

Irish paupers in Scotland between the wars: deportation, citizenship and empire

David Feldman, Birkbeck, University of London

Becky Taylor, University of East Anglia

In the summer of 1928, following increasingly sympathetic discussions with the Scottish Office, a deputation composed of representatives of Scottish churches attended the Home Office.¹ Its purpose was to demand that any Irish migrant who applied for poor relief in Scotland could be returned to their parish of origin. In essence the Irish would be deported.² And to remove the source of the perceived problem the deputation demanded that in the place of unrestricted movement between the two nations, migration from Ireland should in future be tightly regulated.

Speaking to a correspondent of the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* after the meeting, one of the delegation told of an Irishman who had been convicted in Glasgow ‘the other day’ for being drunk and disorderly: ‘He had been in Glasgow a fortnight and had had a week’s work although there were thousands of native-born Glasgow citizens walking the streets.’ Adding to his anecdotal evidence that the Irish were stealing jobs from honest Scots, the delegate cited statistics to demonstrate the iniquitous role the Irish played in western Scotland: they might only have been 25 per cent of Glasgow’s population, but they received 70 per cent of all relief, and in 1920 had made up 33 per cent of the city’s police court’s convictions.³ The delegate concluded by emphasising how matters could only worsen, claiming that as a result of the tightening of US immigration policy, Scotland was now ending up with Ireland’s ‘undesirable

element'.⁴ Here, then, we have a familiar depiction of the social problems attributed to migrant populations: the Irish formed a criminal group that simultaneously took work from the Scottish while being disproportionately reliant on poor relief. The problem facing the deputation, though, was that Irish migrants in the UK were not only Irish citizens but also British subjects by virtue of Ireland's Dominion status post-independence. This status exempted them from the immigration restrictions that had, by the inter-war period, been placed on aliens, notably the prohibition on becoming a charge on the public purse.⁵ And so, as British subjects, the Irish had the same entitlement to poor relief and other welfare provision as the wider British population.

Throughout the twentieth century, highly localized conflicts over the presence of migrants have provided the catalyst for key changes in immigration legislation and state policy. We can trace the impact of protests in the East End of London on the lead-up to the 1905 Aliens Act; of the Notting Hill riots of 1958 on momentum leading to the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act; of prejudice, discrimination and agitation in the West Midlands on the Labour government's decision to add the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act; and of the anger of the 'left behind' in 'red wall' constituencies over unrestricted EU migration on the negotiation of a 'hard' Brexit deal by Boris Johnson's Conservative government. All this suggests that we should be alert to the ways in which local opposition to the Irish and Irish heritage presence in Glasgow and surrounding towns meshed with the concerns and priorities of central government. In this case, however, alarm over the threat of Irish Catholicism to a presumed Scottish cultural (and racial) identity threatened to overturn the vision of a unified imperial subjecthood that animated key actors within the British state. As we

will see, imperial policy proved an obstacle to the development of Protestant nativism in Scotland.

These debates over the presence and rights of Irish people in interwar Scotland provide a route into thinking about the longer history of migration and welfare entitlement.⁶ The ways in which welfare rights were reconfigured in the nineteenth century with reform of the law of settlement and the shift to the New Poor Law, and in the decades after 1945 in the context of colonial and post-colonial migrations, have been the subject of significant historical attention.⁷ Sitting between these two periods, the inter-war years have been neglected or, rather, research into the entitlements and status of immigrants in these decades has been consigned to specialisms dealing with maritime labour and Jewish refugees.⁸ Once we look at these decades with a wider lens, we can find there the onset of policies designed to regulate and restrict immigration, which often conceived of citizenship as a matter of race and religion, fitness and health. In 1919 powers to deport aliens ‘detrimental to the public good’, which the Home Secretary had acquired on the outbreak of war, were extended to peacetime.⁹ The 1920 Aliens Order required all who were not British subjects to be medically inspected before landing, in the process defining mobile foreign bodies as a potential danger, even if implementation of the order did not match its draconian intent.¹⁰ International labour migration generally was discouraged and the wartime system of work permits for aliens was retained, so that in 1930 Sir John Anderson, Permanent Secretary to the Home Office, was able to claim that immigration ‘in the ordinary sense of the term’ was no longer allowed.¹¹ In this regard the United Kingdom provides an example of protectionist and exclusionary tendencies visible across the Western world.¹²

The diverse forms of racial distinction and subordination that helped to sustain the British Empire also proliferated in these decades and extended to the metropole in new ways.¹³ In 1925 the Home Office introduced the Special Restriction (Coloured Seamen Order) that required all non-white seamen in Britain's major ports to establish their British nationality or be registered as aliens. The order was designed to disqualify seamen who did not carry passports from British subjecthood, but who, hitherto, had been able to use their discharge books for documentation.¹⁴ It is easy to overlook the significance of this seemingly technical development, but at core it introduced a burden of proof for certain British subjects of colour that was not required of white British subjects. If we want to look for a crack in the principle of universal British subjecthood, something normally dated to the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, then it is to the inter-war years that we must turn.

This article, then, addresses a period in which regimes of exclusion and discrimination were reconfigured – a period when powerful elements in Scotland aimed to institutionalize an exclusionary conception of citizenship conceived on racial and religious lines but during which, crucially, they failed in their attempt. The demands made by the Scottish ministers and their supporters generated a flurry of memos, evidence gathering and correspondence but, ultimately, they failed to secure the changes they sought. It was a moment when the British government might have acted against a supposed immigration problem but chose not to do so. But this history of failure, we argue, is as important for understanding the history of immigration control, citizenship and welfare, as moments of action.

If we regard this history with a view to tangible outcomes, it confirms Enda Delaney's analysis that places the British government's support for free movement for the Irish within a longer tradition of unrestricted mobility that was only briefly interrupted by the Second World War.¹⁵ Other historians have touched on the Church of Scotland's failed campaign. Some conclude that it demonstrates the continuing strength of anti-Irish racism in interwar Scotland; others suggest that it illustrates its weakness.¹⁶ These divergent accounts are propelled by the significant but limiting question 'how prejudiced were Scottish Protestants and Unionists?' David Ritchie touches on the role of the Dominions Office in squashing any restrictions, but doesn't elaborate on his observations.¹⁷ Here we seek to extend this work to develop a more structural understanding of how free movement and eligibility for poor law relief of Irish migrants brings into focus the complex relationship between imperial subject-status, rights and belonging in Britain between the two world wars and at a time when the Irish Free State, as a newly independent nation, was attempting to flex its muscles on the international stage. By tracing the demand for immigration restriction in the 1920s and 1930s, we are able to bring to light the sometimes competing, sometimes convergent, local and national, imperial and international concerns that shaped immigration policy and their implications for welfare rights in these decades.

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The existential threat posed by Irish migration to Protestant Unionism took shape in the context of post-war politics in urban and industrial Scotland. This saw the intersection of Roman Catholicism with the expansion of the electorate, municipal democracy and the emergence of the Labour Party as a political force. At the end of

the eighteenth century Scotland could comfortably have been thought of as a Protestant nation, with Catholicism largely confined to the north-east and the Western Islands, and with its Catholic population of around 30,000 making up no more than 2 per cent of the whole. By the first decade of the twentieth century, rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and mass migration from Ireland ensured the picture was very different. In 1911 there were 520,000 Catholics, or just over one in ten of Scotland's population, most of them Irish-heritage and living in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh, industrial lowland western Scotland and the mining districts of Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Midlothian. Their concentration in particular towns – Hamilton, Greenock, Dumbarton, Kilmarnock – and in particular districts of Glasgow and Edinburgh – Gorbals, Anderston, Cowgate – made their presence and impact there especially visible.¹⁸ This visibility was not only in everyday places of work and leisure; the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in Scotland after 1878 ensured that Catholic priests, churches and schools had become deeply embedded in Scotland's new urban landscapes. And although people spoke of 'the Irish', by the first decades of the twentieth century, in reality this was more likely to refer to second- or even third-generation Irish heritage people than newly-arrived migrants.

Just as Scotland's urban geography was being reshaped, so too was its political ecology. Following the 1707 Act of Union the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 'came to be seen as a kind of surrogate national assembly with the right to pronounce authoritative judgement not only on religious matters but also on political and social issues'.¹⁹ By the last decades of the nineteenth century this dominance had already begun to be challenged at a parochial level, as Catholics sought representation on School Boards and other local public bodies. Change after the end of the First

World War accelerated and advanced this trend.²⁰ The Representation of the People Act 1918 reduced the residency qualification for electors to six months and extended the franchise to those who had been in receipt of poor relief. In Scottish towns with large Irish-heritage populations these changes saw the size of the electorate rising dramatically. Greenock had more than two and a half times as many men registered to vote in 1921 than in 1910, while Glasgow and burghs such as Dumbarton, Dunfermline saw their male electorate double.²¹ Accompanying this expansion, the Labour Party emerged as a major political force in Scotland, winning 29 out of 74 seats in the 1922 general election, more than any other political party, including 10 out of 15 seats in Glasgow.²²

These seismic shifts in Scotland's social and political map were at the forefront of the delegation's minds as they met with the Home Office. Their arguments conflated religion, race and citizenship as they painted a picture of the damage Irish migration was doing to Scotland. The delegation's leader, the Church of Scotland's Dr Rev. White, focussed on the effect of the entry of thousands of Irish and the expansion of the Roman Catholic church on Scotland's religious identity. This development, he argued, was all the more alarming because it was occurring at the same time as the 'emigration of native-born Scots' across the British empire, with the consequent demographic change threatening the 'whole character of the Scottish people' and necessitating government action:

If the human body became over-gorged with food, sickness resulted and the physician was called in. The body politics of Scotland was over-gorged with Irishmen and it was asking the Government to prescribe the remedy.²³

The reference here to the ‘body politics’ is significant and goes to the heart of the deputation’s worries. These not only concerned the Irish migrants’ imagined fecklessness and their use of poor relief but also their increasing political visibility, self-confidence and influence. Indeed, Rev. White argued passionately that ‘it was wrong that power should be placed in the hands of new arrivals *through the municipal franchise* to alter the life and customs of the community’.²⁴ Increased civic engagement might often be celebrated as a key marker of a migrant population coming of age in their new country. But in the context of 1920s Scotland the idea of Irish involvement in politics was seen as deeply threatening to a Protestant Unionist Scottish identity, weakened as it was already by emigration.

For Rev. White and the rest of the delegation, this was a threat long in the making, and they saw their trip to the Home Office as the culmination of years of campaigning. Five years earlier, in 1923, the Church of Scotland, under White’s influence, had produced a short but trenchant report – popularly known as ‘The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scottish Nationality’ – on the negative impact of Irish Catholics in Scotland. This too had drawn out the twin effects of Scottish emigration and Irish in-migration.²⁵

the Scottish race... wished for better conditions of life, higher wages, and wider prospects. Compelled by the economic pressure of the Irish race, young Scottish men and women – the flower of the nation – left their native land, and sought to build up their fortunes in America and the Dominions. It was certainly to the advantage of the countries to which they went that the best of

our Scottish people should have gone there... When Scotsmen settle in other lands they become good citizens of those countries.²⁶

Unlike the Irish migrants to Scotland who were persistently characterized as the least desirable section of the Irish population, here Scots driven out of Scotland were depicted as the ‘flower’ of the nation, destined to become exemplary citizens elsewhere. In their place, the report argued, the Irish population had been gaining ground, leading to the dominance of the Catholic church locally, particularly threatening the character of Glasgow, ‘the second city of the Empire’.²⁷ Richard Finlay suggests the ways in which Irish Catholics were described in this period in Scotland – as having ‘innate racial tendencies towards colonization, crime, drunkenness, sexual deviance, squalor, and parasitic existence’ – are hard to differentiate in ‘their intention and scope from the rabid anti-Semitism found in Europe’.²⁸ The connection was apparent to at least some of those involved in the nativist campaign. The *Dundee Courier Advertiser* drew a parallel between Scotland’s Irish problem and the difficulties of new countries established after the First World War whose peace was menaced ‘by the existence of national colonies planted in national areas’.²⁹ Minorities, whether Jews in Poland or the Irish in Scotland, threatened the the social, moral and political strength of a nation.

The interaction of race and demography provided one strand running through ‘The Menace’. Welfare and state support was another. Rev. Maclagan, who would also serve on the 1928 delegation, declared he was speaking for many when he contended that Irish Catholics ‘had most abominably abused the privileges the Scottish people had given them’. Specifically, the ability of the Irish to claim poor relief meant they

were ‘modifying the Scottish habit of thrift and independence’, so that while ‘the Irishman never hesitates to seek relief from charity organisations and local authorities ... Scotsmen [now] do not see why they should not get help’.³⁰ But the privileges of which Maclagan spoke also referred to the extension of state funding to Catholic schools under the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act. Practically, this had allowed priests to visit schools and offer religious instruction and permitted the Catholic Church to govern the morals of their teaching staff. Symbolically, integrating Catholicism into state education signalled that Irish Catholics were a permanent part of Scotland’s social and political landscape and hence deserving of government resources.

And so, lurking beneath the usual tropes of Irish migrants as over-fecund, feckless, criminal and guilty of taking work from the Scots we find seemingly bizarre claims regarding Irish political activities. Not only, under the influence of Irish labour activists, had Sunday become ‘a day for political meetings and for concerts’, but:

Their gift of speech, their aptitude for public life, their restless ambition to rule, have given them a prominent place in political county, municipal, and parochial elections. They have also asserted themselves in co-operative and benefit societies.³¹

It was certainly the case that Irish and Irish-heritage trade unionists had formed a prominent part in the highly visible wartime strikes and in the 1919 Forty Hours campaign, and the 1922 election campaign that saw ten ILP candidates sent to Parliament. But this top-level visibility had only ever been possible because of the dominance of Labour and the ILP at the grassroots and municipal levels and the role

of Catholic voters, trade union activists and rank-and-file members in the local political landscape. This was the political context for the resistance of conservative Presbyterians to state-sponsored pluralism and helps us understand the underlying preoccupations of the 1923 report and the 1928 Church of Scotland delegation. Rev. White and his co-religionists declared that they represented ‘Scottish opinion’, a position they contrasted to the Labour party, which, they argued, ‘in some large towns depended on the Irish vote’.³² But this was wishful thinking. It was precisely because the Irish population was so well-established across the Central Belt – and were not an aggregation of indigent outsiders – that they were able to participate in local affairs *as* locals. And this is why the threat they presented to a nativist and Protestant iteration of Scottishness was felt so sharply.³³

Disregarding the reality that ‘the Irish’ they feared might in fact be Scots-born or from Northern Ireland, and that Scotland was no longer a country which could be characterised as exclusively Protestant and under the control of the Kirk, Rev. White, his delegation and their supporters were fighting for a Scotland which no longer existed. They were churchmen who saw their influence – religious, social and political – eroding rapidly. While articulated as a problem with Irish paupers, the attention paid to the Irish population’s civic activities spoke of a new environment of municipal politics in which working-class voters – with Irish heritage or not – were expanding the new politics of Red Clydeside in a direct challenge to the old order and its politics of deference.

Pushing back against this reality, the 1923 report and the 1928 delegation attempted to place Scotland and the Scots, as well as Ireland and the Irish, in a far wider context.

This context positioned the Scots as good imperial subjects, emigrating to strengthen and bind the Dominions, and refracted the meaning and value of state support and political engagement almost exclusively through fixed and racialized understandings of citizenship and belonging. The Scottish delegation arrived in London certain of the support of Sir John Gilmour, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Walter Elliott, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. Both were prominent Scottish Unionists: Gilmour was an Orange Order Grand Lodge member, while Elliott was a member of the Church of Scotland who had already voiced his concern over the impact of the Irish in Glasgow.³⁴ With such backing their success seemed almost guaranteed. How, then, did they fail?

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A year before the deputation was received by the Home Office, there had in fact been an internal governmental meeting to discuss the repatriation of Irish paupers. Here too we can tie concerns over Irish pauperism and migration to a particular brand of Scottish Presbyterian Unionism. The meeting had been convened by the Scottish Office. It was chaired by Walter Elliot, a progressive Unionist who pioneered free school milk schemes and other statist measures to combat socialism, and who saw the issue of Irish pauperism as an opportunity to combine militant Protestantism with support for the native poor. At the Whitehall meeting he anticipated the arguments the deputation would make the following year:

Whether by accepting lower wages and worse conditions or through the action of compatriot foremen the Irish obtained employment in the face of serious

unemployment among Scotsmen. Numbers of Scotsmen annually emigrated from Scotland only to be replaced by Irish. The number of persons of Irish birth or extraction in Scottish prisons was out of proportion to the total number of Irish persons in Scotland.³⁵

Backing him up and reinforcing the case for control was the Scottish Board of Health, which, in the absence of any systematic statistics, provided anecdotal evidence. Jeffrey, representing the Board, cited the case of an Irishman who, having arrived from Ireland on a Sunday and making an application to Edinburgh Parish Council ‘on the following Tuesday’, ‘complained of being refused relief’. Jeffrey contended that this ‘man’s practice was to remain in Ireland so long as he could get work and to come to Scotland when unemployed because, he said, there was no provision in Ireland for persons out of work’. Warming to his theme, he asserted there were ‘often’ cases of Irishmen who ‘arrived in groups of up to twenty, up to three times a week in some places’, sometimes ‘directly recruited from Ireland’, and so taking work from the unemployed Scots.³⁶ Once again, then, the case against the Irish was that they were taking work and disproportionately applying for poor relief.

But if these were issues that generated enthusiasm within Scottish departments, their counterparts in Whitehall were dismissive, both of the need for restrictions on migration from Ireland and of concerns over the alleged abuse of poor relief. The London-based civil servants made two counter-arguments: first, that the poor relief problem was highly localized and numerically insignificant; and second, that the ramifications of changing the rights of Irish Free State migrants were vast and raised fundamental questions concerning British subjecthood and imperial belonging. To

support their case the Ministry of Health collected statistics on Irish migration and numbers of Irish migrants claiming relief. These showed that despite claims made by Elliot and the Scottish churches, Scotland was in fact experiencing a marked drop in Irish migration compared to pre-1914 levels. Census figures from 1871 to 1921 recorded a steady reduction in the Irish-born population in Scotland, both in raw numbers – from 207,770 to 159,020 – and as a percentage, from 6.18 per cent of the population to 3.26 per cent. Significantly, just over half of those recorded as Irish in the 1921 census in fact came from Northern Ireland rather than the Irish Free State. These figures at once undermined the church's claim that Scotland was being swamped by Irish migrants and gave substance to its fear that the Irish were becoming an established part of the Scottish population.³⁷

Moving on to the accusation that the Irish disproportionately received poor relief, the Ministry found some evidence to support this, as the percentage of paupers in Scotland who were Irish-born in the 1920s had remained steadily at around 7 per cent, or roughly double their proportion in the population as a whole. Moreover, had the right to remove Irish paupers not been ended on the creation of the Irish Free State, the ministry found that in 1924 just over a thousand would have been liable to deportation. However, it was equally clear that this was a geographically concentrated phenomenon. The vast majority of these cases came from three unions – Govan (520), Edinburgh (254) and Glasgow (203) – with only twenty unions across Scotland having any cases recorded.³⁸ Beyond Scotland Irish paupers figured even less prominently. Only fourteen of England and Wales's 625 unions had made any representations to the Minister on the subject and of these there were only two areas – Westminster and Liverpool's West Derby - where the issue was perceived to have

‘serious importance’. West Derby had dealt with 182 Irish paupers in the year ending March 1925, while Westminster had relieved 348 in the last five years, an annual average of approximately seventy.³⁹ Certainly other Unions dealt with Irish migrants – Paddington in London estimated it handled between thirty and thirty-five a year, Southampton up to twenty-five, and Plymouth less than ten – but none saw the Irish as a significant problem. The only Poor Law Guardians to express any strong opinion were those in Lambeth who, in direct opposition to the Scottish deputation, insisted on the rights of those Irish paupers ‘who, by reason of their war service or of their religious or political views, could not remain in southern Ireland’. Overall, the Ministry of Health’s work provided compelling evidence that the numbers of Irish Free State citizens were ‘not sufficiently large’ to justify any change in policy.⁴⁰

While the Ministry of Health was looking at poor law returns, the Ministry of Labour examined claims that the Irish were enjoying special access to local authority schemes for relief of the unemployed, a charge presumably founded on the belief that Labour councils were unfairly favouring their Irish constituents. Lochaber Water Supply Scheme had been held up as a particular culprit of direct recruiting of Irish labour: here a census conducted on 28 July 1927 found that 187 of the 2007 men employed were from the Irish Free State. But on investigation Lochaber turned out to be an outlier. Civil servants found that of the 3939 workers employed in relief schemes across Scotland only thirty-seven ‘at most’ had come from the Irish Free State.⁴¹

These figures undermined the Scottish Unionist case by revealing it to be numerically insignificant across the United Kingdom generally, but marginal too within most of Scotland. Still more decisive, however, were the opinions of the Dominions Office

and Home Office. Largely unconcerned with the local impacts of migration, these ministries' sights were set on the bigger picture. Leo Amery, as Colonial Secretary, declared he would outright oppose any plan 'to regulate the immigration of natives of the Irish Free State into the United Kingdom'. For him any such proposal would be unacceptable, partly on the grounds of cost, but more importantly because it would be an 'intolerable interference in peace-time' for 'ordinary passengers'. Here we see the lingering legacy of nineteenth-century liberal assumptions over the right to freedom of movement, a right the state might restrict only in times of war or epidemic. Passports had only become a de facto requirement for people entering or leaving Britain after 1920, and particularly within an imperial context, the idea of hindering the movement of non-alien through systematic border controls remained highly contested.⁴²

More fundamentally, however, in the eyes of the British government, natives of the Irish Free State only existed as Irish citizens within the Irish state. Beyond its borders their overriding status was that of British subject, and as the law stood they could not be excluded from the United Kingdom. On this point Amery was uncompromising: 'It is an established principle of this country that the possession of British nationality carries with it the right of admission to British territory.' For Dominions Office civil servants who were opposed to 'any proposal to deprive British subjects of their right of admission to the mother country', the principle of imperial citizenship similarly took precedence over any local concerns around pauperism, Scottish identity or political advantage.⁴³

In Whitehall then, the preoccupation of key civil servants lay not with the concerns of a few parishes in Scotland or the declining influence of the Kirk, but with maintaining a unified British subjecthood that would express and facilitate an empire. By the late 1920s and early 1930s their priorities centred around managing the effects of the depression and long-term unemployment in the context of growing challenges to Britain's global status. We can see this, for example, in the 1931 Committee on Empire Migration, which dealt simultaneously with undesirable Irish migration to Britain, the problem of a 'surplus population' at home caused by high unemployment, and ambitions for 'redistributing the white population within the Empire'.⁴⁴ Sitting at the heart of the government's response to all these challenges was the principle of free movement of people and goods within and between all parts of its empire. Such movement would facilitate the flow of raw materials to the metropole and promote white settlement in the Dominions. It would boost economic activity at the same time as reinforcing personal and cultural ties to the motherland. It is understandable therefore that the Dominions Office saw the Scotland's Irish pauper issue as only one part of 'the larger question of the repatriation of migrants, on any grounds, within the Empire generally'. And this attitude lay behind its insistence on 'securing uniformity of practice between members of the British Commonwealth of Nations in this matter'.⁴⁵

The Home Office similarly declared that its concern lay, not in the specifics of Scottish experience, but with maintaining the consistency of British subject-status within the United Kingdom. Consequently civil servants declared their policy would be to object:

to any proposal having for its purpose the sub-division of British nationality...
[as] it would be a complete reversal of immemorial policy for the Government
to take power to keep out or send out any British subject from this country.⁴⁶

But behind such definitive statements there was ambiguity in attitudes towards British subject-status. As we have seen, only two years previously the 1925 Coloured Seamen Order had done precisely this. Its insistence on passports rather than service records for colonial seamen undermined their automatic right of entry to the United Kingdom and so set up a mechanism for the differential treatment of British subjects.⁴⁷ Some in the government favoured extending a policy of differentiated nationality beyond colonial seamen to Irish migrants. The Home Secretary William Joynson-Hicks, a vigorous evangelical and anti-Bolshevik right-wing Conservative, like Walter Eliot the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, was personally sympathetic to the opinions of the Scottish churchmen.⁴⁸ Ignoring the statistics produced by the Ministries of Health and Labour, and the clear guidance from the Home Office and Dominions Office over the imperial ramifications of their proposals, Joynson-Hicks and Elliot together argued that ‘the gravity of the situation justified a departure ... from present law and custom’.⁴⁹ Jointly they proposed a two-pronged approach. First, they drew up plans to develop a ‘reciprocal agreement’ with the Irish Free State, so that both countries had the right to remove the other’s paupers to their place of origin. This, of course, would have been reciprocal only in theory – the number of United Kingdom paupers in the Irish Free State was negligible – and in practice would primarily have confirmed Britain’s right to remove Irish paupers to Ireland. Their proposal would have reinstated the long-held practice of removal enshrined in the poor law, and one

which was still in operation in relation to Northern Ireland. As such, therefore, it was not contentious for any of the government departments.

Their second proposal, though, was far more problematic. In this vision those entering without a permit issued by either the Ministry of Labour or a labour exchange ‘would be barred from work in the country for a certain number of years’. In effect, Joynson-Hicks and Eliot were proposing to treat British subjects from the Irish Free State as if they were aliens. To further ensure that Irish migrants were not threatening British workers, labour exchanges would not be allowed to issue a permit ‘if workmen capable of performing the work were available locally or could be made available from other Exchanges’. The proposals made it clear that permits ‘would only be granted in exceptional cases’, and that moreover a system of penalties would be introduced, to be ‘imposed on any person knowingly employing’ migrants who did not have a permit.⁵⁰ The beauty of this scheme, in the eyes of its proposers, was that while:

immigration from Ireland would be greatly reduced, it could not be alleged that this was done on racial or religious grounds, or on any grounds other than the protection of the workmen of this country.⁵¹

Given that most Irish migrants coming to Britain did so entirely informally, typically picking up work by word-of-mouth on arrival, such restrictions would have been catastrophic. These proposals flew in the face of Home Office and Dominion Office advice. In the case of Joynson-Hicks, subjecthood and entitlements based on empire gave way in the face of national protectionist political visions. The local and regional

concerns of the deputation of Scottish churches in July 1928 converged with, and gave additional weight to, the national-level proposals prepared jointly by the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Home Secretary, who did so despite the want of evidence to suggest their proposals were necessary.

And yet these combined attempts to influence policy made no headway. Given the magnitude of the change in the meaning of British subjecthood suggested by the introduction of stringent work permits for imperial subjects, Cabinet required a further round of evidence gathering, which was carried out in the autumn and winter of 1928. The results confirmed the Ministry of Health's earlier findings that any problem with Irish pauperism was highly localized. Further, the difficulty of disaggregating Northern Irish migration from Irish Free State migration meant its dimensions were fundamentally unquantifiable. Given the weight of evidence, Joynson-Hicks reluctantly accepted that legislative change was unjustifiable. However, acknowledging that Irish in-migration had fallen did not lead him to abate his anti-Irish stance: 'It is, in fact, the Irish and their descendants already in Scotland who present the real problem.'⁵²

The arrival of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour administration in the summer of 1929 changed the political landscape. The new Secretary of State for Scotland, William Adamson, a Scottish trade unionist and ex-miner cognisant of the importance of the Irish in Scotland's Labour Party, refused to entertain the proposals. He simply ignored further submissions from the Scottish churches for the repatriation of Irish paupers and 'to fix a minimum period before an immigrant be allowed to exercise the franchise'.⁵³ However, the vital skirmish had been fought before Labour took office,

when the advocates of an indivisible imperial subjecthood – however tainted by anti-Black attitudes it was in practice – had out-manoeuvred the leaders of Scottish nativism and their sympathizers in government.

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So far our discussions of citizenship and entitlements of the Irish in Britain might imply that the major, or indeed only, players in this history, were Scottish or English. But this would be to ignore the ways in which by the 1920s the established imperial order was already being challenged, not only by the dismantling of empires as part of the Treaty of Versailles, but also by Irish independence. We can see the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922 as part of the arrival of new, and not necessarily deferential, actors in the international order. Reinforcing this impression, from its first days the new Irish government publicly declared its intention to follow a different and self-consciously modern approach to welfare to draw a line under the poor law machinery it had inherited.⁵⁴ Arguing that the old practices often ‘opposed to the welfare of the poor persons concerned’ and caused ‘great suffering and hardship’, the Irish government would, as Michael Collins made plain to Winston Churchill in 1922, make it a priority to disband workhouses, reform the poor law and end the removal of paupers.⁵⁵

Behind this assertive public face, privately civil servants in Dublin admitted that their ‘real concern’ was to ‘find a way to prevent Irish poor persons who become chargeable on the rates of Great Britain from being made a charge on Irish local

rates'. They knew that although the Irish government had suspended the poor law in Ireland it remained in force in the United Kingdom, as did the British government's right to deport Irish paupers, a practice that civil servants privately thought reasonable.⁵⁶

Such persons have made little or no contribution to the wealth of the country which is called on to support them, in all probability they have rendered no special service which would place communities in Great Britain under any obligation to them.⁵⁷

Overriding all other concerns was their fear that if Ireland refused to agree to a reciprocal arrangement over pauper removals, this could 'lead to measures to control immigration to Great Britain'. Given the reliance of many Irish families on emigration to Britain, particularly in the light of tightened entry controls to America, this was something to be avoided at all costs. Consequently, behind public expressions of defiance, on both pragmatic and ideological grounds, civil servants worked to drag their heels – taking years to reply to correspondence – while also focussing their minds on how best to reduce the stigma attached to removal. To this end they suggested that migrants' point of arrival should be 'a railway station rather than a Poor Law institution', both because most workhouses had been closed and for humane reasons: 'it would focus less public attention on... their destitution and the reasons for their removal are not so much advertised in their native place'.⁵⁸

Ireland's refusal to engage with the British proposals combined with the British Labour government's lack of interest in pursuing the matter led to a stalemate. It took

the fall of the Labour government in 1931 and the ever-deepening depression to force the issue of deportation of paupers back on the table.⁵⁹ In 1932, with unemployment in the United Kingdom peaking at 22 per cent, the Dominion Office finally received an answer, formally rebuffing a reciprocal deportation agreement. Or, as Cabinet put it, the 'I.F.S. do not want the destitute Irish of G.B. returned to Ireland and [use] high humanitarian [grounds] to justify their attitude'.⁶⁰ The Irish government had indeed argued that within Ireland 'there was no law of settlement and no power of compulsory removal', because these were 'out of harmony with the modern conception of public social services freely given to all residents however recently they migrated to a new district'. Reinforcing its point, Dublin's letter went on to note that there would be no workhouses to receive the deported Irish as they had been 'closed altogether and converted into Homes for the aged and infirm or Hospitals for the sick poor'. Furthermore, as the letter pointed out, Britain's request was looking out of date even by its own standards, as following its 1929 Local Government Act and own reforms of the poor law, the numbers of people liable for removal were significantly reduced. Dublin's one concession was to agree to 'give the fullest consideration to all cases in which removal back to this country is desirable in the interests of the person whom it is proposed to deport'.⁶¹ As in 1922, at the dawn of its independence, the Irish Free State's stated position was about far more than the removal of paupers and carried its own political charge. Éamon De Valera had just been elected on a platform that included repealing the controversial Oath of Allegiance to the British Crown, which itself was part of a package of measures that promised a newly assertive and socially just Ireland.

Yet while there was a degree of political grandstanding in the Irish government's position, Irish politicians and civil servants also were performing for a new audience: not only their national electorate, but also on an emerging international stage. What we find expressed in this 1932 letter was a set of norms increasingly becoming institutionalized in the League of Nations and its International Labour Organisation. In the minds of the British and French governments, these institutions existed solely as a means to enable established imperial agendas via a different medium. But the reality was that the League and its attendant organisations consisted of such a diffuse range of 'shifting alliances, networks and institutions' that they were impossible for Britain or France to completely control. Britain's Dominions had joined these institutions as freestanding nations not as imperial appendages. This mattered because these new bodies created new international fora that were never completely controlled by the imperial powers, despite their best efforts to dominate them. In no small part this was because even for the great powers, international opinion mattered. Britain had long set store by its civilising influence across the globe, and had often publicly legitimised its empire on this basis. After 1920 the League and Geneva were to become another important site where such 'work of legitimation', as Susan Pedersen puts it, needed to be performed.⁶²

And so, when the Irish Free State joined the League of Nations in 1923, it explicitly used its new position to try to carve out an independent role for itself. As one contemporary political commentator put it:

In South Africa and the Irish Free State, and to some extent in Canada, their position in the League and their rights there have been the touchstone and the

test of their freedom from subordination, and of equality with Great Britain in their relations with other States.⁶³

In this aim Ireland was successful, as it rapidly became seen as a serious small nation player within the League, a position which was explicitly recognized by its election to the League Council in 1930. And thus while in this article we have been focussed on Britain's relationship with Ireland and Irish migrants, in reality, from the late 1920s the Irish Free State was developing independent relationships both in its status as a Dominion and as part of the League of Nations. As with the engagement of the Irish electorate in the Labour Party in Scotland that served to destabilize established elites, through the medium of new international institutions, the Irish Free State attempted to disrupt the received international political hierarchy.

To this end the Irish became closely involved in nearly all of the League's most important projects, including its development of international agreements over labour mobility and welfare entitlements.⁶⁴ Central to these projects were attempts to standardize the assistance available to 'indigent foreigners' across the signatory nations. This work was premised on progressive understandings of non-punitive state support, in which the best interests of the assisted person and their family were to take priority, most notably on the issue of deportation.⁶⁵ Again, we can see how Ireland, as a country of emigration, had a strong national interest in ensuring the good treatment of migrants in need, and so not only actively contributed to the report, but was also quick to endorse its final principles.⁶⁶ Our point here is not that Ireland was more progressive than Britain in its treatment of indigent foreigners – in fact Britain by this point had dismantled much of its poor law – but rather that independence had meant,

for the Irish, not simply the reworking of old colonial norms, but developing a new political international identity.

In this Ireland was not alone. From the first years of the twentieth century, Canada, Australia and South Africa had all introduced their own immigration controls. These typically included entry restrictions for British subjects likely 'to become chargeable to public funds', and deportation measures for British subjects who became convicted criminals or had become chargeable to public funds.⁶⁷ Here we can see the active fracturing of formal imperial citizenship. Whitehall cleaved persistently to the idea of imperial citizenship. At the same time, it disregarded how the Dominions had for some time been expressing their own understandings of what it meant to be part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, through barring entry to undesirable British immigrants, and how the Irish were asserting themselves within the League of Nations and beyond. Whitehall's insistence on an enduring British subjecthood both protected individual Irish paupers whom Scottish Unionists would like to deport, and took no heed of the ways in which the international field was being profoundly reworked in the inter-war period.

* * *

Finally, we are bound to ask whether this history amounts to anything more than an account of things that didn't happen. The Scots church fathers failed. Neither their demand to have Irish paupers deported nor for an extension of residency requirements for electoral registration found expression either in policy or practice. Nor did the

British government gain a reciprocal agreement with the Irish Free State over the deportation of paupers or manage to unify immigration policy, citizenship and welfare entitlements across the Dominions. Nor, for that matter, did the international welfare agreements developed by the League of Nations, and enthusiastically endorsed by the Irish Free State, ever see light of day. The lessons we draw from this episode do not flow from changing policy, legislation, or administrative practice. Instead, we suggest, the traces left in the archives by these divergent projects illumine the politics of immigration control, citizenship and welfare in the decades between the world wars and, notably, before the emergence of post-1945 welfare states.

First, there was the confrontation of different scales of experience and political vision. What was of burning importance at a local level did not result in national legislation or imperial policy, even if, as in this case, key government ministers were actively anti-Irish in their sentiments and political agendas. We know from other moments in twentieth-century domestic British politics that this disjuncture was not inevitable, and so should not assume that the grievances expressed by a small number of districts were bound to fail. Paying attention to where they did so reveals the importance of historical context and contingency, and allows us to step away from an assumption that local level anti-immigrant scaremongering always feeds through to national legislation. In this case it was Scotland's position in the Union that played a large role in dampening action. As Richard Finlay has argued, Scottish politicians from both the left and the right continued to see the solution to Scottish problems within a 'wider British perspective' so that the 'issues, the personnel, and the debate north of the border was dominated by an agenda that was set in London'.⁶⁸ For all the rhetoric vaunting the 'Union', Whitehall would always treat Scottish concerns – even

conservative Unionist concerns – as subservient to the needs of the metropole and the empire. At Whitehall, and at the national level, it was another scale entirely – that of empire – which took precedence. As disunited as different Whitehall departments often were in their priorities, on this point they converged. The Ministry of Labour argument that the presence of the Irish in Scotland was only a highly localized problem; the Home Office's insistence that all British subjects needed to be treated equally; and the Dominion Office's idea of a unitary imperial identity all worked to ensure that Irish migrants continued to be able to access welfare support while in Britain.

Second, the position of Irish paupers in Scotland draws attention to the combustible relationship between immigration, welfare and politics well before the *Windrush* era. Even in the early twenty-first century, over sixty years after the construction of a nationally-driven welfare state, locality and local belonging remain key in mediating access to particular welfare benefits, not only in arenas of adoption, child protection and personal care but also more visibly in council housing and the dispersal and accommodation of asylum seekers. For the inter-war period, this tie between locality and welfare was far tighter, and the desire of certain localities to remove Irish paupers to the Irish parish of their birth was in line with longstanding poor law principles. Even following the 1929 Local Government Act, which began dismantling the poor law, both indoor and outdoor relief continued to be assessed, administered and delivered locally. And as the rights associated with British subject status expanded to include access to welfare benefits that increasingly did not come with a punitive stigma, this had significant implications for the meanings of inclusion and exclusion and their bearing on entitlement.

Third, this episode reveals the contradictory influences shaping policy making on immigration between the world wars. In the case of the Irish, Britain refrained from a measure of immigration restriction. Yet at the same time, as Laura Tabili's work on colonial seamen has demonstrated, we cannot believe that these restrained policies owed much to government's commitment to universal principles regarding free movement or an egalitarian conception of citizenship.⁶⁹ Rather, they represented the domestic political and policy consequences of imperial subjecthood. These extended well beyond the skirmish with Scottish interests. It is no coincidence that Leo Amery, one of the most forceful advocates of imperial nationality and unregulated migration between the Irish Free State and Great Britain, was also the architect of state-supported emigration to the Dominions following the First World War.⁷⁰ The project reached its apogee with the programme of imperial preference introduced by the Ottawa conference in 1932. However, the implications of imperial subjecthood for immigration and nationality were contingent, shaped by the institutional, economic and ideological forces operating in particular contexts: as the experiences of those affected by the Coloured Seamen Act knew only too well, it did not lead the British government to allow unfettered access to all imperial subjects. The Irish in Scotland were protected by precepts that flowed from a vision of a unified imperial identity, one that nevertheless was increasingly challenged by the growing independence of the Dominions, and which was to become increasingly coded in terms of whiteness.

Finally, then, this is an episode which also points to the lineaments of change.

Internationally, the Irish Free State responded to the migrant question as an opportunity to present a self-consciously modern and postcolonial image to the world, and as a chance to manifest this internationally, through its involvement in the League

of Nations. The arrival of small states on the global stage, and their efforts to reshape and coordinate welfare delivery for mobile populations, heralded the emergence of new actors and new conceptions of citizenship and entitlement. Although the history we have told led to nothing more than a paper trail, it also does reveal the emergence, well before the disruptions marked by the Second World War, of new regimes of citizenship and belonging that challenged older, still dominant, more conservative practices and norms.

Locally the emergence of Labour in Scotland signalled a new form of politics that had the potential to embrace and champion the interests of minority groups. Nationally, the advent of the Labour government (1929-31) and of politicians who in part owed their presence in Whitehall to the Irish Catholic vote, ensured that Joynson-Hicks's vision of restricted Irish migration was squashed. If we look forward to the post-1945 decades, we can see that the competition between domestic and imperial imperatives, which underpinned the controversy over how to respond to Irish immigration, anticipated the policy debate that preceded the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act. In the interwar years a coalition of churchmen and politicians failed in their attempt to take away the right of residence in Britain from a class of people who possessed British nationality. But this is precisely what was introduced with ever greater severity in the immigration acts passed in 1962, 1968 and 1971.

¹ Stewart Brown, 'Outside the Covenant: The Scottish Presbyterian Church and Irish Immigration, 1922-38', *The Innes Review* 42:1, 1991, pp. 28-9.

² Paupers could still be removed to parishes in Northern Ireland. The Poor Law (Scotland) Act, 1898 decreed that an English-born or Irish-born poor person who had resided in Scotland for not less than five years, of which not less than one year had been continuously in the parish in which he applied for relief, without having received relief should be irremovable from Scotland. Any persons who had resided not less than one year in the parish where he applied for relief could appeal to the Board of Health against removal. The creation of the Irish Free State had ended this arrangement.

- ³ 'Curbing Influx of Irish into Scotland', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 19 July 1928, 1. The delegates were the Reverends Dr John White, Dr Archibald Fleming and J. MacLagan of the Church of Scotland; the Reverends Dr Harvey, Dr Sutherland and Mr Christie from the United Free Church of Scotland; and Sir James Simpson and the Reverend Mr Calder of the Free Church of Scotland. See 'Irish Peril to Scotland', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 20 July 1928, p. 8.
- ⁴ The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act had reduced national quotas for migrants wishing to come to the USA, limiting annual entry from any one country to 2 per cent of that national group present in 1890.
- ⁵ On medical inspection see Becky Taylor, 'Immigration, statecraft and public health: the 1920 Aliens Order, medical examinations and the limitations of the state in England', *Social History of Medicine* 29: 3, 2016, pp. 512-533.
- ⁶ David Feldman, 'Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13, 2003, pp. 79-104.
- ⁷ Feldman, 'Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare'; Robbie Shilliam, *Race and the Underserving Poor*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2018; Charlotte Williams, 'A Very 'British' Welfare State? Race and Racism', in *Changing Directions of the British Welfare State*, ed. Gideon Clader, Jeremy Gass and Kirsten Merrill-Glover, Cardiff, 2012, pp. 141-159.
- ⁸ Neil Evans, 'Regulating the Reserve Army of Labour: Arabs, Blacks and the Local State in Cardiff, 1919-1945' in *Race and Labour in Twentieth-Century Britain*, ed. Kenneth Lunn, London, 1995, pp. 75, 79, 84, 91; Laura Tabili, 'We Ask for British Justice': *Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain*, Ithaca NY, 1994, pp. 71, 75, 138, 152; Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 122-5, 169-70, 282.
- ⁹ Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens and Others: Nationality and Immigration Law*, London, 1990, p. 107.
- ¹⁰ Taylor, 'Immigration, Statecraft and Public Health'; Krista Maglen, *The English System: Quarantine, Immigration and the Making of a Port Sanitary Zone*, Manchester, 2016.
- ¹¹ Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-48: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 18.
- ¹² Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship. The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept*, New Haven, 2007, p. 125. On restrictions on migration to the new world, see Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson *Global Migration and the World Economy. Two Centuries of Policy and Performance*, Cambridge Mass, 2005, ch. 8-9. In Europe changes came at different times. In France and the Netherlands the 1920s were a decade of immigration, reversed thereafter. See Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, 'The Netherlands' and Leslie Page Moch, 'France' in *The Encyclopedia of Migration and Minorities in Europe: From the 17th Century to the Present*, eds Klaus J. Bade, Pieter C. Emmer, Leo Lucassen and Jochen Oltmer, Cambridge, 2011.
- ¹³ The literature is vast. For a tour d'horizon see John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain*, London, 2011, pp. 396-400.
- ¹⁴ Laura Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Special restriction (Coloured Seamen) Order, 1925', *Journal of British Studies* 33: 1, 1994, p. 79, p. 83.
- ¹⁵ Enda Delaney, '"Almost a Class of Helots in an Alien Land": The British State and Irish Immigration, 1921-45', *Immigrants and Minorities* 18: 2-3, 1999, pp. 240-65.
- ¹⁶ For a relatively optimistic view which distinguishes between militant Protestant and mainstream Unionist politics see Alvin Jackson, *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007*, Oxford, 2012, pp. 254-5; Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880*, Edinburgh, 2010, pp. 164-6. For a darker interpretation see Donald M Macraill, *The Irish Diaspora in Britain, 1750-1939*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke, 2011, p. 187; Mary J Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain*, Aldershot, 1995, pp. 216-7.
- ¹⁷ David Ritchie, 'The Civil Magistrate: The Scottish Office and the Anti-Irish Campaign, 1922-1929', *Innes Review* 63: 1, 2012, pp. 48-76.
- ¹⁸ Martin Mitchell, 'Anti-Catholicism and the Scottish Middle Class, 1800-1914', in *Anti-Catholicism in Britain and Ireland, 1600-2000: Practices, Representations and Ideas*, eds Claire Gheeraert-Graffeuille and Geraldine Vaughan, Cham, Switz., 2020, pp. 219-235, 219-20.
- ¹⁹ Tom Devine and Michael Rosie, 'The Rise and Fall of Anti-Catholicism in Scotland', in *Anti-Catholicism in Britain and Ireland*, pp. 273-88, 275.
- ²⁰ Mitchell, 'Anti-Catholicism and the Scottish Middle Class', p. 276.
- ²¹ Shaun Kavanagh, 'The Role of the Catholic Irish in the Rise of the Scottish Labour Movement During a Period of Change and Dislocation: 1918-1924', 10, www.academia.edu/4298667/, accessed 15 December 2020.

- ²² Richard Finlay, 'The Interwar Crisis: The Failure of Extremism' in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, ed. Thomas Devine and Jenny Wormald, Oxford, 2012, p. 572. For a finessing of the point on the dominance of Labour see Thomas Stewart, "'Vote as You Pray": The Success of the Scottish Prohibitionist Party in Dundee during the Interwar Period', *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 13: 2, 2018, pp. 105-117.
- ²³ 'Irish Peril to Scotland', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 20 July 1928, p. 8. For a more worked-up articulation of this position see John Torrence, *Scotland's Dilemma: Province or Nation?*, Edinburgh, 1938.
- ²⁴ The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA): HO45/14634, Note of the proceedings at the Deputation to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland from the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland, 19 July 1928. Our emphasis.
- ²⁵ Its official title was Report of Committee to Consider Overtures from the Presbytery of Glasgow and From the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr on 'Irish Immigration' and their 'Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 19 May 1923. On its historical legacy see Tom Devine, 'The legacy of a notorious campaign', Newman Association, Glasgow, 6 November 2013, <http://www.openhousescotland.co.uk/legacy-notorious-campaign/>, accessed 15 December 2020.
- ²⁶ 'The Menace of the Irish Race', 752 & 761. On discussions of 'race' in Scotland see Richard Finlay, 'Nationalism, Race, Religion and the Irish Question in Inter-War Scotland', *The Innes Review* 42: 1, 1991, pp. 46-67; on race and empire see Colin Kidd, 'Race, Empire, and the Limits of Nineteenth-Century Scottish Nationhood', *The Historical Journal* 46: 4, 2003, pp. 873-92.
- ²⁷ 'The Menace of the Irish Race', p. 757.
- ²⁸ Finlay, 'The Interwar Crisis', p. 583.
- ²⁹ Brown, "'Outside the Covenant'", p. 31.
- ³⁰ Brown, "'Outside the Covenant'", pp. 19-20.
- ³¹ 'The Menace of the Irish Race', p. 758.
- ³² TNA: HO45/14634, Note of the proceedings at the Deputation to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland from the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland, 19 July 1928.
- ³³ Kavanagh, 'The Role of the Catholic Irish', p. 20.
- ³⁴ Steve Bruce, Tony Glendenning, Iain Patterson and Michael Rosie, *Sectarianism in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 43; Ian Hutchinson, 'Scottish Unionism Between the Two World Wars', in *Unionist Scotland, 1800-1997*, ed. Catriona Macdonald, Edinburgh, 1998, p. 90.
- ³⁵ TNA: HO 45/14634, Notes of Proceedings at an inter-departmental conference on the subject of Irish immigration, Scottish Office, 22 July 1927.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ TNA: HO45/14634, letter from MoH to HO enclosing minute sheet 'Emigration from Irish Free State to Great Britain', 13 September 1928; National Archives of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter NAI): S 4/784, letter from Dominions Office to the Minister for External Affairs, 16 February 1928, Table 2. There is a discrepancy between the number cited in the MoH letter – 694 – and the total receiving out-relief cited in Table 2 of the Dominions letter (1,004). Here we use the latter, as it gives a detailed breakdown by parish.
- ³⁸ TNA: HO45/14634, letter from MoH to HO, 13 September 1928.
- ³⁹ TNA: HO45/14634, letter from MoH to Under-Sec of State, Dominions Office, 8 November 1927 and minute, N.C.B., Dominion Office, 6 December 1927.
- ⁴⁰ TNA: HO45/14634, letter from MoH to Under-Sec of State, Dominions Office, 8 November 1927.
- ⁴¹ TNA: HO45/14634, letter from Ministry of Labour to Mr Hinshelwood, HO, 18 July 1928.
- ⁴² The 1920 Aliens Order required anyone entering or leaving Britain to have a passport or 'some other document satisfactorily establishing his national status and identity'. More generally on the evolution of passport control see John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport*, Cambridge, 1999. On travel restrictions on public health grounds see Maglen, *The English System*. Note, however, the racialised nature of this. See Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference'.
- ⁴³ TNA: HO 45/14634, letter from Dominion Office, 19 November 1927.
- ⁴⁴ TNA: CAB 24/201, Economic Advisory Council, Committee on Empire Migration report, 11 July 1931.
- ⁴⁵ TNA: CAB 24/201, letter from John Lamb, Scottish Office to Dominions Office, 14 March 1932.
- ⁴⁶ TNA: HO45/14634, Notes of Proceedings at an inter-departmental conference on the subject of Irish immigration, Scottish Office, 22 July 1927.
- ⁴⁷ Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference'; Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Black 1919. Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain*, Liverpool, 2009.

- ⁴⁸ On his anti-alienism see David Cesarani, 'Anti-Alienism in England after the First World War', *Immigrants & Minorities* 6, 1987, pp. 5-29. A more moderated account of his politics can be found in Huw Clayton, 'The Life and Career of Sir William Joynson-Hicks, 1865-1932: A Reassessment', *Journal of Historical Biography* 8, 2010, pp.1-38.
- ⁴⁹ TNA: HO45/14634, extract from conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet, 1 August 1928.
- ⁵⁰ TNA: HO45/14634, extract from conclusions of a meeting of the Cabinet, 1 August 1928.
- ⁵¹ TNA: HO45/14634, memorandum by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland: Irish Immigration, 31 July 1928.
- ⁵² TNA: HO45/14635, memorandum by the Home Secretary, 'Irish Immigration', 20 February 1929. For the Scottish Office's reaction see TNA: CAB 24/201, memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland, 21 February 1929.
- ⁵³ See TNA: HO45/14635, copy of note of proceedings at meeting between Sec of State and Deputation from the Scottish churches, 9 May 1930, and 'Irish immigration into Scotland', memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland, 21 July 1930.
- ⁵⁴ The reality of course was very different. On the dominance of the Catholic Church and conservative attitudes in the shaping and delivery of welfare policy generally see Kevin O'Higgins, *The Political Economy of the Irish Welfare State: Church, State and Capital*, Bristol, 2017. Most notorious was the institutionalisation of unmarried mothers and other women considered deviant and their babies, as revealed in the 2021 Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.
- ⁵⁵ NAI: S 4/ 784, letter from Michael O'Coileain to Winston Churchill, Colonial Office, 22 May 1922.
- ⁵⁶ NAI: S 4/784, Department of Taoiseach memo to the Attorney-General, 13 April 1926, p. 3.
- ⁵⁷ NAI: S 4/784, letter from EP McCarron, Department of Local Government and Public Health to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 29 February 1928, attached memo, 'Compulsory removal of poor persons from Great Britain to Ireland'.
- ⁵⁸ NAI: S 4/784, McCarron to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 29 February 1928.
- ⁵⁹ See letters in NAI: S 4/784, dated 4 August and 9 August 1928, and internal memo 4 October 1928 referring the matter to a Sub-Committee of the Minister for Finance, Minister for Justice and Minister for Local Government and Public Health.
- ⁶⁰ TNA: CAB 24/201, minute, 4 March 1932.
- ⁶¹ NAI: S 4/ 784, letter from Department of External Affairs, Irish Free State to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 21 January 1932. For an insight into how this operated in practice see TNA: DO 35/467/6. We are grateful to Jean Smith and Camilla Scholfield for sharing this file.
- ⁶² Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians. The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, Oxford, 2015, p. 5.
- ⁶³ William Moore, 'The Dominions of the British Commonwealth in the League of Nations', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931-1939)* 10:3, 1931, pp. 372-391, 375.
- ⁶⁴ Michael Kennedy, *Ireland and the League of Nations, 1919-1946*, Dublin, 1996.
- ⁶⁵ NAI: DFA/S 4/10, League of Nations: Assistance to Indigent Foreigners, Report submitted by the fifth committee to the Assembly, 25 September 1934.
- ⁶⁶ NAI: DFA/S 4/10, letter from the Department of External Affairs to the Secretary General, League of Nations, 29 March 1935.
- ⁶⁷ For example Australia's 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, Canada's 1906 Immigration Act, and South Africa's 1913 Immigration Regulation Act.
- ⁶⁸ Finlay, 'The Interwar Crisis', pp. 581-2.
- ⁶⁹ Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference'
- ⁷⁰ David Feldman and M. Page Baldwin, 'Emigration and the British State, ca. 1815-1925', in *Citizenship and Those who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation*, ed. Nancy Green and Francois Weil, Chicago, 2007, pp. 135-155, 148-9.