

Episode 55 – Liam Lynch During the Irish War of Independence

Hello, I'm Alex Amenn, your non-binary host and this fifty-fifth episode of the Art of Asymmetrical Warfare. Today I'll talk about Liam Lynch, during the Irish War of Independence.

[theme song]

Right now I have a small contest going on: 30 Patrons by the end of the year. My goal is to gain 30 supporters on Patreon to celebrate three years of podcasting. Everyone who joins now and helps me reach my goal will receive an exclusive, hand-crafted sticker designating you as one of my original 30 supporters and allow you to brag that you loved my podcast before it was cool.

And now that the begging for money part is over, it's time for making history.

Making History

Virginia's state elections are this fall and Indivisible Chicago-South Siders are gathering together on Sept 9th and 21st to write letters to Virginia voters. As we saw in the last batch of elections, the larger the turn out, the better chance we have at defeating the fascists at the polls. The current Virginia governor is already threatening LGBTQ+ rights, reproductive rights, and voter rights. If he has a GOP majority in the state senate and house, there will be no one who can protect Virginian citizens from fascist policies. Email Indiv.Chi.South@gmail.com to sign up for the event.

There have been several legal challenges to Biden's CHNV program, which allows 30,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans apply to entry the US for a temporary stay of up to two years. This is a bare minimum kind of policy, but right now the goal is to preserve anything semi-beneficial for immigrants. Texas, of course it's fucking Texas, and 20 other states have submitted a challenge not only the CHNV, but also against the Uniting for Ukraine program. The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) submitted an amicus to defend the programs, but they need our help. They've provided an [explainer](#), breaking down the CHNV program, an explainer on [the case](#) and amicus, and they need us to [Calling on the Biden administration](#) to robustly defend the CHNV parole program and its parole authority in Court, lift the 30,000 monthly limit on CHNV applications, and rebuild the asylum system and the U.S. Refugee and Assistance Program (USRAP) to ensure access to protection is available to **ALL** those in search of safety.

And now time to talk about Liam Lynch.

Intro

Liam Lynch: leader of the anti-treaty IRA, the Provisional Government's best hope at preventing civil war, and a nationalist hero who shone brightest during the Irish War of Independence. Lynch represented both the best of the Irish nationalist's tendencies and the worst. But who was he and how did he become a key player during the Irish Civil War?

Early Life

Liam Lynch was born on November 20th, 1892, in County Limerick to a rural family that owned a modest bit of land. Liam was one of seven children and was closest to his younger brother, Tom. He was educated at the Anglesboro National School and started an apprenticeship in O'Neill's hardware shop in 1909. Despite his reputation for nationalism, Lynch started off somewhat conservative. He joined both the Gaelic League and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, but also voted for the Irish Parliamentary Party and supposed the latest version of Home Rule. Many nationalists at the time thought the Home Rule Bill was anathema. Later, Lynch would look back on his dedication to the IPP with disdain and an acknowledgment that he had a long way to being a true nationalist.

Lynch relocated to Fermoy where he worked at the Messrs J. Barry & Sons, LTD hardware store. Fermoy was defined by the presence of the British military barracks. The presence of the military made it a successful town and about 140 men from Fermoy died while fighting in the British Army during WWI. There was also a vibrant branch of the Gaelic League in Fermoy, which Liam joined. Because Lynch was in Fermoy and not connected to the nationalist volunteers, he didn't participate in Easter Rising.

Despite not taking part in Easter Rising, Lynch was still radicalized by it because of the British reprisals. In a town south of Fermoy, seven Royal Irish Constabulary officers arrested the Kent family. The four men in the family organized the Castlelyons Volunteer Company and were members of the large Cork Brigade of the Volunteers. The Kent men resisted arrested, killing one constable. The youngest Kent brother was shot during the shootout. The Kent family was marched hand-cuffed and bare-foot through the streets of Fermoy, while the wounded brother ride in a horse-drawn cart. Lynch watched the proceedings in horror. The death of the youngest brother and the execution of the oldest radicalized him further. According to Lynch himself:

“He was Nationalist until the day the British attacked the Kents...and he saw Thomas Kent being brought out bleeding through the town of Fermoy and his poor old mother...They were barefooted...he said then that he would join up with the Irish Volunteers...He said that when he saw the Kents going through Fermoy it was like a sword going through his heart” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 21)

Irish War of Independence

Organizing An Insurgency

Lynch joined the Fermoy Company of the Irish Volunteers in early 1917. He was elected first lieutenant for the Fermoy Company and his best friend, Michael Fitzgerald, led one of the four squads within the company.

At first, the Fermoy Company focused on drilling and marching, but events in Ireland accelerated with the release of the 1916 rebels. Being so far from Dublin, Lynch missed the formation of the first Dail, DeValera's ascension to the presidency, and Thomas Ashe's funeral, but he was busy with events in Fermoy. His captain was arrested but Lynch, himself, managed to avoid arrest. He wrote:

“O'Denn was taken from us last Saturday and lodged in Cork main prison where they are forty-seven in all now awaiting trial, or rather, court-martial by the enemy, but we have declared for an Irish Republic and we will not live under any other law, when he left I was appointed Captain and commanded about 150 men last Sunday and indeed did drill and march.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare A Republic*, pg. 35).

By early 1918, the Fermoy Company swelled to a hundred volunteers and the larger Cork Brigade reorganized itself to accommodate the growing number of members and companies. The Fermoy Battalion, the sixth of twenty battalions which the Cork Brigade, was created in early 1918. The leadership consisted of: Martin O'Keefe as Battalion Commandant, Michael Fitzgerald as the vice-commandant, and Liam Lynch as adjutant. Lynch took his position seriously and visited a company per week to make an “intensive study of every problem they had to face, always urging the perfection of organization, the intensification of training, and the acquisition of arms” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 41). Quartermaster George Power believed that “Lynch was the driving force in organizing the battalion and in helping to develop the backward companies” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 41).

Tomas MacCurtain, the commanding officer of the Cork Brigade, and Terence MacSwiney, the vice commanding officer, understood the importance of having a good intelligence network. They utilized the skills of Liam Tobin, an intelligence officer within the IRB who was close to Collins, and women volunteers who worked in various businesses and could pass along materials and letters unnoticed. Lynch would personally utilize the services of Tobin and Siobhan Lankford who worked at the Mallow Post Office. Lynch and Lankford arranged that messages would be sent between Mallow and Fermoy through the Powers' tailor shop. Lankford would call and provide important information via details and measurements for clothing. Lankford would become a reliable and trusted ally of Lynch during the Irish War of Independence

Conscription Bill

As I've discussed in my first season, the conscription bill was the final spark the Irish liberation movement needed to burst into a full out rebellion. Upon introduction of the bill, GHQ sent word to all of its commanders to prepare for a military conflict once the conscription bill was passed and Lynch was eager to take the initiative. The perfect opportunity rose when Lynch learned that

a large number of rifles and ammunition was due to arrive by train to Fermoy in early May. He, Fitzgerald, Tobin, Lar Condon, and James Fanning devised a plan.

First they hired cars from a local garage and parked them at Benny boreen, the designated transfer spot. They also involved volunteers from several other companies to serve as lookouts and scouts. Fanning took a handful of men from the Fermoy Company to the Castletownroche railway station. They planned to force the train to stop and change its destination to Benny boreen, however the Volunteers cut the wires at the wrong time and the train could not leave Castletownroche. Fanning called the men off. Later, Lynch learned that there weren't even any arms on the train. Instead, they had arrived the day before. While Lynch was disappointed, he philosophically saw it as great practice for future operations.

Commanding a Brigade

By the end of 1918, the Cork Brigade consisted of twenty battalions equally a total of 8,000 volunteers. GHQ split the brigade into three different units: Cork Brigade 1 commanded by Tomas MacCurtain, Cork Brigade 3 commanded by Tom Hales, and Cork Brigade 2 commanded by Liam Lynch. His vice-commandant was Dan Hegarty, his quartermaster was Thomas Barry, and his adjutant was George Powers. Lynch's friend, Michael Fitzgerald was the Fermoy Battalion's commanding officer.

By early 1919, the Cork 2nd Brigade consisted of 2,500 volunteers with roughly 200 shotguns, 24 revolvers, twelve rifles, and limited ammunition. They were responsible for North Cork; their territory extended east to west from the Cork-Waterford border near Tallow to the Kerry border at Rathmore and north to south from Milford to Donoughmore.

His British counterpart was Major General Sir E. P. Strickland who had men stationed in various barracks throughout Fermoy. In total, he commanded 4,300 men consisting of soldiers from the 6th Division's 16th and Kerry Brigades, two bridges from the Royal Field Artillery, a machine gun battalion, as well as 490 armed members of the RIC who knew the area intimately.

Lynch's headquarters were in Fermoy, in the most eastern part of his territory, but along with Power's help, he was able to create an intelligence network that covered the entire area. He relied on the railway workers, the cycling Volunteers, and members of Cumann na mBan, who "were always at hand, on the shortest notice, day or night." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: to Declare a Republic*, pg. 55). Lynch also continued his habit of meeting as many battalion commanders as possible and reviewing the situation firsthand.

Lynch was a skilled organizer, but his heart was fighting, so in early 1919, he, Fitzgerald, and Con Leddy, original commanding officer of the Araglen Company, planned an assault on the Araglen RIC barracks. Lynch and Powers inspected the barracks and planned the attack for April 20th. Lynch wouldn't lead the attack, he would be in Dublin to meet with GHQ on the 20th, but he trusted the assault would go well, even claiming, "I have started something that will shake up these fellows." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: to Declare a Republic*, pg. 58).

The attack went off without a hitch. Five of the six RIC men based in the barracks were at Mass at the time of the assault and the lone remaining officer was easily subdued. The IRA earned six carbines, ten hand grenades, 400 rounds of .303 ammunition, a Webley revolver, and twenty rounds of ammunition.

It's unknown how GHQ reacted to Lynch's unsanctioned attack. GHQ would always struggle to control its many officers and, while in 1918 they had urged caution over action, by

1919 they were slowly accepting that their soldiers would have to fight the British at some point if they wanted to win the war. Additionally, Mulcahy and Lynch seemed to have a trusting relationship. Lynch was often attacked by those who hated GHQ and Mulcahy for being overly friendly with them. Seumas Robinson, who hated Mulcahy and I pretty sure the feeling was mutual, noted, “it was well known to me and to other Brigade Officers that GHQ was Sanctum Sanctorum to Liam, that the Chief of Staff was its High Priest, and that Liam and all Cork were as children of light to GHQ” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: to Declare a Republic*, pg. 60).

Mulcahy, even decades after the Irish Civil War, considered Lynch to be one of his best commanders. Mulcahy even called Lynch “a lion of the resistance movement”. It could be because they had similar work ethics, were similarly somber and meticulous, and were similarly exacting of the people under their command. Maybe Lynch simply knew that the best way to win Mulcahy over was to write perfectly formatted reports and to tolerate his many, many memos. Mulcahy was known to send Lynch’s reports to other disappointing officers to use as a reference when they were crafting their own reports. Apparently, Mulcahy offered Lynch the role of deputy chief of staff several times and each time Lynch refused. So, it sort of makes sense why some IRA men felt Lynch was a teacher’s pet.

For his part, Lynch seemed to respect both Mulcahy and Collins and looked to them for support and guidance, but he was also aware of their weaknesses, especially when it came to communicating with IRA units far from Dublin.

Raids and Kidnappings

In September 1919, Lynch led an arms raid against soldiers stationed in Fermoy. Using cars, Lynch’s men encircled the party of British soldiers on their way to church. Instead of surrendering right away, the soldiers fought back. Lynch was wounded and one British soldier was killed, but his death and the inquest that followed, led to soldiers destroying Fermoy. They used hammers to smash shop windows and were followed by citizens who looted the remains. Families gathered together to defend their shops and homes and the RICs were called to disperse the looters and round up the aggressive soldiers. It’s estimated that about 50-60 shops were destroyed. Fermoy was then placed under martial law, prohibiting gatherings of more than three people within 3 miles of the RIC barracks in Fermoy.

Despite his wounds, Lynch didn’t stay still for long. He ended 1919 by visiting his various battalions, reorganizing those who didn’t meet his exact standards, and spent early 1920 in Dublin conferring with Mulcahy and Collins. When he returned to Fermoy, his friend, Fitzgerald was in jail, and Lynch was eager to take the initiative once more. He decided he was going to kidnap a British officer.

On June 26th, Lynch, George Powers, Commandant Sean Moylan of the Newmarket Battalion and Commandant Patrick Clancy of the Kanturk Battalion drove a Ford to British Brigadier General Cuthbert Henry Tyndall Lucas’ fishing lodge. They were supported by men from the Cork No. 2 Brigade. Moylan and Clancy led the assault on the cabin, but only succeeded in terrifying the cook and a young girl. Two British soldiers and a servant stopped by the lodge and they were easily disarmed and captured by Lynch’s men, but Lucas had yet to be spotted. Lynch sent Powers and Clancy to search for Lucas. Powers ran into him by accident and disarmed him. Lynch let his prisoners eat at the lodge and sent a letter to Fermoy barracks, alerting the British of the general’s kidnapping.

Lynch transported the prisoners in two different cars. Moylan took one of the soldiers while Lynch took the other soldier and General Lucas. The prisoners entered the cars without resisting but as soon as the cars took off, Lucas and the soldier attacked Lynch. The car, predictably crashed, and the IRA and British soldiers took the fighting to the road. Lynch was able to overpower Lucas, but the British soldier was strangling Clancy. Lynch warned him to let go or he'd shoot. The British soldier refused to comply and Lynch shot him in the face. Moylan, realizing that Lynch's car was no longer behind him, turned around and retraced his steps, arriving just after Lynch shot the British soldier.

Lucas was handcuffed and placed in Moylan's Ford while a doctor was sent for and another IRA member was sent to GHQ to report the kidnapping. They took Lucas to the designating hiding spot and the general settled into being a prisoner with relative ease, even engaging Lynch in "friendly" conversation.

The British responded by trashing Fermoy once more. Lucas moved from hide out to hide out until he finally managed to escape. He was picked up by British soldiers and driven into an IRA ambush he narrowly survived. Lynch would later admit that moving Lucas around as much as they did was bad practice as he "must have learned a lot more about us than he should" (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 91).

On August 11th, while conferring with Brigadier commander Terence MacSwiney, Lynch, MacSwiney, and others were arrested. Lynch was held in Cork City Jail and gave a false name of James Casey. He had a map detailing the exact positions of all battalions and companies in his command. He managed to smuggle it to another IRA member who tore it apart and flushed it down the toilet. While in prison Lynch was able to reunite with his friend Michael Fitzgerald, who was currently on hunger strike. Lynch only spent a few days in jail before being released, most likely because of his false name, but his friend Fitzgerald would die in prison on October 17th, on the 67th day of his hunger strike. He was followed by Terence MacSwiney on October 25th, seventy-four days into his hunger strike, and Joseph Murphy, also on October 25th, seventy-six days into his hunger strike. These deaths would weigh heavily on Lynch for the rest of his life.

Flying Columns

Once Lynch was released, he, with help from GHQ staff member, Ernie O'Mally, reorganized Cork No 2 battalion to include a 24 men flying column. Lynch's vision was that every battalion would have two to three flying columns and they could be used to support larger operations. He instructed members of the column:

"When not lying in ambush, each column should carry out a regular schedule of training on its own during the day. At night the members of the column were to train the members of the companies in whose areas they were billeted. In this way he felt that an unlimited supply of trained personnel would be available throughout the brigade area at all times." (Gerard Shannon. *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 100).

The flying column's first operation was a raid on the Mallow Military Barracks. Two members of the Mallow Battalion, Jackie Bolster and Richard Willis, were working as painter

and carpenter in the barracks and were able to gather several pieces of important information for the raid.

The attack was planned for September 28th, 1920. It began with Paddy McCarthy of the Millstreet Battalion entering the barracks as an inspector while Lynch, O'Malley, and several others billeted in Mallow town hall. Early in the morning, O'Malley walked to the front door of the barracks and knocked, claiming he had a message for the commanding officer of the barracks. Once O'Malley was inside, he disarmed the sentry and opened the door for the rest of the flying column. The IRA surrounded the guardroom and held up seven soldiers while Willis shot at the approaching sergeant major. Lynch gave a prearranged signal and three cars drove into the barracks and were filled with two Hotchkiss light machine guns, twenty-seven rifles, a revolver, some pistols, 4,000 rounds of ammunition, and several bayonets and lances.

The British responded with, what Florence O'Donoghue described as, "the pattern now becoming familiar to the civil population...a night of terror for the inhabitants of [Mallow] town." Lynch and the others watched from a distance as the British soldiers burnt down buildings and residences including the town hall and the local creamery. Lynch regretted the British reprisal, saying, "Damn it, it's terrible to think of the women and children in there and the Tans and the soldiers sprawling around drunk, setting fire to the houses", (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 104) but he was also excited that his flying column had better weapons.

Becoming a Divisional Commander

The end of 1920 saw an increase in British reprisals, IRA raids, and assassinations. Lynch's men were hard pressed as the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries tried to squeeze the IRA out of the Cork area. After talking to one of his battalion commanders, Seamus Robinson, Lynch realized that the IRA needed to undergo another reorganization. He felt that brigades were "often hard pressed by the enemy, while neighbouring Brigades are listening to the guns and do nothing, often perhaps allowing enemy reinforcements pass through unmolested" (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 120). He sent a proposal to GHQ about division size units. Robinson always claimed that his discussion with Lynch prompted GHQ to initiate its reorganization of the IRA in 1921. Along with the suggested reorganization, Lynch also sent a proposal to shoot all enemy hostages on sight and to expand the size of flying columns. GHQ rejected these proposals.

Because of increased British presence and a collapse of the Fermoy intelligence gathering, Lynch spent the first six months of 1920 engaging in small actions and barely escaping several attempts to arrest him. After one particularly close call, a rumor spread that Lynch was killed in action.

Lynch continued to send reports to GHQ asking for permission to expand operations, poison the food of British cavalry horses, and disrupt the civilian to barracks supply chains. He wanted to issue a statement forbidding civilians from sharing information with the British writing if, "we rigidly put in force that none of the civil population speak or communicate with them, it will break up their all-important Intelligence Department" (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 119). Mulchay promised to look into poisoning the horses, but told Lynch not to disrupt the supply chain just yet.

On March 8th, Mulcahy wrote to Lynch stating:

“we [are] sending a HG representative to the south...it has appeared for us for some time that it is necessary to create a Divisional Command in the south for the area...[it was] quote imposible to co-ordinate the work of the Brigades in the area from here and it is absolutely necessary the work be co-ordinated...it is my idea that you will be appointed Divisional Officer in charge of the area with instructions to co-ordinate the work and to develop the Divisional Staff...I want you to think over this matter and if you have any definite thing to say on it. I shall be glad to hear from you.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 119).

At first Lynch rejected the divisional commander position, but eventually changed his mind a month later. His change of mind seemed to have coincided with his elevation with the IRB ranks as head of the South Munster center. Lynch was formally promoted on April 13th and a division wide meeting was held, announcing the promotion and reorganization. Some members used the meeting to complain to GHQ representative Ernie O'Malley, who had only recently escaped from Kilmainham jail, but overall, everyone accepted the change. Lynch, with some difficulty because brigades didn't want to let their best men go, created the following divisional staff:

1. Florence O'Donoghue as divisional adjutant
2. Joseph O'Connor as quartermaster
3. Patrick Coughlan as divisional engineer,
4. Liam Deasy as vice-divisional officer commandant
5. Tom Barry as divisional training officer.

Sean Moylan took over Lynch's brigade initially, but after he was arrested and imprisoned in Cork's Spike Island, George Powers took over.

Lynch grew more confident and more aggressive a divisional commander. When he heard that the British had burnt down ten houses of republican supporters and allies across North Cork, Lynch replied, “I'll bloody well settle that; six big houses and castles of their friends, the imperialists, will go up for this. I don't know what GHQ will do – but I don't give a damn.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 126).

In April 1921, GHQ sent out a communication stating that:

“communication to the Enemy of information concerning the work...of the Republic is an offence...and in the ultimate is punishable by death.” Lynch wrote back requesting permissions to shoot a local loyalist for every republican prisoner executive, explaining, “it is proposed to notify the loyalists to this effect, and by doing so we hope to get them to prevent the enemy from shooting our prisoners.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 126-127)

He further explained that:

”in view of the fact that in the Cork No. 2 Brigade area, where the enemy burned houses as a reprisal, we burned loyalist houses as a counter reprisal with the result that the local

loyalists approached the enemy authorities immediately asking them for God's sake to stop the reprisals." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 126-127)

Mulcahy wrote back, rejecting his proposal and asking, what:

"exactly has been the result, as far as you can see, of the approaches made by local loyalists to the Enemy authorities with a view to getting them to stop reprisals against property. It does not seem to me that it has had any results." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 126-127)

Lynch wrote back:

"We higher officers are expected to lead the rank and file and I for one look to GHQ and the Government for definite action in this matter. If the enemy continue shooting our prisoners then we should shoot theirs all round and they should be told so. If a day is fixed for such an action and the whole Army act together from that [day] forward, I am sure the enemy will quickly change its policy.

All lives must be considered sacred and indeed, we would all wish to be chivalrous but when the enemy continue such an outrage, let it be a barbarous war all round. Anyhow, whatever action is taken, let it be Official and working all round if possible." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 128)

When he received information about a potential truce, Lynch wrote to Mulcahy again urging for the shooting of prisoners, claiming:

"You may like to hold your hand until this peace move is over, but peace during executions seems ridiculous. Hostages should not be held any longer if we are not to use them when a case arises." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 128)

Lynch and Mulcahy never settled the question of shooting prisoners, although given Mulcahy's record during the Irish Civil War, he may have wanted to approve Lynch's suggestion but was waiting to see how the peace negotiations would play out. A communication was sent to all IRA divisions on July 11th, announcing a truce between the Irish and British forces.

The Truce and Treaty

Many IRA commanders were blind-sided by the truce. Moss Twomey wrote that the Truce was a "bolt from the blue", but Lynch felt that it was a great "opportunity to perfect organisation and training." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 135). He didn't think the truce would last for long and wanted his unit prepared for a resumption of war. Liam Deasy wrote that, "[Lynch's] one concern was how long it might last so that he could improve and enlarge the existing units and be ready for the continuation of the war which seemed to him quite inevitable." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 136). He still pestered GHQ for better arms and more ammunition, asking if "GHQ in a reasonable time make up for the shortage of revolver ammunition, otherwise such activity cannot hope to go on. Grenades in

plentiful supply will of course ease the situation” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch to Declare a Republic*, pg. 141)

While others used the Truce to relax, many picking up drinking, Lynch drove himself hard and often complained to GHQ about the deteriorating discipline within the ranks. When an IRA member of the 2nd Cork Brigade asked Lynch what he thought would be the outcome of the treaty, Lynch replied, “The politicians will defeat us.” When the IRA member replied that the politicians didn’t have any authority as the army was the one who was fighting, Lynch replied, “that was not the way it would be; that the army would be subservient to the representatives of the people...it would be for the people to decide.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 139). Lynch would tell another IRA member that he was “afraid that they [the politicians] are not strong enough and there is the danger that they will let the country down.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 139).

The truce also allowed Lynch’s to further develop his very militant stance on government. When the IRA were charged with managing unions and their strikes, Lynch felt that the union movement was anti-nationalist and couldn’t be allowed to distract from the IRA’s goal of liberation. When asked how Sinn Fein could better support the war effort, should it resume, Lynch wanted to turn Sinn Fein into an auxiliary or service corps to the army, claiming that:

“England during the world war is a striking example of what a mighty force the civil population is in wartime if organized on definite lines. They had all towns and villages doing their utmost assisting the various organizations...[without this] the Empire would have gone down in the world war.” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 144).

He also discredited the efforts of the government during the Irish War of Independence:

“We must admit that all civil organisations, County Councils, District Councils, Corporations, urban Councils, Sinn Fein Clubs and all other organized bodies were an absolutely failure during the last phase of hostilities, if [anything] they were a burden on the Army, why even the civil Government failed. Had there been a highly organized system the result would have been far more effective” (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 144)

Lynch was dragged into the growing feud between Mulcahy and Brugha when Brugha tried to force his own recommissioning plan that would have demoted Mulcahy to the same rank as a divisional commander and subordinate to Brugha. Lynch wrote back, refusing to accept Brugha’s plan:

“I feel that the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff cannot do their duty when they are not placed in a position to do so. I may have the wrong views of the duties of a Commander-in-Chief and Minister for Defence, if so, I will put up with the result. I painfully realise the consequences of the present relations between Cabinet and GHQ Staff, therefore I cannot act blindly in the matter and be responsible for waging war in the most active area of Ireland. I hold GHQ

responsible for directing general operation policy, at the present moment when the war be resumed at short notice..." (Gerard Shannon, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, pg. 147)

The announcement of a compromised treaty, put everything on hold and split the IRA irrevocably. Lynch actually knew about the treaty first, because Collins sent it to the IRB Supreme Council before he discussed it with the Dail. No one knew that Collins would sign a treaty and many members of the IRA felt personally betrayed. Lynch, despite agonizing over the idea of civil war, would eventually side with the anti-treaty IRA, giving it legitimacy and some organizational power that would enable it to fight for a year and a half before turning into disgruntled citizens of the Free Irish State.

Outro

Thank you for listening. I hope you enjoyed this episode. You can listen to my full catalogue on Spotify, iTunes, and my website www.samswarroom.com. Please join my Patreon at www.patreon.com/aoawarfare to keep up to date on all my projects. Until next time wear a mask, organize with your community, and stay safe.

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Eamon De Valera: a Will to Power by Ronan Fanning

Green Against Green by Michael Hopkinson

Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic by Gerard Shannon

"I thank God that I have been in the very big push for the motherland": The Role of Violence and Society in the Correspondence of IRA Commander Liam Lynch by Thomas Earls FitzGerald