

For neither king nor swastika? Malan's Afrikaner nationalism and De Valera's Irish nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s

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Abstract

The debate on supposed fascist influences on Afrikaner nationalists, particularly the mainstream National Party (NP), as opposed to more extremist groups, has mostly centred around alleged links or parallels with Nazi Germany, or whether anti-British sentiment was more key. An often-overlooked influence was similarly mainstream, historically anti-British Irish nationalism. Comparing Daniel Malan and the Purified and later Reunited NP with Eamon de Valera and *Fianna Fáil* (FF) in the 1930s and 1940s, this study addresses similarities in areas such as republicanism, language, religion, neutrality, and authoritarian tendencies, but argues that constitutionalism tempered clerical and political authoritarian influence. Malan and the NP differed in their approach to neutrality from De Valera and FF, who were also less affected by the era's antisemitism.

Keywords: Afrikaners; Irish; Nationalism; Fascism; Republicanism; Clericalism; Authoritarianism; Antisemitism.

Introduction

Critics of those drawing parallels between fascism and the more “mainstream” 1930s and 1940s Afrikaner nationalism of Daniel Malan's National Party (NP), as opposed to the more radical nationalism of the Greyshirts, Ossewabrandwag (Ox-Wagon Sentinel/OB), or New Order,¹ have long argued that the NP was inspired more by anti-British feeling than by pro-German, much less pro-Nazi sentiment,

¹ B Bunting, *The rise of the South African reich* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969); H Simson, *The social origins of Afrikaner fascism and its apartheid policy* (Uppsala, Sweden, University of Uppsala, 1980); S Mzimela, *Apartheid: South African Nazism* (New York, Vantage Press, 1983); P Furlong, *Between crown and swastika: The impact of the radical right on the Afrikaner nationalist movement in the fascist era* (Hanover, New Hampshire, University Press of New England, 1991); and J Hyslop, “Anti-fascism in South Africa 1933-1945, and its global legacies”, K Braskén, N Copey, and DJ Featherstone, *Anti-fascism in a global perspective: Transnational networks, exile communities and radical internationalism* (London, Routledge, 2020), p. 81.

and that Malanite nationalism never abandoned constitutional democracy.² Was an alternative source of inspiration Ireland, which NP politicians often viewed admiringly? Was Malan's Purified and later Reunited NP perhaps less like a fascistic or at least pro-fascist movement than akin to Eamon de Valera's fiercely nationalist, republican, pro-neutral, but proudly democratic *Fianna Fáil* ("Warriors of Destiny") (FF), in power from 1932 to 1948, and a more "mainstream" nationalist movement than increasingly marginalised Irish Republican Army hardliners, who rejected working inside existing legal and constitutional structures to achieve nationalist political aims such as a united independent republic?³

There is little such comparative analysis. Studies of Irish and Afrikaner nationalism mostly have an earlier emphasis, including Fortenbacher-Nagel's wide ranging work, which for the most part does not cover Malan and De Valera.⁴ Suzman's study of Zionism, Irish and Afrikaner nationalism discusses Afrikaners to 1948, but Ireland only to 1923.⁵ Kapp compares South African, Irish and American stances on entering World War II rather than Afrikaner and Irish nationalism.⁶ Lowry addresses more Irish-South African ties than parallels, chiefly before 1939.⁷ McCracken compares name-changing parallels, but in South Africa mainly from 1994.⁸ Several other works compare Northern Ireland, which remained part of the United Kingdom, and

2 FJ van Heerden, "Nasionaal-sosialisme as faktor in die Suid-Afrikaanse politiek, 1933-1948" (D Phil, University of the Orange Free State, 1972), p. 357; D O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner nationalism 1934-1948* (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1983), p. 2; H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2003), pp. 417-418; 443-444; "The making of the apartheid plan, 1929-1948", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(2), 2003, pp. 373-392.

3 It could be argued that FF's rival *Cumann na Gaedheal* ("Society of the Gaels") and the latter's successor *Fine Gael* ("Family of the Irish") were similarly "mainstream" Irish nationalists, but these last two were more flexible, particularly regarding compromises with Britain. Similarly, it could be argued that Malan's former NP leader, JBM Hertzog, also represented "mainstream" Afrikaner nationalism, but from 1933 to 1939 Hertzog was willing to lead a coalition and then a shortlived merger with the South African Party of the more pro-British Jan Smuts, which Malan's followers roundly rejected; both Hertzog and Smuts also espoused varying forms of a broader white South African nationalism than what Malan was willing to countenance at the time, retaining some vestigial links with Britain.

4 K Fortenbacher-Nagel, "'Travelling the same road?' Irisch-südafrikanische unabhängigkeit bestrebungen, ihre verflechtungen un ihr beitrage zur transformation des empires, 1899-1949" (D Phil, Philipps-Universität Marburg, 2017).

5 M Suzman, *Ethnic nationalism and state power: The rise of Irish nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism and Zionism* (New York, St Martin's Press, 1999).

6 P Kapp, "Nasionalisme en neutralisme en die uitbreek van die Tweede Wêreldoorlog: 'n Vergelyking van die faktore en omstandighede wat ontwikkelinge in die VSA, Suid-Afrika en Ierland bepaal het", *Historia*, 36(1), 1991, pp. 56-72.

7 D Lowry, "'A fellowship of disaffection': Irish-South African relations from the Anglo-Boer War to the Pretoriaastroika 1902-1991", *Études Irlandaises*, 17(2), 1992, pp. 105-121; and his "'Ireland shows the way': Irish-South African relations and the British Empire/Commonwealth, c. 1902-61", *Southern African-Irish Studies*, 3, 1996, pp. 89-135.

8 D McCracken, "Equivocators or zealots? Post-revolutionary re-imagining colonial languages, names and name change in Ireland and South Africa", *Critical Arts: A North-South Journal of Cultural & Media Studies*, 26(4), 2012, pp. 447-465.

South Africa.⁹ This study is a tentative effort focused chiefly on Malan and the NP and De Valera and FF in the age of the dictators.

Prelude

When Malan's NP defeated Jan Smuts's United Party (UP) in 1948, Irish newspapers rejected seeing parallels between their country and South Africa.¹⁰ The FF daily, *The Irish Press*, also dismissed NP and UP race policy differences, given South African whites' broadly backing segregation.¹¹ Yet for earlier Irish nationalists, who likened themselves to the Boers,¹² the 1899-1902 South African War had been seminal.¹³ In the 1919-1921 War of Independence, Irish Republican Army (IRA) chief Michael Collins modelled his flying columns on the Boer commandos.¹⁴ The Irish Republican Association of South Africa's Benjamin Farrington's articles in the Cape NP's *De Burger* in turn urged backing Irish revolutionaries; the NP's Nasionale Pers published IRASA's newspaper, *The Republic*.¹⁵

Just as in the 1918 elections, when Irish republicans routed Home Rulers seeking only a Dublin parliament with some autonomy, in 1924 JBM Hertzog's NP defeated Smuts's less militant South African Party. The 1921 Anglo-Irish treaty led to a truncated Irish Free State (minus six more Protestant northeastern counties), with, like the 1910 Union of South Africa, autonomy within the British Empire. Both states secured dominion sovereignty,¹⁶ so placating Hertzog that in 1934 he and Smuts formed the United Party, but Malan's Purified NP hardliners, like De Valera's FF, wanted more.¹⁷ Irish partition and retaining the British monarch led in 1922 to civil war over the treaty: the republican *Sinn Féin* ("Ourselves Alone") split between

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- 9 H Giliomee, "South Africa, Ulster, Israel: The elusive search for peace", *South Africa International*, 19(3), 1989, pp. 140-151; DH Akenson, *God's peoples: Covenant and land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1992); J McGarry, "Political settlements in Northern Ireland and South Africa", *Political Studies*, 46(5), 1998, pp. 853-871; D Kirkpatrick, "Why negotiate when you can criminalize? Lessons for conflict transformation from Northern Ireland and South Africa", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 41(8), 2018, pp. 619-637.
- 10 PW Coetzer, *Die Nasionale Party Deel 5: Van oorlog tot oorwinning* (Bloemfontein, Institute for Contemporary History, 1994), p. 70.
- 11 "South Africa", *Irish Press*, 26 May 1948, p. 4.
- 12 D Lowry, "A fellowship of disaffection'...", *Études Irlandaises*, 17(2), 1992, p. 105.
- 13 D McMahon, "Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth, 1900-1948," JM Brown, WR Louis and A Low, *The Oxford history of the British Empire: Volume IV – The twentieth century* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 140; D Lowry, "A fellowship of disaffection'...", *Études Irlandaises*, 17(2), 1992, p. 106; DP McCracken, *The Irish pro-Boers 1877-1902* (Johannesburg, Perskor, 1989); D Lowry, "The play of forces worldwide in their scope and revolutionary in their operation' [Hobson]: The South African War as an international event", *South African Historical Journal*, 41, 2000, pp. 98-104.
- 14 D Lowry, "The play of forces ...", *South African Historical Journal*, 41, 2000, pp. 102-103.
- 15 J Atkinson, "Benjamin Farrington: Cape Town and the shaping of a public intellectual", *South African Historical Journal*, 62(4), 2010, pp. 673-675.
- 16 D Lowry, "Ireland shows the way' ...", *Southern African-Irish Studies*, 3, 1996, pp. 97-98.
- 17 JH le Roux, PW Coetzer and AH Marais, *Generaal JBM Hertzog: Sy strewe en stryd, II* (Johannesburg and Cape Town, Perskor, 1987), pp. 589-620.

the pro-treaty *Cumann na nGaedheal* (which merged in 1933 with smaller parties to form the anti-De Valera *Fine Gael*), De Valera's FF (for anti-treatyites favouring constitutionalism over armed struggle), and IRA militant holdouts.¹⁸

Constitutional issues

As prime minister from 1932, De Valera proved more radical than his *Cumann na nGaedheal* predecessor, William Cosgrave, starting an economic war until Britain gave up naval bases similar to South Africa's Simonstown,¹⁹ and ended the oath of allegiance to the crown and the monarch's internal role. The 1937 Constitution created a *de facto* republic with a president, only tenuously tied to the Commonwealth.²⁰ As De Valera explained:²¹

Ireland is an independent republic, associated [in] our external policy with the... Commonwealth. To mark this association, we avail ourselves of the... [1936] External Relations Act... by which the King recognised by the States of the British Commonwealth... acts for us, under advice, in certain specified matters in the field of our external relations [signing diplomatic appointments and international treaties].

He thus dismissed Ireland's formally becoming a republic in 1949 as a mere description.²² Hertzog, in contrast, dropped republicanism once the 1931 Statute of Westminster conceded crown divisibility (allowing dominions separate foreign policies from that of Britain) and dominion sovereignty.²³ After Ireland abolished the oath, a step which Purified NP backbenchers praised, Hertzog did not encourage similar steps toward leaving the Commonwealth.²⁴

Malan's Purified NP was more like FF, seeking a republic separate from the crown and rejected Hertzog's compromise allowing both Britain's Union Jack and the Union flag.²⁵ In the 1927 flag debate, Malan declared that for both Ireland and

18 D Ferriter, *Judging Dev: A reassessment of the life and legacy of Eamon de Valera* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 2007), pp. 63-104.

19 De Valera stopped paying Britain "annuities" for land sales to Irish farmers under pre-1921 Land Acts, causing retaliatory tariffs. He ended the war by paying £10 million for remaining annuities while Britain transferred three "treaty ports". See K O'Rourke, "Burn everything but their coal: The Anglo-Irish economic war of the 1930s", *Journal of Economic History*, 51(2), 1991, pp. 356-357.

20 D McMahon, "Ireland and the Empire-Commonwealth, 1900-1948", JM Brown, WR Louis and A Low, *The Oxford history of the British Empire: Volume IV...*, pp. 156-157.

21 *Dáil Éireann Debates*, Vol. 97, No. 23, 17 July 1945, col. 2573, available at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1945-07-17/24/> (as accessed on 27 June 2022).

22 "Republic of Ireland Act: Fianna Fail View", *Irish Press*, 18 April 1949, p. 1.

23 S Marks, "Southern Africa", JM Brown, WR Louis, and A Low, *Oxford history of the British Empire*, Vol. IV..., pp. 554-555.

24 D Lowry, "'Ireland shows the way' ...", *Southern African-Irish Studies*, 3, 1996, pp. 105-109.

25 JH le Roux and PW Coetzer, *Die Nasionale Party Deel 3: Die eerste bewindsjare 1924-1934 - II* (Bloemfontein, Institute for Contemporary History, 1982), p. 637.

South Africa the Union Jack meant conquest and bloodshed.²⁶ He later recalled his outrage at leaders indulging British interests, such as on crown divisibility or keeping “God Save the King” with “Die Stem” as national anthems.²⁷ Compromises by Cosgrave's pre-1932 pro-treaty *Cumann na nGaedheal* government equally angered De Valera's camp. His Washington representative Robert Brennan stated: “While waging a savage war against their former comrades in the IRA, they showed a craven subservience to the British”.²⁸

Malan's personal papers include copies of documents showing his interest in Ireland: its 1919 declaration of independence and message to the world's nations; the 1934 nationality and citizenship bill, and the 1937 Constitution, plus Eric Louw's 1939 lecture “Ireland Shows the Way”.²⁹ Ireland also attracted Purified NP interest in parliament. In 1934, Frans Erasmus praised De Valera's dismissing his governor-general.³⁰ In 1937, Charles Swart, backing a bill to end the right of appeal to the British Privy Council, argued that this made even more sense for South Africa than when Ireland did so, because South Africa used Roman-Dutch, not British law.³¹ After Edward VIII's 1936 abdication, Malan derided splits in the Smuts and Hertzog UP wings over crown divisibility, asking if South Africa would now align with Ireland.³² Malan, like De Valera, favoured a republic apart from the empire;³³ he opposed raising Ireland's constitutional position at the 1937 Imperial Conference without its request, fearing endangering South Africa's own right to decide its future.³⁴

After Hertzog resigned over entering World War II (Smuts led a pro-Allied coalition), he re-joined Malan, who led the “Reunited” NP after Hertzog left party politics over English-speakers' rights.³⁵ Malan now claimed the NP was following Ireland's path to a republic;³⁶ in January 1942, he asserted that De Valera's Ireland proved that only a republic guaranteed neutrality.³⁷ In 1944, when De Valera rejected American demands that Ireland remove Axis representatives, Malan cabled his “deep admiration at your determination and courage”; Malan's papers include a De Valera

26 DF Malan, speech “Die Vlag”, 23 May 1927, SW Pienaar and JJJ Scholtz, *Glo in u volk: Dr DF Malan as redenaar, 1908-1954* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1964), p. 146.

27 DF Malan, *Afrikaner-volkseenheid en my ervarings op die pad daarheen* (Cape Town, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1959), pp. 65-67; 141-145.

28 R Brennan, *Eamon de Valera: A memoir* (Dublin, University College Dublin Press, 2002), p. 159.

29 JS Gericke Library, University of Stellenbosch, DF Malan Collection, Reference 1/1/590, 1/1/591, 1/1/1489, 1/41/9 (10) and 1/41/9 (11).

30 Union of South Africa, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, Hansard, Vol. 22, 2 May 1934, col. 3104.

31 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 28, 15 January 1937, cols. 216-217.

32 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 28, 4 February 1937, cols. 1147-1148, 1178; also 28 January 1937, cols. 825-826.

33 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 29, 7 April 1937, col. 4404.

34 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 29, 6 April 1937, cols. 4257-4258.

35 JH Le Roux, PW Coetzer and AH Marais, *Generaal JBM Hertzog..., II*, pp. 652-691, 722-730; MPA Malan, *Die Nasionale Party van Suid-Afrika: Sy stryd en sy prestasies 1914-1964* (Elsies River, South Africa, Nasionale Handelsdrukkery, 1964), pp. 199-201.

36 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 41, 6/7 February 1941, col. 2645.

37 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, Vol. 43, 13 January 1942, col. 36.

telegram expressing gratitude for this message.³⁸

Language and the rural factor

In January 1948, a columnist in de Valera's *Irish Press* asserted that only an Irishman, who understood the problem of nationality in languages, could have written the chapter on Afrikaans in genealogist Edward MacLysaght's new book on South Africa.³⁹ The *Irish Press* sympathised with Afrikaner anger at pro-British disdain for Afrikaans, "for exactly the same sneers have been cast at our language..."⁴⁰

Malan had been active in the post-South African War "Second Afrikaans Language Movement", advocating strongly for the replacement of "High Dutch" with Afrikaans. With its complex grammar and spelling, few Afrikaners spoke Dutch well, whereas its simplified local variant had evolved in the long interaction between Dutch-speaking settlers, indigenous Khoisan-speakers, and slaves imported from various parts of the Dutch colonial empire around the Indian Ocean. "High Dutch" had increasingly become a mainly written language used for formal purposes, whereas Afrikaans was the language actually spoken by most Afrikaners. Malan, as far back as 1908, had argued that Dutch, unlike Afrikaans, could never become the people's language (*volkstaal*) and that Afrikaans had the best chance to survive in South Africa, especially given the strong competition with English.⁴¹ In 1925 he also played a prominent role in the campaign to replace Dutch with Afrikaans as an official language.⁴² He included white English-speakers in the "South African nation",⁴³ but not as Afrikaners, like Hertzog,⁴⁴ insisting that as [white] Afrikaans-speakers had developed their own language, church, and identity, and had such a painful history, they had the leading role on the road to South African nationhood.⁴⁵ In 1941 Malan's "Reunited" NP guaranteed (white) English-speakers equal cultural and language rights, but insisted that (white) Afrikaans-speakers as "creator and bearer of our own South African nationhood" had a right to their "own survival" and "own special unity".⁴⁶

38 DF Malan Collection, Reference 1/1/1229: Telegram, DF Malan to E de Valera and reply with accompanying news item, 24 March 1944; "Dr DF Malan se boodskap aan De Valera", *Die Burger*, 15 March 1944.

39 "Seen, heard and noted", *Irish Press*, 14 January 1948, p. 4.

40 "Those 'superior people'", *Irish Press*, 5 December 1949, p. 6.

41 DF Malan, "Dit is ons ernst", speech to the Stellenbosch branch of the *Afrikaanse Taalvereniging*, 13 August 1908, SW Pienaar and JJJ Scholtz, *Glo in u volk...*, p. 170.

42 L Koorts, *DF Malan and the rise of Afrikaner nationalism* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2014), pp. 61-63, 213-214; H Giliomee, "The beginnings of Afrikaner consciousness, 1850-1915", L Vail, *The creation of tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, c 1989), pp. 21-54.

43 "Boodskap aan die Afrikaners", *Die Burger*, 16 February 1934, p. 2.

44 L Koorts, *DF Malan...*, p. 48.

45 DF Malan, *Afrikaner-volkseenheid...*, pp. 54-55.

46 "Verklaring oor toekomsbeleid van HNP of V", *Die Burger*, 10 April 1941, p. 5.

De Valera in turn came to nationalism via the Gaelic League,⁴⁷ which promoted Irish, like Afrikaans linked especially to the rural poor, but spoken less widely. In founding FF in 1926, he too seemed ethnically exclusivist, given the few remaining Irish-speakers, quite apart from the mainly Protestant Anglo-Irish minority, stating that the party sought to restore the Irish language and develop a native Irish culture.⁴⁸ During World War II he insisted that his people work to make Irish their everyday speech, despite few still having mastered it.⁴⁹ He stated repeatedly that if he had to make a choice, he would place restoring Irish as a spoken language even over the re-unification of Ireland, although he himself lacked full confidence in his own ability to speak Irish and was never able to get his Cabinet ministers to join his project of speaking the language regularly.⁵⁰ Malan had no such problem on either score, if only because he did not face the challenge of a language which not only had low prestige value, but which had held on mainly in a few remote rural areas. Restoring the status of Irish was assuredly linked to uplifting the rural Ireland where it had survived.

Already in the 1920s, Malan had become convinced that one of the best ways to combat rural white poverty, which drove mainly Afrikaans-speaking poor whites into urban areas where they could not compete with English-speakers, was to implement equal language rights. This would create jobs in commerce and the civil service, since bilingualism would give Afrikaners a rare advantage (many English-speaking whites disdained learning either Dutch or Afrikaans).⁵¹ For Malan, the farmers were South Africa's true backbone and his Purified NP was strongest in the rural Cape, especially districts with many poor whites.⁵² The 1938 NP election manifesto reflected this in seeking to help poor white farmers to secure land.⁵³

Similarly, FF appealed to struggling farmers; De Valera declared that FF sought equal opportunity for all Irish citizens [and] land distribution "...to get the greatest number possible of Irish families rooted in the soil of Ireland".⁵⁴ He made much of his having been raised in a labourer's cottage and in the 1930s had a large-scale housing programme aimed especially at agricultural labourers; not only did the government subsidy for building cottages increase, but legislation gave the Land Commission power to expropriate land considered appropriate to redistribute among small farmers.⁵⁵

47 TP Coogan, *Eamon de Valera: The man who was Ireland* (London, Hutchinson, 1993), pp. 38-39.

48 "Press statement, 17 April 1926", M Moynihan, *Speeches and statements by Eamon de Valera 1917-73* (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1980), p. 131.

49 "Radio broadcast, 17 March 1943", M Moynihan, *Speeches ...*, pp. 467-468.

50 D Ferriter, *Judging Dev...*, p. 305.

51 L Koorts, *DF Malan...*, pp. 198-199.

52 L Koorts, *DF Malan...*, pp. 321, 323.

53 "Die Nasionale Party se verkiesingmanifes: Algemene verkiesing 1938", WA Kleynhans, *Suid-Afrikaanse algemene verkiesingsmanifeste 1910-1981* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 1987), p. 64.

54 "Press statement, 17 April 1926", M Moynihan, *Speeches ...*, p. 131.

55 D Ferriter, *Judging Dev...*, pp. 280-281.

Church and state

Irish laws on divorce and censorship, even drinking and dancing,⁵⁶ recall South Africa's Sunday Observance Act, censorship, and public morality laws. As a young man, De Valera had seriously considered the priesthood;⁵⁷ as president of the Irish Republic from 1959 he prayed in his private oratory five times a day.⁵⁸ Malan in turn, was an ordained Dutch Reformed minister. His slogan "Believe in your God! Believe in your *volk* [people]! Believe in yourself!" embodied his conservative Christian nationalism.⁵⁹ His foreign affairs expert, Eric Louw, so enthused over religious aspects of the 1937 Irish Constitution that he forgot the usual Afrikaner Calvinist concerns about the *Roomse Gevaar* ("Roman [Catholic] Danger") in a 1939 speech, "Ireland Shows the Way", hailing the preamble's Holy Trinity reference and the central place given to Catholic social teaching, emphasising family and marital indissolubility.⁶⁰

Catholic future Dublin Archbishop John McQuaid and an entire Jesuit committee had deluged De Valera and the drafting committee with ideas for the 1937 Constitution.⁶¹ De Valera even privately circulated a version close to a McQuaid draft, virtually creating a state church.⁶²

3. The state acknowledges that the true religion is that established by Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ Himself, which he committed to his Church to protect and propagate, as the guardian and interpreter of true morality. It acknowledges, moreover, that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church.

In contrast, the 1922 Free State Constitution had promised freedom of conscience, free profession and practice of religion, and no legal endowment of any religion.⁶³

The 1909 Union of South Africa Constitution did not refer to religion,⁶⁴ but even Hertzog's 1934 UP programme reflected earlier "Christian-nationalist" NP

56 D Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland: Nation and state* (New York, St Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 27-31.

57 TP Coogan, *Eamon de Valera...*, pp. 36-38; Anthony J Jordan, *Eamon de Valera 1882-1975: Irish, Catholic, visionary* (Dublin, Westport Books, 2011), pp. 20-23.

58 TP Coogan, *Eamon de Valera...*, p. 681.

59 This slogan even appeared before the main text in his memoirs. See DF Malan, *Afrikaner-volkseenheid...*, p. 9.

60 D Lowry, "Ireland shows the way' ...", *Southern African-Irish Studies*, 3, 1996, pp. 114-115; "Ierland se vryheidstryd vir SA 'n voorbeeld", *Die Burger*, 1 August 1939, p. 3.

61 D Keogh, "The Catholic church and the writing of the 1937 constitution", *History Ireland*, 13(3), 2005, pp. 36-41; Appendix 7, "Jesuit constitution committee minutes, 1936"; Appendix 8, "Jesuit Submission, October 1936", D Keogh and AJ McCarthy, *The making of the Irish constitution 1937* (Douglas Village, Cork, Mercier Press, 2007), pp. 413-450.

62 Compare "14. Draft memo on [Art. 1] Church and State", C Cullen and M Ó hÓgarthaigh, *His Grace is displeased: Selected correspondence of John Charles McQuaid* (Sallins, Merrion Press, 2013), pp. 22-23 and Dublin, Irish National Archives (INA), Department of the *Taoiseach*, S9715A, "Constitution, 1937: Preliminary Draft", Article 42, Section 3.

63 "The constitution of the Irish Free State (*Saorstát Éireann*) Act, 1922", Article 8, available at <http://re.search.ucc.ie/celt/document/E900003-004#body> (accessed on 13 Jun 2022).

64 "South Africa Act, 1909", GW Eybers, *Select constitutional documents illustrating South African history 1795-1910* (New York, Routledge, 1918), pp. 517-558.

language:⁶⁵

The Party acknowledges the sovereignty and guidance of Almighty God in the destiny of peoples and countries, and desires the development of the people of South Africa along Christian-national lines, without prejudice to the right of the individual citizen to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The Purified NP's 1936 programme of principles omitted the more generous final clause.⁶⁶ The Purified NP and UP also shared language on "Christian trusteeship of the European race" over the "Natives", the NP adding the "coloured [mixed race population]";⁶⁷ Malan's NP also, reminiscent of Ireland, had a section on "Sunday and public morality".⁶⁸

The Party acknowledges the duty of the authorities with due consideration of sovereignty in each sphere to honour Sunday as a day of rest in the public arena and to combat all unchristian practices in the volk life.

Constitutionalism versus authoritarianism and clericalism

The fierce nationalism and quasi-clericalism of De Valera's FF and Malan's NP may, together with other authoritarian tendencies, suggest more than just opposing British imperialism. In 1941, while struggling with the fascistic OB, Malan insisted that his Reunited NP was the only party-political body representing "National-oriented Afrikanerdom", opposed Afrikaans press independence from the NP, and pushed through an NP Union Congress a reorganisation, replacing branches, committees, and chairmen with cells, wards and districts, each headed by a leader. At the top was Malan, elected as *Volksleier* (*Volk Leader*), with full authority over all party bodies between NP conferences.⁶⁹

In the 1930s strongman era De Valera in turn was seen as the unique dictator: "a leader whose power, influence and authority were apparently only limited by his own commitment to constitutional and democratic principles".⁷⁰ In office from 1932 to 1948, he transcended old ties to IRA hardliners; having in 1936 eased their joining the system by abolishing the oath to the crown and the governor-generalship, he did not hesitate to use old emergency laws when the leftist IRA refused to decommission

65 Compare NP "Programme of principles", 7-9 January 1914 and "United South African National Party: Programme of principles", 1934, DW Krüger, *South African parties and policies 1910-1960: A select sourcebook* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1960), pp. 69, 85.

66 [Appendix B] "Bylae B", JH Le Roux and PW Coetzer, *Die Nasionale Party, Deel 3*, p. 636.

67 Compare "Bylae A" and "Bylae B", JH Le Roux and PW Coetzer, *Die Nasionale Party Deel 3...*, pp. 633, 639.

68 "Bylae B", JH Le Roux and PW Coetzer, *Die Nasionale Party deel 3*, p. 641.

69 P Furlong, *Between crown and swastika...*, pp. 196-199.

70 B Farrell, "De Valera: Unique dictator or charismatic chairman?" JP O'Carroll and JA Murphy, *De Valera and his times* (Cork, Cork University Press, 1983), p. 36.

weapons, as he did against rightist Blueshirts.⁷¹ This seems reminiscent of Malan's side-lining of the OB and other extremists.

The last points show both cases' complexity. Malan feared radical northerners favouring force to achieve a republic, in 1935 noting admiration for the IRA in the Transvaal NP's *Die Republikein*.⁷² He opposed seeking a republic via a coup d'état, favouring Ireland's constitutional path.⁷³ His seemingly authoritarian 1941 Congress scheme had the effect of outflanking his quasi-fascist rival Oswald Pirow, whose "New Order" promoted national socialism from within the NP. In Malan's new hierarchy, leaders would be elected, not appointed, unlike in fascism. Pirow's faction was soon pushed out of the NP.⁷⁴

Many Irish feared a personalised dictatorship with De Valera's 1937 Constitution, especially after that of 1922 had previously been disregarded, the senate abolished, electoral districts manipulated, and military tribunals used against the IRA and Blueshirts. Instead, there were a ceremonial president elected by popular vote rather than the FF-controlled *Dáil* (lower house), constitutional changes only by popular referendum, and proportional voting, making single-party domination less likely.⁷⁵

Like Malan, who left the pulpit to run the NP newspaper *Die Burger*, De Valera valued a party paper, founding the pro-FF *Irish Press*. Despite his personal piety, he did not give strong support to the authoritarian nationalist rebel leader, General Francisco Franco, in the Spanish Civil War, unlike the Irish Catholic bishops (due to Spanish Republican anti-clerical atrocities) or the main pro-1921 treaty daily, the *Irish Independent*. The pro-treaty opposition was actually more overtly clerical and often linked to ultra-conservative, even quasi-fascist groups such as the Christian Front and Blueshirts.⁷⁶

De Valera rejected several Jesuit suggestions for the 1937 Constitution;⁷⁷ less controversial language was adopted than in the draft religion section after consulting other churches' clerics.⁷⁸ Sub-section (ii) merely noted the demographic fact of Catholic predominance while sub-section (iii) was surprisingly pluralistic.⁷⁹

71 B Kissane, "Democratic consolidation and government changeover in the Irish Free State", *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 39(1), 2001, p. 11; R Fanning, *Eamon de Valera: A will to power* (Faber & Faber, 2016), pp. 178-181.

72 L Koorts, *DF Malan...*, p. 305.

73 DF Malan, "Nasionale Party se pad na 'n republiek", *Die Transvaler*, 1 October 1937, pp. 20-21.

74 P Furlong, *Between crown and swastika...*, pp. 197-198.

75 B Kissane, "Democratic consolidation and government changeover...", *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 39(1), 2001, pp. 17-18.

76 F McGarry, "Irish newspapers and the Spanish Civil War", *Irish Historical Studies*, 33(129), 2002, pp. 68-90.

77 D Keogh and AJ McCarthy, *The making of the Irish constitution 1937...*, p. 104.

78 G Hogan, *The origins of the Irish constitution, 1928-1941* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 2012), pp. 214-215.

79 Quoted from Section 44 in G Hogan, *The origins of the Irish constitution...*, p. 216.

(ii) The State recognises the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens.

(iii) The State also recognises the [Anglican] Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, as well as the Jewish Congregations and the other religious denominations existing in Ireland at the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution.

Malan too did not fit stereotypes. In the Dutch Reformed Church, he was thought liberal on evolution; he had once believed education would remove whites' and blacks' differences.⁸⁰ He supported church-state separation, but much like De Valera, wanted church, *volk* (people), and state subject to Christian principles.⁸¹ A draft constitution drawn up during the 1940 NP-OB dalliance sought a republic on a Christian-national basis, limiting citizenship to whites expected to act in a *volksopbouend* (people-building) manner and media freedom to those showing devoted service to the *volk*; the conservative family and women section resembled Ireland's.⁸² Malan authorised publication, but distanced himself, partly due to English being called a second or complementary official language.⁸³ Eric Louw cited Ireland in distinguishing NP constitutionalism from fascistic rivals such as the OB or New Order: countering claims that the NP was obsolete, he argued that after eight centuries of failed armed struggle, De Valera had won through well-organized political action.⁸⁴

The neutrality issue

War-linked controversy, however, dogged both FF and the NP. De Valera detained IRA members without trial, executed those convicted of violence, and censored news: Nazi atrocities were just as avoided as in NP newspapers.⁸⁵ In 1945, De Valera caused outrage when he and the secretary of External Affairs, Joseph Walshe, visited

80 H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 415-416.

81 L Koorts, "Podium and/or pulpit? DF Malan's role in the politicisation of the Dutch Reformed Church, 1900-1959", *Historia*, 52(2), 2007, pp. 219-228.

82 Hoover Institution for War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, California (HIWRP), WH Vatcher Collection (WHVC), Box 2, "Konsep-grondwet van die Republiek", 1942, articles 2.2, 3.2 and 3.5; on the family, see article 3.6; Compare G Hogan, *The origins of the Irish constitution ...*, pp. 526-533.

83 HIWRP, WHVC, "Konsep-grondwet van die Republiek", article 2.5.

84 "Die enigste veilige huis vir die Afrikaner", *Die Burger*, 4 April 1945, p. 5.

85 S MacBride, *That day's struggle: A memoir 1904-1951* (Blackrock, Dublin, Currach Press, 2005), pp. 132-135; D Ó Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland 1939-1945: Neutrality, politics and society* (Cork, Cork University Press, 1996), pp. 123-129; SL Friedman, "Jews, Germans and Afrikaners: Nationalist press reaction to the final solution" (BA Honours, University of Cape Town, 1982).

Dublin's German minister to give condolences on Hitler's death.⁸⁶ In 1948, Malan freed pro-Nazi broadcaster Eric Holm and would-be assassin Robey Leibbrandt without the governor-general's approval.⁸⁷ Just as the NP and Afrikaner right press denounced the Nuremberg trials, so too did De Valera.⁸⁸

De Valera's neutrality policy angered Britain,⁸⁹ but unlike Spain's Franco, who let German U-boats use Spanish ports,⁹⁰ he quietly aided the Allies, allowing thousands of Irish to join the British forces and sent the Dublin Fire Department to Belfast after German bombing.⁹¹ He insisted that Ireland's history and incomplete freedom due to partition meant it could only be a friendly neutral.⁹² Although he acknowledged that many Irish (like many Afrikaners) hoped Germany would make them more free, he had no such illusions, asking for British arms to defend against any German invasion.⁹³ His government denied the Allies bases in Irish ports, but closely watched the Dublin German legation, impounded their wire transmitter, and had a close relationship with British intelligence.⁹⁴

Malan decried foreign ideologies such as national socialism.⁹⁵ His keeping many letters calling him a "traitor" and "Nazi" suggests particular sensitivity on this topic.⁹⁶ Yet, despite Hitler occupying Czechoslovakia and invading Poland, in 1939 Malan had defended neutrality by stating that Germany, "a nation with a love of liberty", did not want to destroy neighbours' independence and that the Czech state (despite being deprived of its Sudetenland defences at Munich) threatened German security.⁹⁷ In March 1941, he declared that if the NP came to power, it would befriend Germany.⁹⁸ As late as 1943, he warned: "It is a hundred times better that England

86 D Keogh, "De Valera, Hitler and the message of condolence", *History Ireland*, 5(3), 1997, pp. 58-61 and his "Eamon de Valera and Hitler: An analysis of international reaction to the visit to the German minister, May 1945", *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 3(1), 1989, pp. 69-92.

87 Jagger Library, University of Cape Town, Archives and Manuscripts Department, G Brand van Zyl Papers, Unpublished "Reminiscences", 5, p. 86.

88 M Shain, *A perfect storm: Antisemitism in South Africa 1930-1948* (Johannesburg and Cape Town, J Ball, 2015), p. 270; B Girvin, *The Emergency: Neutral Ireland 1939-45* (London, Macmillan, 2006), pp. 21-23.

89 AJ Kochavi, "Britain, the United States and Irish neutrality, 1944-5", *European History Quarterly*, 25(1), 1995, pp. 93-115.

90 SG Payne, *Fascism in Spain 1923-1977* (Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), pp. 337-338.

91 JT Carroll, *Ireland in the war years* (New York, Crane and Russak, 1975), p. 21; *Dáil Éireann Debates*, 91 No. 16, 16 November 1943, col. 2124, available at <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1943-11-16/30/> (accessed on 27 Jun 2022).

92 "Cork, 14 December 1941", M Moynihan, *Speeches ...*, p. 462.

93 "Note of a conversation between Eamon de Valera and Malcolm MacDonald (Copy), Dublin, 17 June 1940", C Crowe et.al, *Documents on Irish foreign policy, Volume VI 1939-1941* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 2008), pp. 238 and 243.

94 D Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland...*, p. 160; a more comprehensive treatment is T Ryle Dwyer, *Behind the green curtain: Ireland's phoney neutrality during World War II* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 2009).

95 DF Malan, *Afrikaner-volkseenheid...*, pp. 185-195.

96 DF Malan Collection, Reference 1.1.1341-1.1.1423, "Dreigbriewe en poskaarte wat DFM as 'n verraaiet en Nazi bestempel".

97 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 36, 4 September 1939, cols. 49-52.

98 "Dr. Malan oor demokrasie", *Die Transvaler*, 25 March 1941, p. 6.

and America lose the war because if England and America win the war, since Russia is winning the war for them, then the leader of Communism will force Communism on the World";⁹⁹ and in March 1944, he insisted that if an Allied victory led to communism spreading, a German victory would be in its interest.¹⁰⁰ Even when Germany invaded the kindred Low Countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, he had insisted that the Allies had already violated Iceland's and Norway's neutrality and that NP neutrality policy simply followed the World War I Dutch example – despite their Belgian cousins being invaded then.¹⁰¹ De Valera, in contrast, stated that it would be unworthy not to protest “against the cruel wrong” done to two small nations fighting for their lives.¹⁰²

Jews and antisemitism

Nazi diplomats had preferred Malan's pre-war Purified NP over the overtly fascist Greyshirts to promote anti-communism and antisemitism.¹⁰³ It had often denounced Jews, who the Transvaal NP barred as members.¹⁰⁴ In 1937, Malan proposed to ban “unassimilable” immigrants such as Jews, bar those present from some occupations, require original names, and de-list Yiddish as a European language.¹⁰⁵ Eric Louw's similar 1939 bill defined Jews racially to include those with just one Jewish parent.¹⁰⁶

By September 1939, Malan was listing the “Jewish question” as among “our big principles”.¹⁰⁷ A November 1939 speech went even further:¹⁰⁸

We have, moreover, the Jewish problem which hangs like a dark cloud over South Africa. Behind organised South African Jewry stands the organised Jewry of the world. They have so robbed the population of its heritage that the Afrikaner resides in the land of his fathers, but no longer possesses it.

There were some ugly popular Irish antisemitism and stridently pro-German views, even inside FF, while pre-war bureaucrats such as minister to Berlin, Charles Bewley (dismissed in mid-1939 for greater loyalty to Germany than Ireland) blocked visas for Jewish refugees.¹⁰⁹ De Valera's wartime government,

99 “Nasionalisme veg om te wen”, *Die Burger*, 1 May 1943, p. 1.

100 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 48, 16 March 1944, col. 3291.

101 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 39, 14 May 1940, cols. 7566-7571.

102 “Ireland and the War”, *Irish Press*, 13 May 1940, pp. 1, 5.

103 K Braskén, “South African anti-fascism and the Nazi Foreign Office: Antisemitism, anti-communism, and the surveillance of the Third Reich's International Enemies”, *South African Historical Journal*, pre-print open access April 2022, available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473/2022.2027005> (accessed on 20 Jun 2022); M Shain details NP antisemitism in *A perfect storm...*, especially pp. 143-256.

104 P Furlong, *Between crown and swastika...*, especially pp. 46-69; G Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African experience (1910-1967)* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1980), especially pp. 137-168.

105 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 28, 12 January 1937, cols. 32-33.

106 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 33, 24 February 1939, cols. 825-850.

107 “Staan vir die belang van ons vaderland”, *Die Burger*, 27 September 1939, p. 2.

108 “Dr. Malan antwoord”, *Die Burger*, 7 November 1939, p. 1.

109 B Girvin, *The emergency...*, pp. 1-2; K Goldstone, “Benevolent helpfulness? Ireland and the international

however, tried repeatedly (if in vain) to get German permission for at least some Jews to go to Ireland.¹¹⁰ De Valera was on friendly terms with the Dublin Jewish community, especially the chief rabbi, Isaac Herzog.¹¹¹ Jewish FF *Dáil* member Robert Briscoe and the Jewish Representative Council insisted that no Irish government had ever discriminated against Jews.¹¹² Arthur Griffin, the tiny antisemitic People's National Party's leader, even claimed that Jews controlled FF!¹¹³

Ironically, Malan, having renounced antisemitism after the war ended and the horrors of the Holocaust became widely known, was the first head of government to visit Israel while in office; his government recognised it in 1949,¹¹⁴ whereas Ireland long delayed doing so.¹¹⁵ Malan's dramatic shift reinforces the view that his antisemitism was opportunistic and fluid (into the early 1930s he had been friendly to Jewish South Africans),¹¹⁶ although Shain counters that later, under radical right pressure, Malan had often seemed consumed by imaginary Jewish machinations.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

Both FF and the NP preferred constitutional methods. Just as, despite some militant rhetoric, Malan was suspicious of violent radicalism, De Valera might sound sympathetic in public to militant, rejectionist republicanism, but privately sought a more moderate, constitutionalist solution – leading to breaking with *Sinn Féin* in 1926 to establish FF.¹¹⁸ In the age of the dictators, De Valera's Irish nationalism was thus somewhat comparable to Malanite Christian nationalism, both blending anti-imperialism and suspicion of Britain, passionate ethnic nationalism mediated by conservative religion, respect for some constitutional niceties, ambivalence toward Allies and Axis, and tolerance of some semi-authoritarian methods, despite growing distaste for home-grown “fascists” or other violent radicals. Many in the NP certainly admired De Valera's more measured approach to achieving an independent republic.

reaction to Jewish refugees, 1933-9”, M Kennedy and JM Skelly, *Irish foreign policy, 1919-66* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 116-136; A Roth, *Mr Bewley in Berlin: Aspects of the career of an Irish diplomat 1933-1939* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 34, 55-56.

110 C Crowe et.al, *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy Vol. VII 1941-1945* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 2010), pp. 405-406, 413-415, 420-421, 425-427; 446, etcetera.

111 D Keogh and AJ McCarthy, *The making of the Irish constitution 1937...*, pp. 160-161.

112 D Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland...*, p. 129.

113 C Willis, *That neutral Island: A cultural history of Ireland during the Second World War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 367-8; AJ Jordan, *Eamon de Valera...*, p. 199.

114 G Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism...*, pp. 208, 213.

115 P Wylie, “The virtual minimum: Ireland's decision for *de facto* recognition of Israel, 1947-9”, M Kennedy and JM Skelly, *Irish foreign policy...*, pp. 137-154.

116 L Koorts, *DF Malan...*, pp. 310-311; 314.

117 M Shain, *A perfect storm...*, p. 293.

118 D Ó Beacháin, *Destiny of the soldiers: Fianna Fáil, Irish republicanism and the IRA, 1926-1973* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 2010), pp. 25-41.

Nevertheless, very different histories and demography limit the Irish analogy. De Valera knew his people overwhelmingly backed neutrality,¹¹⁹ whereas white South Africans were far more divided on the war issue.¹²⁰ The Malanite wartime view of neutrality, like Malan's sometime antisemitism, also differed from De Valera's government.

The authoritarian lure for an Afrikaner community viewing itself as increasingly embattled also proved stronger. Once in power in the south, Irish nationalists gave a larger political role to the few remaining Protestants than did the NP for white English-speakers (who were shut out of NP cabinets until inclusion, from the 1960s, of at least one English-speaking minister, despite Malan's claim that a republic would be for both Afrikaners and English-speakers).¹²¹ De Valera's first Irish president in 1937, Douglas Hyde, was Anglican; James Irwin, ex-Presbyterian Moderator, was from 1945 to 1954 a member of the FF executive.¹²²

There is certainly no Irish parallel (excepting in some ways Protestant Unionist discrimination against the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland) to the treatment of South Africa's black majority, who from 1948 faced even harsher rule under apartheid than under earlier forms of segregation. Despite concern as early as Malan's government that South Africa was moving contrary to the rest of the world,¹²³ the Irish government joined the anti-apartheid campaign only much later.¹²⁴ Yet, ironically, Irish nationalism had once been a major source of inspiration for the party and leader that introduced that very system.

119 "Radio broadcast, 13 April 1941", M Moynihan, *Speeches ...*, p. 454.

120 N Roos, *Ordinary Springboks: White servicemen and social justice in South Africa, 1939-1961* (Aldershot, England, Ashgate, 2004), pp. 24-43.

121 Union of South Africa, *Debates ...*, 41, 6/7 February 1941, col. 2646.

122 D Keogh and AJ McCarthy, *The making of the Irish constitution 1937...*, p. 158.

123 "The South African Elections", *Irish Press*, 12 March 1949, p. 6.

124 INA, Department of the *Taoiseach*, S 11115A, Letters to E de Valera on vote at United Nations condemning apartheid, 4 November 1957, undated, and 27 August 1958.