and political alike'.<sup>12</sup> It claimed its ambitions were apolitical, stressing the need to rehabilitate Irish industry and economy, as well as to alleviate 'distress' generated by the ongoing conflict. Through international fundraising and community-based voluntary action the Irish White Cross melded together humanitarian practices with charity fundraising. 'Voluntary action', a term coined by William Beveridge, founder of the British welfare state, is British historian Frank Prochaska's 'voluntary impulse' or what Robert Putnam referred to as 'social capital'.<sup>13</sup> All terms are integral components of the voluntary principle.<sup>14</sup> It relies on people acting collectively, in association with each other, or individually, for the common good, and was a particularly important component of social welfare provision, undertaken outside of the state, and especially important during times of war and conflict where the organisations were called war charities or patriotic funds.<sup>15</sup> Voluntary organisations like the White Cross in Ireland were continuing a long tradition of voluntary action – of individuals coming together to assist in addressing a specific need. The White Cross combined a long tradition of charitable and philanthropic giving in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries along with the war charity tradition of the First World War.<sup>16</sup>

In its pamphlet literature, the American Committee for Relief in Ireland identified the women and children of Ireland as the primary objects of humanitarian assistance, to whom relief in the form of food, clothing, medical supplies and building materials would be distributed by 'trained relief workers'.<sup>17</sup> Appeals distributed to the United States public contained evocative images of the inordinate suffering of the Irish elderly, women, and children, who they described as the 'innocents' of the conflict. Pamphlets titled, *A Summons to Serve from the Women and Children of Ireland* or *The Need for Relief in Ireland*, carried sketch drawings depicting starving and homeless 'half-naked' children made destitute by the conflict.<sup>18</sup> Multiple pamphlets repeated an appeal slogan for ten dollars as enough to 'feed and clothe a homeless Irish waif for a month'.<sup>19</sup> This campaign carried the hallmarks of professionalised aid advertising,

which placed the starving child at the centre of their fundraising efforts. Emily Baughan has described similar fundraising tactics by the American Red Cross, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Near East Relief Foundation which all encouraged the figurative adoption of international children through 'financial adoption programmes'.<sup>20</sup> The committee also drew sympathy for the Irish men, repeating the factually unsubstantiated claim that the 'greater part of the able-bodied male population is leading a hunted and fugitive existence'.<sup>21</sup> However the majority of pamphlets focused on starving children and disrupted family units as a challenge to the continuation of the Irish people, arguing 'the future of the Irish race depends on relief now'.<sup>22</sup> Though women and children were at the forefront of its advertising campaigns, its emphasis lay on the preservation of the Irish family.

In practice, children became a central pillar for relief spending in Ireland. This may have been because of scepticism voiced by organisations in Britain, like the British Red Cross and American Friends Service Committee, about the scale of destitution in Ireland.<sup>23</sup> The British government protested against the fundraising as perceived American intervention in a 'domestic matter', while many, like Frederick Dumont, the American Consul in Dublin, expressed their private belief that the money raised was being diverted to support Sinn Féin's war effort.<sup>24</sup> Though the committee in the United States refrained from openly acknowledging its links with the Irish White Cross, in spring 1921 a delegation from the American Committee for Relief in Ireland travelled to Ireland to oversee the administration of relief.<sup>25</sup> On arrival in Dublin, the delegation were informed by Dumont and the British General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Nevil Macready, that they were not permitted to distribute personal relief which might benefit Sinn Féin's war effort. Instead, the delegation was advised that funds raised in the United State could be exclusively distributed on 'non-political' and 'charitable' activities.<sup>26</sup> Children's welfare sat particularly well between these objectives, and funding from the United States was increasingly directed towards funding programmes for children.<sup>27</sup>

In response to this, the Irish White Cross organisation maintained that the ongoing war against Britain had hampered the provision of existing child welfare services in Ireland, providing a gap which could be justifiably filled using the funds raised in the United States. These included schemes for feeding children at school at public cost, varying from 7,000 to 10,000 children in Dublin city alone. The withdrawal of grants for these children by the British government was described by the White Cross as 'in effect an act of war on hungry children'.<sup>28</sup> To counter this deficit, the White Cross initially funded the Dublin Corporation School Meals Committee directly, before agreeing to provide meals to families outside the school-term and investing an additional £500 to improve the quality of food supplied from insubstantial quantities of 'bread and cocoa'.<sup>29</sup> Food expenses from the committee show an allocation of 3 loaves of bread, half a pound of butter, two ounces of tea or cocoa, and a pound of sugar per week; 1 pint of milk and 1 one portion of meat or eggs a day, and a shilling's worth of vegetables.<sup>30</sup> An additional £13,000 was earmarked from March 1921 onwards for the feeding and clothing of school children in the poverty-stricken regions of Ireland's west coast, including sending school clothes to around 2,000 children.<sup>31</sup> The majority of this funding was drawn directly from money raised by the American Committee for Relief.

Alongside schemes for feeding children the Irish White Cross also funded committees organised for infant welfare, including for expectant mothers and babies in care homes.<sup>32</sup> In an attempt to affirm its apolitical stance, another of its sub-committees in Dublin distributed £200 weekly to all women and children who had 'lost their breadwinner through accidents in the streets' during the conflict.<sup>33</sup> Clothing items distributed by the White Cross provide a window into domestic life in Ireland during the conflict. Boys were issued a suit, overcoat, shirts and braces, while girls received a coat, dress, cotton dress and stockings. Though both were allocated money for underwear, boots, towels, and nightclothes, the girls items were worth slightly more.<sup>34</sup> Finally, three separate grants were made to children's hospitals in Dublin, to supply school meals, tend to infants and help the recuperation of women and children traumatised by the conflict.<sup>35</sup> Although the White Cross insisted its aim was to alleviate distress caused by the war itself, the organisation argued that the conflict had exacerbated the suffering of children in Ireland. Poverty, famine and 'distress' generated by the 'terror' in Ireland melded together, blending wartime humanitarian relief and charitable activity.

Even after its fundraising finished in the United States and fighting ceased in Ireland, individual donations continued to arrive, earmarked for the 'poor children of Dublin', whose plight had captured the hearts of Americans.<sup>36</sup> This focus on suffering children seems to connect the Irish conflict with wider movements on behalf of saving children in post-war Europe. Children were being placed at the forefront of internationalism and linked with new humanitarian responsibilities accepted by nation states as well as voluntary organisations such as Save the Children, the League of Red Cross Societies, and others through the League of Nations and the 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child.<sup>37</sup> Even as money raised in the United States was funnelled to Ireland for aiding child victims of the conflict with Britain, fundraising in Ireland concentrated on other child victims of international humanitarian crises. An Irish branch of the Save the Children Fund was established in 1921, and initially geared solely towards alleviating distress from the Russian famine.<sup>38</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, the Vice-President of the *Union internationale de secours aux enfants* spoke at the launch in Dublin. 'If it were possible', the *Irish Times* reported her saying, 'to give the majority of the children of the world ... the same opportunity of a decent life that they had before the war, then the children when they grew up would very quickly repair the havoc which had been done'.<sup>39</sup> These remarks about rebuilding after the war seem incongruous in a city which was openly still at war. Perhaps in reflection of this, the fund slowly pivoted to incorporate relief schemes for Irish children; between 1921 and 1923, £1,795 was sent to Russia, £139 to Austria and £690 was spent in Ireland.

Yet Jebb's assertion, that post-war reconstruction could be best accomplished by focusing on children, resonates with the approach of the White Cross in the aftermath of the Irish conflict. While the war against Britain continued, support took the form of immediate humanitarian relief, like feeding children or distributing food and clothing. But, as the following sections will show, the White Cross organisation transitioned from a general humanitarian relief organisation, to focusing exclusively on children's welfare following the conclusion of the Irish civil war in 1923. As Friederike Kind-Kovács suggests, these changes were part of the 'professionalization but also the fundamental transformation of child welfare in the aftermath' of the First World War.<sup>40</sup> On an international scale this transformation involved a repositioning of children as 'international

citizens'. The 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child justified the present care of children based on their future productivity and contributions to international society. Baughan and Tara Zahra have shown that as states sought to rebuild after the First World War, children were viewed as belonging to the collective nation as much as their families. More assimilable than their parents, children were constructed as the biological and political future of national communities.<sup>41</sup>

On the one hand, therefore, the White Cross mirrored the humanitarian activity of international organisations like Save the Children, in its efforts to mould future citizens to rebuild after the First World War. Yet it was simultaneously a national movement, whose voluntary action aided the development of the emerging Irish state. Before the introduction of the *Army Pension Act* (1923), and the *Military Services Pension Act* (1924) in Ireland there were minimal welfare provisions for those directly affected by the conflict, while these acts contained no provisions for non-combatants. It was these civilians that the Irish White Cross and its successor for children, the Children's Relief Association sought to assist. Despite the 1923 and 1924 Acts, the British government remained responsible for the payment of pensions to disabled Irish ex-servicemen who served in the First World War as 'the Irish Free State refused to regard itself as having participated as a nation in the First World War'.<sup>42</sup> Post-war welfare in Ireland was intimately connected with the emerging nation, and its emphases indicated the priorities of the nascent Free State. As part of the voluntary sector, the Irish White Cross assisted the state, by plugging gaps in its legislation and assisting families who fell through the cracks.

### **The White Cross orphan's maintenance committee**

Relief for children was an integral part of White Cross activities and American fundraising during the conflict with Britain in early 1921. An uneasy ceasefire then prevailed in Ireland from the summer of 1921 to early 1922 as an initial truce led to discussions over the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In an uncertain position, the Irish White Cross ceased its wartime relief activities, and instead began diverting funds into specialised committees. The main work of the Irish White Cross was taken up by a Reconstruction Committee, which intended to rebuild destroyed homes and infrastructure.<sup>43</sup> In early 1922, £150,000 was set aside to provide for children whose parents had been killed during the struggle for independence. This represented the single largest allocation from the White Cross' surplus funds.<sup>44</sup> The allocation signalled a conscious decision to prioritise children's welfare alongside the rebuilding of the nation.

Determining where this money for children should be allocated presented a challenge however, due to vast disparities in economic conditions and intensity of the conflict across Ireland. To assess these claims a committee to deal with 'orphans' was appointed by the White Cross executive. This committee met for the first time on 6 February 1922, taking advantage of the relative peace in Ireland to determine the exact number of children in its care. It circulated forms to families in receipt of White Cross payments, requesting details of children under 16 years of age, to be accompanied by both a death certificate for the deceased parent or parents, and a birth certificate for the child.<sup>45</sup> In assessing the conditions for the payment of grants the committee eschewed 'hard and fast' rules, preferring to deal with each case individually.<sup>46</sup> Initially, the committee dealt exclusively with dependents of those killed during the 'black and tan' war,



but in June 1922 civil war broke out in Dublin. Waged between republican opponents of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, and supporters of the nascent Irish Free State the conflict, which lasted ten months, generated deep divisions within the Irish nationalist movement.<sup>47</sup> In the aftermath of the civil war, the orphan's maintenance committee expanded its remit to incorporate the dependents of those killed during that conflict, before later expanding again to include those killed during Easter 1916. From 1 April 1922 to January 1925, it would allocate relief payments to 723 children in Ireland.<sup>48</sup>

Heading the committee was Quaker and architect James H. Webb. Other members included Nancy O'Rahilly and Kathleen Clarke, both prominent organisers on behalf of Irish prisoners, and Senator John O'Neill. Also appointed to the children's committee was Áine Ceannt, who served as secretary of the children's association of the Irish White Cross from 1922 until the cessation of its activities in 1947. She was originally born in Dublin as Frances O'Brennan in 1880, the youngest of four daughters. Her father, an auctioneer and member of the Fenian movement, died before she was born, and she was raised by her mother who had four children under five to care for. The girls were educated by the Dominican nuns while their mother worked as a nurse in a workhouse. Áine became a widow when her husband, Éamonn Ceannt, a leader of the Easter Rising, was executed on 8 May 1916. They had met through the Gaelic League and married in 1905. A son, Rónán, was born the following year. By 1916, Ceannt was Assistant to the City Treasurer and member of the Irish Volunteers. Both committed nationalists, Áine moved into the public sphere on the death of her husband. She was involved with the Irish National Aid Association from its inception in 1916, engaging with sponsors in the United States. She became Vice-President of the Irish nationalist women's organisation Cumann na mBan, as well as a member of the standing committee of Sinn Féin (1917–1925). On the outbreak of the civil war in mid-1922 she sided with the republican faction and was immediately tasked with establishing a First Aid Station at St. Enda's School in Rathmines.<sup>49</sup> During this conflict, she conducted propaganda for the republican faction, sheltering men who had escaped from prison and helping visitors, including her fellow-White Cross committee member David Robinson. Due to her involvement with the White Cross and then the Children's Relief Association, she resigned from both Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan in 1925 to focus on the children's agency.<sup>50</sup>

After the civil war the activities of the main body of the Irish White Cross concluded but the payment of maintenance grants for dependents of those killed during the conflict in Ireland continued, hampering efforts to dissolve the White Cross entirely. In August 1924 a general meeting of the White Cross Council decided to incorporate the 'orphans fund' as a new 'Children's Relief' committee.<sup>51</sup> The committee was conceived of as a catch-all fund, with the aim of providing for all those who had been excluded from the orphans committee, and from the recently passed *Army Pensions Act* 1923. The primary object of the fund was

To provide for the maintenance, education, advancement or benefit of children whose parents or breadwinners were killed or permanently disabled in the course of the Anglo-Irish War and of the Civil Strife in Ireland subsequent thereto and who have not been otherwise sufficiently provided for.<sup>52</sup>



Other clauses and objects allowed the fund to maintain existing capital and property. Two of the original committee members left, though James Webb remained President, alongside James O'Neill, Nancy O'Rahilly, Kathleen Clarke and David Robinson, now appointed Honorary Secretary. Overseeing the maintenance of the Children's Fund was the 'Winding Up Committee', which was tasked with administering the final funds from the White Cross organisation. Áine Ceannt remained as a paid secretary. The restructuring transferred the focus from orphans to a broader swathe of affected persons.<sup>53</sup> These included children who were not strictly orphans, but who had been deprived of the family breadwinner during the conflict, for example through parents who had 'lost their reason' due to torture or incarceration, or those whose incarceration had affected their health. It also opened relief to more complicated family dynamics, including the brothers and sisters of the eldest sons of widows, whose death had deprived their siblings of their own earnings. Table 1, consisting of data compiled by Áine Ceannt of military casualties during the civil war provides a glimpse at the diversity of funding arrangements provided by the Children's Relief Association.<sup>54</sup>

The last remaining funds of the White Cross Winding Up Committee were allocated to subcommittees and associated bodies. From a total sum of £113,834 the organisation allocated an additional £60,000 for widows and dependents, other than orphans, who had not already been provided for by the Children's Relief Association. £30,000 was set aside for former internees in the north of Ireland, £12,000 for hardship caused by repaying funds to the White Cross, £4,000 for persons disabled by the war in Ireland, and £3,000 for 'heads of families', suffering from distress, but not disabled, as a consequence of the conflict.<sup>55</sup> A further £2,000 was donated to St. Ultan's Children's Hospital, while an outstanding debt due to the White Cross from Dingle Waterworks was transferred to St Mary's Children's Tubercular Hospital, Cappagh. In a report outlining the changes, the White Cross stressed that 'suffering children' had held particular significance for the representatives of the American Committee for Relief in Ireland. The latter two donations to children's hospitals and children's welfare were made both on their behalf, and on behalf of 'ordinary supporters' in the United States. By making the allocation for crippled and injured Irish children, the report argued, 'the Winding-Up Association feel that they are assisting work which is dear to the hearts of the donors of the fund'.<sup>56</sup> Children as subjects of international humanitarian attention had been the focus of donors in the United States, dictating the evolution of the fund when the conflict ended in Ireland.

Although the White Cross had made similar donations in the past, this time the decision to send the balance from the White Cross fund to the Children's Relief Association and the children's hospitals was not universally welcomed. Disillusioned republicans had already claimed that the White Cross treasurer James Green Douglas was misappropriating funds raised in the United States.<sup>57</sup> But the publication of the final balance by the White Cross Winding Up Committee in August 1926 refocused attention on the organisation's finances. Writers to the *Irish Independent* expressed their disapproval that White Cross funds were being moved to the Children's Fund 'Incorporated', 'to do what it likes with the money'.<sup>58</sup> Others argued that, 'as deserving as hospitals are' the fund should cater to republican prisoners and others injured during the conflict who were not eligible for compensation from the Free State.<sup>59</sup> They were joined by former White Cross council member, Maud Gonne MacBride, who criticised the decision to

**Table 1.** Enclosed in letter, Áine Ceannt to Éamon de Valera, 8 January 1936. MS 41,484/2/8, National Library of Ireland. This is a surviving fragment of a longer list of the 'particulars of orphans of those executed or killed in action from 1916 to the end of the civil war'. The table contains military casualties only, not civilian casualties.

Name of recipient	County	Relative deceased	Date of death	Number of children	Amount received per week
Mrs Ellen Burns	Cork	Father	21st August 1922	3 children	10/- each per week
Mrs Julia Hayes (aunt)	Cork	Parents, dead; brother killed	October 1922	brother and sister	15/- each per week
Mrs Ellen Kenefick	Cork	Father died	8th September 1922	2 children	15/- each per week
Mrs. Michael Regan	Galway	Father, removed to mental hospital Ballinasloe	November 1923	2 children	10/- each per week
Mrs. John Conway	Kerry	Father died	24th February 1922	2 children	10/- each per week
Mr Martin Enright	Kerry	Brother Eamon Enright, acute mental trouble		brother and sister	£100 paid, case closed
Mrs Patrick Galvin	Kerry	Son died; father invalid	8th September 1922		£10 grant, pending investigation
Mrs Patrick Loughnane	Kerry	Father disabled		5 children	10/- each per week
Mrs Patrick Lynch	Kerry	Father died	30th November 1922	1 child	25/- per week
Mrs Jas. MacEnery	Kerry	Father executed	25th April 1923	1 child	20/- per week
Mrs Julia Murphy	Kerry	Son died	27th September 1922	sister and brother	6 months allowance 10/- each per week, then to be apprenticed
Mrs Daniel O'Donoghue	Killarney	Son died	7th March 1923	sister and brother	10/- per week
Nora O'Sullivan	Kerry	Son executed	14th March 1923	sister and brother	10/- per week; brother apprenticed
Mrs John Slattery	Kerry	Father disabled		4 children	10/- each per week
Mrs Michael Walshe	Kerry	Father disabled		3 children	10/- each per week
Mrs Mary Barcoe	Kilkenny	Son died	3rd February 1923	brother	10/- per week
Mrs James Morrissey	Kilkenny	Father died	13th June 1923	2 children	15/- each per week
Mrs. K Murphy	Kilkenny	Son executed	29th December 1922	brother	10/- per week
Mrs John Phelan	Kilkenny	Father executed	29th December 1922	3 children	15/- each per week
Mrs Julia Behan	Kildare	Son died	13th December 1922	sister	10/- per week
Mrs Michael Hughes	Kildare	Father died	25th April 1925	5 children	10/- each per week
Mrs John Butler	Limerick	Father died	18th August 1922	4 children	10/- each per week
Mrs Dansford	Limerick	Father died	29th August 1923	4 children	10/- each per week
Miss K O'Dwyer	Limerick	Parents dead, 2 brothers killed	7th August 1922	sister	10/- per week
Miss Mary T. Melin	Louth	Parents dead, brother executed	22nd January 1923	brother and sister	Grant of £250
Mrs S. Carroll	Sligo	Son died	20th September 1922	sister	15/- per week
Mrs S. Devins	Sligo	Father died	20th September 1922	1 child	20/- per week
Mrs B Langan	Sligo	Son died	20th [no month] 1923	2 brothers, 1 sister	10/- each per week
Mrs Mary Nolan	Tipperary	Father died	14th August 1922	1 child	25/- per week
Mrs James St. John	Tipperary	Father died	17th February 1923	2 children	12/6 each per week
Mrs Edward Whyte	Wexford	Father died	25th July 1923	1 child	20/- per week

send money to children's hospitals, arguing that disabled servicemen who had fought with the Irish Republican Army were more 'deserving' of the funds.<sup>60</sup>

These criticisms of the spending of the White Cross funds, which persisted until the 1930s, were indicative of wider divisions within the republican movement.<sup>61</sup> Ceannt would later describe the children the organisation funded as 'Ireland's children' and the work of the Irish White Cross as embodying the 'sincerity and simplicity which formed the keynote of the 1916 struggle'.<sup>62</sup> Her language pointed back to the 1916 and Easter rebellion, before the divisions caused by the Irish civil war. This rhetoric suggested that the Children's Relief Association intended to provide an avenue for reconciliation. Women like Gonne MacBride had stressed their relationality to the dead men of the revolution, mourning them as mothers and wives.<sup>63</sup> In contrast, the Children's Relief Organisation bypassed the politics and past military activities of parents entirely by focusing solely on the suffering of their children.

### The Irish White Cross (Children's Relief) Association

For 21 years, the office of the Children's Relief Association was located at Room No 7 in Mansion House Chambers, 27 Dawson Street, Dublin. The Association was '*Loco Parentis*' – treating children 'with the humanity and kindness that a parent might show'.<sup>64</sup> Financially, the Children's Relief Association determined a basic provision, or minimum payment of 10s per week per child. These rates were determined by the family's financial status, with some children receiving as much as £3 per week. The sum was paid every four weeks. In addition, children received additional grants and bonuses, including 5s at Christmas and £2 for their first communion and confirmation outfits. Children were eligible for the grant until the age of sixteen and were required to remain in school until this age, two years after the legal requirement.<sup>65</sup> Education was considered so important that families were required to send monthly school reports to the White Cross. If children were found to have missed school the grant payment was temporarily withdrawn until the child returned.<sup>66</sup> Additional funds were set aside for children on turning sixteen, to pay for apprenticeship fees, business start-up, secondary school or university education, or training in commercial or domestic schools. Funds were provided for work tools, clothes, and for medical expenses, including glasses or convalescence. On several occasions the White Cross committee covered funeral expenses, following the death of one of the children. A final grant was made at 21, or upon marriage, in the form of Free State savings certificates, to encourage the now-adult children to save and begin a home.<sup>67</sup> Should a child fail to qualify for a position, or obtain work, their case could be closed without receiving this final grant. A time limit for applications was fixed to 1 June 1924, ensuring children born after this point were not eligible for applications. This was later readjusted to 1926, then again to 1 June 1927.<sup>68</sup>

In many cases, the Children's Relief Association paid individuals who were later eligible for other forms of compensation, whether through the Free State's new pension scheme or British court compensation. In the aftermath of the war against Britain, some compensation was awarded by British courts operating in Ireland, usually for civilians who were not associated with military action.<sup>69</sup> Others were able to obtain compensation after the formation of the Free State from the Personal Injuries Committee. As

mentioned earlier, in 1923 the Free State introduced the *Army Pensions Act*, which provided compensation for dependents of members of the Irish Volunteers or Irish Citizen Army killed during active combat in the Easter Rising and War of Independence.<sup>70</sup> It was expanded in 1927 to encompass dependents of those killed after the conflict from illness or injuries, and again in 1932 to incorporate dependents of all the warring parties from the 1916 rebellion to the civil war. As the pension acts expanded, recipients of the Irish White Cross funds were notified of their eligibility, instructed to apply for the pension, and assisted in navigating the legislation. The committee viewed this as essential to its operation, by continually creating space in the fund for those not eligible for government support.<sup>71</sup> Clause 14 of the 1932 *Army Pension Act*, which debarred repeat applications for the pensions, kept certain children on the books, but newspaper reports in the 1930s noted the number of successful applicants and families removed from the White Cross' lists.<sup>72</sup>

Despite this growing realm of state support for dependents, the pension awards varied considerably. Ceannt recalled that the British courts generally awarded a lump sum in compensation, while the Free State's Personal Injuries Committee made an award to mothers then an allowance for children up to age 15.<sup>73</sup> This allowance was not always generous. Depending on the military rank of the deceased the allowance per child ranged from £15 to £24 annually.<sup>74</sup> This was lower than the minimum payment calculated by the White Cross, which was £26 annually, so the Children's Relief Association agreed to pay the difference for those in receipt of a government allowance.<sup>75</sup> When pension or compensation payments were approved, families were requested to return money they had been awarded by the Irish White Cross. However, even when the money was returned by mothers, the names of the children remained on the books, entitling them to a Christmas present and apprenticeship.<sup>76</sup> The *Army Pensions Act* was quickly followed by the *Military Services Pension Act* (1924) which instituted pensions for active servicemen who had remained loyal to the Free State during the civil war. This act was an unapologetically partisan and politically expedient reward for the Free State's own soldiers.<sup>77</sup> Though the *Army Pensions Act* was less avowedly political, by plugging the gaps in the state's pension scheme, the White Cross compensated for the limitations of the Free State's welfare policies.

In its daily operation the Children's Relief Association broke with the established practices of the White Cross during the war with Britain, by dealing directly with families who had lost their breadwinner, rather than parish and local committees. Mirroring the inspectors of existing charities like the NSPCC and the St. Vincent de Paul, Áine Ceannt regularly inspected the living conditions of the children.<sup>78</sup> She later recalled conducting as many as eight individual meetings with parents and children in one morning at the offices of the organisation in Dawson Street, while each year she travelled around Ireland conducting inspections. The first tour of inspection was in October 1923 to Belfast, where her main aim was to discover eligible families affected by the violence of July 1921 who had not previously appealed to the organisation.<sup>79</sup> In September 1925 she visited families in Kerry, enlisting the help of the Kerry Board of Health. She later recalled meeting children on the side of a mountain, agreeing to send bright children to boarding schools and others to technical schools in Killarney.<sup>80</sup> These inspections point to the central leadership role Ceannt held in the organisation, in assessing family situations and determining the expenditure of the fund. Though she was later described

as the personification of the organisation itself, Ceannt's activities remained within an established framework for women's activism, based on caregiving and maternalism.

Striking among Ceannt's own recollections of the organisation is the intense poverty she encountered on these tours of Ireland. The period from the end of the war to the outbreak of the Second World War was characterised by wide-scale poverty in Ireland, exacerbated by civil war, the financial depression following the Wall Street Crash, and the economic war with Britain in the 1930s. State resources were extremely limited, with little infrastructure to provide for those in need as a *laissez-faire* economic policy tended to neglect welfare, particularly for the sick and injured. The 1920s witnessed cuts to the National Insurance system and Old Age pension, the latter being reduced in 1924 from 10s to 9s weekly.<sup>81</sup> Even a decade later, in 1938, 50% of the population had a weekly income of 20s or less and spent 8s or less on food.<sup>82</sup> In this context, the 10s received weekly per child from the Irish White Cross was an economic lifeline.

Lindsay Earner-Byrne records that 5.6% of Irish children were dependent on widows in 1926, and while it was almost a decade later before the 1935 Widows' and Orphans' Pension was introduced, the scheme still excluded many women.<sup>83</sup> She argues that the Free State's patriarchal conception of the male 'breadwinner' and stay at home mother ran into difficulties when faced with widows, who relied on the state yet could not be held responsible for their fate.<sup>84</sup> The Free State's internal investigation into its welfare provision, the 1927 Relief Commission, stressed that widows were more 'deserving' than unmarried mothers and should be spared the humiliation of poor relief.<sup>85</sup> By awarding compensation in the form of the Army Pension Acts, the state evidently conceived of war widows as a separate category again, made even more deserving by their partner's sacrifice. Yet many of those aided by the Children's Relief Association fell between the cracks of this scheme. These widows and their children were not considered immoral or undeserving poor, but unlike women like Áine Ceannt, whose husband was executed as a leader of the 1916 rising, they were not provided with pensions by the Irish Free State. They were not war widows, but relatives either of civilians killed during the conflict, or civilians who died due to the hardships of the war.

When it was established as an orphan's maintenance fund, the 1922 committee viewed 'orphan' as synonymous with fatherless, referring to children whose principal breadwinner had been killed or injured during the war in Ireland. Occasionally, 'parent' and 'father' were used interchangeably in the rhetoric of the committee, with little allusion to the maintenance provided for children whose mothers had been killed or incapacitated.<sup>86</sup> On her visit to Belfast in October 1923, Áine Ceannt recalled encountering several households where 'the mother had died of shock', and the children 'needed someone to housekeep for them, otherwise the eldest child would have to leave school to mind the house'.<sup>87</sup> In total fourteen widowers of women who were killed during the conflict were provided with an allowance to maintain a housekeeper. However, when the orphan's committee was replaced by the Children's Relief Association in 1925, these children were not considered to have 'lost their breadwinner' and so were not entitled to relief.<sup>88</sup> The gendered dimension to this wording reflected wider Irish society, where there were twice as many widows as widowers in 1926.<sup>89</sup> It also replicated the Free State's conception of the revolutionary soldier, both active and deceased, as

male. Despite women's engagement in the conflict in military roles, just one woman, Dr. Brigid Lyons, received a military pension under the 1924 Act.<sup>90</sup>

Though the evolution of the orphan's committee into the Children's Relief Association expanded its remit in many ways, in others, it restricted the normative and moral dimensions of the White Cross fund. The principal aim of the fund was to preserve the family unit, by permitting children to reside with their surviving parent. In doing so, the organisation challenged widespread emphasis on institutionalisation and boarding-out of children whose parents, particularly single mothers, were considered morally incapable of raising them.<sup>91</sup> However, women's entitlement to the weekly relief was due to the existence of their children, so derived from their role as mothers, not their own dependency as individuals.<sup>92</sup> Forms were circulated by the committee to recipients of relief, asking them to confirm that they had not remarried since the death of their husband and that their children were still alive, with a signature from a local clergyman required to confirm the veracity of the information.<sup>93</sup> If widows did remarry their children's grant was reduced to the minimum weekly amount, without a final grant or saving for apprenticeship or trade school. The future of the children was then considered the responsibility of their stepfather.<sup>94</sup> In providing money and education for children, Irish White Cross tried to ensure that impoverished women would be able to raise their children, with Ceannt and the wider organisation often acting as a moral arbiter to keep the children on the straight and narrow.<sup>95</sup>

The White Cross described its own purpose as treating children 'with the humanity and kindness that a parent might show'. In her later recollections, Ceannt portrayed herself as a benevolent mother figure advocating for the children's needs. She stressed the function of the Irish White Cross as a surrogate parent body, describing the office on Dawson Street as 'like a second home' to the children who travelled through Dublin to boarding school.<sup>96</sup> At times Ceannt played the role of adoring parent to her self-described 'protegees', arriving at their boarding schools to hear instrument and dance recitals. At other moments she recalled children being brought to the office, 'to have his misdeeds recounted to me, and so I had to lecture him or her and perhaps threaten to withhold the Christmas gift, but this threat I never carried out'.<sup>97</sup> The Honorary Secretary, Senator David Robinson, played the role of surrogate-father in these scenarios, due to his 'great influence with lads'. This tone was replicated in articles published about the organisation, which referred to Ceannt as the children's 'fairy godmother',<sup>98</sup> or the wider committee as a body,

who have really regarded themselves as being in the position of parents to the children under their protection and have done all they humanely could to give them as good a chance in life as their parents could have done had they survived.<sup>99</sup>

Though, of course, many of the 'orphaned' children's mothers had actually survived.

This emphasis on maintaining the pre-war social position of families was central to the Children's Relief Association. It allowed for a hierarchical and stratified system of relief payments. Table 1 shows the disparities between the amounts received by dependents of men killed during the civil war an amount calculated based on the economic position of their parents. For some children, the Association argued this necessitated extra funding to allow them to attend boarding schools, while for others the employment of their deceased breadwinner facilitated their career path in an apprenticeship or trade. Yet



the scholastic aptitude of the children was also considered, and the committee agreed to accommodate university fees for particularly able children. Newspaper coverage of annual meetings of White Cross concentrated heavily on the jobs secured for the children, noting the difficulties faced by the organisation in finding employment in Ireland.<sup>100</sup> The career paths and development of the children were depicted as the 'return' on the White Cross' investment. After the conclusion of the fund, Ceannt reflected,

And did our children repay us for all the interest taken in them? I would certainly answer yes. We dealt with about 1,000 children and I can say that only three or four turned out really unsatisfactory.<sup>101</sup>

This idea that children were engaged in a social contract and duty-bound to their benefactors echoed the international rhetoric surrounding the 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It emphasised the responsibility of children as future citizens to acquire stable jobs and contribute productively to the state. What the children themselves might have wanted, where it featured at all, was a secondary concern.<sup>102</sup>

Ceannt's own figures on the paths taken and career options available to the White Cross children provide us with an invaluable glimpse into the prospects for both working and middle class children in Ireland through the interwar period. The dynamics of class and gender as well as the influence and impact of religion are in evidence in their adult lives. Of the children who went to boarding school through White Cross benevolence, a large number became priests and nuns. Four boys entered university, while twelve children attended agricultural colleges and schools of housewifery and domestic science. Seven children did engineering, five medicine, four law. Sixteen passed the highly competitive civil service exams, which in the interwar period could attract 1,000 entrants for 8–10 vacancies.<sup>103</sup> There were eight nurses, six teachers, four music teachers, four radio-operators, two chemists, one architect and three draughtsmen or surveyors. Despite many children losing a family member during the conflict for independence just six joined the national army, and two the Irish navy. Many took blue-collar professions, including fifteen shorthand typists and twenty-two who went on to work in factories and laundries. Though the White Cross paid for training fees, actually gaining an apprenticeship was difficult for the children, unless their father had been engaged in a similar industry or trade.<sup>104</sup> Of those apprenticed, twenty took up carpentry, three cabinet-making, eleven mechanical and electrical engineering, five hairdressing and tailoring, and four to each of plumbing, boot-making and blacksmithing. Of the girls, thirteen were apprenticed in drapery trades, with nine becoming dressmakers. Six, of both sexes, were apprenticed in grocery, confectionary and general business. Three became butchers, two harness-makers, and then one child became each of the following: baker, brush maker, chef, compositor, fitter and moulder, gardening, insurance, art jeweller, plasterer, house painter, ship-builder, and waiter. Finally, four children 'became travelling showmen'.<sup>105</sup> Perhaps these were the children Ceannt recorded as 'unsatisfactory'. The selection of employment suggests that across the middle and working-class, the White Cross idealised stable and respectable employment for children.

In its later years the White Cross attracted little media attention other than sporadic coverage of its annual meetings and note of the declining number of children on the books. Members of the original Executive Council were invited to a meeting in Dublin



in 1936, where Éamon de Valera, now Taoiseach of Ireland, praised the work of the Children's Relief Association as the most valuable work undertaken by the Irish White Cross.<sup>106</sup> Just three years later, newspaper coverage of the annual meeting noted that the work of the organisation was 'slowly drawing to a close'.<sup>107</sup> Towards the end of her tenure Ceannt adjusted the minimum grant to accommodate a rising cost of living from 10s to 12s 6 weekly, though by that point barely 250 children remained in receipt of the fund.<sup>108</sup> The original staff of the association had included a stenographer and bookkeeper, though by 1941 Ceannt, its sole remaining employee, relocated the White Cross offices from Dawson Street to her home in Churchtown.<sup>109</sup> The passage of time, and the death of many involved in the committee, reduced interest in the organisation. In 1947 Ceannt published a history of the Irish White Cross, with detailed recollections of the work of the children's committee and her own role. The following year, James A. Healy of the American Committee for Relief in Ireland, New York, wrote to Áine Ceannt, requesting a copy of her book on the White Cross for his personal archives. He described himself as 'one of the few members of the American Committee still alive'.<sup>110</sup> Now that 'Ireland's children' had grown up, the need for the organisation was addressed and it simply closed.

As the activities of the Irish White Cross declined Ceannt's attention turned elsewhere. In 1939 an independent Irish Red Cross society was founded in Dublin and formally affiliated with Geneva.<sup>111</sup> Ceannt was nominated by the Irish government as one of the founding council members, and a lifetime member of the organisation.<sup>112</sup> Although Ireland remained neutral during the Second World War, the Irish Red Cross worked with authorities to prepare for possible invasion; ran first aid classes; established a blood transfusion service; manufactured bandages; operated a fleet of over 80 ambulances and co-ordinated an anti-TB campaign.<sup>113</sup> It ran a prisoner-of-war committee, raised money for civilians affected by the war in Europe and at war's end initiated 'Operation Shamrock' a scheme that organised temporary accommodation for children from France and Germany. In this role, Ceannt's attention again turned to children, and the importance of alleviating distress against the backdrop of conflict in Europe.<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid has argued that participation in charitable fundraising marked a midpoint on the spectrum of nationalist activity in Ireland, between the extremes of violence and voting.<sup>115</sup> During the height of the conflict in 1921 donations to the American Committee for Relief in Ireland and the Irish White Cross played a similar role for members of the Irish diaspora, and for working and middle-class people in Ireland. During the conflict itself, humanitarian relief focused on needs-based assistance to children and families, in the form of food and clothing. After the end of the civil war in 1923, this kind of emergency relief was increasingly provided by the Irish branch of the Save the Children Fund. Instead, the White Cross focused on transforming the lives of the children it assisted and turning them into active and productive citizens of a new Ireland. Focus on the Irish White Cross organisation reveals that practices of humanitarian intervention and developing 'better' citizens in post-war Europe were similarly evident in Ireland.

However, the particularities of Irish post-war society also shaped White Cross activities. In the aftermath of the deeply divisive civil war, child welfare provided a largely uncontentious avenue for relief in Ireland. Unlike other programmes for children in the Irish Free State, the rhetoric of cultural nationalism was largely absent from the White Cross' publications or descriptions for children's education.<sup>116</sup> Though prior to his assassination Michael Collins had allegedly intended for the White Cross' money to be allocated to St. Enda's, the nationalist and cultural hub of the revolutionary generation in Ireland, no mention of the school is made in the White Cross' accounts.<sup>117</sup> Instead, the Children's Relief Association stressed the non-partisan nature of the fund. It operated on both sides of the British partition of the island, though the majority of recipients were Catholic. The pervasiveness of the Church hierarchy in Irish life is evident in other aspects of the fund, from reliance on parish priests to assist the organisation, to providing extra money for children's Holy Communions. In comparison the lack of cultural nationalism is striking and suggests that even after the conflict had ended the Irish White Cross Children's Relief Association tried to retain its 'impartial' humanitarian status by focusing on the 'depoliticized' child.

The legitimacy of the Irish White Cross' interference in the lives of these children was justified through the combination of practices and rhetoric of international humanitarian relief and national traditions of voluntary action. By drawing on the symbols and rhetoric of the Red Cross at its foundation, the organisation channelled the idea of transnational, impartial humanitarian expertise which had grown up around the wider Red Cross movement during the First World War. In its early years the White Cross justified a focus on children's welfare over other causes as this reflected the desires of donors in the United States. But it also justified its practices by building on a tradition of pre-war voluntary action in Ireland which focused on responsibility for fatherless children. As Áine Ceannt explained, the aim of the organisation was to 'try to treat them [the children] as their fathers would have treated them if they had lived'.<sup>118</sup> This occasional slippage, between 'father' and 'breadwinner' emphasised the underlying paternalism of the organisation, which had erased women as a focus of humanitarian attention. Even as the Irish White Cross Children's Relief Association sought to make new citizens of the Irish state, it preserved a pre-war social order where women's welfare remained contingent on their children.

By providing relief in line with what the child would have received if their parent had lived the Children's Relief Association did not challenge prevailing attitudes about the immorality of poverty in Ireland. However, the base rate paid by the Association, which was adjusted for inflation, and the supports for children later in life did provide many with opportunities they might otherwise not have been afforded. The Irish White Cross emphasised the centrality of the family unit in Irish society, and the preservation and maintenance of traditional gender roles in its focus on women as mothers, and its refusal to provide pensions for widowers. Yet unlike the Catholic Church, the NSPCC, and international bodies like Save the Children during the interwar period, the Children's Relief Association tried to prevent the separation of families and the removal of children to industrial schools, country homes, or foster families. Through voluntary action, the White Cross adapted its operations to assist families affected by the conflict in Ireland, who had not been compensated by the state. By topping up pension payments and providing for children's education the Irish White Cross Children's Relief

Association morphed into a supplement, or 'extension ladder' for the deficiencies in the state's welfare system.

Finally, Áine Ceannt's central role in the organisation illustrates that voluntary movements like the Irish White Cross provided a platform for women's action within an increasingly restrictive society. When she provided a statement to the Irish Bureau of Military History in the late 1940s, Áine Ceannt's two decades of work with the White Cross were reduced to a passing reference.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, when applying for her military pension in 1954, her son Rónán emphasised the difficulty in separating Ceannt's activities between political and military. The humanitarianism of the White Cross, its efforts to distribute wartime relief, and Ceannt's work in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of those affected by the conflict fell squarely outside the 'military' sphere.<sup>120</sup> As we have shown, Ceannt's voluntary action had a lasting impact on the aftermath of the conflict in Ireland. Reintegrating the activities of the organisation, its continued work for children in the interwar period, and the work of women such as Áine Ceannt, into the history of the Irish revolutionary period reveals the significant participation of women in the conflict, often long after the military ceasefire.

## Notes

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  58. G. O'Murchadha to the Editor, *Irish Independent*, 19 August 1926, 8.
  59. Patrick McCartan to the Editor, *Irish Independent*, 25 August 1926, 9; Barry O'Delany to the Editor, *Irish Independent*, 28 August 1926, 8.
  60. Maud Gonne to the Editor, *Irish Independent*, 24 August 1926, 6.
  61. Maud Gonne to Editor, *Irish Press*, 27 December 1933.
  62. R. M. Fox, 'Children of the Nation', *Irish Press*, 28 May 1932.
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  65. Sarah-Anne Buckley, *The Cruelty Man: Child Welfare, the NSPCC and the State in Ireland, 1889–1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 25–7.

66. *Report of the Meeting of the Irish White Cross Children's Relief Association (Inc)* (Dublin, 1936), 14.
67. Ceannt, *Story of the Irish White Cross*, 21; *Report of the Meeting*, 1936, 11–13.
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70. Coleman, 'Military Service Pensions', 201–221.
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79. Ceannt, *Story of the Irish White Cross*, 26.
80. *Ibid.*, 35.
81. Mel Cousins, *Birth of Social Welfare in Ireland, 1922–1952* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 31–32.
82. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, "'Dear Father My Health has Broken Down": Writing Health in Irish Charity Letters, 1922–1940', *Social History of Medicine* 28, no. 4 (2015): 849–68.
83. *Ibid.*, 855.
84. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, *Letters of the Catholic Poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland, 1920–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 35–7.
85. *Report of the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor, including the Insane Poor* (Dublin, 1927).
86. Ceannt, 'Statement'; 'Articles of Association', MS 41,484/1/13, NLI. Recipients of the fund were asked for the 'date and cause of father's death'. However, the articles of association explicitly refer to 'breadwinners or parents', without a gendered bias.
87. Ceannt, *Story of the Irish White Cross*, 28.
88. *Report of the Meeting*, 1936, 11.
89. Lindsey Earner-Byrne, 'Reinforcing the Family: The Role of Gender, Morality and Sexuality in Irish Welfare Policy, 1922–1944', *The History of the Family* 13, no. 4 (2008): 365.
90. Coleman, 'Military Service Pensions', 208.
91. Maguire, *Precarious Childhood*; Buckley, *Cruelty Man*, 11–35; Donnacha Lucey, *Irish Poor Law*, 125–40.
92. Earner-Byrne, 'Reinforcing the Family', 367; Lindsay Earner-Byrne, "'Parading their Poverty ...': Widows in Twentieth-Century Ireland', in *Facing the Other: Interdisciplinary Studies on Race, Class and Gender in Ireland*, ed. B. Farago and M. Sullivan (Cambridge Scholars Press: Cambridge, 2008), 32–46.
93. Irish White Cross, 'Forms for mothers', [undated], MS 41,484/2/15, NLI.
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96. Ceannt, *Story of the Irish White Cross*, 40.
97. *Ibid.*, 22.
98. 'Irish White Cross: Great Work Done by Mrs Eamonn Ceannt', MS 41,484/2/17, NLI.
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100. 'Irish White Cross Children's Relief Organisation', *Irish Times*, 1 June 1933.
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102. Ibid., 39. The desires of children themselves do appear occasionally; Ceannt does mention that children were consulted before being sent to boarding school and that all were happy to go.
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104. 'White Cross Society Aids Child Victims: A Fine Record', *Irish Press*, 28 May 1932.
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107. 'White Cross Work Concluding', *Irish Press*, 18 May 1939.
108. 'White Cross Aids 234 Children', *Irish Press*, 30 April 1941.
109. Ceannt, *Story of the Irish White Cross*, 53.
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113. Phyllis Gaffney, 'A Hospital in Ruins: the Irish Hospital at Saint-Lo', in *Southern Ireland and the Liberation of France: New Perspectives*, ed. Gerald Morgan and Gavin Hughes (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 106–8.
114. Father J. F. Sweetman to Áine Ceannt, 31 October 1945, MS 41,480/6/20, NLI.
115. Nic Dháibhéid, 'The Irish National Aid Association', 728.
116. For examples of the interrelationship between cultural nationalism and childhood in inter-war Ireland, see Ciara Boylan and Ciara Gallagher, eds., *Constructions of the Irish Child in the Independence Period, 1910–1940* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
117. Richard Campbell to Margaret Pearse, 18 November 1926, MS 21,059/12/5, NLI; Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, "'Schooling the National Orphans': The Education of the Children of the Easter Rising Leaders', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 9, no. 2 (2016): 261–76.
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