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Ethnic Fundraising in America and the Irish and Lithuanian Wars of Independence, 1918–1923

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Abstract

The close of the First World War signalled a proliferation of newly established nation-states across Europe. However, the unilateral proclamations of these states' independence did not guarantee their international recognition, nor did it guarantee their financial viability. This article examines the funding of two such states: the unrecognized Lithuanian (1919–23) and Irish (1919–21) republics. Both funded their wars of independence by selling 'war bonds' to their respective diasporas in the United States; the Lithuanians raising almost \$1.9m from c. 28,000 subscribers and the Irish raising \$5.8m from c. 300,000 subscribers. Communication between the organizers of these bond drives was virtually non-existent, but following the example of the US Liberty Loans they employed remarkably similar tactics. Yet, issued by self-proclaimed nation-states with neither territorial integrity nor a credible history of borrowing, the Lithuanian and Irish war bonds promised a return only when the states had received international recognition. In this sense, they were examples of what the authors term Pre-Sovereign Debt. Practically, they were a focal point for agitation for governmental recognition and rousing of American public opinion. Symbolically, they were tangible representations of the Lithuanian and Irish pretensions to statehood.

In December 1919, Rev. Jonas Žilius approached the American Bank Note Company with an unusual request. He was representing the Republic of Lithuania, a state with neither territorial integrity nor international recognition, and his request was that the Bank Note Company print bonds for this non-sovereign republic. After some persuasion, the manager obliged, and the Lithuanian Liberty Loan was born.¹ Around the same time, the American Bank Note Company was approached by the representative of another unrecognized

¹ *Darbininkas*, 7 Feb. 1920, p. 1.

state. Joseph McGarrity, a liquor importer from Philadelphia, was acting on behalf of the newly proclaimed Irish republic, also planning to raise money through the sale of bonds in America. Unfortunately for McGarrity, he was not so successful. The American Bank Note Company responded:

inasmuch as it is absolutely contrary to the custom of our Company to execute orders for Governments which have not been recognized by, or have not duly accredited representatives to, the Government of the United States of America, we find it impossible to entertain the proposition you have placed before us.²

Nevertheless, McGarrity found another printer, and preparations for the Irish bond drive in America began in earnest.³

This article is a comparative study of the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives in America, adding to a growing body of scholarship that compares the experiences of the new nation-states formed after the First World War.⁴ Although located in the opposite extremities of the continent, the Lithuanian and Irish governments applied the same method of fundraising, at the same time, and for the same purpose. Examining these cases together enables better understanding of the fundraising tactics deployed in each case and more meaningful assessment of their outcomes. It also makes the conclusions more generalizable. Drawing on primary sources and secondary literature, this study puts in dialogue two divergent geopolitical contexts and two distinct historiographies. Using the comparative perspective as a heuristic tool enables our study to break free from the linguistic and archival captivity of the nation-state and avoid the national exceptionalism that is typical of the historiography of independence movements.⁵

Moreover, as demonstrated in this article, the Lithuanian and Irish independence struggles were inherently transnational endeavours. By broadening the focus of study beyond national boundaries, this article explores the role of ethnic-American diasporas in furthering the interests of national movements in their countries of origin.⁶ In so doing, it offers insights into the

² American Bank Note Company to McGarrity, 12 Dec. 1919, National Library of Ireland (NLI), MS 17,522.

³ Agreement between E. A. Wright & Co. and McGarrity, 23 Jan. 1920, NLI, MS 17,522.

⁴ E.g. Tim Wilson, *Frontiers of violence: conflict and identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918–1922* (Oxford, 2010); Julia Eichenberg, 'The dark side of independence: paramilitary violence in Ireland and Poland after the First World War', *Contemporary European History*, 19 (2010), pp. 231–48; Jochen Böhrer, 'Enduring violence: the postwar struggles in east-central Europe, 1917–21', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 50 (2015), pp. 58–77; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in peace: paramilitary violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford, 2012); Gerard Keown, *First of the small nations: the beginnings of Irish foreign policy in the interwar years, 1919–32* (Oxford, 2016).

⁵ Pieter Lagrou, 'Between Europe and the nation: the inward turn of contemporary historical writing', in Konrad H. Jarausch, Thomas Linderberger, and Annelie Ramsbrock, eds., *Conflicted memories: Europeanizing contemporary histories* (New York, NY, and Oxford, 2007), pp. 70, 74–5; Philippa Levine, 'Is comparative history possible?', *History and Theory*, 53 (2014), p. 346.

⁶ Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish* (New York, NY, 2000); Gary Hartman, *The immigrant as diplomat: ethnicity, nationalism, and the shaping of foreign policy in the Lithuanian-American community, 1870–1922*

experiences of immigrant communities in the United States more broadly.⁷ In a global context, this article also shows the increasing power of the United States to influence European politics.

One fruit of the Irish-Lithuanian comparison is identification of a fundraising strategy that we term Pre-Sovereign Debt. While sovereign debt is debt that is issued by a sovereign national government, Pre-Sovereign Debt is issued by the government of a state that does not yet exist, promising a return to subscribers if and when that state comes into existence.⁸ By raising funds through issuing bonds, these two self-proclaimed republics were performing sovereignty in anticipation of sovereignty being achieved. By subscribing to the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives, their supporters in America were also engaging in this performance. In effect an act of recognition, the purchase of these bonds added credence to the existence of the states that issued them, providing a first step on the path to official recognition. The subscribers were also buying in to the concept of these new nation-states, renewing ties to their respective homelands, while taking a stake in the outcome of their wars of independence.⁹

This article begins with an historical overview of the Lithuanian and Irish wars of independence, introducing the unrecognized governments in each case and outlining the challenges they faced. It then describes the methods by which these unrecognized states sought funding, introducing the novel concept of Pre-Sovereign Debt. The article then examines the diaspora communities from which the Lithuanian and Irish republics sought to raise funds, placing them in the context of American politics during and after the First World War. Attention then turns to the focus of this article: the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives in America. Analysing how the Lithuanian and Irish

(Vilnius, 2002); Vic Satzewich, *The Ukrainian diaspora* (London and New York, NY, 2002); Michael Doorley, *Irish-American diaspora nationalism* (Dublin, 2005); Mieczysław B. Biskupski, *The United States and the rebirth of Poland, 1914–1918* (Dordrecht, 2012); David Brundage, *Irish nationalists in America: the politics of exile 1798–1998* (New York, NY, 2016); Judah Bernstein, “‘The two finest nations in the world’: American Zionists and Irish nationalism, 1897–22”, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 36 (2017), pp. 5–37; Damian Murray, *Irish nationalists in Boston: Catholicism and conflict, 1900–1928* (Washington, DC, 2018).

⁷ In his overview of the developments of the transnational history, Kiran Klaus Patel underscores the importance of ‘intercontinental encounters’ and notes the relative scarcity of studies dealing with this type of transfer. Kiran Klaus Patel, ‘An emperor without clothes? The debate about transnational history twenty-five years on’, *Histoire@Politique*, 26 (2015), pp. 10–11.

⁸ Lithuania had been recognized by Germany since March 1918, but as a defeated power this did not carry much weight in the post-war context. Although the Lithuanian Republic was also recognized by Soviet Russia in July 1920, the latter did not itself have international recognition at this time (Alfred Erich Senn, *The emergence of modern Lithuania* (New York, NY, 1959), pp. 33, 222). The Irish Republic also sought recognition from Soviet Russia in 1920, but its efforts never came to fruition (David Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland’s Irish revolution* (Cork, 2003), pp. 180–1).

⁹ For more discussion, see Rebecca Adler-Nissen, ‘Sovereignty’, in Adler-Nissen, ed., *Bourdieu in international relations: rethinking key concepts in IR* (London and New York, NY, 2012), pp. 179–92; Dan Lainer-Vos, *Sinews of the nation* (Cambridge and Malden, MA, 2013); Hent Kalmo and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Sovereignty in fragments: the past, present and future of a contested concept* (Cambridge and New York, NY, 2014).

fundraising campaigns were organized and promoted, the article explores the similarities in their tactics and strategies. It also highlights the ways in which they mimicked the US Liberty Loans of the First World War, linking the aspirations of the Lithuanian and Irish governments-in-waiting with President Wilson's stated war aim of liberty for small nations. The article then explores the common challenges facing the Lithuanian and Irish fundraisers, such as internal divisions and external criticism. Finally, attention is paid to the results of the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives in America, with particular focus on the kinds of people who subscribed.

I

The Lithuanian and Irish self-proclaimed republics both emerged from the chaos of the First World War, and each was shaped by its own unique experience of that war. Lithuania began the war as part of Tsarist Russia, but the Russian army's Great Retreat of 1915, accompanied by a mass population displacement,¹⁰ left the country in the hands of the German *Ober Ost* military regime.¹¹ The collapse of the Russian empire resulted in a vacuum of power and several state-building projects – nationalist, Bolshevik, and federalist – competed for control over the ill-defined territory of Lithuania. The Lithuanian nation-state project took shape in September 1917 when the Council of Lithuania, known as the *Taryba*, was convened at the Vilnius conference, organized under the auspices of the German authorities. In December 1917 (and then again in February 1918), the *Taryba* declared independence. However, conceived by the Germans as part of their *Mitteleuropa* sphere of influence, the *Taryba* had difficulty asserting its authority and for more than a year remained under tight control of the occupying forces. The *Taryba*'s fortunes changed later in 1918, when German military setbacks on the Western Front and the outbreak of the German Revolution allowed it to begin a gradual process of political emancipation. In November 1918, the *Taryba* adopted an Interim Constitution that gave it provisional legislative authority, sharing executive power with a cabinet of ministers.

However, when German troops began to withdraw in December 1918, the Red Army advanced into territory claimed by the *Taryba*. This was the onset of the frontier wars commonly known as the Lithuanian wars of independence: first against the Bolsheviks (December 1918 – August 1919), then against German-White Russians or Bermontians (July – December 1919), and finally against Poland (April 1919 – November 1920).¹² In the course of these conflicts,

¹⁰ Peter Gatrell, *A whole empire walking: refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, IN, 1999). For the Lithuanian refugee experiences, see Tomas Balkelis, 'Forging a "moral community": the Great War and Lithuanian refugees in Russia', in Tomas Balkelis and Violeta Davoliūtė, eds., *Population displacement in Lithuania in the twentieth century: experiences, identities and legacies* (London, 2016), pp. 69–95.

¹¹ For more information on German foreign policy towards eastern Europe and Lithuania during and after the Great War, see Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War land on the eastern front: culture, national identity and German occupation in World War I* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹² After signing the ceasefire, low-scale violence continued until as late as May 1923. For more about post-First World War conflicts in Lithuania and how violence shaped the creation of

the Lithuanian army and paramilitaries suffered 1,444 official military casualties.¹³ Meanwhile, the provisional government established a wide network of representations abroad seeking international recognition of the new Republic of Lithuania. In Paris, the officially unrecognized Lithuanian delegation laboured in the corridors of the peace conference.¹⁴

The Lithuanian delegation to Paris was one of many hoping to benefit from US President Wilson's stated war aim of self-determination for small nations. Also on the periphery of the Paris Peace Conference agitating for recognition was a delegation from Ireland, which, according to its leader, established 'particularly friendly relations' with the Lithuanian delegates.¹⁵ For Ireland, as for the rest of the United Kingdom, the First World War was an overseas war. However, a brief exception came in Easter 1916, when German-backed Irish republicans staged an insurrection in the centre of Dublin. Lasting only a week, the Easter Rising was a failure in military terms, but the British response to it resulted in the radicalization of public opinion in Ireland.¹⁶ This became apparent in the UK general election of December 1918, when Sinn Féin, the party most associated with the Rising, won 73 of the 105 Irish seats in Westminster. The Sinn Féin MPs decided not to take their seats in Westminster, and instead formed their own parliament, *Dáil Éireann*, in Dublin. The *Dáil* met for the first time in January 1919 and, on the same day, two policemen were shot dead in rural Ireland. The organization responsible for this attack was the Irish Volunteers, a nationalist paramilitary group loosely under the command of the *Dáil*. This incident is generally regarded as opening the Irish War of Independence, a major civil conflict with between 1,200 and 1,500 fatalities, many more casualties, and substantial damage to property. On one side were the Irish Volunteers, also known as the IRA, and on the other were the forces of the British government in Ireland.¹⁷

Like the *Taryba*, the *Dáil* selected a cabinet from its representatives; with ministries such as Defence, Finance, and Foreign Affairs forming what historian Arthur Mitchell has termed a 'counter-state'.¹⁸ At the head of the counter-state was Éamon de Valera, a mathematics teacher by profession, who was elected president of the *Dáil* before travelling to America in the summer of 1919. At first, this counter-state had neither international recognition nor territorial integrity, but as the war progressed it took on more and more of the characteristics of a legitimate government. Abroad, a diplomatic network was established to agitate for international recognition.¹⁹

Lithuanian nation-state, see Tomas Balkelis, *War, revolution and nation-making in Lithuania, 1914–1923* (Oxford, 2018).

¹³ Alfonsas Eidintas and Vytautas Žalys, *Lithuania in European politics: the years of the first republic, 1918–1940* (New York, NY, 1997), p. 35.

¹⁴ A. E. Senn, 'The formation of the Lithuanian foreign office, 1918–1921', *Slavic Review*, 21 (1962), pp. 500–7, at p. 503.

¹⁵ Witness statement of Sean T. O'Kelly, 17, Bureau of Military History (BMH), WS1765.

¹⁶ Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland: Easter 1916* (New York, NY, 2010), p. 34.

¹⁷ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin, 2002), p. 26.

¹⁸ Arthur Mitchell, *Revolutionary government in Ireland: Dáil Éireann 1919–1922* (Dublin, 1995).

¹⁹ Keown, *First of the small nations*, passim.

Of course the Lithuanian and Irish republics' pretensions to statehood came with a price tag, as did the prosecution of their wars of independence and pursuit of international recognition. Although the need to raise funds was obvious, the means by which funds could be raised was less clear. Notwithstanding their cordial relations in Paris, communication between the Irish Republic and the emerging nation-states of eastern Europe was 'almost non-existent', according to historian Gerard Keown. The fragile states of central and eastern Europe were preoccupied with their own wars of independence and, according to Keown, 'offered little by the way of example or encouragement' to the Irish.²⁰ Indeed, mindful of Britain's great power status, Lithuanian representatives were keen to dissociate their independence movement from the Irish.²¹ Nevertheless, despite their isolation from each other, the Lithuanian and Irish republics' approaches to fundraising were remarkably similar.

II

As demonstrated by the Lithuanian and Irish republics' contemporaries, there are a number of ways for an aspirant state to finance its establishment. The Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918–21), for example, opted to print money to pay its expenses. This highly inflationary policy, which ultimately undermined the viability of the Georgian state, was not an option open to the Lithuanian or Irish republics since neither had a currency of its own in 1919.²² Another option, employed among others by the newly independent Second Polish Republic, was to seek aid from the Great Powers. Lithuania succeeded in raising c. \$20m in this way, partially in kind, but this was soon depleted by the high running costs of its wars of independence.²³ Further efforts to gain access to foreign lending were hampered, inter alia, by persistent territorial disputes, a global scarcity of available credit, and the reluctance of Lithuanian statesmen to accept what they considered unfair credit terms.²⁴ Meanwhile, Britain's dominant position in the post-war settlement

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

²¹ In September 1921, the Lithuanian mission in the United States was scolded by the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an article entitled 'Ulster and Vilnius', which appeared in several Lithuanian-American journals. The official from Kaunas observed that the author might have had good intentions and that his Irish-Lithuanian comparison might not be false, but this kind of rhetoric was dangerous and thus unacceptable. B. K. Balutis to V. Čarneckis, 29 Sept. 1921, Central State Archive of Lithuania (LCVA), 656/1/318, fo. 273.

²² Stephen Jones, 'Between ideology and pragmatism: social democracy and the economic transition in Georgia 1918–21', *Caucasus Survey*, 1 (2014), pp. 63–81, at pp. 5–6.

²³ Germany granted the first and the most substantial monetary loans to the Lithuanian Republic during its wars of independence – more than \$14m in total. The US, the UK, and France offered loans in kind: food, medical and military supplies, and their transport. A historical outline of Lithuanian state's debts, c. 1932, LCVA, 387/5/238, fos. 174–9; *Economic and financial condition of the Lithuanian Republic at the beginning of 1922* (London, 1922), pp. 50–1.

²⁴ Gary Hartman, 'Dollars, diplomacy, and dignity: United States economic involvement in Lithuania, 1914–1940', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 28 (1997), pp. 153–70, at p. 161.

made such 'Great Power' funding impossible for the Irish.²⁵ Another option was the exploitation of natural resources.²⁶ The short-lived West Ukrainian People's Republic (1918–19) relied heavily on the sale of oil, and it was the loss of its oilfields to forces of the Second Polish Republic that heralded its demise.²⁷ Unfortunately for the *Dáil* and the *Taryba*, there were no such resources to exploit in Ireland or Lithuania. Yet another option was to raise funds by requisition: the forced appropriation of property within the nascent state's territory. Although the Lithuanian and Irish republics both resorted to requisitions, the respectability craved by the *Taryba* and *Dáil* rendered such a policy highly inadvisable. It also risked alienating the electorate from which they drew their legitimacy, not to mention harming the economy. A more benign option was to collect voluntary donations. However, while this formed an element of both the Lithuanian and Irish republics' funding strategies, again, it ran counter to their pretensions to statehood. In the words of the *Dáil*'s leadership, appeals for donations would not be 'in accord with its dignity as the *de jure* and accepted Government of Ireland'.²⁸

Which brings us to the focus of this article: the raising of funds through debt. Many belligerent states during the First World War favoured borrowing over taxation and adopted so-called 'internal loan' policies to fund their war efforts. As an expression of a total war, involving the mobilization of the entire population, the new patriotic-capitalist savings model was widespread across Europe. In the words of an advertising professional working on promotion of British war bonds, the aim was to 'make patriotism profitable'.²⁹ Clearly drawing inspiration from the war bonds of the Great War, both the Lithuanian *Taryba* and Irish *Dáil* raised money by selling 'war bonds' of their own within their respective territories. Through these 'war bonds', the Lithuanians raised 40,910,750 ostmarks in Lithuania³⁰ and the Irish raised £358,447 in Ireland.³¹

However, there were two major differences between the war bonds of the Lithuanian and Irish republics and those of the main belligerents in the First World War. First, the Lithuanian and Irish war bonds were issued by self-proclaimed states and repayment of them was contingent on their

²⁵ Although during the Great War, the Irish received non-pecuniary support from Germany in the form of arms for the 1916 Easter Rising (J. Bowyer Bell, *The secret army: the IRA* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2004) pp. 5–6).

²⁶ Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, 'Beyond greed and grievance: feasibility and civil war', *Oxford Economic Papers*, 61 (2009), pp. 1–27, at p. 8.

²⁷ Alison Fleig Frank, *Oil empire: visions of prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 227.

²⁸ Ard Chomhairle of Sinn Féin, 20 Feb. 1919, 2, NLI, MS 8786 (i).

²⁹ Quotation from Hedley Le Bas of the Caxton Advertising Agency, cited in Hew Strachan, *Financing the First World War* (New York, NY, 2004), p. 148.

³⁰ A historical outline of Lithuanian state's debts, c. 1932, LCVA, 387/5/238, fos. 178–81. This amount was raised during two highly publicized national loan drives: the first internal loan drive, launched in mid-1919 and the extraordinary defence loan drive launched in November 1920.

³¹ A further £11,718 was raised in Britain and France. Francis M. Carroll, *Money for Ireland* (Westport, CT, 2002), p. 8.

establishment of sovereignty. The Irish bonds promised a return to subscribers only when British forces had left Ireland and an independent Irish Republic was internationally recognized.³² The Lithuanian Liberty bonds, meanwhile, promised redemption in fifteen years. Citing various allies' tacit recognition of the Lithuanian government, the Lithuanian Liberty Loan's promoters displayed more confidence than the Irish in the likelihood of its repayment. In reality, however, Lithuania was lacking international recognition and territorial integrity so any bond it issued had the same status as the Irish bonds. As such, both the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives can both be termed Pre-Sovereign Debt.

A second major difference between the fundraising efforts of the Lithuanian and Irish republics and those of the belligerents of the First World War was that the ambitions of the former were not limited to their respective homelands. The targets of these Pre-Sovereign Debt campaigns also included the countries' diasporas. While apparently novel, the notion of selling bonds to a diaspora to raise money for an unrecognized state in the homeland was by no means a new one. Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian nationalist, toured America in 1852 selling his 'Hungary Bonds', as did Gottfried Kinkel, leader of the failed Baden revolution in Germany.³³ The 1850s and 1860s filibustering missions of Cuban revolutionary Narciso Lopez were also funded in this way, by selling bonds of the 'Republic of Cuba' to his countrymen in the United States, as was William Walker's ill-fated state-building mission to Nicaragua.³⁴ Indeed, the Irish Republic's own antecedents, the Fenian Brotherhood, sold bonds of the 'Irish Republic' in America in 1866.³⁵ Another newly established state that organized a bond drive in the United States was Poland-Lithuania's competitor for land and population.³⁶ The Poles also targeted their diaspora in America, but having received official recognition from the United States in January 1919 their case cannot be described as Pre-Sovereign Debt.³⁷

There are a number of advantages of fundraising from emigrant communities. They often bear a grievance for having to leave their homeland, they are able to operate more freely in their adopted country than would be the case in their homeland, and their adopted country is often more prosperous than their homeland.³⁸ It also has the merit of not burdening the domestic

³² Minutes of Dáil Éireann Ministry and Cabinet, 19 Dec. 1919, National Archives of Ireland, DE/1/1.

³³ John H. Komlos, *Kossuth in America, 1851-1852* (Buffalo, NY, 1973), p. 90; Sabine Freitag, *Exiles from European revolutions: refugees in mid-Victorian England* (Oxford and New York, NY, 2003), p. 173.

³⁴ David Sim, 'Following the money: Fenian bonds, diasporic nationalism, and distant revolutions in the mid-nineteenth-century United States', *Past & Present*, 247 (2020), pp. 77-112.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Theodore R. Weeks, *Vilnius between nations, 1795-2000* (DeKalb, IL, 2015); Dangiras Mačiulis and Darius Staliūnas, *Lithuanian nationalism and the Vilnius question, 1883-1940* (Marburg, 2015).

³⁷ For more information on the Polish bond drive, see Piotr S. Wandycz, *The United States and Poland* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 181-3.

³⁸ Paul Collier, 'Rebellion as a quasi-criminal activity', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44 (2000), pp. 839-53, at p. 843.

population and thereby eroding support for the movement. Fundraising by bonds rather than donations also has advantages. The sale of bonds reinforces self-proclaimed states' posture as legitimate governments. It also makes tangible what would otherwise be the intangible satisfaction associated with giving a donation, allowing subscribers to show proof of their patriotism for the old country. The uniformity of bonds also allows consistency in message, reinforcing the singularity of an unrecognized government as representative of its nation. It also implies exclusivity, suggesting that any other means of contributing to the national cause is in some way counterfeit.³⁹ Finally, performing sovereignty overseas enables external validation of pretensions to statehood, while also bringing it to the attention of the US government.

III

The Lithuanian and Irish diasporas in America were the result of several waves of mass migration, which over the years had gravitated towards the major population centres of the eastern seaboard and the industrial midwest.⁴⁰ As they grew in numbers, these Lithuanian- and Irish-Americans established numerous cultural, educational, economic, and political organizations to bind their respective communities together. America's Lithuanian-born population in 1920 was 135,068, according to the US census, but diaspora scholars estimate the Lithuanian-American population, including second and third generations, to have been as many as 500,000.⁴¹ Perhaps showing hubris, the Lithuanian authorities of the time estimated the Lithuanian-American population to number 750,000.⁴² Considering the population of Lithuania at this time was barely above 2 million, it is not surprising that the *Taryba* was keen to exploit its diaspora in America.⁴³ Meanwhile, in 1919, Irish-American nationalists claimed that some 20 million Americans were of Irish heritage.⁴⁴ The population of Ireland at the time amounted to less than 4.4 million.⁴⁵ It was these communities, part of the 'greater' nations of Lithuania and Ireland, that were the primary targets of the *Taryba*'s and *Dáil*'s fundraisers.

³⁹ R. J. C. Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman: how, and by whom, was the republican government financed in the Irish War of Independence (1919–21)' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 2019), pp. 179–80.

⁴⁰ Lithuanian mass economic migration to the United States began in the second half of the nineteenth century in the context of demographic growth combined with slow urbanization and industrialization, as well as agricultural stagnation in the home country. Fleeing compulsory Russian military service was another major factor of Lithuanian transatlantic migration. Alfonsas Eidintas, *Lietuvių kolumbai. Lietuvių emigracijos istorijos apybraiža* (Vilnius, 1993), pp. 12–15. Irish migration to America surged during the Great Famine of 1845–51, but continued into the twentieth century due to poverty and a lack of employment opportunities in Ireland. See Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and exiles* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 346–53.

⁴¹ *Statistical abstract of the United States* (Washington, DC, 1923), p. 32; Antanas Kučas, 'JAV lietuvių', in *Lietuvių enciklopedija* (37 vols., Boston, MA, 1953–85), X (1957), p. 37.

⁴² Announcement of the Lithuanian mission, 5 Feb. 1921, LCVA, 656/1/318, fo. 106.

⁴³ *Lietuvos gyventojai. Pirmojo 1923 m. rugsėjo 17 d. visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenys* (Kaunas, 1923), p. xxiii.

⁴⁴ *Washington Times*, 4 June 1920, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Census of Ireland, 1911, General report with tables and appendix (Dublin, 1913).

No less than other sections of US society, the Lithuanian- and Irish-American communities would have become accustomed to the concept of war bonds via the US Liberty Loan campaigns of 1917–19.⁴⁶ Indeed, the US Liberty Loan campaign targeted immigrant groups specifically, asking foreign-born citizens to prove their patriotism and loyalty to the United States.⁴⁷ In essence, by purchasing Liberty Loan bonds, immigrants could ‘buy in’ to their adopted country. Thus, the Lithuanian- and Irish-American experiences of the Liberty Loan campaigns can shed much light on those communities’ positions in broader American society.

Lithuanian-Americans responded enthusiastically to this call, holding massive patriotic rallies during which Liberty bonds were sold.⁴⁸ Lithuanian-American newspapers published specially translated Liberty bond advertisements, while editorial statements explained the duty to contribute in a more personalized manner. Alongside lists of Lithuanian men serving in the US army, Lithuanian-American newspapers published lists of subscribers to the US Liberty Loan.⁴⁹ In some editorials, the US Liberty Loan was also linked to the cause of Lithuanian independence. Most directly, one editorial claimed that ‘every cent invested in these bonds is a brick in the reconstruction of a free and independent Lithuania’.⁵⁰

The US Liberty Loan was less straightforward for Irish-Americans. Having openly declared sympathy for Germany at the outbreak of war, the Irish-American press and leadership were not well placed to promote a loan that was raised to make war on the Central Powers.⁵¹ At the same time, ordinary Irish-Americans would have come under some pressure to subscribe to the loan, in order to prove their allegiance to the United States.⁵² As with Lithuanian-Americans, the US Liberty Loan’s promoters produced advertising aimed at the Irish-American community. A full-page newspaper advert in the *Seattle Star*, for example, included a letter from a torpedoed American lieutenant who came ashore in Ireland. Clearly targeting Irish-American heartstrings, the letter reads, ‘Words were never written that can describe the generosity of these good Irish people. Boys, I never knew men could be so generous and wonderful. Verily, Ireland is heaven and the Irish people are saints.’⁵³ Beyond such sentimental appeals and flattery, Wilson’s doctrine of self-determination also cleared a path for Irish-Americans to display

⁴⁶ Julia C. Ott, *When Wall Street met Main Street* (Cambridge, 2011).

⁴⁷ E.g. *Seattle Star*, 24 Apr. 1918, p. 4; Gary Hartman, ‘Building the ideal immigrant: reconciling Lithuanianism and 100 percent Americanism to create a respectable nationalist movement, 1870–1922’, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 18 (1998), pp. 37–76, at p. 57; Ott, *Wall Street*, p. 57.

⁴⁸ Remigijus Misiūnas, *Informacinių kovų kryžkelėse. JAV lietuvių informacinės kovos XIX a. pab.-1922 m.* (Vilnius, 2004), pp. 219–20; Hartman, ‘Building the ideal immigrant’, p. 57.

⁴⁹ E.g. *Lietuva*, 19 Apr. 1918, p. 7.

⁵⁰ *Lietuva*, 3 May 1918, cited in Hartman, ‘Building the ideal immigrant’, p. 57.

⁵¹ Michael F. Funchion, ed., *Irish American voluntary organizations* (Westport, CT, 1983), p. 121.

⁵² Ott, *Wall Street*, p. 55; Sung Won Kang and Hugh Rockoff, ‘Capitalizing patriotism: the Liberty bonds of World War I’, *Financial History Review*, 22 (2015), pp. 45–78, at p. 47.

⁵³ *Seattle Star*, 24 Apr. 1918, p. 4.

patriotism for 'the old country' in a way that did not conflict with their allegiance to America.⁵⁴

Alongside the US Liberty Loan, the First World War also stimulated an increase in humanitarian remittances from American immigrant groups to their compatriots in Europe. Bane and Lutz have estimated that private charities in America raised as much as \$30m for European relief during the war.⁵⁵ Following a successful lobbying effort, President Wilson declared 1 November 1916 'Lithuanian Day'. During a countrywide public collection of funds, Lithuanian-Americans raised \$179,599.⁵⁶ In addition, from 1914 to 1922, over \$160,000 was raised for relief purposes through three major private Lithuanian-American funds.⁵⁷ Although Ireland was far from the main field of conflict, £59,348 (c. \$237,392) was raised in the United States in 1917–19 for survivors of the Easter Rising and their dependants.⁵⁸ One of the main organizations responsible for raising these funds was the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF), an open-membership society controlled by a secret society called *Clan na Gael*, successor to the Fenian Brotherhood.⁵⁹

Following the Armistice, the FOIF launched a fundraising campaign in support of the Irish delegation to Paris. Echoing the US government's concurrent Victory Loan, in just six months, the so-called Irish Victory Fund raised \$1,005,081 via simple donations.⁶⁰ As well as raising funds, the collection of the Irish Victory Fund saw a dramatic increase in the size of the FOIF's membership, soaring from just 6,069 in February 1919 to 70,485 by the end of that year.⁶¹ At the outset of the war, Lithuanian-Americans also collected funds for political action. From 1914 to 1920, the nationalist Autonomy Fund – renamed Independence Fund in January 1917 – raised \$85,202. From 1914 to 1921, the Catholic National Fund allocated \$306,886 for political purposes. The greater part of these funds was used to finance Lithuanian information offices in the United States and Switzerland as well as the Lithuanian mission in Paris and the delegation to the peace conference.⁶²

Of course, neither the Lithuanian- nor the Irish-American diaspora communities were monolithic. Although almost universally working class, the Lithuanian-American community was split into three political groups –

⁵⁴ Timothy J. Meagher, *The Columbia guide to Irish American history* (New York, NY, 2010), p. 209. This was also true of other ethnic groups in America, such as the Czech-Americans and Polish-Americans (Doorley, *Irish-American diaspora nationalism*, pp. 170–3).

⁵⁵ Suda L. Bane and Ralph H. Lutz, eds., *Organization of American relief in Europe 1918–19* (Stanford, CA, 1943), p. 721.

⁵⁶ *Pasaulio lietuvis*, 15 Apr. 1938, p. 174.

⁵⁷ Nationalist Lithuanian relief fund raised \$9,008 (from 1914 to 1916), socialist Lithuanian assistance fund \$37,661 (1914–17), and Catholic National fund \$115,766 (1914–22). Juozas Skirius, *JAV lietuvių darbai 1918–2018 metais* (Vilnius, 2018), pp. 101–6.

⁵⁸ Caoimhe NicDhÁibhéid, 'Irish National Aid Association and the radicalization of public opinion', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), pp. 705–29, at p. 713.

⁵⁹ Funchion, ed., *Irish American voluntary organizations*, p. 120.

⁶⁰ David Hannigan, *De Valera in America* (New York, NY, 2010), p. 63.

⁶¹ Doorley, *Irish-American diaspora nationalism*, pp. 186–7.

⁶² Skirius, *JAV lietuvių darbai*, pp. 101–6.

clerical, nationalist, and socialist⁶³ – each vying for influence. Newspapers, mutual aid societies, foundations, and educational circles were often organized along the lines of these political divisions. Secular nationalists and clericals disagreed on many points, but shared a nationalist agenda, and supported the independence movement as well as the US war effort. Eventually, in 1918, they joined forces and formed an Executive Committee, which acted as a representative of the Lithuanian diaspora and subsequently of the Lithuanian state, until the arrival of the Lithuanian mission to the United States in late 1919. Lithuanian-American socialists were divided among themselves. The majority, inspired by Russian bolshevism, adopted a revolutionary agenda and, from 1919, called themselves communists.⁶⁴ Sympathetic to the Red Army, they were hostile to the Lithuanian nation-state. The moderate socialists, on the other hand, although critical of the *Taryba*, were supportive of an independent Lithuanian state project without considering it to be the best option or an ultimate goal.⁶⁵ Initially, they were unwilling ‘to pay too high a price’ for independence but ended up supporting Lithuania’s war against Poland, seeing it as a struggle of the Lithuanian working classes against the oppressor class of the Polish landlords and nobility.⁶⁶

The Irish-American community was also divided at this time. Largely borne of nineteenth-century migration, the Irish community in America had more time to develop than their Lithuanian counterparts and were consequently more economically diverse. Support for a completely independent Irish republic was drawn mainly from working-class Irish-Americans, while the middle class in general favoured ‘home rule’ within the British empire.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the *Dáil* was not without wealthy supporters in the United States. Irish-Americans were also more integrated into US politics than their Lithuanian-American contemporaries. Again, this was a source of division within the community, in particular with regard to President Wilson’s proposed League of Nations, a highly contentious issue in American politics. The FOIF took a strong position against the League, on the grounds of national sovereignty, but this risked alienating many pro-Wilson Irish-Americans.⁶⁸ Even within the FOIF, there was an emerging rivalry between the dominant New York faction led by Judge Cohalan and John Devoy and a challenger in the form of Joseph McGarrity in

⁶³ For a number of reasons, it is not possible to determine how many Lithuanian-Americans belonged to these groups whose size and influence changed over time. However, it can be safely stated that at the time in question the secular nationalist group was the weakest one, while clerical and socialist groups had the strongest organizations and following. For a detailed overview of the Lithuanian-American factional landscape, see Hartman, *The immigrant*, pp. 38–45.

⁶⁴ Stasys Michelonas, *Lietuvių išeivija Amerikoje* (Boston, MA, 1961), pp. 91–2.

⁶⁵ *Naujienos*, 3 Jan. 1919, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Naujienos*, 10 May 1919, p. 4; *Naujienos*, 21 Oct. 1920, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Damian Murray, ‘Go forth as a missionary to fight it: Catholic antisocialism and Irish American nationalism in post-World War I Boston’, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 28 (2009), pp. 43–65, at p. 43.

⁶⁸ Doorley, *Irish-American diaspora nationalism*, pp. 97–8; circular from F. P. Walsh, Oct. 1919, New York Public Library (NYPL), MS 211/b.28.

Philadelphia.⁶⁹ In order for the Irish bond drive to be a success, the *Dáil* mission had to appeal to as broad a coalition as possible, so rising above these divisions was crucial.

IV

The Lithuanian-American bond sales began as a private enterprise operated by a company called the Lithuanian Sales Corporation. The company signed a contract with the *Taryba* in August 1919, committing to sell bonds of \$1m among Lithuanian-Americans. In October 1919, the provisional government increased the target to \$5m and signed responsibility for raising it to the Lithuanian mission to the United States composed of three officials: former Minister of Finance Jonas Vileišis as chairman, former Minister of War Maj. Povilas Žadeikis as vice-chairman, and former member of the Lithuanian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference Rev. Jonas Žilius as treasurer. When the mission arrived in the United States and launched the Lithuanian Liberty Loan campaign, the Lithuanian Sales Corporation tried to pursue their private initiative in parallel, but was not able to stand up to competition. Therefore, the company agreed to terminate the contract and to transfer the money raised to the mission's account.⁷⁰

In planning its bond drive, the *Dáil* mission to America carried out a trial fundraising campaign in Wisconsin and used estimates of the Irish population of each state to extrapolate a nationwide target of around \$6m.⁷¹ To reach this figure, the *Dáil* initially planned to issue its bonds using a commercial bank, in the same way that any foreign government or corporation would. To this end, de Valera met with bankers in Chicago to discuss the bond issue, but even bankers of an Irish background were reluctant to risk their reputations in this manner.⁷² As the Irish Republic had not yet been recognized by the US government, and therefore did not exist in the eyes of the law, any bonds it sold would contravene the so-called 'blue sky statutes' which were designed to protect the American public from fraudulent investments. In order to overcome this obstacle, the *Dáil* mission decided to sell the bonds as 'bond certificates', to be exchanged for real bonds on the recognition of the Irish Republic.⁷³ This legal distinction gave the *Dáil* sufficient cover to go ahead with the bond drive.⁷⁴ Rather than sell bonds through banks, it sold bond certificates through the branch network of the FOIF. Strict instructions were given to local organizers that the legal term 'bond certificates' must be adopted at all times and the terms 'bonds' or 'bond sellers' 'must not be used'. Nevertheless,

⁶⁹ Katherine O'Doherty, *Assignment: America: de Valera's mission to the United States* (New York, NY, 1957), p. 19.

⁷⁰ Statement of J. Žilius about the loan in America in 1919, c. 1920, LCVA, 383/2/620, fo. 5.

⁷¹ J. C. Walsh's reminiscences, 143 & 145, NYPL, MS 3212/b.3/5.

⁷² *Sun* (New York), 12 July 1919, p. 16; Lainer-Vos, *Sinews of the nation*, p. 77.

⁷³ Carroll, *Money*, p. 17.

⁷⁴ Lainer-Vos, *Sinews of the nation*, p. 76.

the distinction between ‘bonds’ and ‘bond certificates’ was lost on the general public, who always referred to them simply as ‘the Irish bonds’.⁷⁵

The organizational structure of the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives were remarkably similar. Both bond drives relied on a decentralized organization. In keeping with the majority of US civil society organizations at the time, and indeed with the organization of the US Liberty Loan, both the Lithuanian and Irish missions used a federal structure to promote their bonds.⁷⁶ Harnessing its diaspora, the Lithuanian mission instructed Lithuanian-American communities across the United States to establish local committees to sell the Lithuanian Liberty Loan. The call was answered, and some 184 local loan committees were established at the level of cities, towns, and neighbourhoods. Upon establishment, the local committee elected board members – a chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer – and appointed a team of collectors. The board members as well as collectors worked on a voluntary basis. Once a week, the treasurer sent monies raised to the mission. For motivational purposes, the mission allocated quotas to each local committee.

In the Irish case, the *Dáil* mission appointed a non-executive chairman to each state. He, in turn, would appoint executive chairmen for cities within his state. Each city chairman appointed a city treasurer, responsible for acknowledging receipt of the monies raised in their city, making lodgements, maintaining proper financial records, and sending reports once a week to the *Dáil* mission in New York. The cities were further divided into districts and sub-districts, each with their own sub-committees and ‘captains’ leading a team of collectors.⁷⁷ Collections were made based on pre-prepared lists, and canvassing was done ‘street by street, block by block, house by house’.⁷⁸ A system of receipts was used to keep track of the money as it passed from sub-district to city, state, and national level.⁷⁹ As with the Lithuanian case, the vast majority of the Irish collectors worked on a voluntary basis.⁸⁰ The Irish also used quotas as a motivational tool for collectors.⁸¹ Other incentives included the prize of a silk Irish republican flag for the Team Captain who raised the highest amount within a timeframe.⁸² In both cases, the *Taryba* and *Dáil* missions acted as a central co-ordinating authority and an intermediary between local committees and the government of the republics. This helped them to rise

⁷⁵ Carroll, *Money*, p. 17.

⁷⁶ Eric Hilt and Wendy M. Rahn, ‘Turning citizens into investors: promoting savings with Liberty bonds during World War I’, *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 2 (2016), pp. 86–108, at p. 91.

⁷⁷ Outline of President de Valera’s instructions on organization for Irish bond-certificate campaign, n.d., NLI, MS 21,547.

⁷⁸ *New York Tribune*, 19 Jan. 1920, p. 18; outline of President de Valera’s instructions on organization for Irish bond-certificate campaign, n.d., 5, NLI, MS 21,547.

⁷⁹ Outline of President de Valera’s instructions on organization for Irish bond-certificate campaign, n.d., NLI, MS 21,547.

⁸⁰ Sean Nunan, ‘President Eamon de Valera’s mission to U.S.A.’, *Capuchin Annual* (1970), p. 242.

⁸¹ Outline of President de Valera’s instructions on organization for Irish bond-certificate campaign, n.d., 4, NLI, MS 21,547.

⁸² *Washington Times*, 4 Feb. 1920, p. 1.

above factional infighting and local animosities, and appeal to the broadest cross-sections possible of their respective diasporas.

V

Effective organization was necessary for the bond drives to succeed, but not sufficient. The bonds also had to be promoted to potential subscribers. Information agencies, responsible for domestic and foreign propaganda co-ordination, were a feature of all belligerent states in the First World War.⁸³ In 1917, the US government set up the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to convince the American public to support the war and to spread the message of American democracy worldwide. Staffed with journalists and writers, collaborating with famous artists, the CPI organized mass meetings, conferences and exhibitions, prepared and distributed articles to the press, produced movies, posters, pamphlets, and advertisements. The CPI also sanctioned and supplied material for Four Minute Men, an organization of volunteers giving brief patriotic speeches across the United States, during reels changing in movie theatres and other public spaces. George Creel, the chairman of the CPI, described its work as a 'vast enterprise in salesmanship' and the 'world's greatest adventure in advertising'.⁸⁴ The US Liberty bonds' marketing is a perfect example of how the CPI merged political and commercial practises.

The Lithuanians and Irish also employed similar marketing techniques during their bond drives in the United States, and both owed a lot to the tactics of the US Liberty Loan's promoters. The minimum price for a Lithuanian bond was \$50: exactly the same as the minimum US Liberty Loan bond.⁸⁵ The Irish meanwhile, seeking to attract a wider canvas and exploit the size of their diaspora, priced their minimum subscription at just \$10.⁸⁶ Both the Lithuanians and Irish used public meetings, anniversaries, and door-to-door canvassing for bond sales, promoted by leaflets, posters, and newspaper advertisements. In the Irish case, George Creel's book *Ireland's fight for freedom* was distributed along with other promotional literature.⁸⁷ US Liberty Loan slogans, such as 'Lend to Liberty', were an important source of inspiration for both the Lithuanians⁸⁸ and the Irish.⁸⁹ High-minded ideals such as democracy were regularly invoked to bolster the republics' claims to independence. One Irish press advertisement, for

⁸³ On the First World War propaganda, see, e.g., John Maxwell Hamilton, *Manipulating the masses: Woodrow Wilson and the birth of American propaganda* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2020); Celia Malone Kingsbury, *For home and country: World War I propaganda on the home front* (Lincoln, NB, and London, 2010); Troy Paddock, ed., *World War I and propaganda* (Leiden, 2014).

⁸⁴ George Creel, *How we advertised America* (New York, NY, and London, 1920), p. 4.

⁸⁵ *Lietuva*, 4 Feb. 1920, p. 4; Hilt and Rahn, 'Turning citizens into investors', p. 91.

⁸⁶ Carroll, *Money*, p. 20.

⁸⁷ American Committee for Irish Independence circular to state chairmen, 7 Jan. 1920, NYPL, MS 582/b.13.

⁸⁸ E.g. *Draugas*, 31 Jan. 1920, p. 3; *Lietuva*, 10 Feb. 1920, p. 3, *Darbininkas*, 10 Jan. 1920, p. 3.

⁸⁹ E.g. *Arizona Republican*, 8 Feb. 1920, p. 8; *Chicago Eagle*, 20 Mar. 1920, p. 8; *Irish Standard*, 27 Mar. 1920, p. 7.

example, showed the results of the 1918 general election, posing the question 'Shall the majority rule?' and imploring readers to 'Stand by the Sister Republic of Ireland'.⁹⁰ Indeed, the press advertising for the Irish bond drive was notable for its universalist appeals to democracy, liberty, and solidarity. Perhaps a consequence of advertising in the *lingua franca*, the Irish bond drive's promotional material was notable for its lack of xenophobia.

In contrast, in the Lithuanian case, universalist and democratic rhetoric was often overshadowed by more parochial, sometimes xenophobic, and especially anti-Polish, themes. This kind of negative advertising had echoes of the Fourth US Liberty Loan, which explicitly stressed the brutality of the Germans.⁹¹ Most strikingly, one advertisement for the Lithuanian Liberty Loan claimed that 'A Lithuanian without a bond is a servant of Pilsudski [the Chief of State of Poland].'⁹² Another Lithuanian Liberty Loan advertisement claimed 'Every bond subscribed hammers the [Polish] imperialist.'⁹³ Again, the depiction of war bonds as weapons was reminiscent of language used in a US Liberty Loan poster that exhorted readers to 'Beat back the HUN with LIBERTY BONDS.'⁹⁴ The Lithuanian-American animosity towards Poles was fuelled by inter-ethnic rivalry in America as well as military developments in Europe. Indeed, Lithuanian-Americans were solicited not only by salesmen of Lithuanian bonds, but also by the salesmen of equivalent Polish securities.⁹⁵ This competition generated tensions within the Lithuanian-American community as some businessmen were accused of displaying Polish bond drive propaganda material and several priests were compelled to deny in public having bought Polish bonds.⁹⁶

While *pathos* was a dominant persuasion strategy, organizers of the campaign also relied on pragmatic arguments. Lithuanian bond drive announcements pointed to the urgent needs of the country's economic reconstruction.⁹⁷ At the same time, the Lithuanian mission reassured potential investors that Lithuania was in excellent financial standing since it had low foreign debt, turning the republic's lack of credit history into a strength. It was also suggested that Lithuanian bonds were a good investment opportunity because they offered a (slightly) higher interest rate than the American securities.⁹⁸ Generally, in the Lithuanian case, bond sales served as a symbolic assertion of capitalism over communism. Some of the Irish bond drive advertising also emphasized the Irish Republic's ability to 'Pay Its Way', comparing its population and resources with those of similarly sized, independent countries.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ *Evening World*, 22 Jan. 1920, p. 20.

⁹¹ Kang and Rockoff, 'Capitalizing patriotism', p. 47.

⁹² Announcement of the Lithuanian mission, 4 Oct. 1920, LCVA, F/656/1/318, fo. 67.

⁹³ Leaflet of a local Liberty Loan committee, LCVA, 656/1/319, fo. 147.

⁹⁴ Kang and Rockoff, 'Capitalizing patriotism', p. 51.

⁹⁵ *Draugas*, 13 Aug. 1920, p. 4.

⁹⁶ *Draugas*, 14 June 1920, p. 4; *Draugas*, 4 Dec. 1920, p. 3; *Draugas*, 29 Dec. 1921, p. 2.

⁹⁷ *Lietuva*, 6 Jan. 1920, p. 3; *Draugas*, 20 Oct. 1921, p. 2.

⁹⁸ *Lietuva*, 6 Jan. 1920, p. 3.

⁹⁹ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 Feb. 1920, p. 11.

The resemblance of the Irish bond drive to the US Liberty Loan campaign did not go unnoticed. The British consul in New York observed young women selling Irish bond certificates in the lobbies of some of New York's most prominent hotels, a tactic that imitated the sale of Liberty bonds during the Great War.¹⁰⁰ The British consul in St Louis, Missouri, reported that the windows of houses in the city's poorer districts were displaying green, white, and orange posters with the words 'Subscriber Irish Bond Certificates'.¹⁰¹ As noted by the consul, this also mimicked the US Liberty Loan campaign.¹⁰² The US government also followed the Irish bond drive with interest and took particular exception to the practice of accepting US Liberty Loan bonds in exchange for Irish ones. This was a key part of both the Irish and the Lithuanians' marketing strategies, implying parity of credibility between the American government and the newly established states.¹⁰³ It also linked directly the Irish and Lithuanian republics' wars of independence with President Wilson's justification for US entry into the First World War – the right of self-determination for small nations. In February 1920, the US treasury secretary wrote to the Irish bond drive's organizers requesting them to cease advertising the acceptance of Liberty Loan bonds at par, but by then the connection had already been made in the minds of many Irish-Americans.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the Lithuanian bond drive, with its much lower profile, continued this practice unchallenged.

Most of the Lithuanian-American newspapers published the Lithuanian Liberty Loan advertisement free of charge and some of the editorial offices acted as subscription bureaus. Lithuanian Liberty Loan ads appeared regularly, but were modest, especially compared to the dashing full-page US Liberty Loan ads. This can be explained by the limited means of the mission as well as their belief that the written word was virtually ineffective. Instead, the organizers of the Lithuanian Liberty Loan campaign focused on oral propaganda, allowing it to target numerous illiterate fellow countrymen.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the main concern of the mission and of all loan committees was to find good public speakers. Visitors from the homeland were particularly appreciated and the mission organized their tours across the country.

The diaspora press was also invaluable in promoting the Irish bond drive. Like the Lithuanian case, some Irish-American newspapers acted as subscription bureaus. The *Irish Press*, edited by Joseph McGarrity, gave over entire issues to the promotion of the Irish bond drive, and even published lists of those who subscribed.¹⁰⁶ Unlike the Lithuanian case, the *Dáil* mission also advertised its bond drive widely in the mainstream American press, winning

¹⁰⁰ E. D. Miller to R. C. Lindsay, 26 Feb. 1920, The National Archives (TNA): FO/115/2599/95. This was also the practice during the FOIF's Victory Fund campaign.

¹⁰¹ British consul in St Louis to R. C. Lindsay, 5 Mar. 1920, TNA: FO/115/2599/94.

¹⁰² Diary of Harry Boland, 4 May 1920, University College Dublin Archives Archives (UCDA), P150/1170.

¹⁰³ *Lietuva*, 6 Jan. 1920, p. 3; notebook: copy of note from J. O'Mara to Nunan, 17 Feb. 1920, NLI, MS 21,548(5).

¹⁰⁴ Notebook: copy of note from J. O'Mara to Nunan, 17 Feb. 1920, NLI, MS 21,548(5).

¹⁰⁵ Lithuanian mission's annual report, 23 Feb. 1921, LCVA, 656/1/318, fo. 150.

¹⁰⁶ *Irish Press*, 31 Jan. 1920, pp. 2, 4.

the support of press barons such as William Randolph Hearst.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, public meetings were also central to the Irish bond drive campaign. Most prominently, President de Valera toured the country attracting audiences in the tens of thousands.¹⁰⁸ According to a colleague in the *Dáil* mission, 'If in any city he visited, no Bond committee had been formed, the enthusiasm created by his visit increased the local sale of the Bonds.'¹⁰⁹ Smaller meetings were held across the country too and, similar to the US Liberty Loan's 'Four Minute Men', the *Dáil* mission dispatched speakers and promotional material to ensure consistency of message.¹¹⁰

Again echoing the US Liberty Loan, celebrity endorsement was also a feature of the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives. However, if the US Liberty Loan was promoted by famous artists and movie stars,¹¹¹ immigrant communities gathered in front of a more conservative type of speakers – usually clergymen and military officers. The Irish mission publicized endorsements from senior Roman Catholic clergy and, particularly in the southern states, employed men 'who rendered conspicuous service in the American Army during the war' as speakers.¹¹²

The Lithuanian and Irish bond drives were not without their critics. The timing of the bond drives made them particularly vulnerable to accusations of fraud, as there were scores of financial swindlers operating in the United States in the years following the Great War.¹¹³ Much like the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives, these swindlers persuaded inexperienced 'citizen investors' to sign over their US Liberty Loan bonds in exchange for shares in 'uncertain, worthless, or even non-existent enterprises'.¹¹⁴ Most infamous was Charles Ponzi, who was operating a pyramid scheme in Boston at the same time as the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives.¹¹⁵ Perhaps as a function of its scale, the Irish bond drive attracted the most criticism in the press, with Wall Street journalists taking a particularly dismissive line.¹¹⁶ In response to a reader's question, the financial editor of the *New York Tribune* advised against exchanging Liberty bonds for 'so-called Irish bonds', which they described as 'to say the least, one of the most highly speculative "securities" ever offered to the American public'.¹¹⁷ Most vociferous in its condemnation was an editorial in *The Street*, which was picked up by *The Daily Telegraph* in London. Referring to 'this absurd but dangerous Irish Loan swindle', the editorial

¹⁰⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish revolution*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁸ Witness statement of M. A. O'Mara, 7, BMH, WS0690; e.g. *Irish Press*, 27 Mar. 1920, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick McCartan, *With de Valera in America* (Dublin, 1932), p. 145.

¹¹⁰ Patricia Lavelle, *James O'Mara: a staunch Sinn Féiner 1873-1948* (Dublin, 1961), p. 154; Hilt and Rahn, 'Turning citizens into investors', p. 91; Boland to J. O'Mara, 16 Dec. 1919, UCDA, P150/1138.

¹¹¹ Hilt and Rahn, 'Turning citizens into investors', p. 92.

¹¹² *Kentucky Irish American*, 29 May 1920, p. 2; Katherine Friel to Katherine Hughes, 12 Feb. 1920, NYPL, MS 1854/b.4/44.

¹¹³ Ott, *Wall Street*, p. 116.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Francis M. Carroll, *American opinion and the Irish question, 1910-23* (Dublin, 1978), p. 153.

¹¹⁷ *New York Tribune*, 1 Feb. 1920, p. 5.

declared that 'no intelligent patriotic American will give them the money they wish to shoot British policemen in the back or attempt assassination of British officials in Ireland'.¹¹⁸

The Lithuanian and Irish missions to America also faced opposition from rival factions within their diasporas. Lithuanian-American communists were openly hostile to the Lithuanian Liberty Loan and campaigned against it through their newspapers and local organizations. Despite continuous efforts of the mission to rally moderate socialists, they refused to support the loan decreed by 'reactionary' Lithuanian governments.¹¹⁹ Equally undermining were continual quarrels between clericals and nationalists, which were energized by political developments in Lithuania. For instance, clerical attacks against the first Lithuanian mission, which they deemed too secular, intensified after the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party secured a landslide victory in the republic's first democratic general elections to the Constituent Assembly, held in April 1920.¹²⁰

In the Irish case, the FOIF leadership saw de Valera as a rival voice for the Irish in America, and this caused resentment that came to the fore whenever he strayed into domestic American politics. This was most notable in his attempts to secure US recognition by leveraging Irish-American voting power during the 1920 presidential election. In particular, de Valera's presence at that year's Republican and Democratic Party conventions drew fierce criticism from sections of the FOIF leadership. This mapped onto the pre-existing rivalry between the FOIF's factions, with John Devoy's *Gaelic American* accusing de Valera of misappropriation of funds and Joseph McGarrity's *Irish Press* coming to his defence with counter-claims of financial malfeasance.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the bond drive proceeded, achieving considerable results for their efforts.

VI

A total of \$1,852,047 was raised during the Lithuanian Liberty Loan campaign, attracting subscriptions from c. 28,000 subscribers.¹²² In this way, the \$5m loan remained greatly undersubscribed and the initial expectations of its organizers to raise up to \$10m proved highly unrealistic. However, revealing the effectiveness of the Lithuanian bond drive's marketing strategy, 23 per cent of subscriptions were paid in the form of US Liberty Loan bonds.¹²³ The majority of the

¹¹⁸ Cited in *Daily Telegraph*, 11 Feb. 1920, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ *Keleivis*, 21 Jan. 1920, p. 2; J. Vileišis to E. Galvanauskas, 23 July 1920, LCVA, 656/1/318, fo. 42.

¹²⁰ Jonas Aničas, *Jonas Vileišis, 1872–1942* (Vilnius, 1995), p. 286.

¹²¹ Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', ch. 8.

¹²² Transfer Act, 26 Apr. 1923, LCVA, 927/4/3613, fo. 63. The total amount of monies raised from 1919 to 1923 includes partial unfinished payments, but not the interest that accumulated while keeping the money in a bank account. Since the mission's financial records did not keep track of series of bonds sold, the estimation of the number of subscribers is based on bond inventories produced at the end of the campaign.

¹²³ Final report of the Lithuanian Liberty Loan, c. 1925, LCVA, 387/5/247, fo. 38.

money came from Illinois (27 per cent) and Pennsylvania (15 per cent),¹²⁴ the two main centres of Lithuanian-American settlement (19 and 28 per cent of the Lithuanian-American population respectively).¹²⁵

The Irish bond drive succeeded in raising \$5,151,600 from 276,219 subscribers.¹²⁶ Although the public goal was to raise \$10m, the private expectation was that \$5–6m would be raised, so this result was in line with the organizers' expectations.¹²⁷ Indeed, according to historian Francis Carroll, this was the largest amount ever raised by the Irish movement in America.¹²⁸ As was the case with the Lithuanian Loan, the majority of these funds came from the main centres of Irish-American population. Some 26 per cent came from New York and 20 per cent from Massachusetts.¹²⁹

The great majority (75 per cent) of Lithuanian-American subscribers bought \$50 bonds, the lowest denomination possible.¹³⁰ Many chose to purchase in instalments but a substantial minority failed to complete their payments, indicating that the minimum price was set too high for the largely working-class Lithuanian-American community. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian mission believed that the 'ordinary workers' contributed the most to the loan, whereas the Lithuanian-American middle class was less generous or even opposed to the campaign.¹³¹

Reflecting the different socio-economic composition of the Irish diaspora, the Irish bond drive attracted a number of large subscriptions. John McGinley, vice-president of the West Penn Steel Company, subscribed \$20,000, Edward L. Doheny, chairman of the Mexican Petroleum Company, subscribed \$10,000, as did Thomas J. Maloney, president of the Lorillard Tobacco Company.¹³² Large subscriptions also came from the bond drive's organizers, including Joseph McGarrity who, although a liquor importer during a time of prohibition, managed a personal subscription of \$5,000.¹³³ However, these were rare exceptions and, much like the Lithuanian case, the success of the Irish bond drive rested on the working class. According to the Irish bond drive's secretary for Manhattan, most of the subscribers were poor people, who 'put their savings of years on the altar of the Irish Republic'.¹³⁴ Wealthier Irish-Americans, in the main, held aloof.¹³⁵

¹²⁴ Financial report of local Lithuanian Liberty Loan committees, 1923, LCVA, 656/1/320, fos. 161–94.

¹²⁵ According to the pre-war statistics in Karolis Vairas-Račkauskas, *Amerika arba rinkinys įvairių faktų, žinotinių Amerikoje gyvenantiems ir čion atkeliaujantiems lietuviams* (New York, NY, 1915), pp. 204–5.

¹²⁶ Circular from F. P. Walsh, 23 Sept. 1920, NLI, MS 21,548(3); Carroll, *Money*, p. 23.

¹²⁷ Carroll, *Money*, p. 20.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹²⁹ Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', p. 249.

¹³⁰ Transfer Act, 26 Apr. 1923, LCVA, 927/4/3613, fo. 63.

¹³¹ Lithuanian mission's annual report, 23 Feb. 1921, LCVA, 656/1/318, fo. 151.

¹³² American Committee for Irish Independence bulletin, sheet 2, 2 Apr. 1920, NYPL, MS 582/b.13/2; *Irish Press*, 13 Mar. 1920, p. 1; Hannigan, *De Valera*, 166.

¹³³ *Irish Press*, 21 Feb. 1920, p. 1.

¹³⁴ O'Sheel to Cohalan, 9 Apr. 1920, American Irish Historical Society, DFC/Bx.13/10.

¹³⁵ Hopkinson, *Irish War of Independence*, p. 171.

This is borne out in the subscriber lists; the vast majority (76 per cent) of subscribers opted to purchase the minimum subscription, which was \$10.¹³⁶

The majority of subscribers to the Irish bond drive were men, but a significant minority were women. This varied by location: while 41 per cent of subscribers in Manhattan were women, this figure was 36 in Chicago, 23 in Philadelphia, and 20 in Birmingham, Alabama.¹³⁷ The same was true in the Lithuanian case: women made up 20 per cent of subscribers Baltimore, 19 in Brooklyn, and 7 in Homestead (Pennsylvania).¹³⁸

The interactions of Lithuanian-Americans with other nationalities during the Lithuanian Liberty Loan campaign were very limited. The provisional government's decree on the loan stipulated that bonds were to be sold among 'Lithuanian citizens in America'.¹³⁹ Indeed, the Lithuanian authorities often referred to the Lithuanian-American loan as an 'internal loan'. However, it must be noted that the word 'citizen' was understood and used in an inclusive sense and the loan promoters targeted not only ethnic Lithuanians, but also Jews and Polish-speakers. The mission especially sought collaboration with Jews originating from Lithuania. Its call was answered to some extent, as numerous Jewish-speakers shared the stage with Lithuanian nationalists promoting the loan. That said, the mission observed, with disappointment, that there were not many Jewish subscribers to the Lithuanian Liberty Loan.¹⁴⁰ Besides the call to 'all citizens regardless of their religion or nationality', the mission did not appeal massively to broader audiences on the basis of small nation, Catholic, or anti-Bolshevik solidarity. The strategy of focusing on the Lithuanian-American community was possibly designed as a security measure against eventual inquiries from the American authorities, which only gave the Lithuanian mission unofficial permission to organize the loan campaign.¹⁴¹

Similarly, the majority of subscribers to the Irish bond drive were Irish-born or of Irish descent.¹⁴² There were a number of non-Irish subscribers, however, including some Lithuanians.¹⁴³ The Irish bond drive's organizers also reached out to other nationalities and ethnic groups in America. As with the Lithuanian case, it was not uncommon for a rabbi to share a stage with the bond drive's promoters, and a number of Jews, predominantly of eastern European

¹³⁶ Statement issued by *Dáil Éireann* of receipts and expenditures of First Loan of the Republic of Ireland to 13 June 1921, UCDA, P150/962.

¹³⁷ Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', p. 269.

¹³⁸ Reports from local loan committees, LCVA, 383/2/621. Since only a limited number of lists of subscribers to the Lithuanian Liberty Loan was sent to the mission by local loan committees and even a smaller number of these lists have survived, this percentage is based on incomplete data: one list from Baltimore (there were three loan committees in total), three lists from Brooklyn (four committees in total) and one list from the single committee in Homestead, the only one surviving from Pennsylvania.

¹³⁹ *Laikinosios vyriausybės žinios*, 8 Oct. 1919, p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ Lithuanian mission's annual report, 23 Feb. 1921, LCVA, 656/1/318, fo. 151.

¹⁴¹ J. Vileišis to Rev. Leo Vaiciekauskas, 17 July 1920, LCVA, 656/1/292, fo. 45.

¹⁴² Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', p. 283.

¹⁴³ *Irish Press*, 7 Feb. 1920, p. 1.

origin, can also be identified in the Irish bond drive's subscriber lists.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, when the World Zionist Organization launched the *Keren Hayesod* (Foundation Fund) drive for Palestine, an editorial recommended that its organizers take note of the tactics employed in the Irish bond drive.¹⁴⁵ There were also reports of Chinese- and African-Americans subscribing to the Irish bond drive. Notably, the black activist Marcus Garvey, whose Universal Negro Improvement Association launched a 'Liberian Liberty Loan' later in 1920, was greatly influenced by the activities of the *Dáil* mission to America.¹⁴⁶ The government of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, in exile in America since its defeat to Polish troops, also drew inspiration from the Irish, promoting a bond drive of its own in 1921.¹⁴⁷

VII

This article has examined the funding of the unrecognized Lithuanian and Irish republics in their wars of independence. Although separated by a continent, each republic followed a similar strategy: Pre-Sovereign Debt. Both countries had large diasporas on which to call and a history of diaspora fundraising, relying on their compatriots not only for buying the bonds, but also for selling them. Similarly, both countries were striving to gain international recognition in a post-war world in which America had never been more influential. By imitating the US Liberty Loan, the Lithuanian and Irish republics placed their bond drives as successors to that fundraising campaign, invoking President Wilson's war aim of self-determination for small nations. Indeed, by accepting US Liberty Loan bonds at par in exchange for their own, the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives can be seen as part of a 'second life' of the US Liberty Loan. Perhaps as a consequence of their experience of the US Liberty Loans, the Irish and Lithuanian bond drives employed remarkably similar tactics of organization and marketing. Although communication between the organizers of the two bond drives was virtually non-existent, they were united by a common inspiration.

This comparative analysis has also allowed us to reveal some significant points of contrast between the Lithuanian and Irish bond drives. The Lithuanian campaign had a lower profile than the Irish, which provided security from the interference of American officials. In the Irish case, its broader advertising campaign used a more universal message to attract subscribers from outside the Irish community and raise awareness more generally. The Lithuanian-Irish comparison also highlights the importance of pricing: with a minimum subscription of \$50, the Lithuanian Liberty Loan was too expensive for much of its working-class support-base. Meanwhile, the Irish bonds, priced at just \$10, were affordable for even the poorest of supporters.

¹⁴⁴ Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', p. 282.

¹⁴⁵ Bernstein, "'The two finest nations in the world'", p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', p. 281.

¹⁴⁷ *Svoboda*, 25 July 1921, p. 1; *Svoboda*, 8 Nov. 1921, p. 3. The West Ukrainian government in exile raised \$110,000 in America from July 1921 to May 1922 through its 'National Defense' loan (*Svoboda*, 23 Feb. 1923, p. 2).

Clearly, the Lithuanian Liberty Loan campaign fell short of expectations. A second Lithuanian bond drive, launched in July 1921, also gave meagre results.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, various donation campaigns took off, indicating that Lithuanian-Americans turned back to more traditional ways of supporting their homeland.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the Lithuanian Liberty Loan provided significant funding for the young state during the most critical years of its existence, contributing to the republic's war financing and enabling its diplomats to function. As a result, in September 1921, Lithuania was admitted to the League of Nations which constituted a major step towards the republic's international recognition, completely achieved in 1922. As stressed by the mission, the Lithuanian Liberty Loan provided 'not only a monetary value, but a moral one as well'.¹⁵⁰ The Lithuanian government duly paid the interests and proceeded to repayment of bonds in 1935–6. The only investors not to be reimbursed were those who agreed to extend the term of their bond to 1945, by which time the Second World War had extinguished the Lithuanian state.¹⁵¹

The Irish bond drive exceeded expectations, enabling the Irish Republic to prosecute its war of independence against Britain while mobilizing public opinion in America. The *Dáil* launched a second bond drive in November 1921, with an initial focus on Washington DC and Illinois. Raising \$532,450 in little more than a month, it was cut short by the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in December.¹⁵² This treaty created the Irish Free State, which gained admission to the League of Nations in 1923. The civil war (1922–3) that followed Irish independence and consequent divisions in the country's politics complicated and delayed repayment of the bond certificates.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, their importance in the struggle for Irish independence was undisputed. As the Irish Free State's finance minister remarked when proposing repayment with interest, 'If it had not been for the generosity and the faith of the people who subscribed to the Loan there would be no Free State to-day'.¹⁵⁴

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¹⁴⁸ Juozas Skirius, *Julius J. Bielskis (1891–1976). Gyvenimas Amerikoje tarnaujant Lietuvai: JAV lietuvių veikėjas ir diplomatas* (Chicago, IL, 2004), pp. 98–115.

¹⁴⁹ An outline of donations, LCVA, 656/1/320, fos. 200–1.

¹⁵⁰ Lithuanian mission's annual report, 23 Feb. 1921, LCVA, 656/1/318, fo. 152.

¹⁵¹ Juozas Skirius, 'Dėl Lietuvos laisvės paskolos gražinimo JAV lietuviams', *Istorija. Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų mokslo darbai*, 2 (2007), pp. 29–40.

¹⁵² Adams, 'Shadow of a taxman', ch. 10.

¹⁵³ The repayment of the Irish bond certificates is beyond the focus of this article, but is covered in detail in Carroll, *Money*.

¹⁵⁴ *Dáil Éireann* debate, 13 Dec. 1923: the postal commission: *Dáil Éireann* Loans and Funds Bill, 1923 – Second Stage.

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