Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

GEORGIA KING

BA (University of Victoria, 2017)

“National Housekeeping:”
Rethinking Nationalism through the Irish Housewives Association

Department of History

Tuesday, August 25, 2020
10:00 A.M.
Conducted Remotely

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Lynne Marks, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Elizabeth Vibert, Department of History, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Julie Guard, History & Labour Studies, University of Manitoba

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Laura Parisi, Department of Gender Studies, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

While Ireland remained neutral throughout the Second World War, it was not spared from the economic and social consequences of the conflict. This time in Ireland is known as ‘the Emergency’ and shortages of essential goods exacerbated poverty, often with fatal consequences for the worst off. In 1941, Hilda Tweedy organized a petition signed by Irish women that was sent to Government in pursuit of a variety of policies intended to alleviate some of the harshest suffering caused by economic turmoil and minimal government intervention. This petition ultimately laid the groundwork for the subsequent formation of the Irish Housewives Association in 1942. This Association was involved in a wide array of activities, but consumer protection and the cost of living were of preeminent concern throughout their existence. The Irish Housewives Association has received some historical attention for its feminist activities, but I propose that many of their initiatives can be usefully analyzed through theories of nationalism. I argue that the theoretical innovations of everyday nationalism and consumer nationalism possess previously unrecognized utility for illuminating women’s experience throughout this period of Irish history.