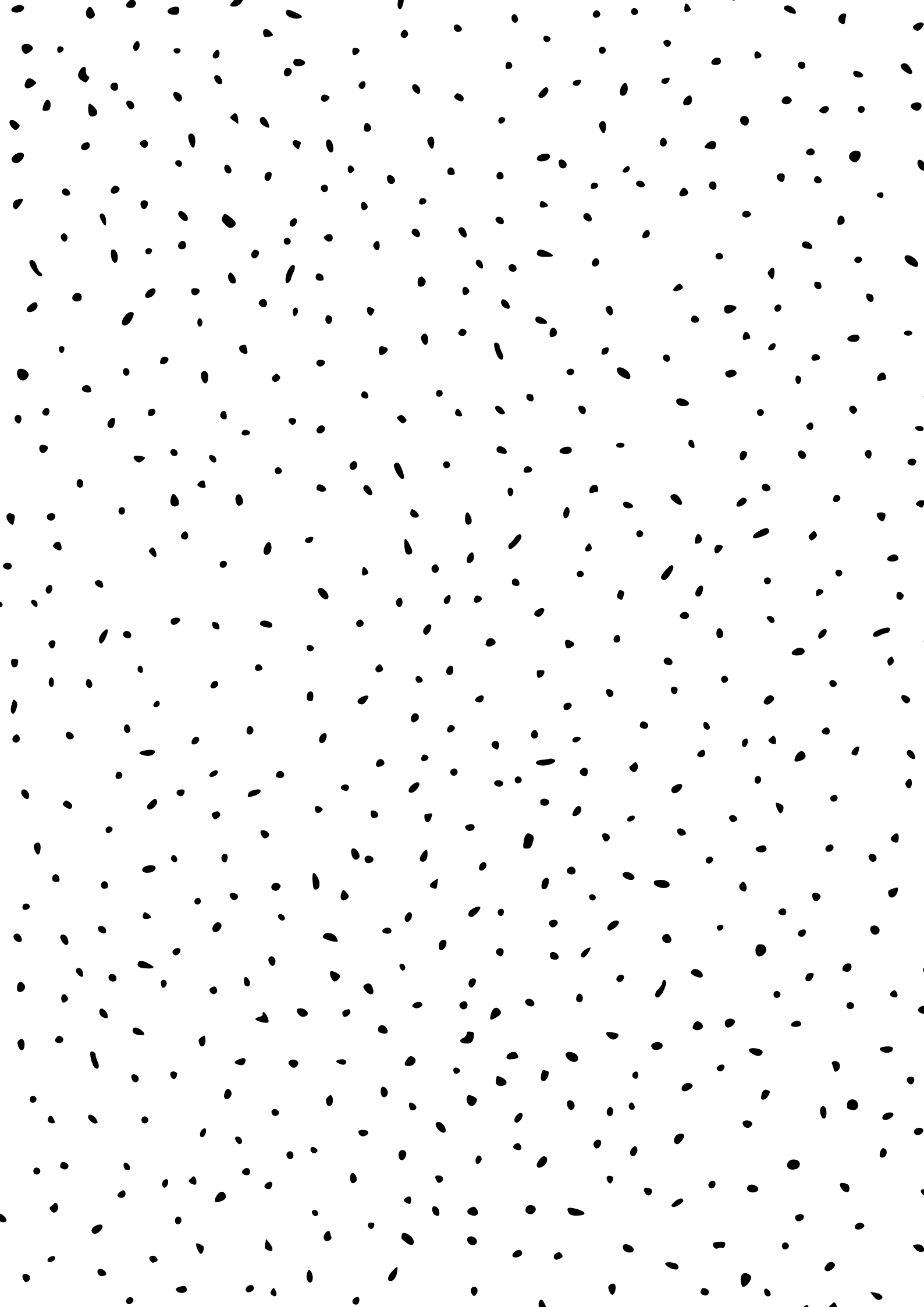


Dictionary *of* Irish Biography

Relevant Irish figures
for Leaving Cert history



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
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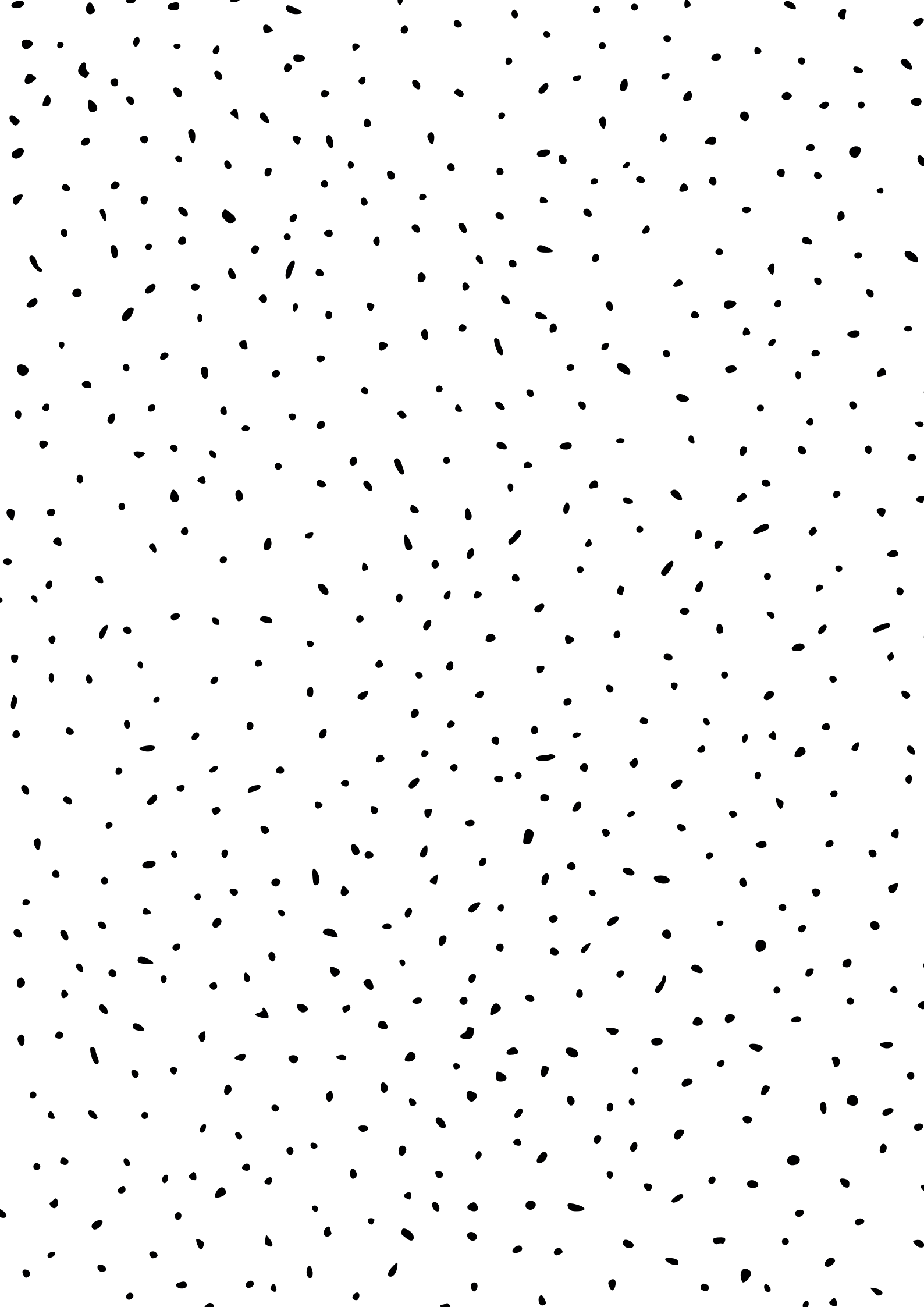
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Part 1.
Ireland and
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Daniel O’Connell

O’Connell, Daniel (1775–1847), barrister, politician and nationalist leader, was born in Carhen, near Caherciveen, in the Iveragh peninsula of south-west Kerry, on 6 August 1775, the eldest of ten children of Morgan O’Connell (1739–1809) and his wife, Catherine O’Mullane (1752–1817).

Family background and early years

Morgan O’Connell was a modest landowner, grazier, and businessman. Within the peninsula the family were the leading surviving catholic gentry of the old Gaelic stock. By the time of Daniel’s birth English was already established as the family vernacular, as it was generally in Ireland among those of their social rank and education; but Irish was the language of the mass of the peasantry in late eighteenth-century Iveragh, and was the usual language of communication between the O’Connells (including Daniel) and the common people of the district. The O’Connells were resourceful survivors, the very remoteness of their residence, their business acumen, and the occasional connivance of protestant neighbouring gentry permitting them to maintain their hold on land and on a modest gentleman status in the difficult era of plantation and penal laws.

Two of Daniel’s paternal uncles were especially important in his upbringing and for his future prospects. One, Daniel, was a count of France (with the rank of major general) and was an important ‘society’ connection for the family, not least in military circles (in France and later in England), during Daniel’s early years. Far more important, however, was Daniel’s uncle Maurice, better known as ‘Hunting Cap’, the eldest and incomparably the wealthiest of his father’s brothers, and clearly the patriarch of the family, who resided at Derrynane abbey, some 20 miles south of Carhen. Hunting Cap had amassed considerable wealth as a landowner, grazier, merchant, and smuggler, and, while he harboured a historical sense of grievance at the misfortunes that had befallen Irish catholics, he was a pragmatist who believed in operating, cautiously, within the political status quo.

Daniel’s earliest years, until he was four, were spent – in the traditional Gaelic manner – in fosterage to a small herdsman’s family, after which he was in effect adopted by his wealthy uncle, Hunting Cap, with whom he went to live, probably from the age of five. Hunting Cap, without a child of his own, was to prove a reliable, if stern, patron and financial support for Daniel for more than thirty years. In 1790 Daniel went to Father Harrington’s small school in Cork. In

1791 he and his brother Maurice, younger by one year, were sent, via Liège and Louvain, to the English college at St Omer, despite the anxieties of Count O'Connell that the political and security situation in France (and on its borders) was deteriorating. Within a year the boys moved to the more academically challenging and more austere English college at Douai. Here Daniel's sharp intelligence, eloquence, and ambition were recognised by his superiors, who declared him destined to make his name as a remarkable public man. He was a studious if rather solitary boy, who quickly took to the close study of rhetoric and the classics.

The accelerating descent of revolutionary France into bloodshed finally forced the O'Connell boys to leave for London in early January 1793, where their uncle the count, already ensconced with other outraged émigrés, undertook to supervise their education at Fagan's 'academy'. The French experience, and the fear engendered by the encounter with the sanguinary excesses of revolution, left O'Connell with an abiding antipathy to bloodshed, mob rule, and the 'French way' of political change. While Maurice was recalled by Hunting Cap to an army commission, in 1794 Daniel began terms at Lincoln's Inn to prepare for the bar. The relaxation of the penal laws against catholics had by this time opened a career at the Irish bar (at least to the level of junior counsel) to catholics, and O'Connell was to be a beneficiary of these relief measures.

The London years were formative in O'Connell's intellectual and political development. Through his wide reading, which included Voltaire, Rousseau, Gibbon, Paine, William Godwin, and Adam Smith, and his quickening interest in public affairs, he was drawn towards a liberal, not to say radical, point of view. Civil and religious equality, freedom of conscience, and the extension of individual liberty became the basis of his philosophical and political position. This period also saw O'Connell enter a phase of religious scepticism, which was to last for several years before he eventually returned to an orthodox, indeed devout, catholic observance.

On his return to Dublin in 1796 O'Connell was affected by the high level of political excitement that had gripped the Irish capital in response to the general state of European politics and Anglo-French tensions, and, in particular, the danger of a French invasion of Ireland. He was especially alarmed at the appearance of the French fleet off Bantry Bay in late 1796. Called to the Irish bar in 1798, Daniel, like many others in his profession, was caught up in the Volunteers, inspired by a broadly patriotic impulse and a resolve to defend public order. While mindful of Hunting Cap's continuous exhortations and warnings that he devote his talents and energy to professional advancement rather than to political involvement, O'Connell was drawn to the public sphere, albeit in a most responsible and conventional way for a young ambitious barrister.

Appalled by the bloodshed and socially subversive challenge of the 1798 rebellion, O'Connell was nevertheless opposed to the proposal for the ending of the Irish parliament and the enactment of the Act of Union. His public statement made in January 1800 in the debates on the union proposal – his first major public intervention in political debate – was significant. It exposed his credo on the historical and legal rights of Ireland as a kingdom, and his refusal to accept that any political group or generation of leaders had the right to abrogate or surrender them. He famously declared that 'if the alternative were offered him of union, or the re-enactment of the penal code in all its pristine horrors, he would prefer without hesitation the latter, as the lesser and more sufferable evil' (*Life and speeches*, i, 8–9). This was to be the sticking point of all his later demands, however embellished with utilitarian or opportunistic arguments, for the restoration of the Irish parliament in College Green or, as it became, the demand for the 'Repeal of the Union'.

O'Connell's opposition to the union was voiced in the strong patriotic language of the late eighteenth century, and was essentially no different from the position of Henry Grattan, save that O'Connell was speaking as a young catholic barrister, and the catholic hierarchy had committed itself to support of the union, on the grounds that the protestant parliament in Dublin offered less prospect of 'equal' citizenship and religious equality for catholics than the parliament

at Westminster. The primacy of Ireland's historical rights over immediate confessional advantage was, therefore, the basis of O'Connell's early political declarations. It is worth stressing, in this context, his enduring monarchism. He defended strenuously the rights of the 'kingdom of Ireland'. In later decades his expressions of loyalty to particular British monarchs (notably George IV during his Dublin visit of 1821 and Victoria, 'the young queen', from the moment of her accession in 1837) were extremely – for some embarrassingly – fulsome.

In the immediate post-union years O'Connell's public stature largely derived from his professional work. He was twenty-five years old and had already made a mark. His political views placed him in the patriotic reform camp with regard to the conduct of government and administration, the discharge of the law, and religious and civil liberties, and he had a particular agenda of denouncing privilege and prejudice. From the more 'quietist' political perspective of Hunting Cap, he was outspoken to the point of incautious notoriety.

Legal practice and family life

Within a few years of his starting to practise, O'Connell's professional reputation and his earnings at the bar began to grow. By 1806 he was earning £600 net in fees, and, as he became more sought after in the years that followed, his income grew accordingly. Indeed, his fame as an advocate was such that he was popularly known during this phase of his career as 'the Counsellor'. By 1813 he was earning almost £4,000 per annum. At the height of his legal career, in the mid-1820s, before he turned to politics as a full-time occupation, he was earning more than £6,000 at the bar. This would certainly have placed him in the top bracket of barristers, so far as professional income was concerned. But the continuing legal prohibition on Catholics entering the inner bar prevented O'Connell from reaching the very top rung of his profession, an exclusion which he, in common with other leading Catholic barristers, understandably resented.

His legal reputation was based on his prowess in both criminal and civil cases. His forte was jury cases, where his ruthless techniques of cross-examination of witnesses, combined with sharp forensic and histrionic talents in addressing juries, frequently carried the day for his clients. His personality and style, wit, and eloquence were the assets that served him best, rather than the close, dry exegesis of technical points of law, though his knowledge of the law was formidable. Clients, including those with whose conduct, actions, or political positions he had no sympathy, trusted him to do his best for them. However, there were exceptional occasions, such as the notorious case of July 1813, in which he defended John Magee, a Dublin newspaper editor charged with libelling the Lord Lieutenant; accepting that, with both judge and jury implacably 'packed' against his client, the verdict was a foregone conclusion, O'Connell decided to throw his defence to one side and use the court as a platform for a corrosive and personally abusive attack on the government officers who presided in Dublin Castle and the prejudices that characterised their regime. This exceptional self-indulgence, though it made a predictably strong political impact, was disapproved of by many moderate observers, and it dismayed the cautious Hunting Cap in Derrynane.

O'Connell's personal life was also changing in the immediate post-union years. In July 1802 he secretly married his distant cousin Mary O'Connell (1778–1836), one of eight children of the long-deceased Thomas O'Connell, a medical doctor in Tralee. The secrecy was due to the fact that Mary was without a dowry and the match was not likely to meet with the approval of his family. Indeed, the marriage remained a secret for some time because the couple feared that Daniel's patron, Hunting Cap, would so dislike the match that he would take retribution to the extent of cutting Daniel off from further financial support. This fear proved only too well founded. When Hunting Cap finally learned of the marriage his show of disapproval was immediate and financially severe: Daniel's brother John (1778–1853) was elevated to the status of favourite in

his place by Hunting Cap. The estrangement lasted more than two years and, though a reconciliation was effected during 1805, O'Connell was to find, on Hunting Cap's death in 1825, that his estate was divided almost equally between himself and his two brothers James and John.

The anxieties about money that marked its beginnings were, at least until 1830, to be a regular feature of the married life of Daniel and Mary. Their marriage was otherwise characterised by abiding affection, expressed with particular force in correspondence during their frequent separations when Daniel's professional and political career became especially demanding, and when, in 1822–3, a short-lived (and unavailing) economy drive made it necessary for Mary and their family to reside for a time in France. Even as O'Connell's earnings at the bar, and his later income from funds contributed by the people to support his political career, reached impressive levels, his expenditure, and that of his family, more than kept pace. He was generous in supporting relatives in difficulty, not particularly shrewd in his business dealings, and during his vacations in Kerry (usually at the end of the Munster circuit in September) regularly impulsive and invariably free with his spending and patronage. In short, he did not manage money very well, and neither, it may be said, did Mary. Their first residence in Dublin, at no.1 Westland Row (purchased in mid-1805), was followed within four years by a move to the more spacious and expensive 30 Merrion Square.

Seven children of the marriage survived to adulthood: Maurice (b. 1803), Morgan (b. 1804), Ellen (b. 1805), Catherine (b. 1808), Elizabeth (b. 1810), John (b. 1810), and Daniel (b. 1816). It is clear from his correspondence and other surviving evidence that O'Connell doted on his children when they were young (especially when he was away from the family home, as he frequently was), and that he continued to support them, and to see the merits of whatever they attempted to do, throughout their later lives.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, O'Connell lived the life of a barrister, with a Dublin residence and a busy practice on the Munster circuit. From as early as 1808 he was probably the leading figure, and certainly the most outspoken, in catholic political circles in Dublin. No doubt his increasingly dominant position accounts, at least in part, for the explosively vituperative terms in which he denounced the leading figures and the general political complexion of the 'Orange ascendancy' in Dublin castle and in the apparatus of law enforcement throughout the country. The abrasive language was intended to shock, and so it did. Its exhilarating defiance may have raised the spirits of many among the general body of 'aggrieved' catholics, but for the more cautious and deferential catholics, not to speak of the members of the ascendancy, it went far beyond acceptable polemic. It made O'Connell many enemies, some of whom (notably Sir Robert Peel, appointed chief secretary in 1812) were to prove enduring and formidable adversaries. O'Connell's combative language had more immediate and lethal consequences. His denunciation of Dublin corporation as 'beggarly' led to his being challenged to a duel by a Dublin merchant, John d'Esterre, whom O'Connell killed in their encounter on 3 February 1815. He felt remorse for the deed for the rest of his life.

The struggle for emancipation

The movement for the further relief of catholics – notably the removal of the oaths that prevented them from becoming members of parliament, referred to as 'catholic emancipation' – was carried forward in these post-union years by the Catholic Committee (later, variously, 'Association' or 'Board'), in which a small group of catholic noblemen and a cohort of professional and commercial middle-class catholics, who met regularly, debated, composed resolutions, and lobbied influential political figures in pursuit of their cause. The support of a group of liberal protestants was vital to this work of political persuasion, especially if the issue was ever to make it to the political agenda at Westminster.

O'Connell was active in the committee, and took a position on the most assertive and uncompromising wing of the movement, with those who demanded that catholic grievances be redressed with no strings attached. In the second decade of the nineteenth century the balance of influence – in political tone as well in the substance of the demands – shifted towards the more assertive, and middle-class element, principally lawyers, and away from the more cautious and politically 'quietist' catholic noblemen. The so-called 'veto controversy' of the period from 1808 to 1820 both illustrated and accentuated this shift. While Rome, and for a time some of the Irish bishops and leading catholic laymen, felt inclined to concede that some measure of state influence on the nomination or appointment of Irish bishops was not unreasonable, if there was to be a major concession of catholic emancipation within the British state, the more assertive wing of the Catholic Committee in Ireland (apparently with substantial support among the wider leadership of the catholic community) was opposed to any such conditions being attached to the concession, which they considered as no more than their right. Liberal protestants, such as Grattan, who up to his death in 1820 steadfastly continued to bring forward petitions and proposals for catholic emancipation in the commons, found this uncompromising stance perplexing and disappointing. But not even strong papal intervention could shake the resolve of the church 'autonomy' party in Ireland, and eventually, after years of argument, the 'no conditions' position prevailed. Catholic emancipation, when it came, would have no qualifications attached that in any way gave the government a role in the matter of Irish episcopal appointments or the financial support of priests.

Until the mid-1820s the modest role of the Catholic Committee in maintaining interest in the catholic claim seemed unlikely to achieve any major breakthrough, whatever the shifts in personal attitudes among the various leading politicians of the day. What transformed the political situation, and the prospects for emancipation, was the decision to broaden the base of support for, and popular involvement in, the catholic campaign in Ireland. It proved difficult to maintain a popularly based political movement in Ireland on any broadly representational basis: governments feared 'representative bodies' and their pretensions, and legislation regularly sought to stymie any efforts to establish such a body or movement. Thus, from 1811 onwards all attempts to establish a representative catholic body (with, for example, county delegates) was met by laws banning such bodies from sitting. In the cat and mouse game that followed in the later 1820s, O'Connell's legal expertise and political astuteness were deployed in devising various stratagems for circumventing government prohibitions.

In May 1823 the Catholic Association was formed, to renew efforts to secure catholic emancipation. O'Connell was its leading figure from the outset. Extending the range of catholic grievances for public denunciation and cultivating a supportive press were key objectives of the new departure. O'Connell's suggestion in early 1824 that 'every Catholic in Ireland should be called upon to contribute a monthly sum from one penny up to two shillings' in order to achieve a broad popular membership of the Catholic Association proved especially important. This 'catholic rent' created the momentum and mass involvement that transformed the catholic emancipation campaign. The tactic of bringing pressure to bear on candidates at elections to declare in favour of catholic emancipation so as to secure the support of catholic voters had been employed on several occasions since 1818. In 1826 O'Connell himself played an active role in the Waterford election of the liberal protestant Henry Villiers Stuart (1803–74), who defeated Lord George Beresford, a pillar of the Castle ascendancy establishment, for which O'Connell reserved his special contempt and resentment. However, O'Connell was not invariably sure-footed in his judgement or tactics. In 1825, while in London leading a delegation to protest against Goulburn's bill prohibiting political 'societies' in Ireland of longer duration than fourteen days (which, when passed, saw the Catholic Association temporarily dissolved), O'Connell

declared support for Sir Francis Burdett's catholic relief bill, which had attached to it provisions for the state payment of catholic priests and the disfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders. The bill failed. But the outrage expressed by radicals in Ireland and Britain at O'Connell's acceptance of the 'wings' to the bill, reminded him that he was not immune from criticism. His defence of the state payment of priests was that it would not compromise their independence.

Whatever flexibility was present in Westminster politics from the mid-1820s (when some senior political actors were sympathetic to a measure of catholic emancipation) seemed to have dissolved by early 1828, when a hard-line Wellington–Peel government took office, under a monarch known to be an unyielding opponent of catholic emancipation. O'Connell and the revived Catholic Association seemed to be faced with an impossible task, despite the fact that by 1826 majority opinion in the house of commons was probably inclined towards catholic relief. But, by chance almost, an opportunity arose to force the issue. By convention those taking office in a new ministry had to seek re-election in their constituencies: usually a mere formality. But the Catholic Association had decided that any appointee of the Wellington–Peel ministry seeking re-election in an Irish constituency should be opposed. One such potential minister was William Vesey Fitzgerald, the member for Clare and a respected pro-emancipation protestant and popular landlord in the county. Indeed, such was the regard in which he was held that finding a Clare candidate to stand against him proved more than difficult. Eventually O'Connell was prevailed upon to stand, though it was understood by all that, if elected, he would not be able to take his seat, because the oaths required of an MP were repugnant to a conscientious catholic. After a remarkable election campaign, during which popular excitement and demonstrations, by non-electors as well as by the electors, remained remarkably disciplined and orderly, and in which the catholic priests were very active, O'Connell in July 1828 won a decisive victory, securing 2,057 votes to Vesey Fitzgerald's 982.

The result precipitated a crisis. The government, fearing that further resistance to the verdict would provoke serious disorder in Ireland, reluctantly, and to a chorus of recrimination from their diehards, persuaded the dismayed monarch that the controversial oaths would have to be changed and that catholic emancipation would have to be conceded. The 'sting' in the act included a provision for the disenfranchisement of the Irish 40s. freeholders. Nevertheless, O'Connell, having initially been refused entry, finally took his seat in the house of commons on 4 February 1830, the first Irish catholic to benefit from the 'emancipation' which he, more than any other political figure, had helped to accomplish. He was to remain an MP for the next seventeen years, being returned for various Irish constituencies at successive general elections: Waterford County (1830), Kerry (1831), Dublin City (1832–6), Kilkenny City (1836), Dublin City (1837–41), and Cork County (1842–7).

'Liberator' and MP

O'Connell's achievement in forcing the government to concede catholic emancipation in 1829 was immense. It earned him the title 'the Liberator', among his fellow catholics in Ireland. Its reverberations were also felt further afield. The fact that he could remain a devoted and conforming catholic, while supporting the separation of church and state, the ending of privileges and discrimination based on religious affiliation, and the extension of individual liberties, including those in the sphere of politics, made him a hero and inspiration to catholic liberals in many European countries. Moreover, the fact that his political movement was based upon popular support and the mobilisation of the mass of the people, while yet being non-violent and orderly, gave proof that 'excited' popular politics did not necessarily have to be anti-clerical or sanguinary. The attention his movement and opinions received in the continental European press was

remarkable, as were the number and distinction of European writers and political figures who visited Ireland with the express purpose of securing an audience with O'Connell. It is probably fair to say that no other Irish political figure of the nineteenth or early twentieth century (indeed no other Irish figure in any sphere of life) enjoyed such an international reputation as did O'Connell throughout his later public career. The public acknowledgement of his influence, and the tributes he received during his lifetime and immediately after his death (from such figures as the French liberal catholic Charles de Montalembert, the Dominican Henri Dominique Lacordaire, and Abbé Félicité Robert de Lamennais) are eloquent testimony to his international stature.

So far as his particular achievement as 'the creator of Irish democracy' is concerned, the larger claims made for him by admirers such as Sean O'Faolain, that he 'embodied' or 'created' a people, must be tempered by acknowledgement that many of the techniques and tactics employed by O'Connell in mobilising popular support for the catholic emancipation campaign, and later for the repeal campaign, were not entirely new: petitions, public meetings, dedicated newspapers, a network of articulate lawyers and local branches, the encouragement of popular 'ownership' of a movement through accepting small but regular subscriptions to a campaign fund – all of these techniques had featured in different popular campaigns at one time or another in Britain from the later eighteenth century. Among his contemporaries, Thomas Wyse of Waterford was consistently innovative in devising political tactics, which O'Connell exploited to good effect. Furthermore, recent scholars of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ireland have stressed the high degree of socialisation (a prerequisite for political mobilisation) that had already been attained in Ireland in the decades before 1820, through fairs and markets, and through soldiering during the long periods of war from the 1770s to Waterloo. Some have gone so far as to suggest that, in a number of important respects, O'Connell was more the beneficiary than the creator of a peasantry capable of disciplined collective action.

Yet the sheer force of his leadership in the emancipation struggle of the late 1820s, the various registers of Irish identity that he embodied and combined, together with the discipline he achieved and the momentum for change that he succeeded in generating within the boundaries of non-violent political agitation must surely rank as an achievement without precedent in Ireland. When he called on the 'hereditary bondsmen', the Irish catholics, to get off their knees and demand their rights, his instinctive playing on a historical memory of grievance was masterly, as was his skill in channelling this historic sense into new forms of constitutional, mass politics. His most distinguished modern biographer, Oliver MacDonagh, is surely right in concluding that 'he was perhaps the greatest innovator in modern democratic politics, as well as the originator of almost all the basic strategies of modern Anglo-Irish constitutional relations'.

O'Connell's entry into parliament following the passing of catholic emancipation marks a milestone in his career. Up to 1829 he was, in a certain sense, an 'outsider', a formidable agitator, with a career at law and a political mission to secure the full measure of catholic relief. From 1829 until his death in 1847 he was a full-time politician and parliamentarian. Remarkably, his income now came chiefly from the people of Ireland, in the form of an annual collection or 'tribute', to enable him to devote his time and energy exclusively to championing the cause of Ireland. Throughout this long period as (literally) the public servant of the Irish people, O'Connell never spared himself. His personal life was, more than ever before, subordinated to the public cause. His detractors might sneer at 'the king of the beggars', but for O'Connell there was neither shame nor loss of stature in being supported in his labours by the subscriptions of the people to whose welfare and interests he had dedicated his life.

Given the endless crises in his family finances, the charge that he needed to keep his popular agitations in a state of excitement in order to ensure a satisfactory income cannot be dismissed

out of hand. Yet O'Connell was a landowner and businessman of substance in these years of public service. On his father's death in 1809 he inherited an estate with a rental value of about £1,500 in the post-Waterloo era. When Hunting Cap died in 1825 he was left a sizeable lump sum as well as his share of the estate. From 1825 onwards his annual income from land amounted to about £4,000 in total. He also had financial interests in newspapers (the *Dublin Review*), banking (he was founder-director of the National Bank), and brewing (he was a chief investor in an ultimately unsuccessful brewery). In 1835 he was appointed a magistrate for Kerry (he was removed from the commission of the peace in 1843 during the repeal agitation). Despite the prejudices with which he had to contend, he was a member of several clubs: Brooks's, the Clarence, and the Reform.

As a landlord, O'Connell was generally attentive to the welfare of his tenants, and, while expecting obligations and undertakings to be discharged, showed sympathy and consideration when exceptional circumstances caused tenants to experience particular distress and difficulty. This benign reputation is, however, balanced by his having employed a kinsman, John Primrose, who had a reputation as a strict agent, to manage his property for him from 1822 to 1845. In his personal life, the death in 1836 of his wife, Mary, left O'Connell heartbroken. He was sixty years of age, and his major campaign for repeal lay yet in the future – a future that he had to face without his most loving and supportive companion.

O'Connell's introduction to the parliamentary world of Westminster coincided with the excitement of the reform crisis, as Lord Grey's government proposed, and in 1832 enacted, a substantial measure of parliamentary reform, which included both franchise extension and redistribution of seats. O'Connell was an ardent supporter of the whig reform proposal, actively involved in speaking on its behalf in parliament and on platforms in Ireland and in Britain. Aligned frequently with such English radicals as Francis Burdett, Henry Hunt, and Joseph Hume, O'Connell in the 1830s supported manhood suffrage, triennial parliaments and vote by ballot, free trade, reform of the electoral system (including trenchant criticism of the house of lords), representative local government, and reform of the tithe system in Ireland. A strong advocate of the abolition of slavery, he supported the liberation movement of Simón Bolívar and favoured Jewish emancipation. His radical credentials were impressive.

The repeal campaign

In the early 1830s O'Connell had an agenda of his own, however, centred on the political objective that had first introduced him to political activism – the repeal of the union. With the passing of the Reform Act in 1832, O'Connell put repeal at the head of his political demands; in the general election of 1832 some thirty-nine Irish MPs were elected on the pledge, in some form, to support repeal and to follow O'Connell's lead in parliament. These were slightly referred to as 'O'Connell's tail'. Unlike the earlier campaign for emancipation, repeal was utterly opposed by all major strands of political opinion in parliament and in all the influential organs of British political opinion. Furthermore, in the early 1830s an agitation against the payment of tithes, together with a rise in violent crimes in the Irish countryside, seemed to portend unrest of a kind not seen in the 1820s. While the respectable farmers and middle-class professionals, who opposed having to pay tithes for the upkeep of an established church to which only a minority of the population belonged, stuck to legal methods in the anti-tithe campaign, there were a number of serious incidents of violence, resulting in fatalities, between tithe process-servers and protesting peasants.

The recital of popular grievances, through which O'Connell had created momentum for the emancipation campaign in the 1820s and through which he now proposed to sustain an active

popular support base for his new purpose, was perceived by his ascendancy opponents in Ireland, and by many on the government side as well, as calculated to keep the people (especially the poorer peasantry) in a state of permanent excitement, and primed to threaten social order. The tithe agitation did indeed threaten, at times, to shade into the more direct methods of the agrarian secret societies, to which O'Connell remained implacably opposed, seeking, as always, to obtain redress for grievances through peaceful, constitutional means in parliament and in the administration of justice. O'Connell's attempts to sustain a popular movement for repeal foundered in 1834. The impact of strong coercion laws created difficulties for him (and for those newspaper editors and others who publicly supported him). The strains of office were telling on some of the whig ministers, and O'Connell observed matters closely to see if a change of personnel would improve the prospects for more favourable treatment – in terms of both men and measures – in the government of Ireland. Eventually, in 1834, a motion calling for an enquiry into the case for the demand for repeal was finally debated in the house of commons and was overwhelmingly rejected.

The unequivocal refusal of all main parties to allow a debate on repeal moved O'Connell to change tack. Moreover, the short minority government of Robert Peel, his implacable adversary, was a further spur to O'Connell to explore all possibilities for working with the whigs, under Lord Melbourne, in the hope of extracting practical reforms for Ireland. O'Connell would never disavow repeal, but when the direct route was blocked he actively pursued 'justice for Ireland' by instalments. He immediately entered into a formal understanding with the whig government, the 'Lichfield House compact', through which he pledged his support (and that of his parliamentary following) to the government in return for a reform programme for Ireland that included both administrative and legislative concessions. The unmeasured terms in which the compact was denounced, not only by conservatives but also by various organs of public opinion, testify to the odium in which O'Connell was still held in influential quarters of the British press and political establishment.

The years of the whig alliance were not without reward, though O'Connell constantly protested his disappointment at the inadequacy of the concessions made, and regularly threatened to return to a more independent course. What was striking was that, despite widespread hostility to him in such organs of opinion as *The Times* and among sections of the political elite in Britain, he succeeded in making the transition from a popular agitator to an accomplished parliamentary performer. He was acknowledged as a powerful radical voice on a range of issues, not all relating to the condition of Ireland. He proclaimed himself a Benthamite, and in general terms he was indeed a strong utilitarian. But in examining O'Connell's views and proposals on economic and social matters, it would be a mistake to look for theoretical coherence or indeed consistency. His instincts were unerringly opposed to all versions of monopoly or the oppression of the liberty of the individual, but this did not mean that he was invariably opposed to an interventionist or regulatory role for the state. He favoured free trade, including the abolition of the corn laws (a form of sectional privilege), and likewise opposed the new poor law and its Irish transplant of 1838. He was not opposed in principle to trade unions but, as his disagreements with the Dublin trades demonstrated, he was against the coercion of workers into joining 'combinations', against restrictive practices (such as control of apprentices), and against the use of force or violent methods by workers; and he considered that the fixing of tradesmen's wages was likely to lead to uncompetitive costs and, inevitably, the loss of jobs.

On the specific issue of Ireland's economic problems O'Connell held a simple view of the regenerative potential of a restored national parliament. He did not envisage or propose that such a parliament would resort to protectionist or tariff-based measures to encourage Irish industry.

The return of a parliament, combined with a reduction in income tax would, he naively contended, result in a boost in demand for Irish manufactured goods and a general improvement in investment and consumption in Ireland. On the thorny issue of Irish landlord–tenant relations, O’Connell, by 1845, had come to favour a tax on absentee landlords, compulsory conacre on holdings larger than 200 acres (a concession to labourers and cottiers), and greater security of tenure for tenants. In the desperate conditions that enveloped Irish rural society, and in particular the rural poor, with the onset of the potato famine in late 1845, O’Connell strongly urged the government to adopt emergency measures (importing food) to meet the crisis.

By the late 1830s O’Connell, seeing the authority and energy of Melbourne’s government rapidly draining away, began to contemplate his next move. By 1838 he had already established the rather pointedly titled Precursor Society. In July 1840 the Loyal National Repeal Association was founded, and with the fall of the Melbourne government and the return to office, with a good commons majority, of Peel, O’Connell geared up for a major campaign for repeal. After a slow start, he soon gathered momentum, his own profile boosted by his being elected lord mayor of Dublin in 1841. The repertoire of political tactics was generally along familiar O’Connellite lines, albeit with some new titles: speeches from the leader’s headquarters rehearsing a long agenda of popular grievances, repeal reading-rooms acting as focuses for local activists, discipline kept by repeal wardens and ‘pacificators’. Electoral readiness was essential. At a local level the support (and organisational skill) of priests was vital, despite numerous injunctions throughout the 1830s from Rome and from many bishops warning against direct clerical involvement in politics.

There were new elements to the repeal campaign, however, which had not been employed in the struggle for emancipation. In particular, a small group of writers and intellectuals, based at TCD, founded in 1842 a newspaper, *The Nation*, which became immensely popular and influential in disseminating not only news of the repeal movement’s activities, but nationalist ideas and propaganda across a wide range of interests: poetry, prose, history and antiquities, economic and social issues. The ‘spirit of *The Nation*’ was passionately nationalist, in a recognisably European sense. The young nationalists, chief among whom were Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillon, Charles Gavan Duffy, and, later, John Mitchel, were idealistic and gifted thinkers and propagandists, and were initially a significant addition to O’Connell’s resources.

More directly dependent on his force of personality and oratory were the ‘monster meetings’ that O’Connell called at historic locations throughout the country in order to promulgate the repeal message. Mindful of the need to keep his mass following at the ready and focused, O’Connell called for one great effort to make 1843 ‘the year of repeal’. He proposed the convening of a ‘Council of Three Hundred’, a virtual parliament of district ‘delegates’. It was a risky strategy. Peel was determined to face down O’Connell and the repeal campaign. Strong repressive legislation was accompanied by unflinchingly firm implementation. When O’Connell called a monster meeting at Clontarf for 8 October the government proclaimed the meeting at the last minute and called up a large force of military to prevent its taking place. In order to avoid the risk of bloodshed O’Connell backed down and cancelled the meeting. Shortly thereafter he was arrested, tried, and convicted of sedition. In 1844 he spent several months in Richmond jail, though in considerable comfort, before being released in early September 1844.

Decline and last days

While it may not have been immediately apparent, the cancellation of the Clontarf meeting marked the point at which the repeal momentum was halted. The brinkmanship of raising public excitement and expectations, in order to force the government of the day to concede, had not worked on this occasion. The decision to cancel soon led to expressions of disappointment by

some of the younger nationalists. But, more importantly, it seriously damaged O'Connell's aura of invincibility. When Peel's government followed up this decisive show of resistance to repeal with a programme of measures aimed at 'appeasing' the catholic bishops and some of the leading moderate lay catholics, further differences of opinion emerged between O'Connell and the younger idealists.

A particularly contentious issue was the Queen's Colleges proposal of 1845, to which O'Connell and the bishops were bitterly opposed but which some of the young idealists saw as having the merit of providing a non-sectarian, mixed environment in which young catholics and protestants could receive a university education together. The underlying problem was that, with repeal stopped in its tracks for the moment, O'Connell reverted, as he had ever done, to exploring alternative possibilities of renewed cooperation with the whigs, and indeed expressed interest in canvassing federalist ideas as an alternative to repeal. The young intellectuals found this compromising disposition and dilution of the demand for repeal on O'Connell's part unworthy and unacceptable. The old leader, used to being followed rather than corrected, found the self-righteous and incorruptible stance of his young critics naive and, in a sense, impertinent.

The final break with the Young Irelanders (as O'Connell's young critics were styled) came with the peace resolutions of July 1846. O'Connell, though he frequently resorted to inflammatory language and was not averse to suggesting that if his reasonable demands, expressed peacefully, were refused, popular anger might well go beyond mere words, insisted that the cause of repeal – and of Ireland's rights – could be advanced only by exclusively non-violent means. Although they had no intention of using or recommending the use of force in the prevailing circumstances, a number of O'Connell's young critics, led by Thomas Francis Meagher, would not accept that force was never justified, and, at a meeting to debate the matter in July 1846, refused to yield to O'Connell, or to his son and political heir, John, and walked out of the Repeal Association. The repeal movement had split, and O'Connell would not be able to unite it again.

In fact by late 1846 O'Connell's powers and health were failing. Ireland was gripped in the crisis of the famine, and O'Connell was desperate to exercise his influence in persuading the whig ministers to take emergency steps for the relief of distress in Ireland. He was also prepared to explore the wider possibilities of cooperation between his parliamentary following and the whig government, in the hope of securing a further reform package for Ireland, much as he had done a decade earlier. The condition of his finances and the state of his tenantry in Kerry caused him deep distress. But time was not on his side, and his critics among the younger nationalists were scathing in their denunciation of what they saw as his shameful retreat from repeal and his pitiful overtures for a new dose of patronage and 'reforms'. A broken man, O'Connell set out from Folkestone for Rome in late March 1847. He died in Genoa on 15 May, and, while his body was brought back to Dublin for burial on 5 August, his heart, at his request, was left in Rome.

Reputation and legacy

Any assessment of O'Connell's achievement, historical reputation, and legacy must contend with certain contradictions and paradoxes. He was a champion of civil and religious liberty and equality, who always insisted that he had no wish to substitute a catholic for a protestant 'ascendancy' in Ireland; but his intense struggle to establish the equal rights of Irish catholics, and the ferocity of his attacks on protestant ascendancy in post-union Ireland, undoubtedly raised the spectre of catholic ascendancy for many Irish protestants. The historical memory of victimhood, which he invoked in mobilising the long-demoralised Catholics, encouraged the development of a strong sense of 'catholic nationalism', and protestant Ulster firmly rejected his repeal claims, as it was to resist the claims of later Irish nationalist movements.

But O’Connell was also criticised by various strands of Irish nationalist opinion. The prolific writings of his Young Ireland critics (notably Charles Gavan Duffy and John Mitchel) set the tone: they denounced his flexibility as lack of principle, his determination to see qualified Catholics (including his relatives, friends, and professional colleagues) penetrate the apparatus of government and administration in Ireland as simple place-hunting, and his absolute disavowal of the use of force as a form of cowardice. His autocratic style of political leadership (whatever its older Gaelic tribal antecedents) was seen as the prototype of a kind of ‘boss’ politics, which later flourished among the Irish of the diaspora in urban America. Separatists who espoused physical force rejected his political creed out of hand, while republicans found his monarchist enthusiasms and incrementalist reformism utterly unpalatable. Cultural nationalists, notably language revivalists, found his indifference to the fate of the ancestral language – his own first language – unforgivable.

Of course, mainstream Catholic historiography, and the leaders of the Catholic church in Ireland, never ceased to honour O’Connell’s memory or salute his achievement. But from the middle decades of the twentieth century a more dispassionate and contextual approach to his career, by professional historians and biographers, resulted in a more measured and positive assessment of O’Connell’s achievements. Few would now dissent from the verdict of another popular tribune on O’Connell. Writing in 1889, Gladstone described O’Connell as ‘the greatest popular leader whom the world has ever seen . . . who never for a moment changed his end [and] never hesitated to change his means’ (*Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1889).

Written by Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh

Sources: *The life and speeches of Daniel O’Connell*, ed. John O’Connell (2 vols, 1846); W. E. H. Lecky, *Leaders of public opinion in Ireland* (2 vols, 1912); Michael Tierney (ed.), *Daniel O’Connell: nine centenary essays* (1949); J. F. Broderick, *The holy see and the Irish movement for repeal of the union with England, 1829–1847* (1951); A. Macintyre, *The Liberator: Daniel O’Connell and the Irish party, 1830–1847* (1965); K. B. Nowlan, *The politics of repeal: a study in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland, 1841–50* (1965); *O’Connell corr.*; Ríonach Uí Ógáin, *An Rí gan Choróin* (1984); Fergus O’Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation: Daniel O’Connell and the birth of Irish democracy* (1985); Oliver MacDonagh, *O’Connell: the life of Daniel O’Connell, 1775–1847* (1991)

Thomas Davis

Davis, Thomas Osborne (1814–45), Young Irelander, poet, and journalist, was born 14 October 1814 at Mallow, Co. Cork, youngest of three sons and one daughter of James Thomas Davis, military surgeon, and his wife Mary (née Atkins).

Family and education

James Davis's family were of Welsh origin but considered themselves totally English. He took a posting in Ireland with the Royal Artillery and died at Exeter on 27 September 1814 on his way to the Peninsula as acting director of military hospitals. Mary Atkins traced her lineage back to the Anglo-Norman house of Howard through a Cromwellian settler in Ireland in the seventeenth century. Remaining protestant, the Atkins family intermarried with Irish catholics. Thomas's great-grandmother was a daughter of the O'Sullivan Beare, who thus became the guarantor of his Irish origin. There is strong evidence to suggest that, through the O'Sullivans, Davis was related to Daniel O'Connell, although it is unlikely that either man was aware of the connection. Mary had a modest inheritance from the Atkinses who owned land in Co. Cork. She moved with her family to Dublin in 1818 and later acquired a substantial terraced house at 61 (later 67) Baggot St. Lower.

Thomas, with no memory of his English father, always looked back with pride to the place and county of his birth, although he never joined the company of the young blades sung of in 'The rakes of Mallow'. Sport in any form was never his interest. He spent many holidays with relatives at Templeberry in Tipperary, where the memories of 1798 remained vivid and Irish was still spoken in the countryside. He began his education at Mr Mungan's private establishment in Lower Mount St. where he took the first steps in the virtue of tolerance by learning, without distinction of creed, 'to know, and knowing, to love my countrymen'. Davis entered TCD in 1831 and graduated BA on the same day as John Mitchel in 1836 with an undistinguished degree. Two years previously he had enrolled at King's Inns.

Early writings and outlook

In 1837 Davis self-published a slight work entitled *The reform of the lords* in which he accused their lordships of having been 'perennial perpetrators of wrong', although he refrained from

suggesting the abolition of their house. His most radical proposal was that hereditary rank 'should be unhesitatingly swept away', but he refrained from applying the same principle to the monarchy.

Davis suffered no sudden conversion to Irish nationality but, among a small group of protestant and catholic students at TCD, the seeds were sown in the late 1830s for a renewed flowering of Irish nationality. Davis was both its foremost creator and principal propagator, and developed his ideas in three lectures he gave to the College Historical Society at TCD, of which he became president. Never using the word 'nationalism', he understood nationality as a union of the whole people of Ireland with the land and with each other. Asserting that Irish nationality, 'indifferent of sect and independent of party', must contain and represent the races of Ireland, he said that it 'must not be Celtic, it must not be Saxon – it must be Irish'. Trinity College, permeated by prejudice and with manifest social and intellectual failings, was none the less the seedbed wherein matured the most powerful, cogent, and developed ideal of modern Ireland.

In 1838 Davis kept terms in London at Gray's Inn, went walking in Wales, and was called to the Irish bar. He never held a brief and never again left Ireland. Later (and tediously repeated) assertions that he had imbibed elements of German and French romanticism – indeed, 'underwent an evangelical-like conversion' while on the Continent in the late 1830s – have no basis in fact. They have, however, served to bolster the argument made by some historians that Davis and his followers were mere romantic idealists with their heads clouded by effete, foreign, and harmful notions of nationalism.

In 1839 William Elliott Hudson financed a new Dublin magazine, the *Citizen*. It was whig in tone and had elements of Irish nationality, so that Davis was happy to contribute prose and verse to it from 1839 to 1843. He rejoiced in Grattan's parliament but said 'never was freedom, once won, so weakly forfeited' so that, after 1798, transition to the union was inevitable. He saw land tenure as a 'question of life and death for the people'; landlordism, especially when absentee, outraged him. He wrote: 'Ireland exists, and her millions toil for an alien aristocracy, while the people rot upon their native land' and pleaded that the Irish not be asked to copy 'English vice, and darkness, and misery, and impiety; give us the worst wigwam in Ireland and a dry potato rather than anglicise us'. In October 1842 he contributed his finest ballad, 'The Geraldine's daughter', to the magazine. With its refrain 'Oh, why did she die?' he foreshadowed the theme and words of his other great ballad, 'Lament for the death of Eoghan Ruadh O'Neil'. When, soon afterwards, Davis began to contribute verse to the *Nation*, no one seemed to notice that he had already done so in the *Citizen*. The myth then arose, and survived, that he discovered his talent as a poet, especially in ballad form, only when he began contributing verse to the *Nation*. He believed in the saying of the Scottish patriot Alexander Fletcher of Saltoun, 'If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation'.

Although he was a believing Christian, Davis seemed to owe no allegiance to any particular sect, nor had he committed himself to any organised political group. His principal conviction was that independence was the *sine qua non* of nationality. To help foster independence he became a member of O'Connell's Repeal Association on 19 April 1841. It was a grave and ominous mistake because, in essence, the Association was both sect and party. Henceforth Davis would have to accept the strictures of the organisation and take great care not to give offence to its catholic ethos and membership.

The Association was committed to O'Connell's determination to win freedom 'by moral combination' alone. That, in O'Connell's words, meant 'one drop of human blood shall never be shed' to obtain freedom. Davis had asserted publicly in 1837 that physical resistance becomes a duty for a people when their fundamental rights are suppressed by physical force. Affirmations of loyalty to the crown, often enunciated fulsomely in respect of his 'darling little queen' by

O'Connell, meant nothing to Davis. Loyalty, he wrote, is a conditional virtue, and 'technical loyalty becomes a crime when resistance becomes a duty'. Finally O'Connell, who said in 1841 that 'Ireland was a nation when I was born', did not accept nationality in the sense of Davis, who held that his primary duty was 'to make Ireland a nation yet'. Henceforth, week by week, Davis was forced to engage in tortured mental gymnastics in order to avoid the wrath of the Liberator.

Founding the *Nation*

Already prepared intellectually and morally for his life's work, Davis founded the *Nation* in Dublin in 1842 with Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon. As T. W. Moody said at TCD on the centenary of Davis's death, 'thus began what was to prove the most notable journalistic venture in Irish history' (Davis, 27). From 1842 to 1845, the lapidary years of its existence, the *Nation*, with its motto 'To create and foster public opinion, and make it racy of the soil' and its purpose of directing all effort 'to the great end of Nationality', was decisive in its immediate effects, and its influence continued throughout the next century. The weekly paper was edited by Duffy but Davis was its principal contributor, frequently writing 15,000 words for each issue. In ballads, especially 'The West's asleep' (22 July 1843) and 'A nation once again' (13 July 1844), in trenchant, critical, and resounding prose on politics, art, agriculture, economics, foreign affairs, but rarely on religious questions, Davis kept up an incessant flow of ideas, all aimed at developing Irish nationality and independence.

On the basis of its circulation figures, Duffy claimed that the *Nation's* reading audience was 250,000, the highest in Ireland. Henry MacManus later painted a striking scene entitled 'Reading the *Nation*' (NGI). It depicts an elderly gentleman reading the paper to an enthralled but illiterate group of listeners, among whom its central theme of nationality took hold. Meanwhile Davis, adding to his daily work on the *Nation*, looked to the past for inspiration, and his detailed examination of the last independent Irish parliament, under James II in 1689, provided the material. Although it was his major work, and not published in book form until 1893 as *The patriot parliament of 1689* (edited by Charles Gavan Duffy), it appeared in lengthy articles in the *Citizen* in 1843 and was later used extensively by W. E. H. Lecky in his own work.

Disagreements with O'Connell

Although Davis threw himself wholeheartedly into the work of the Repeal Association, he regarded the monster meetings of 1843 as painful and embarrassing exercises in futility. The only good he saw coming from them was in training 'the country people to military movements and a martial tread' so as to prepare for an engagement with England 'at whatever cost', and he became an assiduous student of military tactics. The débâcle at Clontarf in October 1843, when O'Connell capitulated to English threats, spelt the virtual end of repeal. O'Connell's influence in Ireland was somewhat diminished, but Davis remained loyal to the 'leader' whom he revered. The small group – Duffy, Dillon, John Mitchel, William Smith O'Brien, and others – who coalesced around Davis became known as 'Young Ireland', and Davis solemnly said that 'Ourselves alone' had to be their motto. His writings became increasingly belligerent, and *Tait's Magazine* saw the 'war section' of the repeal party as a 'practical and business-like set of men' whom it regarded as the most dangerous enemies to the 'integrity and power' of the British empire. Such talk was mere hyperbole, at least in the short run.

Meanwhile the small group continued their work on the *Nation*, attended Conciliation Hall (now increasingly run by the Liberator's son John O'Connell), and did their utmost to maintain the impetus towards independence. In May 1845 Davis was attacked by Daniel O'Connell in the Hall

as a sectarian, which reduced him to tears, and Dillon burst a blood vessel with rage. It was a false accusation framed by Michael Conway, an acknowledged scoundrel in whom O'Connell trusted, thereby revealing his own fading powers. The opinion was circulated among priests throughout Ireland that there was 'a dangerous spirit in the *Nation*, hostile to religion'. When Davis stood against O'Connell and Archbishop John MacHale as a proponent of the introduction of a state-endowed secular system of tertiary education based on national colleges, he met determined opposition. Opponents of the colleges thought they were 'godless' and a threat to the allegedly traditional catholic view on denominational education. The argument was lengthy and bitter, and Davis emerged from it bowed but determined to stand by the principle of 'mixed education', which he saw as vital for the growth of an inclusive form of nationality in Ireland. Ensuing talk on a political level of a federal arrangement that would give some autonomy to Ireland failed to arouse any enthusiasm but created further division between Old and Young Ireland.

Promoting independence

Vainly trying to keep up the impetus towards nationality, Davis founded a semi-military body called the '82 Club in April 1845, but its existence was brief. At its first meeting, he traced the tie between art and independence, asserted that art is the foe of 'ignorance, sensuality, and cowardice', that it could never thrive under foreign rule, and that 'its highest conceptions seem denied to provinces, like progeny to the imprisoned eagle'. To Davis, Ireland without independence was an Ireland without a soul.

Convinced that his chosen weapon, the pen, was a mightier force than oratory, Davis always resisted any attempt by his followers to make him their public leader or to persuade him to stand for Westminster. He turned to writing lengthy reports on matters of national importance such as the land question, education (with his incessantly repeated refrain 'educate that you may be free'), and the strength of the British military. He begged that there be incessant progress in Irish literature, the preservation of the language (in which he regretted his own deficiencies), and a reawakening of the artistic and creative values of the medieval past, the pathetic ruins of which, to his sorrow, were strewn across the land. He worked for the development of a 'national theatre' and a national library based in Dublin, and formed a committee to establish a library. He was elected a member of the RIA in 1843 and was constant in attendance at its meetings. By 1845 he was able to rejoice in the publication and widespread acceptance of Irish ballads, songs, and prose in *The spirit of the Nation* and *The voice of the Nation*. He wrote a preface for both compilations. In his writings, and especially in the vast compilation of his reports on matters of national interest, there is great sense, wide knowledge, practical wisdom, and no trace of mere romanticism.

Despite his youth, Davis's health was already worn by incessant toil and worry when he made his last speech in Conciliation Hall in May 1845. Grieving over the disunity that had come between the young men and those who surrounded O'Connell, he prayed 'that the people of this country and the leaders of the people may continue united in that pursuit of liberty in which they were so often defeated at the moment of its apparent fruition before – and with a prayer to that God that we not be defeated again'.

Throughout August Davis wrote the editorials in the *Nation*, in one of which he deplored the 'striking cause of misery in England to be found in the manufacturing despotism, the tyranny of accumulation' and how employers, 'by their command of capital, can dictate their own terms to the laborious poor'. Reverting again to his theme of the need for education, he said of the Irish: 'It was because they were ignorant they were wretched. With enlightenment they will grow prosperous and powerful.'

Death and reputation

Annie Hutton, daughter of presbyterian parents, accepted Davis's proposal of marriage in August 1845 after a romance broken in 1843 by her parents who objected to his politics. Over the previous two years Davis had suffered from recurring bouts of scarlatina, from which, after a brief illness, he died at his mother's home on Baggot St. on 16 September 1845. He was not yet 31. Watched by the mourning poor of the Liberties, a huge procession composed of Ireland's finest patriots followed his coffin to the protestant cemetery of Mount Jerome where he was buried. His own wish, 'Be my epitaph writ on my country's mind', was partially fulfilled by the inscription on the tombstone that Davis wrote years before in his poem 'My grave': 'He served his Country and loved his kind'. At Derrynane, O'Connell cried, 'What a blow – what a cruel blow to the cause of Irish nationality! He was a creature of transcendent quality of mind and heart; his learning was universal, his knowledge was as minute as it was general. And then he was a being of such incessant energy and continuous exertion. I cannot expect to look upon his like again'. Samuel Ferguson wrote his finest elegy, in which he spoke of the 'brave young men' who had striven to make Ireland a nation, concluding with: 'And if God grant this, then, under God, to Thomas Davis/Let the greater praise belong!' In 1893 Denny Lane, one of Davis's closest friends from Trinity days, summed up his influence: 'From him, as from some great organ of life, radiated all those currents that then coursed through the frame of Ireland, and back to him again converged, from the remotest extremities of the land, and from the furthest outposts of our race, those counter-currents which helped to revive our country into warmth and life. Then indeed "a soul came into Ireland".'

In his own lifetime Davis became a legend that was metamorphosed after his death. His influence on fellow Young Irelanders and on many of the nationalists that came after them was profound: Arthur Griffith, Patrick Pearse, and Éamon de Valera all acknowledged a great debt to him. He stands as one of the makers of modern Ireland. There is a statue by John Hogan in the City Hall, Dublin, and another by Edward Delaney in College Green. A drawing by Frederic William Burton is in the NGI. The main corpora of Davis's papers are in the NLI and the RIA.

Written by John Molony

Sources: *Nation* (1842–5); Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: the memoirs of an Irish patriot, 1840–46* (1890); T. W. Moody, *Thomas Davis 1814–45* (1945); *King's Inns admissions*; John Neylon Molony, *A soul came into Ireland: Thomas Davis, 1814–1845: a biography* (1995) (contains list of Davis's works, 353–4)

Charles Trevelyan

Trevelyan, Sir Charles Edward (1807–86), 1st baronet, civil servant, was born 2 April 1807 at Nettlecombe rectory, Somerset, the fourth son of six sons and three daughters of the Ven. George Trevelyan (1764–1827), rector of Nettlecombe, third son of the 4th baronet of Nettlecombe, an estate which had been the family's seat since 1452. The Ven. George Trevelyan, who had begun his clerical life as a guards chaplain, rose successively to be canon of Wells, archdeacon of Bath, and archdeacon of Taunton in Somerset, where the Trevelyans were principal landholders. His wife was born Harriet Neave (1772/3–1854), daughter of a wealthy merchant, Sir Richard Neave (1731–1814), who was for forty-eight years a director, then a governor, of the Bank of England. His grandson, Sheffield Neave (1799–1868), Charles Trevelyan's first cousin, was a director of the bank during the commercial crisis of 1847 in the midst of the Irish famine, which placed Trevelyan, as assistant secretary at the treasury, in a prime position to gain intelligence on the state of the bank's finances during that catastrophic period.

Trevelyan was educated until the age of ten at a local day school in Taunton. From 1817 he attended Blundell's School in Tiverton, Devon, where the headmaster was a notorious flogger. From 1820 he attended Charterhouse, where he was shepherded towards the East India Company's service. A prize-winning pupil, he excelled at classical languages. In 1824, at the age of seventeen, he entered the East India Company's training college at Haileybury, Hertfordshire, where he studied oriental languages, classics, mathematics, natural philosophy, political economy, modern history, and law, earning top honours in classics and Sanskrit and graduating head of the list for the Bengal civil service. At the age of eighteen, in 1826, Trevelyan sailed for India, where, at Fort William College in Calcutta, he passed examinations in Hindi and Persian, winning two gold medals and the attention of his superiors.

A young man of outstanding ability with a strong civic sense, he was attached to the revenue department as assistant to Sir Charles Metcalfe, the resident of Delhi. He was a fervent supporter of education in the vernacular languages of India, and of teaching English to the sons of the middle and merchant classes in preparation for independence. Following a posting as political agent to Bikaner on the western frontier, he was embroiled in controversy in 1829 when, barely twenty-three years old and at great risk to his own reputation and career, he successfully prosecuted his superior, Sir Edward Colebrooke, resident of Delhi, who was subsequently disgraced

and dismissed for taking bribes. Trevelyan's reputation for reform and corruption-free, economical government stems from this time. In 1830 he planned and partly funded a model suburb on 300 acres of land outside the Lahore Gates in Delhi. The following year he was appointed by Lord William Bentinck as a deputy secretary to the political department in the secretariat at Calcutta, where he met and married, on 23 December 1834, Hannah More Macaulay (1810–73), daughter of the abolitionist Zachary Macaulay and sister of Thomas Babington Macaulay, member of the council of India, with whom they set up house. A daughter, Margaret, was born in 1835; another daughter, Harriet Selina, died within a few months of her birth in January 1837 and was buried at Calcutta.

In company with Macaulay, the Trevelyans arrived home on furlough in June 1838. On 1 January 1840, just before he was due to return to India, Trevelyan was unexpectedly offered the post of assistant secretary at the treasury, which he accepted; he held the position until 1859. Between 1845 and 1850 he oversaw the cataclysmic years of the Irish famine, a period that has gained him, in some quarters, an infamous reputation. Recent scholarship suggests that the condemnation of Trevelyan over his supervision of famine relief in 1845–50 is unjustified. Although his intemperate statements and bombastic nature have drawn the wrath of his critics, he was not the architect of relief policy, and does not deserve the blame for the government's parsimonious response to the catastrophe. Rather, as assistant secretary to the treasury, and civilian head of the commissariat, he was responsible for deploying official expenditure of about £10 million (roughly £500 million in modern values) in relief. Bent on supervising every avenue of relief, he engaged in a massive correspondence at all levels, bequeathing a mountainous, minutely detailed archive. An advocate of ecumenicalism, and friend to many Catholics, including Fr Theobald Mathew, he loathed sectarianism and came down hard upon relief officers who showed signs of anti-Catholic or anti-Irish feeling. He was a Whig by inclination and advocated the laissez-faire principles of both governments under which he served during the famine, preferring soup kitchens to the unwieldy public-works scheme of relief, which often failed to reach those most in need of it.

While Trevelyan has been vilified for his dogmatic attachment to free trade, and for lacking compassion towards the Irish, many of his abrasive comments directed at landlords, whom he saw as abrogating their responsibilities, have been erroneously taken as directed at the poor, for whom in fact he reserved his sympathy. Trevelyan was an opinionated man caught up in the tensions between Westminster, Whitehall, and Dublin castle. Yet, in spite of his shortcomings, he was determined to deliver relief to a country to which he was attached by ties of affection and ancestry.

Often referred to as the 'father of modern treasury practice', Trevelyan introduced far-ranging reforms in the civil service. Between 1849 and 1853 he was a member of several commissions investigating administration of the home office, treasury, and thirteen other departments, culminating in the report he produced in 1854 with Sir Stafford Northcote, which is commonly referred to as the Northcote–Trevelyan report. As was to happen so often in his career, he antagonised many of his peers during its drafting, particularly over his opposition to patronage connected with civil service appointments, and the introduction of competitive examinations for entry. In 1857 he was satirised as 'Sir Gregory Hardlines' by his civil service colleague the novelist Anthony Trollope, in *The three clerks*. Trollope afterwards admitted that, though he opposed the reforms, he remained a firm friend of Trevelyan, who was amused by Trollope's characterisation of him. At the select committee of the house of lords on the renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1853, Trevelyan (typically) advocated equal rights for Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, and the appointment of Indians to senior posts.

In 1859 Trevelyan returned to India as governor of Madras where, characteristically, he made many friends and not a few enemies, including James Wilson, finance member of the governor general's council, an old adversary. In 1860 Trevelyan was reluctantly recalled to London by the president of the board of control, Sir Charles Wood, after he made public his opposition to Wilson's levying of income tax, a policy to which Trevelyan was ardently and vociferously opposed. In an ironic twist, in 1862 Trevelyan returned to India as finance member of the governor general's council in Calcutta, a public vindication of his earlier stance. In both positions he advocated land reform, and attempted to balance the scales in the Indian justice system. He was attacked in the press for his strong opinions, and was the first governor to invite Indians of all walks of life to social occasions at Government House. His inflammatory speeches and brash manner did not endear him to many of his countrymen.

Suffering from ill health, Trevelyan retired in 1865, henceforward dividing his time between London and his seat at Wallington, Northumberland, which he inherited from his cousin, the Pre-Raphaelite patron Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan in 1879; there he gained a reputation as a reforming landlord, and a staunch liberal supporter. In retirement, as an advocate of volunteerism and self-help in charitable enterprise, a warm supporter of local government, and an opponent of centralisation, he played a prominent part in the Charity Organisation Society. In retirement he wrote letters to the press, as he had done since his early days as a civil servant, often under the pseudonyms 'Indophilus' and 'Philalethes', and continued to publish pamphlets on a range of subjects until his death at his London residence, 67 Eaton Square, on 19 June 1886. He was buried in Cambo churchyard, Northumberland, on 25 June 1886, and a memorial, designed and executed by E. J. Physick, was erected there in February 1887. His motto was 'Mindful of future generations'.

On 6 May 1848 Trevelyan was made KCB for his services during the famine, and on 2 March 1874 he was created a baronet. After the death of his first wife in 1873, Trevelyan married, on 14 October 1875, Eleanora Anne Campbell (1829–1919), daughter of Walter Campbell of Islay. She outlived him by thirty-three years. Upon his death his wealth was calculated at £50,801 17s. 6d., probated on 6 September 1886. His son, Sir George Otto Trevelyan, was chief secretary for Ireland (1882–4). In January 1851 Lady Trevelyan was presented with a portrait by Eden Eddis of her husband, aged forty-one, sitting beside his desk at the treasury, with the famine blue books at his feet. Commissioned in 1848 by the senior officers of the commissariat, 'as a mark of respect for the high character and abilities of our official Chief', it hangs at Wallington. Numerous prints of the etching, by F. Joubert, were distributed to commissariat officers worldwide. Another portrait, of the eighteen-year-old Trevelyan, about to depart for India, also hangs at Wallington. Numerous etchings can be found in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*.

In addition to scores of official reports, Trevelyan published numerous articles and pamphlets including: 'The aristocracy of rank: is it the aristocracy of talent?', *Fraser's Magazine*, xxiv (1846), 159–66; 'Charity electioneering', *Macmillan's Magazine*, xxix (1874), 171–6; *Extracts from a description of the measures for relieving the distress caused by the Irish famine entitled 'The Irish crisis'* (1879); 'The Irish crisis', *Edinburgh Review*, clxxv (Jan. 1848), 229–320; *The Irish crisis* (1848); *The Irish crisis: being a narrative of the measures for relief of the distress caused by the Great Irish Famine of 1846–7* (1880); *The no-popery agitation, and the Liverpool corporation schools* (1840); *On the education of the people of India* (1838); and *Papers originally published at Calcutta in 1834 and 1836, on the application of the Roman letters to the languages of Asia* (1858).

Letter books, personal papers, and correspondence are in the Robinson Library, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Trevelyan's official papers and correspondence are in Treasury Papers

(Irish relief) and Commissariat (War Office) Papers, National Archives (Kew). Holdings of his correspondence with others include: Clarendon Deposit, Bodl.; Gladstone Papers, BL; papers of Sir James Graham, BL; Monteagle Papers, NLI; papers of Sir Robert Peel, BL; papers of Lord John Russell, National Archives (Kew); and papers of Sir Charles Wood (Hickleton Papers), Borthwick Institute, University of York.

Written by Robin Haines

Sources: *Times*, 4 Mar. 1874; 21 June, 2, 26, 31 July, 24 Sept. 1886; John J. Sidley, *A sermon, preached in Cambor church, on Sunday, June 27, 1886 . . . in memory of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, bart, K.C.B.* [1886]; *Times*, 7 Feb. 1887; J. C. Bruce, 'The late Sir C. E. Trevelyan, bart.', *Archeologica Aeliana*, xii (1887), 150–54; Edward Keith, *Memories of Wallington* (1939); E. Hughes, 'Sir Charles Trevelyan and civil service reform, 1853–55', *English Historical Journal*, lxiv (1949), 53–88, 206–34; Alistair Elliot and Glenys Williams (ed.), *Catalogue of the papers of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan bt* (1972); Humphrey Trevelyan, *The India we left* (1972); Thomas Pinney (ed.), *The letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, iii (1976); Raleigh Trevelyan, *Wallington, Northumberland* (1994); Katherine Prior et al., 'Bad language: the role of English, Persian and other esoteric tongues in the dismissal of Sir Edward Colebrooke as resident of Delhi in 1829', *Modern Asian Studies*, xxxv/1 (2001), 75–112; Robin Haines, *Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine* (2004); Katherine Prior (ed.), 'Introduction' to C. E. Trevelyan, *On the education of the people of India (1838)* (forthcoming); Alan Walker, *Trevelyan genealogy* (privately pubd, n.d.)

Charles Kickham

Kickham, Charles Joseph (1828–82), journalist, Fenian, and novelist, was born 8 May 1828 near Cashel, Co. Tipperary, the eldest of the four sons and four daughters of John Kickham, draper and urban property rentier, and his wife, Anne (née Mahony), of Mullinahone in the same county. His baptism is recorded in the parish register of Cashel, which suggests that, in accordance with customary practice, his mother returned to her own home for the birth. Little is known about Kickham's early education apart from the fact that he attended a classical school in the town. His education and later life were greatly curtailed by the permanent damage caused to his hearing and eyesight when a flask of gunpowder exploded in his face in a hunting accident.

Political development

The Kickhams, a rising catholic middle-class family, participated in the great political demonstrations against tithes in the 1830s, supported Fr Theobald Mathew in his temperance crusade, and rallied to the standard of Repeal in the early 1840s. The shaping force of Kickham's literary and political careers was the *Nation* newspaper, founded in 1842 by Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillon, and Charles Gavan Duffy. Kickham's uncle James became agent for the paper in Mullinahone, and throughout his life Kickham never lost his belief in the inclusive, non-sectarian political philosophy of the Young Irelanders. His sympathies lay with the young men in their contest with the ageing Daniel O'Connell, concerning the morality of physical force. Kickham's role in the 1848 uprising was limited, and there is no evidence that he was present at the fateful encounter at the Widow McCormack's house near the hill village of Ballingarry on 29 July 1848. Ballingarry marked the end of both Repeal and the Irish Confederation as formal political organisations, but the question as to how Ireland could attain a measure of self-government remained unresolved.

Kickham supported the Callan Tenants' Protection Society, which in 1850 became the Irish Tenant League. His aversion to parliamentary politics and to participation at Westminster was reinforced when two of the leading members of the Independent Irish Party, John Sadleir and William Keogh, defected from the policy of principled opposition to serve in the administration of Lord Aberdeen in 1852.

Living in the comfortable family home during the 1850s, Kickham contributed ballads and prose articles to local newspapers such as the *Kilkenny Journal* and a short-lived literary magazine,

the *Celt*, which had been founded in Kilkenny in 1857 by the Young Irelander Robert Cane. Three of his best-remembered ballads, 'Patrick Sheehan', 'Rory of the hill', and 'Home longings, or Slievenamon', were published during this period. It was at a literary evening at Cane's house that Kickham met James Stephens – whom he would have last seen in July 1848 – back in Ireland to revive revolutionary politics. On 17 March 1858 the Irish Revolutionary (later Republican) Brotherhood was founded in Dublin. Later that year John O'Mahony, Stephens's revolutionary companion in 1848, launched a support organisation, known as the Fenian Brotherhood in commemoration of Ireland's legendary warriors, in America. Kickham may not have formally joined the new organisation – it is unclear if he was ever sworn in – until his neighbour and life-long friend John O'Mahony visited Ireland in late 1860.

Fenian activist and journalist, 1860–69

Kickham was now entering the public phase of a life that was to involve him in bitter paper battles on a variety of fronts: between the Fenians and constitutionalists; in factional struggles within Fenianism; and on a broader front against the two great institutions which controlled Ireland, the catholic church and the British government. His able defence of Fenian politics in the *Irishman* enhanced his status, and when Stephens launched the *Irish People* in 1863 it was no surprise that Kickham was appointed its joint editor with John O'Leary and Thomas Clarke Luby. The decision to leave Mullinahone, the place he loved, cannot have been easy, but Kickham later described Stephens's invitation as 'a call, the neglect of which would have made life unupportable'.

In late 1863 Kickham travelled to America, ostensibly for the purpose of accompanying his sister and her young child, but while there he attended the convention of the Fenian Brotherhood in Chicago. After returning to Dublin he was responsible for many of the leading articles in the *Irish People* enunciating Fenian philosophy. He was especially critical of the catholic church's denunciation of the secret society. Its certitude was met with equal certitude from Kickham, who preached, as the Young Irelanders had done in the *Nation* in the 1840s, that the people had a right to judge for themselves in temporal matters.

The *Irish People* suffered the same fate as its radical predecessors. In September 1865 the police closed the paper's offices and arrested the editors, John O'Leary and Thomas Clarke Luby, and the business manager, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Kickham and James Stephens were located at Fairfield House, Sandymount, and were also arrested. Stephens was dramatically rescued from Richmond jail through the agency of John Devoy, but the others were charged and tried under the Treason Felony Act, first introduced in 1848 to ensnare John Mitchel. Kickham was given a fourteen-year sentence by Judge William Keogh. Keogh, who had defected from the Irish party in the 1850s for a place in government, was the sentencing judge in the celebrated case of the McCormack brothers, natives of Tipperary, who were executed, wrongly many claimed, for the alleged murder of a land agent. Kickham had castigated Keogh on both of these issues, and some perceived the sentence on the semi-invalid as a spiteful act of revenge. Prison for the delicate and fastidious Kickham was an ordeal, and much of his sentence was served in the invalid prison at Woking. The accession of Gladstone as prime minister in 1868 heralded a new programme of pacification after the Fenian threat had faltered in the spring snows of 1867.

Politics and literature, 1869–79

Released on compassionate grounds in March 1869, Kickham returned to Mullinahone and entered what appears to have been the most comfortable period of his life. His first novel, *Sally*

Cavanagh, or The untenanted graves, was published in May 1869. Though contented in the sanctuary of his home and among his own people, the realities of Irish life intruded. 'But', he wrote in the preface, 'the roofless walls of once happy homes meet one at every turn and the emigrant ship is still bearing away its freight of sorrow and vengeance.' Kickham's first novel attempted to delineate the national character and manners, and he claimed no more merit for it other than its truthfulness. His mission also was to vindicate the character of his countrymen against the calumnies which daily denigrated them in the hostile media. As in all his writings, he never condoned individual acts of violence but understood 'why a shot sometimes rang out in the night air, and a red stain was on the land'.

While the members of the Fenian movement decried constitutional parliamentary politics, they were not averse to contesting elections as a measure of public support. In December 1869 Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, then in prison, was elected MP for Tipperary. However, he was declared unfit as an unpardoned felon. A new contest was called and Kickham, reluctantly it appears, was nominated. His campaign consisted of one ambiguous letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, and he lost by a narrow margin to the liberal candidate, Denis Caulfield Heron. It was Kickham's first and only participation in parliamentary politics. But the political landscape was changing rapidly. Isaac Butt's Home Government Association signalled another attempt to seek redress through parliament. Somewhat reluctantly, the IRB, with many of their leading men either in jail or exiled in America, gave qualified support to the new agenda. The movement, as Kickham termed it, was following the precedent of the Young Irelanders who had hoped to align parliamentary and military politics. Kickham, now the most senior IRB man in Ireland, was elected to the supreme council in 1872, and in 1874 became its chairman.

In June 1873 Kickham's greatest literary work, *Knocknagow, or The homes of Tipperary*, was published through the benevolence of A. M. Sullivan, a bitter opponent of Fenianism. Dismissed by literary critics as flawed, it nevertheless remains the best literary 'photograph' of land, landscape, and life in nineteenth-century Ireland. *Knocknagow* has its quota of sentiment, but close reading reveals it as a scathing indictment of English misrule and Irish gombeenism that together were destroying the community of small farmers and cottiers that Kickham revered. Although it became one of the most popular novels in late nineteenth-century Ireland, its publication did not bring Kickham financial security, and the departure to New York in September 1876 of the two nieces who had shared his family home in Mullinahone deprived him of the domestic companionship he craved. His circumstances were not helped either by family problems, which led to the sale of the interest in the urban property accumulated by his grandfather and subsequent loss of income. Separation from a cherished home place, one of the great themes of *Knocknagow*, now visited its author, and early in 1877 Kickham was again forced to leave the locality he loved and return to Dublin.

The emergence of two charismatic men, Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell, set a fresh agenda for Ireland in the late 1870s. Davitt championed the occupying tenants through the Land League, while Parnell orchestrated a parliamentary campaign for home rule. Kickham remained committed to parliamentary abstentionism despite an attempt by John Devoy, who supported the 'new departure', to effect a rapprochement between Kickham and Davitt at a meeting of the supreme council in Paris in January 1879. By degrees the Young Irelanders were exiting the political stage. On 4 March 1877 Kickham delivered a funeral elogy for his friend and neighbour John O'Mahony, who had died in a New York tenement after a lifetime of unrequited service for Ireland. O'Mahony, like Kickham, had forfeited everything for the movement.

Perhaps Kickham was thinking of his own as well as his friend's legacy when he said: 'But in spite of denunciation and calumny, of dissension and disorder and derision, in spite of the dungeon and the gallows, the Movement, the foundations of which were laid by Doheny,

O'Mahony and Stephens, more than twenty years ago, is not a memory; it is an existing thing' (Maher, 313). Kickham opposed both the 'skirmishing campaign' advocated by O'Donovan Rossa and the 'no rent manifesto' of the Land League. He was more a political propagandist than a political activist; security of land tenure within familiar boundaries under an Irish parliament was his social as well as his political credo.

Last years

In November 1878 the *Freeman's Journal*, conscious of Kickham's financial problems, established a fund to help him. Kickham reluctantly accepted the assistance and in the following year went to live at the residence of James O'Connor in Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Here in this comfortable suburb within sight of the sea he enjoyed again both the companionship of family life and that of the literary circle which frequented the house. He died there 22 August 1882 after suffering a paralytic stroke.

Kickham's funeral cortege left Blackrock at 11 a.m. on Sunday 27 August and at 4 pm reached Kingsbridge (Heuston) railway station, where the body was placed on the train to Thurles. A request was made to the administrator of Thurles parish, Fr James Cantwell, to have the remains repose in the cathedral overnight before removal for burial in Mullinahone. In the absence of Archbishop Thomas William Croke, Cantwell refused the request, no doubt aware of the refusal by Cardinal Cullen in 1877 to allow John O'Mahony's body into the pro-cathedral, Dublin. The following day thousands joined the cortege in its slow procession to Mullinahone. Here, in the town Kickham had immortalised, the graveyard gate was locked and no priest was present to officiate at the burial service. There were two brief speeches. Alexander Kickham said 'that my brother Charles's soul is gone as pure to heaven as if there was a thousand of them [priests] here' (*Tipperary People*, 1 Sept. 1882). The Limerick Fenian activist John Daly was succinct: 'the Davis of '82 has followed the Davis of '43 to his rest. Though death has robbed the British government of its greatest enemy, the day will yet come when the sides of Slievenamon will ring out to the tune that Kickham composed' (*ibid.*). In 1898 a statue of Kickham by John Hughes was erected in Tipperary town; after the foundation of the GAA in 1884 hurling and football clubs throughout Ireland were named in his memory. Each year since the centenary of his death in 1982 an annual commemorative series of lectures is held for Kickham in his native Mullinahone.

Written by William Nolan

Sources: John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish rebel* (1929; repr. 1969 with intro. by Seán Ó Luing); J. Maher (ed.), *The valley near Slievenamon: a Kickham anthology* (1942); T. W. Moody (ed.), *The Fenian movement* (1968); R. V. Comerford, *Charles J. Kickham: a study in Irish nationalism and literature* (1979); id., *The Fenians in context: Irish politics and society, 1848–82* (1998)

James Stephens

Stephens, James (1825–1901), nationalist and co-founder of the Fenian movement, was, according to local tradition and baptismal records, born in July 1825 in Kilkenny city, the adopted son of John Stephens, auctioneer's clerk, and his wife Anne (née Casey). He was one of six children (four boys and two girls), but by 1856 James was the only member of the family still living. Educated at St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, for at least one quarter in 1838, he was later apprenticed to a civil engineer, and from 1844 onwards worked for the Waterford–Limerick Railway Co.

Rebellion and exile

When the Young Irelanders split from Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association and founded the Irish Confederation in January 1847, Stephens became involved in the activities of the Kilkenny Confederate clubs. After the government suspended habeas corpus and issued warrants of arrest against the Confederate leaders, William Smith O'Brien appeared in Kilkenny on 23 July 1848 seeking support for a popular insurrection, and two days later Stephens joined him. For four days he followed O'Brien's wanderings and took part in all his encounters with government forces, including the affray at the home of Widow McCormack on 29 July when O'Brien's followers besieged a party of policemen in a house near Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary. They were finally dispersed by gunfire and the arrival of reinforcements, thus ending O'Brien's revolutionary efforts. Stephens received two bullet wounds, but managed to hide and evade arrest.

Three days later Stephens proceeded to Ballyneale, near Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary, in search of John O'Mahony. He accompanied O'Mahony to meet Michael Doheny, and for six weeks Stephens and Doheny avoided arrest by roaming around the south of Ireland, an adventure that Doheny recorded in *The felon's track* (1849). On 12 September Stephens was smuggled out of Ireland by the family of the Skibbereen attorney McCarthy Downing, and four days later managed to reach Paris. O'Mahony and Doheny joined him shortly afterwards, although Doheny soon emigrated to the US.

From their exile Stephens and O'Mahony watched the failure of the '49 conspiracy of James Fintan Lalor and Philip Gray, and witnessed the barricades against Louis Napoleon's coup d'état in 1851. Stephens later claimed to have joined the French republican insurgents, but according to O'Mahony this was merely a frustrated intention. Equally without foundation is the rumour that Stephens and O'Mahony at this time joined a republican secret society as a training ground for their future Irish enterprise.

Stephens remained in Paris (1848–55), supporting himself by teaching English; he attended the Sorbonne, and had plans to obtain a professorship that never materialised. Towards the close of his exile he was employed by the *Moniteur Universel*, for which he translated Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Late in 1855 he returned to Ireland and undertook a series of tours throughout the island. He later magnified the venture as 'the 3,000 miles' walk' and reformulated it as an attempt to measure the country's nationalist temperature. However, his primary intention at the time was to collect information for a book he was planning to write. The following autumn he returned to Dublin, became tutor of French to the children of several well-to-do families including that of the Young Irelander J. B. Dillon, and joined the nationalist circle of Thomas Clarke Luby, Philip Gray, and other veterans of the '49 conspiracy.

IRB founder and leader

When Gray died in January 1857, Stephens asked O'Mahony, then living in New York, to collect funds for a funeral monument. This evidence of nationalist activity, coupled with the prospect of 'England's difficulty' awakened by the recent Crimean war and the insurrection in India, gave life to O'Mahony's and Doheny's Emmet Monument Association (EMA). That autumn the EMA sent an envoy to Ireland with a proposal for Stephens to prepare the country for the arrival of a military expedition. Stephens offered to organise 10,000 men in three months, provided he was given at least £80 a month and absolute authority over the enterprise. On 17 March 1858 (St Patrick's day) Stephens received the first instalment and his appointment as 'chief executive' of the Irish movement. The same day Stephens and his associates took an oath to make Ireland 'an independent democratic republic'. The nameless secret society thereby inaugurated eventually became known as the Irish Republican (or Revolutionary) Brotherhood; it was organised in cells, each led by a 'centre' – Stephens was known as the 'head centre'.

The EMA's failure to send a second instalment prompted Stephens to travel to New York in October 1858. While in America he attempted, and failed, to engage the support of the Young Irelanders John Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher, but succeeded in establishing a solid partnership with Irish nationalists based in New York. Late in 1858 the surviving members of the EMA reorganised themselves into a modified replica of the IRB, and under John O'Mahony's inspiration adopted the name of the Fenian Brotherhood (FB). Eventually the label 'Fenian' came to be applied to the members of both organisations. As part of the new arrangements Stephens obtained a new appointment as head of the movement 'at home and abroad'.

Despite Stephens's success, his labours in America and the secrecy of his own activities in Ireland were almost spoiled in December by the arrest of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and other members of the Phoenix Society of Skibbereen, which had been incorporated into the IRB the previous May. On his return from America in March 1859 Stephens took refuge in Paris and delegated management of the organisation to Luby. He only returned to Dublin in April 1861 when O'Mahony, then on a tour of inspection, suggested establishing an executive council to share Stephens's power. Stephens succeeded in frustrating this plan, but from the time of O'Mahony's visit the tension between the two leaders never subsided.

In the autumn of 1861 Stephens took lodgings on Charlemont St. at the house of John and Rossanna Hopper, owners of a small tailoring establishment, and soon fell in love with their daughter Jane, almost twenty years his junior. James Stephens and Jane Hopper were married on 24 January 1864 at the church of SS Michael and John, Exchange St; they had no children.

The first success for Stephens's IRB came on 10 November 1861, when the IRB-dominated National Brotherhood of Saint Patrick staged the funeral for the Young Irelander T. B. McManus after an intense tug-of-war with both the catholic church and constitutional nationalism. Stephens

played a central role in promoting IRB control of the funeral arrangements and although the event lacked the mythical nationalist significance claimed by Fenian apologists, it served to boost Fenian self-assertion and hasten the divorce between middle-class nationalist elites and a new militant republican working class which had different interests at stake in an independent Ireland.

Despite the McManus funeral success, the IRB continued to endure financial difficulties throughout 1862. In 1863 Stephens resolved to address these difficulties and consolidate the movement's position by founding a newspaper. The *Irish People* was first issued on 28 November 1863. Stephens contributed leading articles to its first three numbers, but finally abandoned his literary efforts in favour of Luby, John O'Leary, and Charles J. Kickham, thereafter the paper's leading writers and guiding spirits.

In the meantime the relationship between Stephens and O'Mahony continued to deteriorate. In November 1863 O'Mahony had turned the tables and persuaded the FB to acknowledge Stephens merely as 'its representative in Europe'. In March 1864 Stephens again travelled to the USA in order to stimulate the flow of funds towards the IRB and regain some hold on the FB. As part of his new policies he made the sensational announcement that 1865, at latest, was to be the movement's 'year of action'. After the end of the American civil war (April 1865) Fenian activity increased spectacularly, and demobilised soldiers travelled to Ireland. However, on 15 September 1865 the government took action, suppressed the *Irish People*, and arrested most of Stephens's closest collaborators, including Luby, O'Leary and O'Donovan Rossa. Stephens himself was arrested on 11 November but, in a daring operation that proved a propaganda coup for the Fenians, escaped from Richmond Prison thirteen days later and eventually made his way to America via Britain and France. By the time he arrived in the USA the FB had split into two 'wings', the partisans of John O'Mahony and those of William R. Roberts, the president of the Fenian 'senate', who advocated shifting military efforts towards invading Canada. The split ended Stephens's already slender chances of launching a successful rising before the end of December, and he called a postponement.

On 17 February 1866 the government suspended habeas corpus in Ireland, and arrests multiplied. Stephens braved the members' impatience, called a new postponement, and in May travelled to New York in order to try and solve the American crisis in the IRB's favour. He accepted O'Mahony's resignation, took control of his wing, and started an intensive campaign of propaganda and fund-raising. Again he proclaimed 1866 as the 'year of action', but by December the movement was weaker than ever, and Stephens tried to call a new postponement. This time Stephens's lieutenants, led by Col. Thomas J. Kelly, lost patience and deposed him from leadership and prepared to launch the insurrection themselves. The result was the ill-fated Fenian rising of 5–6 March 1867.

Last years

After his deposition Stephens spent most of his remaining years in France, in dire financial distress, but still hoping against hope to regain his position at the head of the movement. However, the IRB was now under the control of the anti-Stephens supreme council, and the FB was quickly losing its influence to the newly emerged Clan na Gael. Stephens's reputation, always tainted by his controversial personality and autocratic management, had been ruined forever by the 1866 events and his repeated failure to order the rising. With the exception of a small core of diehard partisans, the majority of his former associates and followers had grown resentful of his leadership and were vehemently opposed to his return.

Apart from occasional English tutoring and a ruinous venture as a wine merchant that took him to the USA (1871–4), Stephens's post-Fenian years were mainly spent in poverty and awaiting

the next opportunity to resume leadership of the IRB. In 1880, after a last unsuccessful trip to the USA and a crushing defeat by John Devoy and Clan na Gael, he gave up hope, returned to Paris, and settled down to earn a living as an occasional newspaper contributor. In 1885 he was expelled from France under the unfounded suspicion of involvement in dynamiting activities with his cousins Joseph and Patrick Casey and the journalist Eugene Davis. He then took up residence in Brussels, but was able to return to Paris two years later. Finally, through Parnell's intervention in 1891, Stephens was allowed to return to Ireland. He moved into a cottage in Sutton, near Howth, and settled into retirement. After his wife's death in 1895 he moved to the house of his in-laws in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, where he died 29 March 1901. Two days later he was given a solemn nationalist funeral and interred in Glasnevin cemetery.

Assessment

Stephens's controversial historical reputation never accorded him a comfortable place in the post-independence nationalist pantheon. His egotism and defects as a leader could not distract from the credit he was given as a founder and organiser. Yet Stephens's notorious personality is arguably the key to his success and ultimate historical significance. Stephens's obsessive self-confidence and single-mindedness turned the EMA's half-matured proposal into a solid partnership that inaugurated an enduring pattern of American involvement in Irish nationalism. At the same time, by impressing the IRB with his own assertiveness he enabled it to break the tacit monopoly of the middle classes on Irish political life. By the time of Stephens's downfall Irish republicanism had acquired a definite shape and a marginal but stable position in the Irish political scene.

James Stephens's name has been incorporated into Kilkenny local heritage in institutions as diverse as a swimming pool, a military barracks, and a hurling team. In 1967 a plaque was unveiled at the site of his childhood home on Blackmill St. The main collections of his documents are the James Stephens papers, MSS 10491–2, in the NLI, and the Michael Davitt papers addenda, MS 9659d, in TCD.

Written by **Marta Ramón**

Sources: NLI, James Stephens papers, MSS 10491–2; TCD, Michael Davitt papers addenda, MS 9659d; Kilkenny Archaeological Society County Database, Rothe House, Kilkenny; Michael Doheny, *The felon's track* (1849); R. de Loughry, *James Stephens, C.O. of the Irish Republican Brotherhood* (1967); Desmond Ryan, *The Fenian chief: a biography of James Stephens* (1967); R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in context* (1985); Marta Ramón, *A provisional dictator: James Stephens and the Fenian movement* (2007); information from Frank McEvoy, Patricia De Loughry, and Mary Flood of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society

Asenath Nicholson

Nicholson, Asenath (1792–1855), traveller and social reformer, was born 24 February 1792, youngest child and only daughter among three children of Michael Hatch (c.1747–1830), farmer, and his wife, Martha (maiden name unknown; 1745–1837), in Chelsea, Vermont, USA. Educated at her local school in Chelsea, she then worked as a schoolteacher in her hometown from the age of 16. She suffered from ill health and, on the advice of a physician, undertook a change of lifestyle which included a move to New York City. While in New York, she became involved with the dietary philosophies of Sylvester Graham, a New England temperance advocate. After hearing a series of his lectures in June 1831, she left teaching to operate a series of boarding houses, run along the Grahamite principles of vegetarianism and temperance, and sympathy for the abolitionist movement. She also worked with the Irish poor of New York City, particularly during a cholera epidemic in 1832.

By 1844 she decided that she had a calling to work among the Irish and to bring the Bible to the Irish poor. She went to Ireland and from June 1844 to July 1845 travelled mainly by foot but also by boat, jaunting car, and ass-cart. She wanted to witness first-hand the suffering endured by the Irish peasantry during the famine and so stayed with them in their homes. While there, she also distributed both English- and Irish-language bibles for the Hibernian Bible Society. She returned to Ireland in 1847 as the field agent of the New York Irish Relief Society to observe the effects of the famine on the Irish people, again travelling by various modes, but mainly by car and foot. She spent some time in Cork, where she befriended the temperance worker, Fr Theobald Mathew.

Although from a congregationalist background, she never affiliated herself with any particular denomination. Initially she was regarded with suspicion by catholics, who disliked her Bible mission, and by protestant missionaries, who were wary of her tolerant, democratic views. However, she worked closely with quaker relief agencies and the Presentation nuns. Her work with the Irish poor included aiding them in cooking the unfamiliar relief-supplied flint cornmeal. She showed them how to cook it in a more appetising manner, as many of them could not follow, or even read, the recipes provided for its usage. Her two accounts of her travels, *Ireland's welcome to the stranger; or, An excursion through Ireland in 1844 and 1845, for the purpose of*

investigating the condition of the poor (1847) and *Lights and shades of Ireland in three parts* (1850), highlighted the plight of the Irish poor. The latter even recorded how she had witnessed starving people attempting to eat dogs, a fact later reported in the *Freeman's Journal* in February 1848 (Hatton, 136). She left Ireland in September 1848, returned to the USA in 1852, and lived the remainder of her years in relative obscurity. She died 15 May 1855 in Jersey City, New Jersey, from typhoid fever.

She married (1831) Norman Nicholson (c.1790–1841), merchant. They had no children. She also published *Nature's own book* (1835), which recalled her early life.

Written by Deirdre Bryan

Sources: Introduction by Alfred Tresidder Sheppard (ed.), Asenath Nicholson, *The Bible in Ireland* [previously *Ireland's welcome to the stranger*] (1927), pp v–xliv; Helen E. Hatton, *The largest amount of good: quaker relief in Ireland, 1654–1921* (1993); Maureen Murphy, 'Asenath Nicholson and the famine in Ireland', Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd (ed.), *Women in Irish history* (1997), 109–24; introduction by Maureen Murphy (ed.), Asenath Nicholson, *Annals of the famine in Ireland* (1998), 5–17

Mary Aikenhead

Aikenhead, Mary (1787–1858), foundress of the congregation of the Religious Sisters of Charity and of St Vincent’s Hospital, Dublin, was born 19 January 1787 in Cork city, eldest of four children – three daughters and one son – of David Aikenhead, apothecary, son of a Scottish military officer, and Mary Aikenhead (née Stacpoole), daughter of a Cork merchant family. David was a protestant and his wife Roman catholic, and the children were brought up in the religion of their father. As an infant, because of delicate health, Mary was fostered by a poor family on the outskirts of the city, where she was influenced by her catholic foster-parents and joined in family prayer and worship.

After the death of her father, who converted to Roman catholicism on his deathbed, Mary too converted at the age of 15. Shortly afterwards she became aware of a vocation to dedicate her life to God as a religious sister, serving the poor. At that time all religious congregations of women in Ireland were bound by rules of enclosure, so Mary determined that if the Daughters of Charity, whose work among the poor in France she admired, were to open a convent in Ireland, she would join them. However, Dr Daniel Murray, coadjutor bishop of Dublin, was hoping to set up a congregation of Sisters of Charity in his own city, and having learned of Mary’s vocation, in 1811 he invited her to be a part of it. She agreed, on condition that a suitable superior would be found, as well as other volunteers. So she and a companion, Alicia Walsh, entered the noviciate of the Bar Convent, York, England, in May 1812, where they underwent three years of religious formation.

On 22 August 1815 they returned to Dublin and, at Dr Murray’s request, took over the administration of an orphanage for girls in North William St. Soon other young women joined them, and they were able to visit the sick poor in their own homes, as well as running a primary school for local children. Thus began the Religious Sisters of Charity, whose members are vowed to the service of the poor, and especially the sick poor, with the motto *Caritas Christi urget nos* (‘The love of Christ motivates us’). Mary Aikenhead, now Mother Mary Augustine, was appointed head superior and the congregation was canonically erected by Archbishop John Troy on 1 December 1816.

This first foundation was followed by thirteen others in the lifetime of Mary Aikenhead, including one in Parramatta, Australia, where the sisters worked among women convicts and their children. They were the first women religious to set foot on Australian soil. But the foundation that might be regarded as the fulfilment of Mary Aikenhead’s life’s dream was St Vincent’s

Hospital in Dublin. She had longed to see a hospital where ‘God’s nobility, the suffering poor’ could be given the best of medical and nursing care free of charge, such as the rich were able to procure with money. During the cholera epidemic in Ireland in 1832, the sisters in Dublin and Cork had worked heroically among the victims of the disease. In Ringsend, Dublin, they had opened a small, temporary hospital, as well as ministering in the existing fever hospital in Grangegorman. However, Mary Aikenhead remained determined to establish a *real* hospital for the poor, and in 1834, thanks to a gift of £3,000, purchased the residence of the earl of Meath on St Stephen’s Green, which in time was converted into the first hospital in Ireland to be administered and staffed entirely by women. Mother Aikenhead had sent three of her sisters to be trained in Paris, and had procured the services of the best medical doctors in the country. The hospital depended entirely on charitable donations for its maintenance, and the sisters had to work hard to raise funds. Mother Aikenhead put all her trust in the ‘Bank of Divine Providence’ and it never failed.

Mother Mary Aikenhead had a very high ideal of service of the poor. She wrote: ‘The poor are the chosen children of God, but we are called to be the instruments of his mercy and protection in their favour. We must try to become fitting instruments . . .’. Having spent the best part of thirty years as an invalid, during which she administered her congregation from her bed, she died in Harold’s Cross on 22 July 1858 and was laid to rest in Donnybrook. Her remains were carried to the grave by a number of poor workmen who had begged to be allowed to pay this tribute to one who had done so much for them and others like them. Her papers are housed in the archives of the Sisters of Charity in Sandymount, Dublin 4.

Written by Marie O’Leary

Sources: S. A. [Sarah Atkinson], *Mary Aikenhead, her life, her work and her friends* (1879); Maria Nethercott, *The story of Mary Aikenhead* (1897); ‘A member of the congregation’ [Sr M. Padua Flanagan], *The life and work of Mary Aikenhead* (1925); Margery Bayley Butler, *A candle was lit* (1953); Margaret Donovan, *Apostolate of love: Mary Aikenhead 1787–1858* (1979); ‘Positio on the life . . . of . . . Mary Aikenhead’ (submitted (1994) in relation to the cause for beatification)

Paul Cullen

Cullen, Paul (1803–78), catholic archbishop and cardinal, was born 29 April 1803 at Prospect House, near Ballitore, Co. Kildare, third of the fifteen children of Hugh Cullen and his second wife, Mary Maher of Kilrush. (There was one daughter by an earlier marriage.) Prosperous tenant farmers, the Cullens and Mahers were prominent in counties Kildare, Carlow, and Meath. Paul Cullen himself was named after an uncle executed by crown forces in May 1798. Cullen's father was also involved with the United Irishmen, was arrested, and narrowly avoided court-martial and a probable death sentence. He was released in 1801.

Education

Like no fewer than eight other members of his immediate family, Cullen's early education was entrusted to a quaker boarding school in Ballitore, which he entered on 10 May 1813. Cullen seems to have remembered both the school and the quakers fondly, stating publicly and without irony in 1873 that he had 'always been very friendly with the Friends' (*Court of queen's bench, Ireland. Report. . .* (1874), 393). By 1816 he had come under the particular notice of James Doyle, the future bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Doyle was impressed both with Cullen's character and his academic talent. As bishop, Doyle would do everything he could to advance Cullen, and privately expressed the hope that he would succeed him in Kildare.

On 17 February 1817 Cullen entered Carlow College, where he remained for two years. In 1819 he was sent to the Urban College of the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome. This was despite the offer of a place at Maynooth, which his father most likely rejected on the grounds of the oath of loyalty required of all students. Cullen arrived in Rome on 25 November 1820 and in many ways he never left. He fell in love with papal Rome, its liturgical grandeur, and its architecture. If Rome itself was crucial to the development of his character, his time in Propaganda was central to his career. He earned the trust and respect of the officials there, a trust that he never lost; this trust was essential as Propaganda controlled the church (and episcopal appointments) in the UK, the USA, and the British empire.

While a student, Cullen impressed successive cardinal prefects of Propaganda, including Mauro Cappellari, the future Gregory XVI. The basis of Cullen's success was both personal – he was well liked – and academic. By 1821 he had already acquired a good knowledge of Italian, and had begun the study of Greek and Hebrew. (He later studied Syriac.) By 1823 he had begun taking first

place in examinations. In 1828 Cullen was chosen to defend 224 theological propositions before an audience that included Pope Leo XII and two future pontiffs. The performance earned him his doctorate and his reputation. Cullen's mastery of the Italian language further enhanced his influence in Propaganda; the day-to-day language of the Holy See was Italian, and few at Propaganda spoke or read English. He was often commissioned by Propaganda to translate and comment upon English documents sent to them. The opportunities this provided were not wasted.

Rome, 1829–49

Cullen was ordained on 19 April 1829 (Easter Sunday) for the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. Despite Doyle's desire that he return to Ireland, Cardinal Cappellari persistently prevented Cullen's departure, pleading his involvement in the production of a polyglot Bible and the teaching of scripture and oriental languages in the Urban College. The patronage of Cappellari – who was elected pope in 1830 and reigned till 1846 – was crucial to Cullen's early career.

By the early 1830s Cullen was recognised as a rising star in Rome. A number of American bishops urged him to join the mission in the USA, and he became the unofficial agent of the 'Irish' or 'Roman' faction of the American hierarchy. Cullen's representations were crucial in the Roman decision to increase the number of American dioceses and influential in the selection of bishops for them. In 1834 John England, bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, believing he had Cullen's permission for the step, secured a papal bull appointing Cullen his coadjutor with the title of bishop of Oran. (Oran was a defunct see in what later became Algeria.) England had previously urged Cullen's candidature for the see of New York. Despite these and other offers or suggestions, Cullen consistently declined all appointments that required him to leave Rome. What he could not decline was the offer, in late 1831, of the rectorship of the Irish College in that city. Although the incumbent rector was ill, and the power to replace him lay in Ireland, Cullen's appointment was nevertheless the work of Propaganda, which pushed his name on the Irish bishops. The college had only recently been reestablished, and it had fewer than twenty students at Cullen's appointment. It also had inadequate buildings and a precarious financial position.

Cullen's first task was to secure the future of the college, which he did with great success, increasing enrolment and eventually securing it a new home on the Quirinal hill and a summer retreat at Tivoli. Cullen hoped to make Rome an attractive choice for ambitious young seminarians, and he wanted to ensure that those educated in the Eternal City would return to Ireland with not only a first-class education, but also with the same abiding love of Rome that Cullen himself had. As he confided privately to an American bishop in 1833, his plan was that the students of the Irish College 'will be the means of introducing Roman maxims into Ireland and uniting that church more closely with the Holy See' (letter to Francis P. Kenrick, 9 December 1834, Baltimore diocesan archives). In later years, products of the Cullen-era Irish College were sent out around the English-speaking world as bishops; in 1845, for example, no fewer than six future Australian or New Zealand bishops were students.

As rector of the Irish College, Cullen also assumed the position of agent of the Irish bishops to the Holy See. The appointment secured Cullen a much-needed income, but more importantly it placed him in a uniquely powerful position within the Irish church. On the one hand, the Irish bishops needed Cullen to represent their interests to Propaganda. On the other, Propaganda trusted him to explain Irish affairs and to recommend policy, recommendations that were usually followed. The situation was a powerful one, but fraught with tension.

In the 1840s the Irish church was successively divided by the issues of primary education, charitable bequests, and the proposal to establish secular higher education in Ireland. In each case the hierarchy bitterly and publicly disagreed, thus throwing the questions on Rome. Both sides

sought Cullen's assistance, and he had to walk a fine line between the factions. Temperamentally, Cullen was usually in agreement with the minority of the hierarchy led by Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam. MacHale and his allies sought to reject any British concessions that fell below full compliance with catholic demands. Cullen, however, was more pragmatic than MacHale. While visiting Ireland in 1840, and at the request of Propaganda, he examined the national schools as they actually operated. Although opposed to the principle of the system, Cullen's report made it clear that in practice it was safe enough, and his advice ensured that Rome did not condemn the schools. Occasionally, however, Cullen's feelings ran ahead of his pragmatism: in early 1845 he retreated from what he himself admitted to be an over-partisan support for those bishops opposed to the support of Archbishops William Crolly and Daniel Murray for the charitable bequests act. He was helped along to this conclusion by his worst nightmare: papal displeasure.

From 1845 Cullen lent his fervent support to the campaign to ensure papal condemnation of the secular queen's colleges. In the period 1845–9 he sought to ensure that Rome continued to condemn the colleges in the face of the manoeuvrings of both the British government and its allies in the Irish hierarchy. In that time three separate condemnations were secured, successes that confirmed his power in Rome.

Archbishop of Armagh, 1849–52

When William Crolly, archbishop of Armagh, died in April 1849, there was no obvious successor. The bishops of the province failed to unite behind a candidate and the choice was thrown on Rome. The decision was delayed by the political chaos there: in common with much of Europe, the papal states were convulsed by revolution in 1848–9. Pius IX was forced to flee Rome, and a secular government led by Mazzini ruled in the city till violently expelled by the French. By late November or early December 1849, however, it was decided to send Paul Cullen to Armagh with a brief to unify the tempestuous Irish church; the appointment was formally announced on 19 December. Although Cullen's name was first suggested by Archbishops John MacHale and Michael Slattery of Cashel, it was an initiative welcomed in Rome; Propaganda wanted its own man on the scene. Paul Cullen was consecrated at Rome by Cardinal Castruccio Castracane on 24 February 1850.

The British government greeted the appointment with horror. As early as 1847 the unofficial British emissary to Rome, Lord Minto, had identified Cullen as the primary obstacle to securing papal toleration of the queen's colleges. He bluntly told Pius IX that Cullen was giving him false information about Irish affairs. When Cullen's elevation was announced, the lord lieutenant, Lord Clarendon, despairingly told Lord John Russell that there was no worse an enemy of England and that Cullen was the 'devil incarnate' (Bodl., Clarendon papers; Clarendon to Russell, 5 January 1850).

Cullen was sent to Armagh not only as one archbishop among four, but also as apostolic delegate with instructions to convene and chair a synodical meeting of the Irish hierarchy. That meeting, held at Thurles, Co. Tipperary, in August 1850, laid the foundations of Cullen's transformation of Irish catholicism, a process that has been described as a 'devotional revolution'. At Thurles Cullen pushed through – often by exceptionally slim majorities – a series of changes in the disciplinary and devotional practices of the Irish church, as well as a further condemnation of the queen's colleges and an endorsement of a catholic university. Although many of the practices mandated at Thurles had long been in place in at least some Irish dioceses, the synod none the less marked the introduction of distinctly Roman devotional forms across the island. Cullen considered the synod's decrees to be his greatest achievement and worked hard to secure their

implementation. He did his best to enforce them both in Armagh and in Dublin, and gave powerful patronage to such orders as the Vincentians and their campaign of parish missions. Cullen also proved a firm and consistent advocate of religious orders of women, and the number of sisters and nuns and the range of their activities expanded rapidly during his episcopate.

Archbishop of Dublin, 1852–70s

On 3 May 1852 Cullen was translated to the see of Dublin, a move that was pushed by Propaganda in the face of intense British opposition and consequent papal uncertainty. British pressure reached such a level that, in a heated interview with Pius IX, Alessandro Barnabò, the influential secretary of Propaganda, had to threaten resignation in order to save the appointment. Although Armagh was the primatial see, Dublin was the richest and most populous on the island, and Cullen's translation was correctly seen as a promotion.

The 1850s were a period of consolidation for Cullen. His narrow majorities at Thurles made clear that he could not count on the support of the Irish episcopate. On the one hand he faced opposition from a number of bishops who supported the policies of Archbishops Crolly and Murray. On the other, it was becoming increasingly clear that MacHale was unprepared to defer to Cullen or even to work with him. Their alliance of the 1840s began to fail almost immediately after Thurles, and collapsed completely by 1852. In order to avoid the destructive public feuding of the 1840s, Cullen needed to control the hierarchy. To do that, he used his influence at Propaganda to ensure that episcopal vacancies would be filled with acceptable candidates, often displacing the choices of the diocesan clergy and provincial bishops. By 1860 Cullen had influenced enough appointments to be sure of his dominance over MacHale and his few remaining allies. Until then, he had to be careful not to provoke any substantial minority of the bishops, an imperative that substantially limited his freedom of action.

The 1850s also saw resumed political agitation in Ireland. Cullen gave his support to the Tenant Right League, but was less certain of the affiliated Independent Irish Party, which he feared could lead to the evolution of an Italian-style nationalist movement. By 1853 Cullen was working systematically to deny the party clerical support, a decision that caused much dissension both within and without the church. From this time on, first in the columns of *The Tablet* (founded and edited by Frederick Lucas), and then more widely, Cullen began to be portrayed as an anti-national 'Castle bishop'.

More than politics, education was central to Cullen's episcopate. Cullen not only saw a sound catholic education as a crucial good in itself, but also as the surest protection against future revolution. His long support for a catholic university bore fruit with the 1851 appointment of John Henry Newman as the first rector of the Catholic University of Ireland. The appointment was entirely Cullen's idea, unprovoked by any other source, Irish, English, or Roman. The university opened on 3 November 1854. From early 1855 Cullen and Newman came to disagree on issues of finance, discipline, and Newman's erratic residence in Dublin, although Cullen was never quite the confirmed enemy that Newman believed him to be. The university also suffered from its failure to gain a royal charter to award degrees. Few students enrolled, Newman departed in 1858, and the university limped on, a conspicuous failure for the rest of Cullen's life.

At primary level, Cullen's initial hostility to the 'mixed' principle of the national system of education was cemented by his experiences as archbishop. Cullen worked hard to ensure total clerical dominance over those schools where a majority of the pupils were catholic, and regularly and publicly condemned any policy that tended to obstruct that goal. It was his consistent aim to keep catholics and protestants apart in institutional settings, whether in school, university, hospital, prison, the workhouse, or indeed in marriage. This was partially the result of his own distaste

for protestantism as such, and partly from his experience of protestant proselytism in Ireland. Cullen was also concerned to secure catholic prisoners and soldiers regular access to clergy and a suitable place of worship; he was not amused to discover, for example, that the room set aside for catholic worship at a Dublin prison was used during the week to flog prisoners. His campaign lasted many years, and served to solidify his conviction that the Irish protestants who controlled many public institutions were implacably hostile to catholicism.

In the 1860s Cullen was confronted by what he believed to be his greatest political challenge: the Fenians. Although he likely overestimated their potency, Cullen saw the Fenians as the successors of Young Ireland and the near relatives of Garibaldi and Mazzini. Cullen's objections to the Fenians fell under three heads: they could not secure British withdrawal; they could cost countless Irish lives; and their principles, if ever they had the chance to put them into practice, could only lead to an assault on the church similar to that in Italy. As he told his former student Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore in 1865: 'Nothing would be more pleasing to the fanatics of England than to be provoked by Ireland to a trial of brute force. We have not any means of resistance. If the Fenians in America were to succeed in driving our half starved and unarmed people to revolt, the massacres of Cromwell w[oul]d be renewed and all that religion has gained during the present century w[oul]d be lost in six months' (letter to Martin J. Spalding, 2 March 1865, Baltimore diocesan archives).

Cullen threw all his energies into destroying the Fenians. He fought for their formal papal condemnation (finally secured in 1870); he struggled with mixed results to deny them clerical support; he created the National Association in a largely failed attempt to provide a safe alternative political focus for national feeling; and he urged successive British governments to intensify their efforts to suppress the Fenians, efforts that he thought over-timid. On more than one occasion he wrote to Gladstone, urging the prime minister to censor Fenian-supporting publications. Although it is difficult to assess what impact Cullen had on the failure of Fenianism, it is certain that the situation would have been very different if John MacHale had been archbishop of Dublin.

Although distrustful of both the conservatives and the liberals, Cullen preferred the post-Palmerton liberals if given a choice. However, as a pragmatist he was willing to work with whichever party was in power in order to secure his goals, doing so with great success in Gladstone's first administration (1868–74), and with some limited but real successes in Benjamin Disraeli's subsequent government (1874–80). Cullen was profoundly satisfied with the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, and content with the first land act (1870). He only broke with the liberals over the 1873 Irish university bill, as it did not ensure an independent, episcopally controlled, catholic university. He made it clear to catholic MPs that he was opposed, and enough of those usually reliable liberal voters defected; the bill failed by three votes, and Gladstone resigned. It was a Pyrrhic victory, as in the resulting (1874) election many of Cullen's parliamentary allies lost their seats to home rule candidates, removing at a stroke much of his parliamentary influence.

Although he had once been 'anxious' that Daniel O'Connell secure the repeal of the union, and always held O'Connell as his ideal political leader, Cullen did not welcome the advent of the home rule movement after 1870. He remained deeply suspicious of independent, nationally based political parties, and was not reassured by the presence of protestants such as Isaac Butt in the leadership. The political success of home rule was such that Cullen could not hope to defeat it as he had the Independent Irish Party in the 1850s; any condemnation would only cost him influence. Instead Cullen tried to steer a middle path: refusing to endorse the party but failing to condemn it either.

His visible lack of enthusiasm for home rule seemed to confirm what nationalists, republicans, and John MacHale of Tuam had been saying since the early 1850s: Cullen was a 'Castle bishop' or a 'west Briton', more concerned to preserve British rule than to encourage Irish freedom.

This was a serious distortion: Cullen was proudly Irish, and personally loathed the English. If a free Ireland could be obtained without bloodshed and then entrusted to the rule of men like Daniel O’Connell, Cullen would have been content. He opposed (albeit to differing degrees) the Independent Irish Party, the Fenians, and the home rule movement because he did not believe that they either would or could achieve this aim. Rather, at best they would prevent the church from gaining important concessions from the government of the day, and at worst they could provoke all the instability and bloodshed that Cullen had seen in Italy – scenes that were forever at the front of his memory. And if by some chance the British were expelled, Ireland would be given over to men who, Cullen thought, took Mazzini as their model, with all the consequences for the church and society that that would entail.

Personality and influence outside Ireland

Personally, Cullen was a close, somewhat dour man, although not without flashes of slightly heavy humour. His private life was austere: a visiting missionary bishop in the early 1850s recorded in his diary his shock at the simplicity of Cullen’s table. He seems never to have read a novel, and the only secular play he records attending was performed by the Deaf and Dumb Institute in Dublin and imagined the defeat of Garibaldi and the Devil’s consequent distress. (Cullen enjoyed the play very much.) He did not make friends easily outside his own family, and after his student days probably only Tobias Kirby, his successor as rector of the Irish College, could count as one. Cullen had been notably shy as a boy, and he clearly remained so as an adult. He kept a greater distance from all but a handful of his diocesan clergy than was usual for an Irish bishop.

Despite his reserve, Cullen was an active, engaged, and hardworking bishop. When in Dublin, he constantly travelled his diocese. This was in spite of the fact that from at least the mid 1840s he suffered physical collapses at times of great stress; stress that was often caused by a fear that his actions had displeased Rome. On more than one occasion his friends thought death a real possibility. In the summer of 1858 he experienced a full-scale physical and mental breakdown. Even in normal times his health was poor, and he could be laid low by colds and other ailments, a tendency that only got worse as he aged and was not helped by his attempts to work through sicknesses to the point of collapse.

Cullen’s influence extended far beyond Irish shores. From the 1830s he involved himself in American and Canadian church affairs, becoming an important supporter in Rome of Irish-American and Irish-Canadian bishops; as archbishop of Dublin he oversaw the takeover by Irishmen of the hierarchies of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The men sent were usually relatives or former students, or both. Cullen was able to use his influence at Propaganda to ensure Irish episcopal domination throughout the British empire, and to a lesser extent the US, and thus the dominance of his own Hiberno-Roman form of catholicism. These bishops often supplanted existing groups that had hitherto dominated local hierarchies, such as the French Marists in New Zealand and the English Benedictines in Australia. Only Scotland was able to repel Cullen’s Irish. The extent of his influence can be seen by the distribution of his papers: there are substantial collections in the diocesan archives of Dublin, Armagh, Cashel, Cloyne, Elphin, Southwark, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Maitland (New South Wales), Sydney, and the Scottish Catholic Archives. The NLI and the BL both contain important letters to politicians; the vast correspondence held in the Irish College in Rome and the archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of the Peoples testify to Cullen’s lifelong attachment to the Eternal City.

Cullen’s power at Rome was confirmed when on 22 June 1866 he was created cardinal – Ireland’s first – by Pius IX, and given the titular Roman church of San Pietro Montorio. Although many in Ireland and England had expected such a move from the early 1850s, Pius IX was

notoriously unwilling to create cardinals and there was no precedent for an Irish one. Cullen's eventual elevation was partially in recognition of his steadfast support of the papal states and the creation of an Irish brigade to defend them in 1860, and partially an acknowledgement of his success in taming the Irish church and moulding it along Roman lines. As a cardinal, Cullen now sat by right on Propaganda, and the Congregations of the Index (for which he had been a consultant in the 1840s), Sacred Rites, and the Discipline of Regulars. His appointment to Propaganda finally formalised his long influence there.

At the first Vatican council (1869–70) Cullen inevitably backed the majority seeking a definition of papal infallibility. He sat on the important congregation *De Fide*, charged with drawing up and proposing to the council any definitions of faith. Despite his unequivocal ultramontanism, Cullen was never seen as an ultra-infallibilist like Henry Edward Manning of Westminster. Ever the pragmatist, he gave two well-received speeches (in excellent Latin), and offered a compromise formula that maintained infallibility but hedged it about with a number of restrictions. It was this formula that was adopted by the council and defined as dogma.

Last years: the 1870s

The 1870s saw the beginning of a slow decline in Cullen's powers. From 1870 he began to delegate more diocesan business to Edward McCabe, who was made auxiliary bishop in 1877. Cullen was himself thrown into a long, draining, and expensive lawsuit mounted by a peculiarly litigious priest of the diocese of Ossory, Robert O'Keeffe, who at one point won at trial a judgement for libel against Cullen. Cullen's health continued to worsen slowly, and he was more and more forced to take days or even weeks off to rest. At the 1875 synod of Maynooth – which consolidated much of what had been begun at Thurles – Cullen was present as chairman, but was nothing like the force within the synod that he would have been in earlier years.

Paul Cullen died in Dublin on 24 October 1878. Despite his obvious weakening over the previous few years, his death was sudden and unexpected. He had continued working till the end, and was not long back from Rome, where he had travelled to attend the conclave that elected Leo XIII.

After an impressive funeral, Cullen was buried on 29 October in the church at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe. Fittingly, he was laid to rest in an Irish building built to a Roman design. Graphic images of Cullen include one in the NLI (c.1866–78) and one in *Illustrated London News* (2 November 1878). There is a statue (c.1880) in the pro-cathedral, Dublin, and another (1881) in Holy Cross church, Clonliffe, Dublin.

Written by Colin Barr

Sources: *Court of queen's bench, Ireland. Report of the action for libel brought by the Rev. Robert O'Keeffe . . .* (1874); Patrick Francis Moran (ed.), *The pastoral letters and other writings of Cardinal Cullen, archbishop of Dublin . . .* (3 vols, 1882); M. J. Curran, 'Cardinal Cullen: biographical materials', *Reportorium Novum*, i (1955), 213–27; Peadar MacSuibhne, *Paul Cardinal Cullen and his contemporaries: with their letters from 1820–1902* (5 vols, 1961–74); Emmet Larkin, 'The devotional revolution in Ireland, 1850–75', *American Historical Review*, lxxii (1967), 625–52; John M. Molony, *The Roman mould of the Australian catholic church* (1969); Emmet Larkin, *The making of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland, 1850–1860* (1980); Donal Kerr, *Peel, priests and politics* (1982); Emmet Larkin, *The consolidation of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland, 1860–1870* (1987); Donal Kerr, *A nation of beggars? Priests, people and politics in famine Ireland, 1846–1852* (1994); Colin Barr, *Paul Cullen, John Henry Newman, and the Catholic University of Ireland, 1845–65* (2003)

William Carleton

Carleton, William (1794–1869), novelist and short-story writer, was born, probably on 4 March 1794, in Prillisk, near Clogher, Co. Tyrone, the youngest of fourteen children (eight of whom survived) of James Carleton, a catholic tenant farmer, and his wife Mary Kelly. James Carleton also worked as a flax-dresser and, although often classed as ‘peasants’, the family were of above average means in their community. Both parents were Irish speakers and had extensive knowledge of the stories and songs of Irish-language oral culture. William displayed early intellectual aptitude and acquired his education in a variety of hedge schools. His career ambition at one point was to become a priest. Not having settled to any occupation as a young man, however, he left home in 1818 and found occasional work as a tutor before arriving in Dublin in about 1819.

At some point after his arrival in Dublin, Carleton converted to protestantism. Through his friendship with the Fox family he began to build a career as a teacher and was also introduced to his future wife, Jane Anderson. He held a number of teaching jobs in Dublin, Mullingar, and Carlow, but had no success in any (being in fact arrested for debt on one occasion in the 1820s), but in 1827 he met the writer and magazine editor Caesar Otway and at the latter’s suggestion wrote a number of stories for the *Christian Examiner*. The short stories for the *Christian Examiner* grew into a very successful series entitled *Traits and stories of the Irish peasantry*, the work for which Carleton is best known. The first series was published in 1830 and a second series in 1833.

In the course of his career Carleton’s work was published in a variety of journals and periodicals, whose political complexion ranged from the tory unionism of the *Dublin University Magazine* (in which *Fardorougha the miser* (1839), appeared first in serial form in 1837–8) to the romantic nationalism of the *Nation*. It was Carleton’s friendship with Charles Gavan Duffy, rather than any commitment to Young Ireland politics, that facilitated his relationship with the editors of the *Nation*, but it was nonetheless a highly significant development in his career. The influence of Thomas Davis and others encouraged him to address political and social themes in his novels *Valentine McClutchy* (1845), *The black prophet* (1847), and *The emigrants of Ahadarra* (1848). Carleton published prolifically, producing over twenty titles in his lifetime, including fourteen novels and a number of collections of tales and stories, many of which were reissued in a variety of editions over the years. The 1840s were the high point of his career: during this decade he enhanced the reputation he had established as the author of *Traits and*

stories through the publication of his successful and well-regarded novels, and in 1848 he was granted a government pension. The long list of signatories to the petition on Carleton's behalf is astonishing not only for the eminence of the signatories, representing a cross-section of Irish intellectual and political life, but for the way in which it cuts across political and religious divides. The writing Carleton produced after *The tithe proctor* (1849), however, does not reach the quality of his earlier work, and in spite of his pension he experienced continual financial difficulties, arising in part from the need to support a large extended family. At his death he left behind him an unfinished *Autobiography*, which later formed part of David James O'Donoghue's *The life of William Carleton: being his autobiography and letters; and an account of his life and writings from the point at which the autobiography breaks off* (1896), and which remains the only reasonably comprehensive biographical account of the writer.

Carleton's works are indispensable for the study of nineteenth-century Ireland. *Traits and stories of the Irish peasantry*, in particular, has been valued as a social document from which readers gain an insight into social and religious practices including wakes, weddings, faction-fights, secret societies, superstitions and popular beliefs, and so on. Carleton's importance in the history of Irish writing, however, rests not only on his claim to have a uniquely privileged access to the peasant world he depicted in his stories and novels, but also on the competing and often conflicting political and religious affiliations displayed in those works. The origins of his career give an indication of the dramatic tensions in his life and writing. In his *Autobiography* he claimed that his experiences while on a pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg in 1817 (recounted in fictional form in the story 'The Lough Derg pilgrim') 'detached me from the Roman Catholic faith', and the stories commissioned by Otway, an enthusiastic proselytiser for protestantism, contained overt and extensive anti-catholic propaganda. This propagandising function is in tension with Carleton's claims, in the general introduction to a revised, two-volume edition of *Traits and stories of the Irish peasantry* (1843), that his representations of peasant life are 'scrupulously correct and authentic', and that he, uniquely, is able to describe Irish peasants 'as they are', because he alone knows the people and has participated in the customs and practices of daily life that he describes. This, Carleton says, is 'the only merit which I claim'. His perspective is an unusual and valuable one, given the distance and condescension which often characterises the representation of the lower-class Irish in this period, although the instability of his political and religious affiliations is equally as instructive an insight into the history and culture of nineteenth-century Ireland.

Instability is also evident in the language of Carleton's texts, in which a quite densely rendered Hiberno-English idiom, often featuring transliterated phrases in Irish, contrasts with a self-consciously literate and sometimes overpowering narrative voice. Among his *Traits and stories*, those singled out for special praise include 'Wildgoose Lodge', which takes as its subject a real-life incident involving the activities of a catholic secret society, the 'Ribbonmen', and the comic 'Denis O'Shaughnessy going to Maynooth', in which he provides, in the person of the ludicrously self-important protagonist, what can be read as a satirical portrait of his own younger self. Although some have considered Carleton's novels inferior to his short fiction, they offer fascinating examples of the ways in which Ireland and Irish conditions could be treated within the generic constraints of the novel form, with *The black prophet* attracting attention particularly because of its focus on the experience of famine.

As the list of signatories supporting Carleton's request for a government pension indicates, he achieved recognition and acclaim in his own lifetime. His work was admired by one of the pioneers of the Irish tale, Maria Edgeworth, who added her name to the petition just two years before her death, saying that his writing gave 'with masterly strokes and in such strong and vivid

colours the pictures of our country's manners, her virtues and her vices' (Donoghue, ii, 108). Edgeworth's admiration for Carleton is particularly noteworthy because Carleton himself records the strong and favourable impression made on him by a chance reading of her *Castle Rackrent*. Carleton's achievement was also hailed by W. B. Yeats, who edited a selection of his short stories and described him as 'the great novelist of Ireland, by right of the most Celtic eyes that ever gazed from under the brows of story-teller'.

Carleton died of cancer 30 January 1869, survived by his wife and two daughters; his daughter Rose predeceased him the previous year. He was buried in Mount Jerome cemetery in Dublin. A portrait by J. S. Slattery is in the NGI. There are seventy-five letters addressed to Carleton in the D. J. O'Donoghue papers in UCD archives (MS LA15) as well as Carleton correspondence and papers in NLI. His novels are listed and their contents summarised in Loeber and Loeber's *Guide to Irish fiction* (2006).

Written by Cliona Ó Gallechoir

Sources: W. B. Yeats, 'Introduction', in *Stories from Carleton, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats* (1889), ix–xvi; D. J. Donoghue, *The life of William Carleton: being his autobiography and letters; and an account of his life and writings from the point at which the autobiography breaks off*, 2 vols (1896); B. Kiely, *Poor scholar: a study of the works and days of William Carleton* (1947); G. Watson (ed.), *New Cambridge bibliography of English literature*, 4 vols (1969), iv, 713–15; R. L. Wolff, *William Carleton, Irish peasant novelist: a preface to his fiction* (1980); B. Hayley, *Carleton's Traits and stories and the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish tradition* (1983); S. Deane, *A short history of Irish literature* (1986); C. Morash, *Writing the Irish famine* (1995), 155–79; N. Vance, *Irish literature: a social history: tradition, identity and difference*, 2nd ed. (1999), 136–53; *ODNB*; R. Loeber and M. Loeber, *A guide to Irish fiction, 1650–1900* (2006); Gordon Brand (ed.), *William Carleton: the authentic voice* (2006)

William Dargan

Dargan, William (1799–1867), engineer, was born 28 February 1799 in Co. Carlow. His father, probably also called William, was a well-to-do farmer who was a tenant of Lord Portarlington. Much of William's early life is obscure and his mother's name is unknown. Likewise the exact place of birth is uncertain but may have been Ardristan near Tullow. When William was a boy the family moved to an area west of Carlow town in Queen's Co. (Laois), although he always referred to himself as a Carlowman and in later years bought a family homestead of 101 acres near Ballyhide. The names of his siblings are also uncertain, but one genealogical source lists William as the eldest of seven brothers and his will mentions a sister named Selina.

Dargan's education is slightly less obscure. It is believed he went to school in Graiguecullen, a suburb of Carlow town where he excelled at maths and accounting. After leaving school he worked on his father's land before starting work in a surveyor's office but failed to get a position with the Carlow grand jury, which was responsible for public buildings such as jails, court-houses, lunatic asylums, and fever hospitals. Soon after this, two influential patrons took a hand in Dargan's career: John Alexander of the milling family based at Milford, Co. Carlow, and Sir Henry Parnell, MP for Queen's Co.

Roadbuilder 1819–33

Parnell chaired a parliamentary commission to improve the London–Holyhead road, then the main communication artery between Ireland and Britain. The road was dangerously neglected in parts, especially through north Wales, and the great Scottish engineer Thomas Telford was engaged to rebuild it. Parnell secured a position for Dargan with Telford during the years 1819–24, when he learned many of his building skills. In 1836 Dargan told a commons committee he had been an inspector of works and later a resident engineer under Telford, and it is believed the 1,000-yard (914 m) embankment carrying the road (and later the railway) across the Stanley Sands sea inlet to Holy Island is Dargan's work. Dargan may also have worked on another project of Telford's: Prince's Dock, Liverpool, which opened in 1821.

Telford then asked Dargan to survey the road from Dublin to the packet station at Howth (the Irish end of the London–Dublin route), which was also in poor condition and subject to frequent flooding. Dargan rebuilt the entire road with a stone wall to restrain the sea from Clontarf to Sutton. Parnell described it as 'a model for other roads in the vicinity of Dublin'

and the treasury awarded Dargan a special premium of £300 for this work, a substantial sum. In 1824 Dargan became superintendent of the Barrow navigation and resigned from Telford's firm. His mentor was sorry to lose him and said his conduct was always 'perfectly satisfactory'. But Dargan maintained his connection with Telford for a while, surveying the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal and then acting as superintendent and contractor on the Middlewich Canal. It is believed that Dargan met his wife, Jane, while working on these projects, and it is likely her maiden name was Haslam, but the date and place of their marriage are unclear. Back in Ireland Dargan then took on a number of turnpike road contracts: these were with the Malahide, Carlow, and Dunleer turnpikes, followed by improvement works on the Shannon at Limerick and excavation of a large cut through the centre of Banbridge, Co. Down.

Railway engineer 1833–50s

Ireland's first railway, the Dublin & Kingstown, opened in 1834 and Dargan was fortunate to win the contract to build it against six competitors. Working under another Telford pupil, Charles Vignoles, as engineer, Dargan began work near Salthill in April 1833, and although he was six months late finishing the line (which opened on 17 December 1834) the penalty clauses in his detailed contract were not enforced. The successful completion of this line gave Dargan a springboard to winning a substantial share of Irish railway construction contracts on offer in the 1840s and '50s.

Moving to Caledon, Co. Tyrone, Dargan built the Ulster Canal, connecting Lough Erne to Lough Neagh, and then ran canal steamers, as well as cross-channel vessels from Newry to Liverpool. From his Belfast office he completed major improvements to the harbour there (1839–49), followed by works at Solitude and the Bann reservoirs and a complex land reclamation project at Lough Foyle which brought him to the verge of ruin. Moving on to safer ground, he built all but a few miles of the line from Belfast to Armagh for the Ulster Railway and substantial parts of the Dublin & Drogheda Railway. The Dublin & Belfast Junction Railway, largely his, includes the magnificent Craigmole viaduct near Newry, his finest piece of work. He was lucky not to have got the contract to build the Boyne viaduct at Drogheda, which was so troublesome it bankrupted the contractor, William Evans from Cambridge. Less well known is Dargan's involvement in building railways in the north of England. In 1846 he and his partner William McCormick won the contract for the Liverpool & Bury Railway (opened 1848) and for parts of the difficult line of the Manchester & Leeds Railway.

Back in Ireland Dargan came to dominate railway construction in the 1850s. After successfully completing small sections for the Great Southern & Western Railway he then swept his competitors aside by winning the eighty-mile (128 km) section from Thurles to Cork for the astonishing sum of £600,000. At this time a labourer did well to earn 1s. 6d. (£0.075) a day and a good-quality loaf cost 8d. (£0.033). After this came the line from Mullingar to Galway, Longford, and Cavan for the Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR), the precarious Waterford & Limerick Railway, the Belfast & Ballymena, the Belfast & Co. Down to Bangor, and the Banbridge Junction Railway. There were few railway projects in which he was not involved as contractor and/or financier. At one time Dargan said he had 50,000 men working for him; even allowing for sub-contractors, this makes him a key influence in the economy of nineteenth-century Ireland.

Cultural pursuits

Dargan created the Art Industry Exhibition held in Dublin in 1853 and is linked to the subsequent foundation of the National Gallery of Ireland. He approached the RDS to say he would like to

develop its usual exhibition, all at his own expense and guaranteeing against any loss, making it a national event along the lines of the highly successful one held in London's Hyde Park in 1851. Dargan built the glass and iron-framed building on Leinster Lawn, facing Merrion Square, which opened from May to October 1853. The exhibition was primarily a celebration of art, there being few examples of Irish industry, but it was a major personal achievement for Dargan and a much needed expression of national self-confidence. It attracted 1.1 million visitors including 'Mr Punch', who praised Dargan's generosity and named the exhibition 'the Darganeum'. Another prominent visitor was Queen Victoria (August 1853). One of her first outings was to visit Dargan at Mount Anville, his house outside the city. It was rare for a monarch to visit a commoner, and her diary notes that she wanted to make Dargan a baronet but he declined the honour, as he did many other attempts to gentrify him. In fact the only honour he ever accepted was the nominal one of deputy lieutenant of Dublin.

Dargan lost almost £21,000 on the exhibition, a serious blow even for such a wealthy man. A testimonial subscription followed and there was a plan to establish an art gallery to be known as the Dargan Institute, but it was eventually named the National Gallery of Ireland. At its opening (30 January 1864) the lord lieutenant unveiled a statue of Dargan by Thomas Farrell, standing 3.3 m high at the front of the building. Erecting a statue while the subject is still alive is a rare occurrence, and a plaque on the front of the Gallery records Dargan's generosity. One section was later renamed the Dargan Wing and has a portrait by Catterson Smith painted in 1862. A magnificent portrait by George Mulvany hangs in the boardroom at Heuston station.

Later railway and business projects

Continuing his railway contract activities, Dargan went on to build a number of other railways: the lines between Mallow and Tralee, from Limerick to Foynes and Ennis, the Athenry & Tuam Junction Railway, and the Waterford & Tramore Railway are all his. He also completed improvements to Glenstal Castle, Co. Limerick, and built the troublesome graving dock in Dublin, which proved so acrimonious an undertaking that William Cubitt became involved in a lengthy arbitration, eventually finding in Dargan's favour.

The railway most associated with Dargan was the Dublin & Wicklow (D&WR); he built most of its routeing from Harcourt St. to Wicklow and was successively contractor, investor, board member, and finally (1864) chairman. The demands this company made on his time and resources were enormous, putting some strain on both, as evidenced by the number of loans he took out from several banks, mainly the Bank of Ireland. Dargan negotiated the lease of the pioneer Dublin & Kingstown to the D&WR, accepting debentures and bonds by way of payment for construction; thereafter his fortunes were inextricably linked with the D&WR, which almost single-handed he kept afloat. In February 1856 Dargan joined the board and thus no longer took construction contracts but closely supervised the works on the extension towards Wexford.

Dargan is credited with the development of Bray, which before the arrival of the railway (1853) was a small fishing village. He built the seafront esplanade as well as a group of six houses on Quinsboro Road, known as Dargan Terrace, and the famed Turkish baths. He laid out a common, a fair-green, and a market place, and helped instal gas lights in the town. He was a major investor in the four-storey, 130-room International Hotel near the seafront, as well as the Royal Marine Hotel in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) and the Grand Hotel, Malahide.

In the west the MGWR promoted transatlantic steamers from Galway to the US and Canada, and for a time Dargan also invested in these. His other business interests included a flax mill at Kildinan, Co. Cork, a distillery at Belturbet, Co. Cavan, a sugar factory at Mountmellick, and substantial slobland reclamation around Wexford harbour. At Chapelizod, Co. Dublin, Dargan

ran a large thread mill which at one time employed 900 people and was known as Dargan & Haughton mills. In the summer of 1860 Dargan took 700 of his employees on a pleasure trip to Bray, where they dined and danced before taking the train back to Harcourt St.

Later years 1865–7

On 1 May 1865 Dargan had a serious accident when his horse was startled near Booterstown and he was thrown to the ground. Suffering from concussion, he was brought unconscious to Mount Anville. He recovered sufficiently to attend a royal commission on railways in London a few weeks later and made a significant and lengthy presentation on the current state and future prospects of Irish railways. However, the accident took its toll and Dargan was by this time in some business difficulties. A few months later he sold Mount Anville to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and moved permanently to 2 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, a four-storey-over-basement house with courtyard and coach-house. The financial crisis in Britain and the collapse of bankers Overend & Gurney in May 1866 caused the value of railway shares to plummet, a serious blow for Dargan. At the end of the year he appointed two trustees to run his businesses, Valentine O'Brien O'Connor (1811–73) and Richard Martin (1831–1901). The move caused some alarm among his creditors and in particular among his fellow directors of the Dublin, Wicklow & Wexford Railway (as the D&WR had become), who decided the only way to save the company was to offer their personal security against the loans Dargan had negotiated.

In January 1867 Dargan made his will, with Alexander Boyle as executor, leaving his wife, Jane, a legacy of £3,000 and an annuity of £600. Other beneficiaries were Boyle, who received £2,000; Louisa Haslam (Jane's niece), £1,000; and his sister, Selina Dargan, £500. Although there was some question as to Dargan's religious affiliations he received the last rites of the catholic church from Fr John Boland and died, three weeks short of his sixty-eighth birthday, on 7 February 1867, the cause of death being malignant liver disease. Lengthy tributes appeared in the press all over Ireland and Britain and the funeral took place on 11 February. Estimates of the number of carriages varied from 150 to 250, but all agreed it was one of the largest funerals in Dublin for many years. Several hundred DW&WR men led the procession from Fitzwilliam Square to Glasnevin cemetery, and after a funeral service in the mortuary chapel Dargan was buried close to the O'Connell circle, a position of some status in the mortality league. The plot was a gift from the cemetery authorities and the elegant tomb is almost certainly the work of the talented architect John Skipton Mulvany. Some months later an unpleasant sectarian dispute broke out over whether to use the King James version of John 3:36 for an inscription on the grave as Jane Dargan wanted, or the Douai version as the cemetery committee insisted. The argument rumbled on for some weeks, involving Cardinal Cullen, till finally Jane Dargan decided to omit the biblical text altogether. The inscription on the grave thus appears as 'William Dargan, died 7 February 1867, aged 68 years'.

Jane Dargan wrote to a number of distinguished people asking for financial help after her husband's death, and two years later Dargan's property, mainly reclaimed sloblands in Wexford and a number of houses in Bray, was sold. His trustees did an excellent job and far from his dying bankrupt, as has been suggested, Dargan's solicitor, Croker Barrington, told Jane in 1875 that when all debts had been met there was a healthy surplus of £30,000. Soon after, Jane Dargan left Ireland and moved to Glenmore, 21 Anerley Park, Penge, south London. It is quite a large house with a tall cypress tree in the front garden, like those in Mount Anville. She died there on 22 June 1894, aged 91, of diabetes asthenia. The couple had no children.

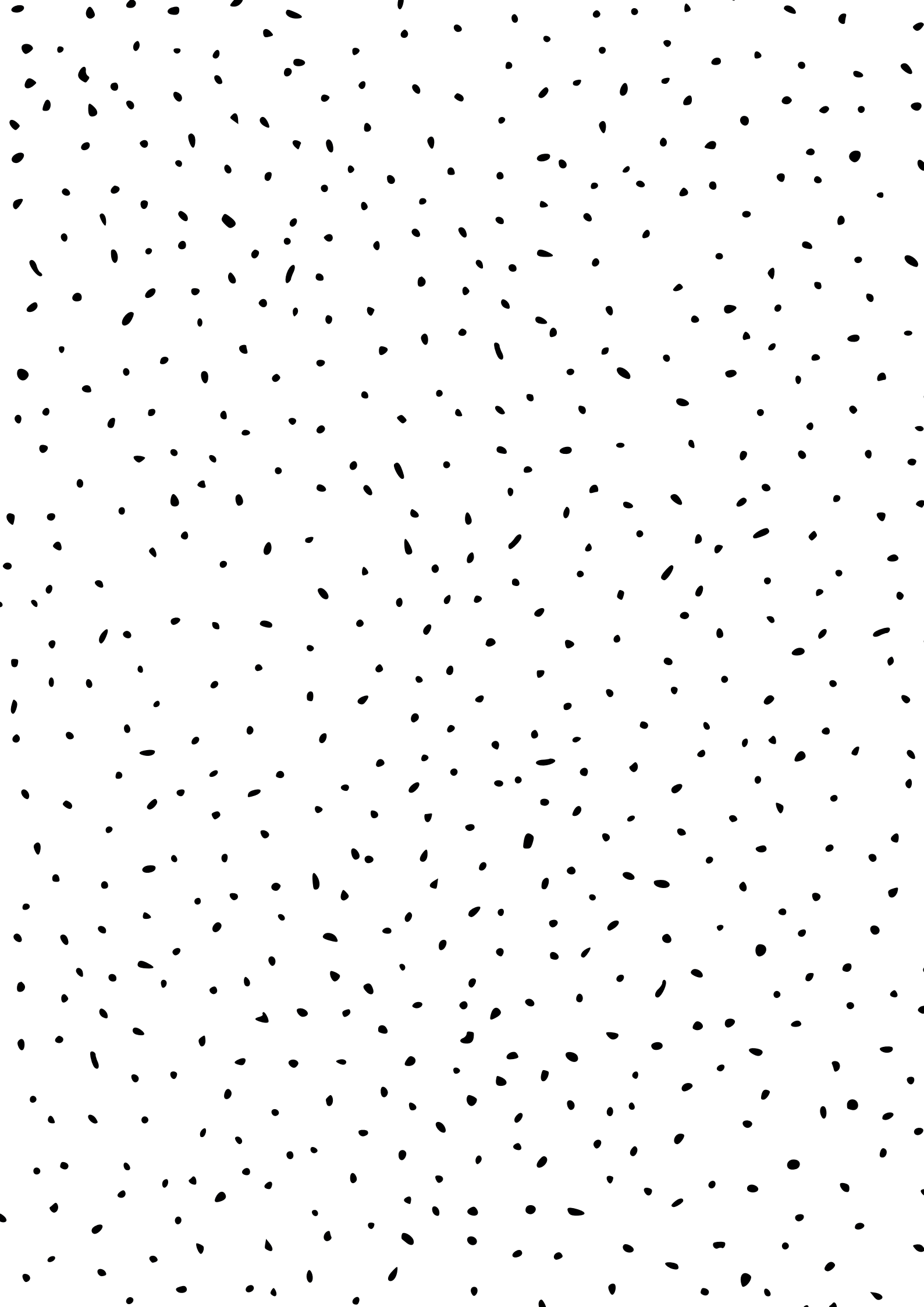
Assessment

Many aspects of Dargan's personal life are tantalisingly obscure. He had a phenomenal capacity for work, managing several major projects simultaneously at opposite ends of the country. Some suggested he enjoyed hunting, and the couple entertained quite often at Mount Anville. It is clear Dargan drank quite a lot but what interests and pastimes he had are unknown. The RDS and Royal St George Yacht Club both elected him a member, but he was not active in either.

William Le Fanu, an engineering colleague of Dargan, knew him well, and the personal description in his whimsical memoirs has the ring of authenticity rather than Victorian hyperbole: 'I have settled as engineer for different companies many of his accounts, involving many hundred thousand pounds. His thorough honesty, his willingness to concede a disputed point, and his wonderful rapidity of decision, rendered it a pleasure, instead of a trouble, as it generally is, to settle these accounts; indeed in my life I have never met a man more quick in intelligence, more clear sighted and more thoroughly honourable' (W. R. Le Fanu, *Seventy years of Irish life* (London, 1893), 208).

Written by Fergus Mulligan

Sources: Jane Dargan papers, private collection; Ena Dargan papers, private collection; index to railway inspectors' reports 1842–59, PRO; diaries of W. R. Le Fanu 1846–67, TCD; council minutes and letter books, 1851–4, RDS archives, Dublin; diaries of James Dargan, 1863–70, private collection; Dublin & Kingstown Railway, plans, estimates, correspondence and papers, House of Lords Record Office; railway company minute, committee and letter books, CIE archives, Heuston station, Dublin; Reilly, Caledon, and Dargan papers, PRONI; Kevin Murray, 'William Dargan', *Ir. Railway Rec. Soc. Jn.*, ii (1950–51), 94–102; Fergus Mulligan, 'William Dargan 1799–1867: a business life' (Ph.D. thesis, TCD, 2002)



Part 2.
Movements for
political and social reform
1870-1914

Charles Stewart Parnell

Parnell, Charles Stewart (1846–91), politician, was born 27 June 1846 in Avondale House, Co. Wicklow, seventh among eleven children of John Henry Parnell and Delia Tudor Parnell (née Stewart).

Ancestry and early life

Parnell was a member of the seventh generation of Parnells in Ireland. Thomas Parnell, the grandson of a mercer and draper of the town of Congleton, Cheshire, came to Ireland shortly after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and purchased an estate in Queen's Co. (Laois). His elder son, Thomas, was archdeacon of Clogher and a poet, friend of Jonathan Swift and Pope. Parnell's line descended from the poet's brother John, a barrister who sat in the Irish house of commons, and his son and namesake who also was an MP. The most politically celebrated forebear of Parnell was Sir John Parnell, chancellor of the Irish exchequer 1786–99, and 'Patriot' opponent of the act of union, if also of catholic emancipation. His third son, William inherited the estate of Avondale from Samuel Hayes in 1795. Of liberal political outlook, and the author of *An historical apology for the Irish catholics*, he fleetingly represented Wicklow in the British house of commons.

His son John Henry Parnell (1811–59) married (1835) in New York Delia Tudor Stewart (1816–98), daughter of Commodore Charles Stewart, whose sobriquet 'Old Ironsides' was a tribute to his naval prowess, which extended to the defeat and capture of two British ships off the coast of Spain in 1812. Parnell's father was well liked, a good landlord, and a staunch Liberal who served as DL and high sheriff for Co. Wicklow.

Parnell's early years at Avondale were passed happily amid siblings and family retainers. At seven, he was sent to a small school for girls in Yeovil, Somerset, under Plymouth Brethren auspices, where he remained until he fell dangerously ill from typhoid. After an interlude of a year or so being taught at home, he briefly attended a private school near Kirk Langley in Derbyshire. He was again educated at home by a succession of tutors from 1856 to 1859. On his father's death in 1859 Parnell, who became a ward of court, inherited the heavily encumbered Avondale estate. The family resided successively in Dalkey, in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire), and at 14 Upper Temple St., Dublin. At 16 Parnell was sent to a cramming establishment at Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, run by the Rev. Mr Wishaw. He spent three-and-a-half years (1865–9) at Magdalene College, Cambridge. When in May 1869 a drunken altercation turned into a brawl, he was rusticated for the remaining two weeks of the term. He never returned to complete his degree.

Entry into politics and early political career

Parnell returned to Avondale to live for a time the life of a young Anglo-Irish landlord, albeit one struggling to maintain a heavily debt-ridden estate. He was at this time distinguished principally for his aggressive gamesmanship as a cricketer. In 1871–2, seeking to reestablish a broken romance with an American heiress, Parnell joined his brother John in the US, visiting chiefly the south.

He was a member of the Wicklow militia and represented his diocese in the synod of the Church of Ireland. In 1874 he became high sheriff for Co. Wicklow. There was little to indicate that he was interested in a political career. Declining the casual suggestion of his brother in 1873 that he stand for parliament, he did not dismiss the idea out of hand, declaring himself in favour of the tenants and of home rule.

Parnell made a sudden and belated attempt to contest the election of February 1874. Precluded by his office as high sheriff, he unsuccessfully ran his brother John Howard for Wicklow. Having won the hesitant and somewhat bewildered support of the council of the Home Rule League, Parnell, who showed himself a catastrophically diffident speaker at his adoption meeting, contested and lost Dublin County the following month. On the death of John Martin, friend and brother-in-law of John Mitchel, Parnell contested and won Meath in a by-election in April 1875.

There was a great deal of speculation in the 1880s, originating chiefly in the English press and among English politicians, as to what could have made Parnell a nationalist, a question which his biographers have also sought to address. If casual speculation was irresistible, the issue had as a premise a primitively reductive conception of nationalism, as if some quirk of temperament or peculiarity of personal circumstances was required to account for the embrace of nationalism by an Anglo-Irish landlord. Various theories were canvassed: his patriotic ancestry; his American descent through his mother, whose Fenian leanings were exaggerated, most of all by herself; the *ressentiment* of a member of the protestant gentry who was not a landlord on a great scale; his experience in Cambridge.

The day on which Parnell took his seat, 22 April 1875, was that on which J. G. Biggar began the most sustained Irish exercise in parliamentary obstruction, against a coercion bill, entering the commons bearing a pile of blue books from the commons' library. A trial of strength between the minority which was to become known as the 'obstructionists' or 'obstructives' and the mild-mannered Isaac Butt, leader of the Irish party, was engaged.

In his maiden speech on 26 April 1875 Parnell asked: 'why should Ireland be treated as a geographical fragment of England . . . ? Ireland was not a geographical fragment but a nation.' Thereafter he embarked on an accelerated apprenticeship in parliamentary procedure and technique. On 30 June 1876 Parnell objected to a reference by Sir Michael Hicks Beach to 'the Manchester murderers' and subsequently rejoined: 'The right honourable gentleman looked at me so directly when he said that any member of this house should apologise for murder, that I wish to say as publicly and directly as I can that I do not believe, and never shall believe, that any murder was committed at Manchester' (Lyons, *Parnell*, 54–5). With this exchange Parnell won notoriety at Westminster, and popularity in Ireland. His directness of language and open indifference to the collective sentiment of the house of commons were to provide the basis for his complex *entente* with Fenianism. An unidentified Fenian eminence told Barry O'Brien: 'His defence of the Manchester men in the house of commons was a revelation to us; but we never lost sight of him afterwards, and I don't think he lost sight of us' (*Parnell*, i, 98). In the autumn of 1876 Parnell and John O'Connor Power went to the US on an unsuccessful mission to present President Grant with a congratulatory address on the centenary of the American declaration of independence, a mission which foundered for reasons of protocol.

The session of 1877 marked the pursuit in earnest of the policy of obstruction. Every procedural device was availed of to frustrate the enactment of legislation promoted by the government. Butt was driven to condemn Parnell in the commons, and pitted his leadership against the policy of the obstructionists. On 31 July–1 August 1877 Parnell and six other Irish members resisted the final stages of the South Africa bill to legalise the annexation of the Transvaal, forcing the house of commons into a continuous session which extended in all for forty-five hours. On 28 August 1877 at the annual convention in Liverpool of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, whose émigré nationalist membership was far more advanced than that of the Home Rule League in Ireland, Parnell displaced Butt as president.

Parnell continued a series of parleys with influential Fenians, generally resorting in awkward moments to silence or to the suggestion that he would go as far as popular sentiment in Ireland was prepared to go, as he set about reconstituting a dynamic nationalist coalition on his own terms. He first met Michael Davitt, recently released from Dartmoor, and still at the time an unreconstructed Fenian, in Dublin in January 1878. They travelled together to a meeting in St Helens, Lancashire, in May. Davitt urged Parnell to join the IRB, which he declined to do. What Parnell said at the meeting conveyed his deflection of Davitt's advocacy of a withdrawal of Irish members from the commons and the constitution of an informal legislative assembly in Dublin. Parnell identified two scenarios. Either the Irish members would be expelled from the house of commons, 'which would be equivalent to sending them all back to Ireland, and holding their own parliament in Ireland, and thus they would be themselves repealing the union'; alternatively the government would feel compelled to permit the conduct of parliamentary business by the passage of beneficial Irish measures.

Davitt left for America. In October John Devoy proffered – subject to the sanction of Charles Kickham – American Fenian support for Parnell on the basis of five conditions, of which the chief were the substitution for Butt's federal demand of a general declaration in favour of self-government, and a vigorous agitation on the land question 'on the basis of a peasant proprietary, while accepting concessions tending to abolish arbitrary eviction'. Promoted by Devoy as 'an Irish new departure', this initiative was unacceptable to the Fenian old guard, dominated by the deaf and intransigent Kickham. Parnell made no public response. Devoy, John O'Leary, Parnell, and Biggar met at Boulogne on 7 March. Devoy concluded that Parnell, while not definitely decided on the precise modality, 'would go with the Irish people to the fullest limit in breaking up the existing form of connection with England'. The decisive qualification 'with the Irish people' at least has a plausibly Parnellian ring.

While emphatically not a Fenian, Parnell had an unusually sure imaginative understanding of the Fenian sensibility. His spare and direct method commended itself to Fenians. His attitude to Fenianism was also free from the sententious moralising that always grated on Fenian nerves. He was, for example, quite capable in his conversation of discussing the impracticality of a military insurgency in Ireland for reasons of the configuration of the Irish landscape. While it is difficult to banish the suspicion that Parnell was likely to have been cynically indiscreet in his conversations with American Fenians, as the occasion required, what was remarkable – and what unionist politicians and publicists could never fathom or bring themselves to accept – was how little Parnell needed to offer to attract Fenian support. In the impasse that Fenianism had reached, many of its adherents turned to Parnell. As one of Barry O'Brien's Fenian informants observed: 'He never led any of us to believe that he would become a Fenian, and nevertheless he gained a complete ascendancy over us' (*Parnell*, i, 137).

From December 1878 the mistrust of Isaac Butt's leadership by those who favoured an activist policy was openly expressed. Butt, while he retained a titular leadership, died a broken man in May 1879. Parnell's adroit handling of his relations with the more pragmatic Fenians assisted

him in establishing his ascendancy among the obstructionists, in particular over his rivals Frank Hugh O'Donnell and John O'Connor Power. At a turbulent meeting in Dumbarton, Parnell cold-bloodedly permitted a ferocious denunciation of the absent O'Connor Power, who had taken the Fenian oath, by his Fenian enemies.

Land agitation and leadership

Parnell in the autumn of 1878 had spoken at meetings organised by local tenants' defence associations in Ballinasloe and Tralee. In what he said he scarcely departed from the Buttite orthodoxy of fair rent and fixity of tenure; he also made vague obeisance to the principle of land purchase.

On his return from the US Davitt revisited his native Mayo. His sympathies were aroused by the parlous state of the people in what was to prove a catastrophic year of 1879 in the west of Ireland. He organised a meeting at Irishtown on 20 April which marked the inception of the land struggle. Before the Irishtown meeting, which he did not attend (O'Connor Power was the only parliamentarian present), Parnell had met Davitt and Devoy, who by now were pulling him in somewhat conflicting directions, as Davitt came to grasp the possibilities for mass agrarian agitation. Parnell met Davitt and Devoy again on 1 June. Devoy always maintained that Parnell agreed to the terms he put for the support of Fenians in their individual capacities, which included doing nothing in the conduct of the public movement to impair or discredit the Fenian ideal of complete independence to be won by physical force: Devoy had to assert the fact of an agreement with Parnell to justify his own course of action to his colleagues in Clan na Gael.

Parnell's attendance at the Westport meetings on 8 June, in defiance of the archbishop of Tuam, John MacHale, was a turning point. With his gift for laconic phrase-making, he told the tenants 'to keep a firm grip on your homesteads and lands'. He still to some degree held back until the conference in Dublin on 21 October 1879 to establish the Irish National Land League. Elected president of the Land League, he threw himself into active campaigning on the agrarian issue. While the agricultural crisis in the west lent urgency to the demand for rent reduction, Parnell did not espouse compulsory expropriation of landlords, and made plain that the value of a holding should be set high for sale purposes.

Following the arrest of Davitt, Parnell attended in his stead on 22 November a heavily policed and turbulent meeting at Balla, Co. Mayo, to protest against an anticipated eviction. Parnell warned against succumbing to provocation: 'We have opportunities denied to our forefathers. Remain within the law and the constitution. Let us stand, even though we have to stand on the last plank of the constitution; let us stand until that plank is taken from under our feet.' In December Parnell embarked with John Dillon for the US and Canada to raise money for the Land League and for the relief of the starving in the west of Ireland. He was later joined as an aide by the young T. M. Healy. On 2 February he addressed the house of representatives on a gruelling speaking tour. Caught off guard by the dissolution of parliament, Parnell and Healy hastened from Montreal back to New York and thence to Ireland.

The leadership of the Irish party had passed on Butt's death to William Shaw, a banker devoid of political intrepidity. The party remained riven between partisans of an activist parliamentary policy in pursuit of home rule, and those of a more 'whiggish' orientation. An ugly episode had flared in August 1879 when the *Freeman's Journal* of Edmund Dwyer Gray alleged that Parnell had characterised those parliamentarians who had advocated a moderate pro-government line on the university question as 'a cowardly set of papist rats'. The allegation was untrue, although Parnell had made sharply disparaging remarks of his pusillanimous colleagues. The episode suggested a belief on the part of his opponents that the rise of Parnell, as a protestant with political associations both with the Fenians and agrarian radicals, could still be headed off by a

conjuncture of the more moderate parliamentarians and the catholic church. Parnell's enemies were not equal to the pace of his ascent or to the popular force that propelled it.

It was essential to Parnell's purpose to ensure the return of the maximum number of candidates who favoured an aggressive parliamentary strategy. The organisation on the Parnellite side was hastily improvised and patchy. Parnell was elected for Mayo, Meath, and Cork, and chose to sit for Cork. The election saw the return also of those who would be Parnell's key lieutenants and collaborators: John Dillon (still in the US), Thomas Sexton, Justin McCarthy, T. P. O'Connor, and J. J. O'Kelly; Healy was elected at a by-election later in the year. The Parnellites, while not a majority of the Irish party, were disciplined and purposeful. Parnell was elected chairman of the Irish party over William Shaw, by twenty-three to eighteen at a pre-session meeting in the city hall, Dublin, on 17 May.

One of those who voted for Parnell was William Henry O'Shea, who had been returned with the O'Gorman Mahon for Clare. Capt. O'Shea was an improbable partisan of Parnell. The son of a Limerick-born solicitor, and a catholic, O'Shea had become a cornet in the 18th Hussars. He married Katharine (1845–1921), thirteenth child of Sir John Page Wood, at Brighton, Sussex, in January 1867. They had three children, and thereafter drifted respectably apart. She became the companion of her very wealthy aunt, Mrs Benjamin Wood, who lived at Eltham, Kent, and who provided for her a house across the park from her own mansion. There remained between Katharine and the captain a lingering cordiality, and their relations were close enough for Katharine to collaborate in the launching of his various entrepreneurial ventures. To this end she had summoned Parnell after the election to dinners in Thomas's Hotel in Berkeley Square, to which he had not come. Not to be put off, she drove with her sister to Westminster to seek him out. Parnell came out to meet her in Palace Yard. The attraction was mutual and immediate. It was in July 1880, and their affair commenced shortly thereafter.

Kilmainham

The rejection on 3 August by an overwhelming majority of the house of lords of the compensation for disturbance bill, introduced by the chief secretary, W. E. Forster, was followed by an increase in agrarian violence in Ireland. When parliament was prorogued, Parnell returned to Avondale as was his wont. He spoke at Ennis two weeks later on 19 September. He did not invent but gave authoritative expression to the idea of what became known as the boycott: 'When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted, you must show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop-counter, you must show him in the fair and at the market-place, and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a sort of moral Coventry, by isolating him from the rest of his kind as if he were a leper of old . . .' (Lyons, *Parnell*, 134). Parnell campaigned across the country and made several speeches in this vein. He warned against recourse to physical force, and continued to advocate land purchase at a price (thirty-five years' rent) far more generous to the landlords than the radicals were prepared to contemplate. At Galway in October he declared that, important as the class of tenant farmers was, 'I would not have taken off my coat and gone to this work, if I had not known that we were laying the foundations by this movement for the recovery of our legislative independence' (ibid., 138). This was not merely a gesture of reassurance towards sympathetic Fenians, but a statement of Parnell's overriding purpose of keeping the land question firmly subordinated to the national question.

Gladstone's government now moved towards the legal repression of the land movement. The trial of Parnell and others in Dublin for conspiring to prevent the payment of rents and resisting the process of ejection ran from 28 December to 23 January, and not very surprisingly ended

in a disagreement of the jury. Parnell's position in Ireland was equally predictably fortified. Some two-thirds of the Parnell defence fund was subscribed through the columns of the *Freeman's Journal*; the organ of moderate nationalist opinion was now staunchly Parnellite. Among the subscribers were two archbishops, three bishops, and a considerable number of priests. Parnell now presided over a national movement which spanned from left to right in catholic Ireland; the scale of his success and the rapidity of its attainment created a new set of challenges that would tax to the utmost Parnell's resourcefulness as a national leader.

Forster's Protection of Person and Property (Ireland) Bill was met with renewed opposition. In a protest prompted by the revocation of Davitt's ticket-of-leave, Parnell and thirty-five members of the party were in succession suspended and removed from the commons. Feelings ran high in Ireland, and Land League radicals advocated drastic responses to the government's repressive measures, chiefly a withdrawal to Ireland of the Irish members and a general strike against rent. The Land League executive met in Paris shortly after Davitt's arrest. Parnell showed up days late, and imposed a policy of 'widening the area of agitation' – creating a kind of democratic alliance between the working class in Ireland and England – to avert more radical courses of action which had the capacity to acquire a momentum of their own and to supersede the pursuit of a parliamentary policy.

Parnell was aware that the coercion act was to be followed by a measure of agrarian redress. Gladstone's land bill was introduced on 7 April 1881. He had considerable difficulty in holding his party together but ultimately, after the passage of the act, succeeded in ensuring that a policy of testing the land act was adopted at a Land League convention in September. To shore up his left flank, he denounced the act in speeches in Ireland. Responding to an attack by Gladstone, Parnell at Wexford referred to the prime minister as 'this masquerading knight errant, this pretending champion of the rights of every other nation except those of the Irish nation'.

Four days later, in the early morning of 13 October, Parnell was arrested at Morrison's Hotel, on Dawson St., where he habitually stayed in Dublin, and driven through the city to Kilmainham jail. En route, Parnell was permitted to despatch a letter to Katharine O'Shea. A tender letter of reassurance, it had a characteristically lucid postscript: 'Politically it is a fortunate thing for me that I have been arrested, as the movement is breaking fast, and all will be quiet in a few months, when I shall be released.' Whatever his earlier misgivings, inside Kilmainham Parnell appended his name to the 'No rent' manifesto on 18 October. While many tenants proceeded to avail themselves of the provisions of the land act, the winter of 1881–2 was marked by an increase in agrarian violence. The possibly apocryphal prophecy attributed to Parnell, that if he was arrested 'Captain Moonlight will take my place', was borne out. The inference that the Land League had actually restrained agrarian violence weakened the position of W. E. Forster within the cabinet.

Parnell's incarceration brought about a deterioration in his health. He corresponded anxiously with Katharine O'Shea, who was pregnant with their child. Through her husband he also maintained contact with Joseph Chamberlain, who had misgivings about the course of government policy. He was released on parole on 10 April 1882 to attend the funeral in Paris of his nephew. En route to France he went to Eltham, where Katharine placed their dying child Claude Sophie in his arms. He met Capt. O'Shea, who was busying himself with the brokering of an accommodation between Parnell and the government, before catching the night train to Paris. He saw husband and wife again on his way back from Paris, his visit coinciding with the death of his daughter.

In the wake of what was designated 'the Kilmainham treaty' – and was more of a conjuncture of political intentions – the release of Parnell, Dillon, and O'Kelly was declared, along with the resignation of W. E. Forster, on 2 May. Events thereafter moved rapidly. Gladstone announced that the existing coercion act would be allowed to expire. Parnell, Dillon, and O'Kelly crossed

to London. Davitt's release was announced. Lord Frederick Cavendish, who was married to Gladstone's niece, was named as chief secretary for Ireland.

The Phoenix Park murders and after

On 6 May Cavendish and T. H. Burke, the under-secretary, were slaughtered in the Phoenix Park by assassins who called themselves 'the Invincibles'. Parnell learned of the murders from the *Observer* at Blackheath Station on getting out of Katharine O'Shea's carriage. Ashen, his immediate intention was to resign, and when he reached London he sent a message through O'Shea to Gladstone, offering to do so if Gladstone thought it necessary for the maintenance of his position and the carrying out of the policy they had agreed upon. To Justin McCarthy he said: 'It is always like this in Ireland; whenever she seems to come near the attainment of her desire, some calamity for which she is not responsible strikes in between her and her hopes' (McCarthy, 'Parnell', 629). He signed a manifesto to the Irish people denouncing the murders, and repeated the condemnation the next day in the commons. After a faltering performance in a debate on the Kilmainham treaty, Parnell reasserted his mastery in the bitter weeks that attended the enactment of the prevention of crime act.

The Irish National League was established to replace the defunct Land League at a conference in Dublin on 17 October 1882. This was a political rather than an agrarian organisation and entrenched Parnell's authority. Davitt compounded the loss of his institutional power base by a lonely and spectacularly mistimed advocacy of land nationalisation. The tilt to the right of the centre of gravity of the nationalist movement was ultimately to create problems of a different kind for Parnell.

The possibility of bringing Gladstone to an acceptance of home rule offered Parnell a greater prize than could ever have been obtained from Chamberlain. Largely dispensing for this purpose with the services of the importunate W. H. O'Shea, Parnell opened a conduit of communication with Gladstone through Katharine O'Shea. She met Gladstone on Parnell's behalf on three occasions in the second half of 1881, and thereafter maintained an intermittent correspondence with the Liberal leader. E. W. Hamilton, who had until shortly before been Gladstone's private secretary, in a diary entry for 7 August 1885 edgily referred to her as 'Parnell's spokeswoman or speaking trumpet'.

In 1883 it was learned that an order had been made on Parnell's petition in the landed estates court for the sale of Avondale. This prompted an extraordinary public demonstration of support. The ensuing national testimonial, whose success was underwritten by a denunciatory circular from the Vatican, was heavily subscribed. When before a banquet in his honour in Dublin Parnell was called on by the lord mayor and other distinguished personages, Parnell interposed: 'I believe you have a cheque for me', and cut off the mayor's intended peroration, folding the cheque (for £40,000) and placing it in his waistcoat pocket. This may reflect a reflux of embarrassed pride rather than ingratitude, although Katharine Tynan said she had always heard the story told 'as an example of saturnine pride on Mr Parnell's part' (*Twenty-five years*, 100).

While the Liberals remained in office, Parnell had, principally through O'Shea, negotiated obliquely with Chamberlain, who was prepared to promote an ambitious measure of local government for Ireland through a 'central board'. Devoid of political imagination. Chamberlain never grasped the chasm that separated his proposal, which in any event went further than Gladstone's government was then prepared to accept, from the kind of home rule measure that nationalists looked to. Chamberlain's affronted recoil was to have lasting consequences for home rule and for the Liberal party.

The first home rule bill

A tense and complex game was now played out between the Irish and Liberal leaders. In the small hours of 9 June 1885 Gladstone's government was brought down by combined Irish and tory votes. Parnell had secret negotiations with Lord Carnarvon, the lord lieutenant in the incoming Conservative government. Carnarvon was, unlike most Conservatives, prepared to countenance a scheme of home rule. It was a remarkable achievement to have contrived a situation in which such parleys could have taken place between a tory lord lieutenant and a nationalist leader.

While there is some historical debate on the subject, it is doubtful that Parnell seriously believed that a Conservative government would concede home rule. A more plausible (if questionable) criticism is that Carnarvon's receptiveness prompted Parnell to engage a little over-zealously in realpolitik directed against the Liberals in his electoral tactics. What was important for Parnell was to breathe whatever life he could into the premise of the strategic fiction of 'independent opposition': that home rule could be won from either of the British parties.

Parnell sent through Katharine O'Shea on 30 October a 'proposed constitution for Ireland'. Gladstone would not be drawn into a public (or private) commitment to home rule. On 21 November Parnell authorised the release of a truculent manifesto drafted by T. P. O'Connor to the Irish in Great Britain, directing their votes to the Conservatives. The manifesto remains historically controversial, given the narrow defeat of the home rule bill the following year. The result of the election was a triumph for Parnell personally and the National League machine. He had eighty-six seats (eighty-five in Ireland, one in Liverpool). The Liberal total was 335, the Conservative 249.

Parnell's victory was marred by his imposition of Capt. O'Shea (who had adjudged himself unelectable in Clare) in the by-election in Galway caused by T. P. O'Connor's decision to sit for the Scotland division of Liverpool. The proposal to run O'Shea provoked a 'mutiny' in Galway, sustained by Healy and Biggar. Parnell was eventually compelled to mortgage his authority by descending personally on Galway. As he told T. P. O'Connor, 'I'm rather hard to start, but when I do I keep on.' Biggar, who was Parnell's oldest parliamentary loyalist, held out to the end. He wrote to T. D. Sullivan after O'Shea's election that 'the Parnell-O'Shea connection is a disgusting one, and unless the former ends it, his ruin and that of his leadership will follow. I wish the party to be ruled by Mr Parnell but not by Mrs O'Shea.' The imposition of O'Shea, who subsequently refused to vote for the home rule bill, mystified ordinary nationalists and returned to haunt Parnell in the split.

Gladstone was compelled at last to play his hand on home rule, and laboured over the details of the scheme. He met Parnell on 5 April. The main issue between them was finance. Gladstone would not reduce the Irish contribution to the imperial exchequer to below one-fifteenth of the imperial budget for imperial purposes. Parnell commented to William O'Brien: 'the old gentleman, when it comes to be a question of cash, is as hard as a moneylender' (*Evening memories*, 110).

On 8 April 1886 Gladstone introduced the government of Ireland bill. Opponents of home rule sheered away from the extremities of the Liberal party, the radicals led by Chamberlain and the whigs by Hartington. At one o'clock on the morning of 8 June the bill was defeated on its second reading by forty votes. Gladstone's scheme fell short of conceding dominion status, never mind the separation for which Fenians aspired. Asked directly in the house of commons if he accepted the bill as a final settlement, Parnell replied: 'Yes'. That home rule was seen as home rule under Parnell did much to ensure its unquestioning acceptance by nationalists in Ireland.

Parnell as a parliamentary leader

The recollection of the leading liberal journalist A. G. Gardiner of the effect produced by Parnell in the house of commons (*Prophets*, 106) can stand for many other set-piece descriptions of the Irish leader:

‘He sat in the corner seat below the gangway, cold, isolated, silent, a man nursing his gloomy wrath and his unconquerable hope. The sad eyes looked out with a sleepless passion from under the level and lowering brows. He affected you like the thunder-cloud. Presently, you felt, the forked lightning would leap out of the gloom and strike the offending earth. He held you by the fascination of the unknown. He was a dark secret – an idea incarnate.’

Parnell was not a great set-piece orator in the late nineteenth-century manner. He disliked the house of commons but, speaking with clarity and without ornament, commanded complete attention. Gladstone observed to John Morley that he had ‘the rarest of all qualities in a speaker – *measure*. He always says exactly as much as, and not any more or less than, he means to say.’ Morley noted that his speeches were ‘studded with incisive remarks singularly well compressed’ (*Recollections*, i, 241). In the great episodes of adversity he rose to vehemence. Curzon recalled: ‘He had no great command of language. But as he hissed out his sentences of concentrated passion and scorn, scattering his notes as he proceeded upon the seat behind him, he gave an impression of almost daemonic self-control and illimitable strength’ (*Parliamentary eloquence*, 50).

Parnell’s self-control under pressure was a central feature of his public image. Ethnic stereotypes rendered his reserve a political issue. In an almost Shavian *aperçu*, J. L. Garvin wrote in 1898 that Parnell in the commons ‘reversed the traditional relations of the races by making Englishmen furious while he remained calm’. Parnell was highly effective as a political leader in the round. Justin McCarthy recalled: ‘In the council-room he was often slow, uncertain, undecided; sat silently listening to the opinion of others, put off his own judgement to the last, sometimes gave no opinion of his own, but suddenly adopted the opinion of another man. . . . But it was not in council that he showed himself at his best. It was in the crisis that his genius came suddenly out’ (McCarthy, ‘Parnell’, 631).

He was an astute judge of men, and skilfully deployed the individual aptitudes of his lieutenants. After meeting Parnell at Brighton before the split, Morley reported to Gladstone that Parnell’s observations on his colleagues were ‘curiously shrewd, very benignant (save as to Healy), and hitting on the exact word for each, with singular precision’. While the party under his leadership was highly disciplined, Parnell was generally disinclined to rein his followers in unless they directly cut across a policy or strategy on which he insisted. Asked why he did not keep his ‘young barbarians’ in order, Parnell responded: ‘Ah! I like to see them flesh their spears’ (R. B. O’Brien, *Parnell*, i, 378).

It became a cliché, originating in English parliamentary gossip and press commentary, that Parnell was arrogant and dismissive towards the members of his party. This was denied in the journalistic writings and memoirs of the members of the party. He was certainly brusque in defence of his privacy, and mistrustful of the Irish tendency to indiscretion.

Parnell’s predicament 1886–90

The four-year period that followed the defeat of the home rule bill put to the test a different facet of Parnell’s political capacity. He had to hold together what was now an exceedingly broad national coalition during a period of Conservative government. He needed to maintain the momentum of Irish nationalism without alienating Liberal sympathy and moderate opinion in Britain. He had also to try to mitigate the petrifying effects of the Liberal embrace of home

rule on the anti-home-rule policy of the Conservative party. While he was to be remorselessly assailed by Healy in the split for abdicating his political responsibilities over this period, Parnell conducted himself with extraordinary adroitness.

What rendered him vulnerable to Healy's charge were his frequent disappearances and absences over this period from parliament and public platforms in Ireland. The reasons were various. His fragile health plagued him. Much of his work, notably in relation to the special commission, was not public. He deliberately chose a relatively low profile, and practised his habitual economy of method, at a time of heavily constrained political opportunity. He also put his relations with Katharine O'Shea on a footing of settled domesticity.

However lucidly conceived his strategy, he was recklessly indifferent to the political effects of his absence. If nothing else, Parnell's disappearances (coupled with his often sepulchral aspect whenever he did turn up) seriously unsettled his followers. His physical demeanour in times of illness had always been a matter of public comment. He was seriously ill for an extended period in mid 1887. On 18 May 1887 Justin McCarthy reported: 'Parnell appeared in the lobby. "Appeared" is a fitting word to use, for no apparition – no ghost from the grave, ever looked more startling among living men. Only one impression was produced among all who saw him – the ghastly face, the wasted form, the glassy eyes gleaming, looking like the terrible corpse-candles of Welsh superstition. If ever death shone in a face it shone in that. I came on John Morley a moment later. We both could only say in one breath "Good God! have you seen Parnell?"' (*Our book of memories*, 108).

Try as they might, it was difficult for even his most loyal parliamentary followers to resist correlating Parnell's absences to his relationship with Katharine O'Shea. There was a tendency towards psychological reductionism. Never quite able to suppress an edge of sour moralism where Parnell was concerned, Michael Davitt professed to have discerned a deepening of Parnell's suspiciousness of character 'due in all probability to the habits of deception and subterfuge to which he was driven by the necessity of concealing his life and relationship with the lady who had his will and character in her keeping' (*Fall of feudalism*, 657–8).

In the split, Healy accused Parnell of having in this period succumbed to his own myth. There is little to sustain this. The principal discernible effect of his spectacular political success lay in a tendency to conceive his strategy in increasingly abstract terms; hence his neglect of the human impact created by his absences. Like everything else about him, Parnell's hubris took an uncommon form.

The 'Plan of Campaign', first promoted in an article in *United Ireland* on 23 October 1886, contemplated the collective proffering of reduced rents by tenants on individual estates; if the rent tendered was refused, the monies were to be applied to the support of any tenants ejected for non-payment of rent. John Dillon and William O'Brien emerged as its chief supporters, vociferously abetted at one remove by Healy. The Plan brought closer to the surface the difference between Parnell's approach to the land question and that of his principal lieutenants. Parnell looked to the combination of land purchase (preferably deferred until after home rule) with the retention of a residential landlord class. He looked with suspicion on what he rightly discerned as an endeavour to infuse the politics of home rule with a contrived agrarian ardour. Aside from being difficult to operate, susceptible to legal sanction, and incurring responsibility for the tenants who were evicted, the Plan risked alienating Liberal opinion.

Morley conveyed to Gladstone on 7 December Parnell's assurance that 'the fixed point in his tactics is to maintain the Liberal alliance'. Parnell summoned William O'Brien, emerging like a phantom from the fog at Greenwich observatory. He deprecated the rhetorical excesses of the Plan, and secured O'Brien's agreement that it would not be extended beyond the estates

already involved. Parnell held himself aloof from the Plan but was anxious, as Morley reported to Gladstone, that 'there should be as little in the way of public disavowal as might be'. Ultimately in May 1888, at the Eighty Club, Parnell made plain his reservations, extending only heavily qualified *ex post facto* support for the Plan of Campaign. Parnell had been placed by the Plan of Campaign in a difficult if not impossible position. Reluctant for good political reasons to disavow the Plan from the outset, his course of action left him open to the taunt of Healy and others of having exhibited a cold-hearted indifference to the fate of the evicted tenants, the 'wounded soldiers' of the land war marshalled in piteous array by the anti-Parnellites in the split.

'Parnellism and crime'

On 7 March 1887 *The Times* commenced publication of a series of articles under the title 'Parnellism and crime' which culminated in the publication on 18 April of a facsimile of a sensational letter in Parnell's name which implicated him in the Phoenix Park murders. The letter was a forgery, and condemned as such by Parnell. It was, moreover, a crude and improbable fabrication, but one which in the supercharged political atmosphere commanded the enthusiastic credulity of unionists and widespread public credence in Britain. The letter and others were the work of Richard Pigott, and its publication stirred the *demi-monde* of ex-nationalist adversaries of Parnell.

Parnell initially held back from taking action. In the wake of a failed libel action instituted by F. H. O'Donnell in somewhat suspicious circumstances, he was driven to demand the appointment of a select committee. Salisbury's government responded with a proposal for the establishment of a judicial commission, with a remit extending beyond the authenticity of the disputed letters, to inquire into Parnellite complicity in political and agrarian crime in Ireland. Against the wishes and counsel of the Liberal leadership, Parnell played the part of an unwavering duellist and accepted the government's choice of weapons.

So began the special commission, in which the resources of the British government were laid at the disposal of *The Times* newspaper. Parnell took over the direction of the Irish case, which he rightly saw as directed primarily at himself as the leader of Irish nationalism. Pigott took the stand on 20 February. Foundering under cross-examination, he signed a full confession in the home of Henry Labouchere, partially recanted the confession in an affidavit, and, fleeing London, sent again the confession from Paris. He shot himself in Madrid on 28 February. With Pigott's failure to attend for the fourth day of his evidence, Parnell stood at his zenith in England. In the commons he impassively endured a tumultuous ovation from the Liberals who had doubted his ability to achieve so complete a vindication in the matter of the letters.

Parnell erred in not withdrawing from the special commission at that point, in disregard of the advice of many Liberals and Nationalists so to do. The proceedings dragged on anti-climatically, remarkable chiefly for Parnell's own evidence, which was less than wholly assured. Cross-examined in relation to something he had said in 1881, he had exhaustedly responded: 'it is possible that I was endeavouring to mislead the house on the occasion'. It was only on 16 July 1889 that counsel for the Irish nationalists withdrew, after the refusal of their application to inspect the books of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union to ascertain the circumstances in which the forged letters were procured. The commission, when it reported on 13 February 1890, found that the respondents had entered into a conspiracy to promote an agitation for the non-payment of rent, and the allegation as to links with extreme nationalists were merely 'not proved'.

In London on 23 May 1889 Parnell declared that if the constitutional movement was to fail, if it was to become evident that they could not by parliamentary action restore self-government to Ireland, 'I for one would not continue to remain for twenty-four hours longer in the house of commons at Westminster . . . the most advanced section of Irishmen, as well as the least

advanced, have always thoroughly understood that the parliamentary policy was to be a trial and that we did not ourselves believe in the possibility of maintaining for all time, or for any lengthened period, an incorrupt and independent Irish representative at Westminster.’

This elaborate caveat was not prompted by any immediate threat to his parliamentary strategy. On the contrary, it was made at a time when, as he said at Edinburgh two months later, ‘nobody can pretend . . . that constitutional action during the last ten years has not been most abundantly vindicated by its results’. The immediate purpose of the speech was to propitiate Fenian sentiment: nothing had more severely taxed the tolerance of those Fenians who were prepared to lend support to Parnell than his virtual writing off of Fenianism as a force in Irish politics in the course of cross-examination before the special commission earlier that month. More generally it was a lucid if abstract restatement of the contingent nature of the Liberal alliance. What it was not was a preemptive repositioning in anticipation of the adverse impact of Capt. O’Shea’s divorce proceedings: he did nothing politically to that end.

The latent line of fissure on the land question threatened to break open prior to the split. Nationalists, and with them many Liberals, were disconcerted by the studious moderation of Parnell’s response to A. J. Balfour’s land purchase bill of 1890. Alfred Robbins of the *Birmingham Daily Post* noted that Parnell’s speech on the vote on the chief secretary’s office in July ‘has caused some irritation among advanced Gladstonian Liberals, who frankly describe him as “a tory on the land question”’. From some points of view it is strange that they have not discovered this before’. The same speech prompted a ferocious attack on Parnell from Healy’s friend and confidant Harold Frederic in the *New York Times*.

The ‘Union of Hearts’ before the split

Parnell was not only the leader of the Irish nation, but in the setting of British and Irish politics the figure who best emblematised the democratic future: this drew Liberals to Parnell from 1886, and gave Conservative hatred of him some of its edge. It is difficult to retrieve from the debris of the split the élan of the Union of Hearts in 1886–90. Gladstone was acclaimed in Ireland and Parnell lionised by English Liberals.

With Gladstone’s embrace, home rule became the defining, polarising issue of the British two-party political system. The expectations which crystallised around the Union of Hearts in British politics were rife with possibilities for future misunderstandings as a result of the Irish party failing to behave as was expected of the junior partner (in British politics) of the Liberal party. Moreover, the closer the juncture of the Liberals and the Nationalist party, the less the prospects of securing the acquiescence of the Conservative party (which controlled the house of lords) in the enactment of home rule, and of achieving marginal accommodations with the Conservatives on subsidiary Irish questions.

The supreme practitioner of the art, or strategic fiction, of independent opposition, Parnell alone of his party fully grasped the difficulties which attended the Liberal–Nationalist project. Amid the ‘flowing tide’ he struggled to maintain the character of the alliance as a matter of power relations between nations rather than of sentimental or ideological affinity between parties. He had always shown himself, notably in his political relations with Davitt, instinctively suspicious of the recasting of the Irish national demand as a radical issue, an item in the programme of contemporary progressive causes, whatever the moral preeminence or political priority accorded it.

Parnell’s concerns were directed to the English political arena. He never saw the alliance as imperilling his leadership of Irish nationalism. The vehemence of his rhetoric in the split may be attributed in part to furious self-reproach on this count. When he proclaimed at Maryborough in May 1891 that ‘the Liberal alliance which was watched by me most carefully has not degenerated

into a fusion, by turning an honourable and self-respecting alliance into a dishonourable blending or fusion', he was (as well as furthering his attack on 'Liberal dictation') drawing on his intimation of the dangers attending such 'fusion' in the British domain which had preoccupied him in 1886–90.

Parnell's attitude towards Gladstone had always been sceptical. He had, as Edward Byrne wrote, 'no genuine respect' for Gladstone. He found Gladstone's prolixity and sententiousness grating, and regarded his moral fervour with suspicion. Their alliance sharpened a certain objective jealousy on Parnell's part. In Cork in 1887, when nationalist enthusiasm for Gladstone was running high, John J. Horgan, with whom Parnell was staying, asked him what he thought then of Gladstone. Parnell responded frigidly: 'I think of Mr Gladstone and the English people what I have always thought of them. They will do, what we can make them do' (R. B. O'Brien, *Parnell*, ii, 176). The excesses of his retaliation against Gladstone in the split were to do him immeasurable damage. Even though he sought latterly to moderate his attacks, he was never quite able to come to terms with Gladstone's popularity in Ireland, or to dissemble what had become an open loathing of the Liberal leader.

The O'Shea divorce and the Irish party schism

Capt. O'Shea filed a petition for divorce, naming Parnell as co-respondent, on 24 December 1889. Parnell sought to convey the public impression that it was a renewal of *The Times* attack by other means. Parnell himself never relinquished the conviction that O'Shea was behind the forgeries. According to Labouchere, writing on Parnell's death in *Truth*, Parnell had objected to his demonstration of Pigott's authorship of the forged letters that 'it cannot be Pigott, because I know that it is O'Shea'. The implicit promise of triumphant vindication, and the absolute silence that settled over the subject of O'Shea's proceedings in Ireland over the year that elapsed before the hearing, ensured that the nationalist public was wholly unprepared for the thunderclap of the divorce court.

In the proceedings Parnell and Katharine pursued an uncertain course. The fixed point of Parnell's strategy was that once the issue was engaged, there had to be a divorce. He and Katharine did not have resources to make the very substantial payment (a figure of £20,000 was mooted) that would have been involved had O'Shea been prepared to accept a settlement on the basis of his consenting to the grant of a decree of divorce on Katharine's counterclaim. That O'Shea had instituted his proceedings only after the death of Mrs Benjamin Wood on 19 May 1890 did not of itself mean that he would agree to such accommodation. The bequest to Katharine of her aunt's enormous estate was not actually available to her, in consequence of the institution of proceedings challenging the will by other relatives, joined by her husband.

The divorce petition was heard over two days, 15 and 17 November 1890. Parnell was not represented, and the evidence was not contested by Katharine O'Shea's counsel, enabling the captain to play unchallenged the role of the trusting husband betrayed. He was granted a conditional decree of divorce. Just as Parnell had been determined that, whatever else, there should be a divorce, so he was constrained – until the elapse of the six-month period before any decree could be made absolute – not to say anything that would suggest connivance on the part of Capt. O'Shea and thereby prompt the intervention of the queen's proctor and the possible annulment of the conditional decree.

The Irish elected Parnell as sessional chairman of the Irish party on 25 November, many of its members apparently persuaded that Parnell was going to resign once reelected. Gladstone immediately published his letter to John Morley of 24 November, stating that Parnell's continued leadership of the Irish party would render his own leadership of the Liberals 'almost a nullity'.

Parnell retaliated with his inflammatory ‘Manifesto to the Irish people’ in which he attacked Gladstone’s presumption in intervening on the question of the Irish leadership, and gave a highly tendentious account of his discussions with Gladstone at Hawarden the previous December in relation to the provisions of a future home rule bill. The manifesto, which opened with the histrionic recital: ‘the independence and integrity of a section of the Irish party having been sapped and destroyed by wire-pulling of the English Liberal party’, urged the Irish people not to ‘consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction’. Parnell needed to lay a principled ground for his furious fight to retain his leadership, but the extravagance of the manifesto compromised from the outset his hard-won mystique as the coolly reticent leader of Irish nationalism. Harold Frederic wrote in the *New York Times*: ‘The manifesto published this morning came with the detonating force of a dynamite explosion. It is a terrible thing to have to record the public suicide of a great public man.’

The issue of the leadership of the Irish party in the wake of the Gladstone letter was debated at a reconvened meeting of the party in Committee Room 15 of the house of commons (1–6 December 1890). Parnell from the outset ruthlessly sought to derive maximum advantage from his occupancy of the chair. It was immediately apparent that his supporters were in a minority. A hiatus in the proceedings ensued with the resolution proposed on 3 December by J. J. Clancy to elicit assurances from Gladstone in relation to the points of dispute raised in Parnell’s manifesto. The initiative foundered on the stated refusal of the Liberal leadership to become formally involved in the deliberations of the Irish party on the issue of the Irish leadership: whether any assurances would have been acceptable to Parnell is open to question. The same day that Clancy proposed his resolution, the standing committee of the Irish catholic hierarchy denounced Parnell as unfit on moral grounds to lead the Irish people. The old Irish party met for the last time on 6 December. When John Redmond characterised Gladstone as ‘the master of the party’, Healy interjected: ‘Who is to be the mistress of the party?’ Shortly afterwards the majority of the party followed Justin McCarthy out of the committee room.

The split in Ireland

In Dublin on 10 December Parnell passed through thronged streets from the Mansion House past the old parliament house to the Rotunda. There he delivered the most passionate and personally charged speech of his life, in which he spoke of walking ‘with you within the sight of the promised land, which, please God, I will enter with you’. The following day he led the forcible repossession of the offices of *United Ireland* (‘a by no means appropriate appellative’, as Leopold Bloom, inserted into the scene by Joyce to return Parnell’s hat, mildly observes in *Ulysses*).

The first by-election of the split took place amid a general expectation, at the outset at least, that Parnell, defeated in Committee Room 15, would maintain his supremacy in the country. Kilkenny North, designated by *The Times* ‘a priest-ridden agricultural constituency’, was considered representative. Michael Davitt, an ideological enthusiast for the Liberal–Nationalist alliance, who in his naive and pedantic way believed Parnell had misled him on the subject of his relationship with Katharine O’Shea, was Parnell’s most formidable opponent in Kilkenny North, rallying the miners of Castlecomer and lending to the right-wing catholic opposition to Parnell a vestige of radical credibility. The sociological pattern of the split was set. Parnell enjoyed strong support in the town, and among the voteless poor. The smaller and middling farmers were opposed to him. The priests threw all their weight against him, and the Fenians were conspicuous among his supporters.

The campaign was brutal and turbulent: Parnell was struck by a projectile at Castlecomer. Parnell himself was agitated, his rhetoric intemperate. A close and perceptive observer, John

McDonald of the Liberal *Daily News*, reported: ‘Mr Parnell’s face was thinner than ever I had seen it. The lustre of the eyes was gone. They seemed tired and dazed. He smoked, or rather half-smoked numbers of cigarettes, throwing one away and lighting another. His gesticulations, his familiarities with followers, were utterly different from anything I had seen in his demeanour before. The “uncrowned king” is breaking down.’ Kilkenny North was a catastrophe for Parnell, his candidate defeated by 2,527 to 1,326. McDonald wrote of Parnell at the declaration of poll in the courthouse: ‘Bandage or no bandage, and in spite of his commonplace, almost slovenly attire, you would have picked him out of a crowd of ten thousand men. He stood proudly erect. Not the shadow of emotion or feeling of any sort passed over Mr Parnell’s face when the figures were read out. The face was as calm and fixed as the face of a marble in the British Museum.’

The last chance of a negotiated settlement foundered at Boulogne, where on 30 December Parnell met William O’Brien, who was joined by John Dillon in mid January. While the Liberal leadership was more forthcoming in the matter of assurances on home rule than during the debates in Committee Room 15, Parnell was immovable. On one point he was clear, and almost certainly correct. A withdrawal would not be temporary. As he had told Morley on 25 November, ‘if he gave up the leadership for a time, he should never return to it; that if he once let go, it was all over’ (*Gladstone*, iii, 440). Thus it was that Parnell, ‘strong to the verge of weakness’, in James Joyce’s superb epithet, chose to fight on. With the failure of the negotiations at Boulogne, Dillon and O’Brien crossed to Folkestone, where they were arrested and taken to Galway to serve the six-month sentence for conspiracy imposed on them the previous year.

After Kilkenny, Parnell recovered much of his lost poise. Healy wrote in sarcastic admiration in March: ‘Mr Parnell has resumed his demeanour and soared home into the trackless altitudes of statecraft.’ Parnell had seriously compromised his mystique, and his support remained that of a clear minority; the split had the stability of allegiance that tends to characterise Irish schisms. While he fiercely castigated his opponents’ submission to Liberal ‘dictation’, Parnell did not repudiate the Liberal–Nationalist alliance. His so-called ‘appeal to the hillsides’ did not entail the abandonment of constitutional politics: the nature of the split’s controversy was such that Fenians needed little prompting to rally to Parnell’s cause. His rhetoric was chiefly directed to the point that he alone could be trusted to secure an acceptable measure of home rule.

In early April Parnell lost the second by-election of the split, in Sligo North. The margin of 3,261 to 2,493 was the narrowest of the three by-elections of the split.

Marriage and death

In the early morning of 25 June 1891, two days before his forty-fifth birthday, Parnell married Katharine O’Shea at the registry office in Steyning, near Brighton. In Ireland this was treated as an aggravation of his moral offence: the *Nation* published the entry in the register beneath the words of Matthew 14: ‘And he that shall marry her that is put away commiteth adultery’. Parnell’s marriage afforded his more opportunistic supporters a final chance to review their allegiances; foremost among these was Edmund Dwyer Gray (d. 1945), whose *Freeman’s Journal* was facing eclipse in the face of competition from the anti-Parnellite *National Press* which Healy had established in March. It was characteristic of Parnell that he refused to take the opportunity of deferring his marriage until after the by-election pending in Carlow. The election became an ugly carnival of popular moralism inspired by the motifs of Healy’s rhetoric. The anti-Parnellite won by a crushing margin of 3,755 against 1,549 on 7 July 1891.

Immediately on their emergence from Galway Jail, Dillon and O’Brien declared their opposition to Parnell, ending Parnellite hopes that they might refuse to associate themselves with Healy. Parnell, in Thurles when the news broke, responded impassively. His train reached Kingsbridge

late on the Sunday evening. As Parnell's brake emerged from the station a great cheering crowd lined the quays and the streets into the city. The houses were lit up and rockets launched as he passed. He was now the acknowledged leader only of the capital city.

When Parnell set out for his last meeting at Creggs on the Roscommon–Galway border on the night mail from Broadstone, the 20-year-old Arthur Griffith, who was among those who saw him off, recalled that he looked 'wretchedly ill'. He remained in Dublin for three days after his return from Creggs, and was seriously debilitated by the time he reached Brighton. He died in Brighton on the evening of 6 October 1891. It was a month he had always dreaded, often saying to his brother: 'something is sure to happen in October' (*Parnell*, 266).

Parnell's haggard appearance over the previous year did not diminish the shock created by his death. T. P. O'Connor observed: '... nobody ever thought it would end so disastrously. There was infinite faith in Mr Parnell's luck for one thing.' Parnell was buried in Dublin on 11 October. His body was brought back to a city swept by wind and rain. It lay in state in the morning in City Hall, where he had first been elected leader of the Irish party just over a decade previously. He was buried in Glasnevin as the shooting star which would become a recurrent symbol in his literary cult flashed overhead.

Katharine Parnell lived on in deteriorating circumstances and died in Littlehampton, Sussex, on 5 February 1921. After Claude Sophie, who died shortly after her birth, Parnell and Katharine had two further daughters, Clare (1883–1909) and Katharine ('Katie') (1884–1947). Clare, who bore a haunting resemblance to Parnell, died in labour. Her son Assheton Clare Bowyer-Lane Maunsell, a lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers, died of enteric fever in India on 29 July 1934, aged 24. As Parnell's biographer F. S. L. Lyons wrote, 'the line of direct descent from Parnell therefore ends in a cemetery in Lahore.'

No private papers of Parnell or Katharine Parnell survive. The limited surviving correspondence of Parnell and related material is dispersed and to be found principally in the Gladstone papers in the BL; in the Davitt and Dillon papers in TCD; in the Harrington papers and miscellaneous other papers in the NLI. Sydney P. Hall's portrait of Parnell, gaunt and commanding, painted posthumously, is in the NGI; drawings by Hall of Parnell at the special commission are in the NGI and in the National Portrait Gallery in London. A portrait of Parnell hangs in the Mansion House, Dublin. There are fine photographic portraits of Parnell by William Lawrence, Dublin. Striking photographs of Parnell, reputedly the last, were taken by Katharine O'Shea in Eltham. There is a vast number of engravings and cartoons of Parnell published in contemporary Irish and British newspapers and illustrated magazines. Parnell liked the work of J. D. Reigh; a portrait by Reigh was reproduced and enclosed as a supplement with the historic edition of *United Ireland* published on 10 October 1891 on his death. Harry Furniss drew brilliant cartoons of Parnell in a fluid line. The chromolithographic portrait of Parnell published in *Vanity Fair* on 11 September 1880 was considered an excellent likeness; its unexpected depiction of a russet Parnell, of rural landlord aspect, is a corrective to the images of Parnell in black and white. The Parnell monument in O'Connell St., Dublin, is by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. There are a number of extant copies of the fine portrait bust executed by Mary Grant in Chelsea in 1892. The illustration by Jack B. Yeats to his brother's 'Come gather round me Parnellites', published in *A Broadside*, new ser., no.1. (January 1937), beautifully captures the slightly archaic manner in which Parnellites celebrated the memory of their dead chief.

Reputation

Parnell had embodied in a way no Irish leader had before him a sense of Irish statehood. Winston Churchill later wrote of him as 'a being who seemed to exercise unconsciously an indefinable

sense of power in repose – of command awaiting the hour' (*Great contemporaries*, 307). His career and the movement he led brought about a transformation of the relationship of Ireland to Britain, and to the world. 'Under his rule', James O'Kelly wrote in 1894, 'Ireland was a nation' (Callanan, *Parnell split*, 302).

The structure of his myth was counter-expectational. At every point there was a defiance of settled anticipation, an eluding of conventional stereotypes. Much of what was characterised as Parnell's enigma derived from his defiance of English expectations of Irish nationalism and of the Anglo-Irish. With remarkable skill and daring, he sought to turn his stature back on Ireland, to redress the deficiencies and imbalances of the Irish polity.

Perceptions of Parnell in Britain were also caught up with late nineteenth-century preoccupation with greatness. An uneasily repressed sense among his adversaries that he might indeed possess the attributes of greatness infused the fervour of the *Times* onslaught on Parnell. In contemporary British assessment Parnell was generally denied greatness, by reason of what was deemed the narrowness of his political sympathies, although the extent of the fascination he exerted somewhat belied this. 'It is not easy to recognise in Parnell the sovereign element that men call greatness', wrote John Morley, Gladstone's hagiographer, in 1917 (*Recollections*, i, 245). Gladstone himself was less grudging, characterising Parnell as a remarkable political prodigy, who was, as he told Barry O'Brien in 1897, 'an intellectual phenomenon' (*Parnell*, ii, 357).

Parnell's career, fused with the political reconstitution of the country he led, was extraordinarily dynamic in its compressed evolution. His own transformation into a public man was rapid and assured. In parliament he overcame his deficient early speaking style; a French observer wrote on his death: 'Sa victoire dans le parlement était, d'abord et surtout, une victoire sur lui-même' ('His victory in parliament was, first and above all, a victory over himself'). The achievement was not purely personal: biography and nation-formation intertwined. He seized imaginatively the hopes of the Irish people, and gave them definition and realisable form. It was the unfolding of Parnell's strategy, in its classicism and plenitude, through a series of discrete political episodes which he negotiated with sure and incisive judgement, that gave his career its deepest fascination and mystery to those around him. T. M. Healy, the most attentive student of Parnell's rise, wrestled with this issue in *United Ireland* on the eve of the 1885 election: 'It is not clear whether, when he set out on his work, he proposed any definite policy to himself, but simply acted in revolt against a system which allowed the enemy to escape all convenience, while the most terrible losses were being inflicted upon Ireland. Slowly, but with certainty, his work evoked an echo in the country.' Justin McCarthy wrote somewhat vaguely, but with greater elegance, of the dead leader: 'Mr Parnell's policy grew upon him, and developed within him, as events went on' ('Parnell', 632).

Parnell enjoyed an intense contemporary fame. There is little to bear out Healy's assertion that Parnell, 'moulded . . . in a sort of English matrix' of hostile fascination, became possessed by his own myth. There was something inviolately private and detached about this Irish leader in the age of Victorian celebrity. Joyce's invocation of 'the light of his mild, proud, silent and disconsolate sovereignty' captures something of Parnell's relation to his physical surroundings, to parliament, to the attention of journalists and the press of the crowd in his passage through those clamorous years.

His nationalism

Parnell's embrace of nationalism was instinctual, and, once his mind was turned to politics, immediate. The decision to enter politics and to do so as a nationalist were executed in a characteristic swift and single movement. In the years of his ascendancy Parnell's provenance was not an issue that troubled the Irish nationalist people. He was trusted implicitly: neither his landlord status

nor his protestantism qualified that trust. That Parnell as a member of the Anglo-Irish gentry had taken up a cause that he did not have to, attracted gratitude and admiration. In his rhetoric in the split, Healy assailed Parnell as ‘Mr Landlord Parnell’, and accused Parnell’s supporters of succumbing to a demeaning obsequiousness to one not of their race. While his rhetoric was effective in dispelling the residual respect and gratitude many nationalists felt towards Parnell, whether it commanded actual credence is more uncertain. The anti-Parnellite argument – that Parnell’s continued leadership jeopardised the success of the Liberal–Nationalist alliance – was pragmatic, almost utilitarian. The dominant rhetorical idiom within anti-Parnellism was, however, that of Healy’s *revanchiste* catholic nationalism.

His realpolitik and the issue of his ‘anti-Englishness’

Parnell’s conception of politics was harshly lucid and bereft of sentiment. Where relations of power were concerned he was temperamentally disinclined to think in conventional moral terms. He insisted that the choice of parliamentary methods was dictated by practical considerations and the prospect of success. This was a fundamental axiom of his political career, which addressed the concerns of Irish nationalists disinclined, on the basis of historical experience, to believe in the prospects for effective parliamentary action, and enabled him to bring the maximum pressure to bear in the British theatre of his political strategy. From his application of this tenet derived much of the suppleness and vigour of his practice of constitutional politics. His career evidenced time and again – most strikingly in its final crisis – that he would in almost all contemporarily conceivable circumstances hold to a constitutional course.

The dubious proposition that Parnell was driven by an implacable dislike of England or the English originates in contemporary commentary, chiefly in England, and has endured in some memoirs relating to Parnell and in popular biographical treatment, but is grounded on little in the way of evidence. In its contemporary form it served as a working hypothesis to account for all that was unbiddable or seemed incomprehensible in Parnell’s personality and politics. ‘Incorruptible, sitting apart, jealous, solitary, with great intensity of purpose and very narrow sympathies’, the *Spectator* wrote apprehensively in 1880, ‘his mind reminds us of some of those who were most potent in the making of the great French revolution’.

The idea of Parnell’s anti-Englishness owed much to his deliberately cold demeanour in the commons. He rigidly eschewed anything that smacked of deference or gratitude in his dealings with English politicians. He was dismissive, sometimes with a chilling edge, both of the hypocrisies of coercion and of patronising professions of benevolent intent towards Ireland. He quite deliberately did not dissemble the ‘hard attorneyism’ of his political technique. ‘Dealing with him was like dealing with a foreign power’, as Charles Dilke told Barry O’Brien (*Parnell*, i, 225). Edward J. Byrne once unguardedly asked Parnell why public men were so vain. Affronted, Parnell replied: ‘Out of the necessity of the case, Byrne’ (*Parnell*, 23–4).

There is little in the writing on Parnell of those who knew him best on the nationalist side to bear out the view of Parnell as anti-English. Justin McCarthy eloquently argued the contrary; although admittedly he was the most mild-mannered of Parnell’s lieutenants, to whom Parnell was unlikely to unburden himself of dark hatreds had he possessed them. McCarthy recalled: “It will all come right in the end”, he used to say. “They will find that we have a real political purpose in what we are doing, and they will do us justice yet” (*Parnell*, i, 636). The idea of Parnell being in the grip of a racial aversion to the English is hard to reconcile with his sceptical disposition and the well attested equanimity of his private conversation, as well as – more trivially – with the personal circumstances of his later life. Parnell was from the early 1880s effectively resident in England. At their last meeting before the divorce decree, he told John Morley he thought ‘Ireland

a very good place to live out of, and England the best of countries to live in' (*Recollections*, ii, 256–7), a genially paradoxical remark for an Irish leader.

His supposed conservatism

It says much that two of the most dubious generalisations concerning Parnell would ordinarily be considered somewhat contradictory: that he was anti-English and conservative. The argument that Parnell's underlying or substantive political orientation (a speculative concept in relation to the leader of a home rule agitation) was conservative has a lineage which stretches back to suspicions of Parnell on the left of the Gladstonian Liberal party in the late 1880s. He was, Labouchere pronounced on his death, 'in truth, a Conservative, and he had very little sympathy with Liberal aspirations'. Some Conservative commentators canvassed a similar view, in characterisations of the Irish leader which were often highly perceptive without actually being right. Among nationalists Joe Biggar had famously mused: 'I wonder what are Mr Parnell's real politics.'

The idea of Parnell's conservatism is based on an extrapolation of his views on the land question, which were to the right of most of his party, and closer to the Conservatives than to the Liberals. Parnell sought to ensure the retention of a scaled-down residential landlord class under home rule, to maintain a class who could contribute to Irish economic development; to contrive a political balance; and to secure ultimate Anglo-Irish and Conservative assent to a scheme of home rule. His conception of unionism was based on the Irish landlord class. He had little knowledge or experience of the north-east of Ireland. Like virtually all his contemporaries, irrespective of party allegiance, he saw Irish unionism as a unitary phenomenon. Parnell's embrace of the land question at the outset, his sympathy for the Irish working class, the often radical tendency disclosed in his early career as an obstructionist, the generally neglected influence of his involvement in the lost world of Irish émigré politics in Britain, all make it difficult to classify Parnell as a conservative.

Moreover, the thesis of Parnell's conservatism ignores the Parnell of the split. Healy's *National Press* charged: 'His policy is himself, his end is himself, his devotion is to himself.' Yet whatever degree of cynicism or desperation is imputed to Parnell, the political intelligence and the depth of conviction he displayed, the consistency with his early career on which he insisted, and the depth, if not the breadth, of allegiance he attracted, were such that his campaign to reconstitute his leadership in 1890–91 cannot be discounted as merely a late opportunistic deviation.

Personal attributes

In looks Parnell was extremely striking. By the time of the split his haggard appearance, for which the Irish public was unprepared, bore the impress of the illnesses he had borne since the 1886 election. As a young man his dress was sharply elegant. Latterly, even when he was seeking to escape public recognition or to swathe himself against the cold, his dress frequently oscillated between the slapdash and the eccentric. H. W. Lucy wrote of Parnell's attire on one occasion in 1885: 'the dress is a triumph of laborious art giving Mr Parnell an appearance which is a cross between Oscar Wilde and a scarecrow'. Labouchere wrote that 'occasionally he would appear in a well-fitting coat and well "groomed", but he was usually unkempt and ill-dressed'. During the special commission, he recalled, Parnell went about 'arrayed in an old white coat, with handkerchief half covering his face, a slouched hat over his head, and a black bag in his hand'.

Parnell's resolve masked high sensitivity. Justin McCarthy wrote shortly after Parnell's death: 'The Parnell I knew was a singularly sensitive and nervous man. He was all compact of nerves – like an Arab horse.' Sometimes he appeared lost in distant thought, all the while remaining alert to what was being said. T. P. O'Connor wrote a little novelistically in an obituary in the *Sunday Sun*:

‘He was curiously unconscious sometimes of his surroundings, and used to sit with those strange, red-brown eyes of his, as though, like the raven, he had fallen into a sleepless and unending dream.’

Parnell was devoid of conventional self-consciousness. T. P. O’Connor wrote in the mid 1880s of the difficulties in describing the mind of a man who was ‘neither expansive nor introspective. It is one of the strongest and most curious peculiarities of Mr Parnell not merely that he rarely, if ever, speaks of himself, but that he rarely, if ever, gives any indication of having studied himself. His mind, if one may use the jargon of the Germans, is purely objective’ (*Parnell movement*, 339). Justin McCarthy wrote: ‘He had not the slightest interest in what are called “problems of life”. I never heard from him a word that appertained to anything metaphysical or psychological, or to any form of self-analysis – that morbid pastime of the age’ (‘Parnell’, 631).

Parnell was not possessed of strong religious convictions. There are a few suggestions that his protestantism bore some Plymouth Brethren influence, derived from his family and from Wicklow. He was superstitious (the severely rationalist Morley recalled him saying he had ‘strange and vivid forebodings’), and somewhat hypochondriacal. This cast of mind may be explicable in terms of his exposure to his father’s early death, and the death by 1882 of five of his ten siblings, as well as by his consciousness of his own physical frailty. He is said to have believed he would not live beyond 48, the age at which his father died. The chief political anomaly of his superstition was his aversion to the colour green.

Parnell saw Avondale infrequently in the decade of his hegemony, chiefly when parliament rose. His interests were not primarily agricultural. Parnell invested heavily in mining and quarrying ventures in Wicklow, in particular stone quarrying at Big Rock, near Arklow, from which he supplied paving setts to Dublin corporation. He expended money and effort in seeking to revive the old lead mine and to relocate the lodes of iron and seams of copper that had formerly been worked in the vicinity of Avondale. Through the late 1880s his chief recreation was the quest for gold in Wicklow, assaying samples of ore in his workshops successively at Etham and Brighton. He ruefully informed the royal commission on mining royalties in March 1891: ‘I fear the quantity of gold in Wicklow is very limited.’

In the split, stung by Healy’s ‘Stop thief’ allegations, he asserted: ‘The money I have received from the people of Ireland I have given back to the people of Ireland.’ The extent of his expenditure ensured that while his personal tastes were frugal, he was never free from financial worries. There was good reason for his amusement, noted by Edward Byrne, at a comment of Randolph Churchill, of whom he was fond: ‘He laughed heartily – and his laugh was very rare, although he had a cheery and most genial smile – at one expression of Lord Randolph’s who said that “the only paupers in Ireland were the Irish landlords”’ (*Parnell*, 251). Parnell observed morosely to his brother: ‘politics is the only thing I ever got any money from’ (J. H. Parnell, *Parnell*, 288).

In late April 1891 Parnell wrote from Brighton to the directors of the Dublin Wicklow & Wexford Railway Co., seeking to defer the payment of freight charges, ‘without which I shall find it impossible to keep the works at Wicklow going, which still mean a loss to the company in freights as well as a loss to the locality’. John Howard Parnell disposed of the remaining Parnell interest in the quarries in 1898, and was obliged to sell Avondale in 1900.

Parnell’s shooting lodge at Aughavanagh was, he told Morley, his favourite place. An excellent shot with rifle or revolver, Parnell latterly ceased to care for shooting game, instead accompanying the party. From Kilmainham in 1881, when the Land League were seeking to impose sanctions on hunting, Parnell had despatched a subscription to the Wicklow Hunt.

The later myth

With Parnell’s death, his posthumous myth embarked on its strange odyssey. John Redmond’s Parnellite party kept alive the memory of Parnell while seeking, from after the 1892 election, to

close off the quarrel of the split. The debate on Gladstone's second home rule bill of 1893 became the occasion for Parnell's remaining parliamentary loyalists to render a valedictory *hommage* to the dead leader. The attendance at the annual processions in Dublin on the anniversary of his death began to fall off shortly thereafter. It suited both the anti-Parnellite majority and the Parnellite minority to distance themselves from the issues of 1890–91 and to laud the pre-split Parnell who had led an unbroken movement. It was this cropped and bland effigy of Parnell that provided from 1900 the tutelary emblem of the reunited Irish party. By the time the Parnell monument was unveiled on 1 October 1911, the future of home rule seemed assured. John Redmond prematurely declared: 'We have got back, at long last, to the point to which Parnell had led us, before he and our cause were submerged in that catastrophe of twenty years ago.'

Parnell was not readily assimilable to the more ideologically driven nationalisms of the early twentieth century. Patrick Pearse treated Parnell somewhat guardedly: 'the pale and angry ghost of Parnell' was edged out of his canonical four 'master minds' of separatist nationalism. Arthur Griffith more lucidly asserted that 'the era of constitutional possibilities for Irish nationality ended on the day Charles Stewart Parnell died'.

The memory of Parnell flared with R. Barry O'Brien's sympathetically perceptive *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell* in 1898. Katharine Parnell's *Charles Stewart Parnell: his love story and private life*, published in 1914, shattered the collusive reticence that had settled over Parnell's personal life and the issues of the split. The disclosure of the extent of her political role across the gap of a quarter-century prompted muted consternation among his surviving lieutenants. Its portrayal of a private Parnell countered the perception of Parnell's hegemonic coldness and refigured the Parnell myth.

The great resurgence of Parnell's memory came in the late poetry of W. B. Yeats and in the writings of James Joyce. These aptly marked the zenith of, and brought to a conclusion, the extraordinary intersection of high Irish literature and nationalist politics from the time of his death. If the independent Irish state has never quite known what to do with Parnell, something of his myth endures.

Written by Frank Callanan

Sources: T. P. O'Connor, *The Parnell movement* (2nd ed., 1886); Katharine Tynan, 'The Irish leader', *Catholic World* (Feb. 1889), 661–70; John Morley to W. E. Gladstone, 13 Nov. 1890, BL; C. S. Parnell to directors of Dublin, Wicklow & Wexford Railway Co., 29 Apr. 1891, in the writer's possession; 'Scrutator' (Henry Labouchere), 'About Mr Parnell', *Truth*, 15 Oct. 1891; Justin McCarthy, 'Charles Stewart Parnell', *Contemporary Review*, lx (Nov. 1891), 625–36; R. B. O'Brien, *The life of Charles Stewart Parnell* (2 vols, 1898); Michael Davitt, *The fall of feudalism in Ireland* (1904); James Joyce, 'The shade of Parnell', originally published as 'L'ombra di Parnell' in *Il piccolo della sera*, 16 May 1912, in James Joyce, *Occasional, critical and political writing*, ed. Kevin Barry, transl. Conor Deane (2000), 191–6; Justin McCarthy and Mrs Campbell Praed, *Our book of memories* (1912); Curzon, *Modern elementary eloquence* (1913); Katharine Tynan, *Twenty-five years: reminiscences* (1913); Katharine O'Shea, *Charles Stewart Parnell: his love story and political life* (2 vols, 1914); A. G. Gardiner, *Prophets, priests and kings* ('John Redmond') (popular ed. 1914); John Howard Parnell, *Charles Stewart Parnell: a memoir* (1916); John Morley, *Recollections* (2 vols, 1917); William O'Brien, *Evening memories* (1920); Michael MacDonagh, *The home rule movement* (1920); Katharine Tynan, *Memories* (1924); Winston Churchill, *Great contemporaries* (1937); Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Parnell and his party 1880–90* (1957); R. F. Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell, the man and his family* (1976); F. S. L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (1977); T. W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish revolution 1846–82* (1981); Edward Byrne, *Parnell: a memoir* (1991; first published in *Irish Weekly Independent*, 8 Oct. 1898); Frank Callanan, *The Parnell split* (1992); Margaret O'Callaghan, *British high politics and a nationalist Ireland* (1994); Patrick Maume, 'Parnell and the IRB oath', *IHS*, xxix (1994–5), 263–70; Frank Callanan, *T. M. Healy* (1996); Paul Bew, 'Parnell', *ODNB* (2004)

John Redmond

Redmond, John Edward (1856–1918), Parnellite and leader of the Irish parliamentary party 1900–18, was born 1 September 1856 in Dublin, third child among two daughters and two sons of William Archer Redmond, a member of a catholic gentry family in Co. Wexford, and Mary Redmond (née Hoey), who belonged to a protestant and unionist family from Co. Wicklow. He lived for part of his youth in Ballytrent House, near Rosslare, Co. Wexford. His great-uncle John Edward Redmond had been MP for Wexford borough 1859–65, and his father held the same seat 1872–80. Politics was in his blood. As a schoolboy in Clongowes Redmond acquired a love of literature and he excelled as a debater. He then proceeded to TCD, an unusual move for a catholic at that time, but he was a mediocre student and he left after only two years. In 1876 he went to London to help his father in the house of commons, and he worked for a short time as a clerk in the vote office.

Parnellite MP, 1881–91

When his father died in 1880 Redmond hoped to inherit the family seat, but instead C. S. Parnell offered it to his protégé T. M. Healy. Redmond was not kept waiting for long; after a delay of some weeks he was returned unopposed for New Ross in February 1881. He was then aged 24. With slight exaggeration he would later boast that he took his seat, made his maiden speech, and was expelled from the house of commons, all on the same evening. He was appointed a party whip, and his oratorical skills were exploited not merely in parliament, but also in making speeches throughout Ireland and Britain. In 1883–4 he and his younger brother, Willie, who was always a close ally and confidant, made a fifteen-month tour of Australia, New Zealand, and the US. They raised large sums of money for the party, and this experience gave Redmond a lifelong belief that Ireland should play a full role in developing the empire. In Sydney he met and married Johanna Dalton, who belonged to a prominent Irish-Australian family. Over the decades he made frequent visits to America.

Redmond was a junior member of the committee that chose home rule candidates for the 1885 general election. In the debates on the first home rule bill a year later he rejected the idea that Ulster differed significantly from the rest of Ireland. For years he had studied law, intermittently, and finally he was called to the bar in 1887. He then practised on the Munster circuit. He supported the Plan of Campaign led by John Dillon and William O'Brien, hoping not merely to achieve rent reductions for

Irish tenants but also to lure the conservative government into using coercive measures. In 1888 he was accused of using intimidating language and was sentenced to five weeks in jail – where one of his fellow-inmates was his brother, by now the home rule MP for Fermanagh North. A prison sentence was a badge of honour, almost a requirement for a home rule politician. The following year his happy home life was devastated when his wife died suddenly, leaving him with three young children.

Parnellite leader, 1891–1900

Redmond did not belong to Parnell's inner circle, but by the end of the 1880s his oratorical skills and his ability in managing party business ensured that he was prominent among the second rank of home rule MPs. He became the leading figure among the minority who remained loyal to Parnell in the split of 1890–91 – a decision that was at odds with his instinctive conservatism, but was partly explicable by personal and class loyalties. He refused to 'sell' the leader of the party, arguing that to do so would destroy its independence. Healy, scourge of the Parnellites, conceded that Redmond avoided rancour but described him nonetheless as callous, calculating, cool-headed, able, and astute (Callanan, *Parnell split*, 151). He was clearly a formidable opponent. After the split he sought compromise and reunification, and in January 1891 he participated in the Boulogne negotiations with William O'Brien.

When Parnell died the following October, Redmond played the main role in organising an elaborate funeral in Dublin, and immediately afterwards he was elected as leader of the minority faction. Despite a series of defeats in the course of the previous year, he and his colleagues decided to continue the fight, and he resigned his Wexford seat to contest the vacancy in Cork city created by Parnell's death. The result was humiliating and he obtained less than a third of the vote. However, only weeks later, in December 1891, he defeated Michael Davitt and was elected for Waterford city – a seat which he held for the rest of his life.

The Parnellites were routed in the 1892 general election and they won only nine seats to their opponents' seventy-two. Redmond welcomed the second home rule bill in 1893, although he described it as a compromise. He dismissed once again the danger of agitation in Ulster, and he forecast, wrongly, that the conservatives would reform the house of lords. In the following years he made his mark as a skilled parliamentarian, revealing qualities unsuspected during the 1880s, and he became one of the finest orators in the house of commons. He was a heavy man of imposing appearance, 'with the face and figure of a Roman emperor' (Gwynn, *John Redmond*, 25), and in later years Prime Minister Asquith's nickname for him was 'Leviathan'. His physical presence reinforced his eloquence. Occasionally he indulged in personal abuse, but he was normally dignified in his battles with the anti-Parnellites, and he was often ready to collaborate with them, with unionists and landlords, and even with Fenians. He sought an amnesty for imprisoned dynamiters, and for a while he became one of the republicans' favourite Irish politicians.

In 1896 he sat on the recess committee, whose recommendations led to the creation of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. He supported the land act of that year, and he also facilitated the financial relations commission, which concluded that Ireland had been overtaxed. He welcomed the local government act of 1898 as an important step towards self-government. Unlike Dillon, who was by now leader of the anti-Parnellites, he believed that as the Irish people became more prosperous and acquired more responsibilities their determination to achieve home rule would increase rather than diminish.

By this stage he had settled into a routine that would vary little in future years. He divided his time between London and Aughavanagh, a former military barracks in the Wicklow hills which had once been Parnell's hunting lodge. It now became Redmond's Irish refuge. The building had

no telephone and in winter it was sometimes cut off by snowdrifts; this was to his taste because, like Parnell, he often chose to be out of his colleagues' reach. He enjoyed the life of a country squire, taking long walks and shooting grouse. His second marriage (1899), to Ada Beesley from Warwickshire, brought him private contentment. Although he enjoyed the company of friends and family he was basically a solitary man who disliked social occasions. He was serious, formal, kindly and courteous, but he had little personal contact with most of his fellow MPs.

Over the years Redmond remained hostile to the liberals, as befitted a Parnellite who had been conditioned by the experiences of 1890–91, and he was wary of an alignment with British radicals. He was convinced that since the liberals would never regain power without Irish support there was little or no need to conciliate them, and that since the house of lords' power of veto could not be surmounted, home rulers would have to strike deals with the conservatives. He hoped to ease class conflict and, if possible, to win over the Irish gentry; in local elections he urged nationalists to vote for worthy protestants, unionists, and landlords – generous and far-sighted advice which was usually ignored.

United party chairman, 1900–10

In January 1900 the home rule movement was reunited – appropriately at a meeting in Committee Room 15, where the split had been finalised nine years earlier. The sparring politicians were influenced by public disgust at their incessant bickering and by widespread Irish hostility to the British war in South Africa. Another incentive was the spread of William O'Brien's new United Irish League (UIL) whose aims included the imposition of unity and discipline on the home rule movement from outside and from below the ranks of its feuding MPs. This encouraged them to end their disputes. The anti-Parnellites were themselves bitterly divided, and this helped explain their magnanimity in consenting to a leader from among their opponents.

For different reasons the three leading anti-Parnellites were prepared to accept him as the chairman of the reunified party. Despite their long-standing mutual dislike and distrust, Redmond and Healy had drawn (briefly) closer together. The UIL had undermined Parnellite support, particularly in Connacht, and this led O'Brien to believe that he could control Redmond. And although Dillon was unenthusiastic and would have preferred another Parnellite leader, he feared isolation and gave way grudgingly.

Redmond was astonished by his unanimous election as chairman, but any appearance of unity was deceptive; soon the party was embroiled in new quarrels between rival factions. Redmond and O'Brien struggled for control of the UIL, and in a compromise settlement in June 1900 the league became the national organisation of the Irish parliamentary party. Redmond was elected its chairman (later president). But as leader of the home rule movement his powers were limited and – unlike Parnell – he was obliged to consult with party colleagues; he would be a chairman, not a chief. He adjusted rapidly to the views of the Dillonite majority and drifted away from cooperation with unionists. In December 1900 he yielded to pressure from Dillon and O'Brien by acquiescing reluctantly in Healy's expulsion from the party. He remained concerned to prevent any further divisions within the movement till home rule had been achieved – after which he believed it would break up and be replaced by new parties.

Redmond was sceptical towards the proposal for a conference between representatives of landlords and tenants, but he and O'Brien supported the plan once it received the endorsement of George Wyndham, the chief secretary. They were among the tenants' representatives at the ensuing negotiations, and the two sides soon recommended unanimously an ambitious scheme of land purchase which would be aided by the state. A bill along these lines was introduced in parliament in March 1903 and Redmond secured amendments in favour of the tenants. Dillon

remained aloof and hostile, seeing the bill as a trap and fearing that home rule might lose its appeal if the land question were to be solved. But Redmond's enthusiasm was fully vindicated, and over the next few years the Wyndham act allowed over 200,000 tenant farmers to buy their holdings on most attractive terms.

In his first years as party chairman Redmond was placed awkwardly between Dillon and O'Brien. Conscious of the balance of power in the party, he chose not to defend O'Brien against Dillon's attacks on the policy of conciliation – till O'Brien resigned suddenly from the UIL directory and from parliament in November 1903. Despite his difficult temperament he had become a useful ally, and his departure left Redmond exposed and more dependent on Dillon's wing of the party – a faction that welcomed conflict and confrontation.

Another setback soon followed. Initially Redmond supported the abortive devolution scheme of 1904–5 proposed by Antony MacDonnell, the under-secretary. He believed it would strengthen the demand for a national parliament in Dublin and that, because it was a 'conservative' initiative, it might escape the house of lords' veto. Dillon and the unionists opposed it, for conflicting reasons, and the result was a humiliating defeat for the policy of conciliation. The conservative and unionist onslaught on Wyndham inaugurated a new polarisation of Irish political life, and it provided a powerful argument against further compromise.

All Redmond's confident expectations were disproved by the massive liberal victory in the 1906 elections, giving the new government a large overall majority and enabling it to dispense with Irish support. He was attracted by the liberals' proposals for a limited form of devolution in the Irish council bill, which envisaged a partly elected body with limited administrative functions but no legislative powers, and he endorsed them warily. He believed that, however inadequate it might be, this measure could be a stepping-stone towards the ultimate objective of an Irish parliament. But he yielded to internal opposition and was forced to insist that nothing less than home rule would be acceptable to the party; there would be no gradual or incremental approach. Once again he gave way to his more intransigent colleagues and followers.

O'Brien and Healy rejoined the party, left it once more, and then carried on a vendetta against its leaders (who now included Joe Devlin). Personal feuds and fluctuating alliances were among the home rulers' most striking characteristics.

Although the liberals were unwilling to concede the nationalists' principal demand, Redmond had grounds for satisfaction in these years. He was able to facilitate legislation such as the Irish labourers act, which provided money to build rural labourers' cottages. He cooperated eagerly with the liberals in drafting the Irish universities bill. He welcomed the 1909 land act which introduced the principle of compulsory purchase. But he remained instinctively conservative and he was suspicious of some aspects of the liberals' welfare policies. He regarded old age pensions as an extravagance because of the future burdens they would impose on Irish finance, and (like the government) he opposed women's suffrage. He also remained aloof from a new round of agrarian conflict which characterised the ranch war of 1906–8.

The constitutional crisis of 1909–11 enabled Redmond to distance himself from agitation at home and to concentrate on events in Westminster. With considerable unease he acquiesced in the 'people's budget' of 1909, although its increase in liquor licences and taxes on spirits made it deeply unpopular in Ireland. This was a dangerous strategy, but it succeeded. The result was the rejection of the budget by the house of lords, a commitment by the liberals to introduce a home rule bill, an early general election in January 1910, and political deadlock in which the liberals and conservatives gained almost exactly the same number of seats. This development surpassed all Redmond's expectations and placed him in the position that home rulers had always sought: with his seventy-one seats he held the parliamentary balance of power. In theory he could make

and unmake governments, although in practice he would have no reason to restore the anti-home-rule conservatives to office.

He seized the opportunity provided by the lords' folly and demanded an end to their power of veto. In these unexpected circumstances he was happy to abandon the policy of conciliation which, with some wavering, he had followed (or tried to follow) since the 1890s. He urged the government to break the power of the lords and then to introduce a home rule bill which could no longer be blocked by the upper house. Since the unionists had chosen an uncompromising path they would no longer be reassured and conciliated; instead, as Dillon and his followers had always wished, they would be confronted and defeated.

For a short while some cabinet ministers contemplated resignation in preference to renewed dependence on Irish support. Redmond was unyielding, insisting 'no veto, no budget', and the government committed itself to abolishing the lords' veto power before he in turn agreed to vote for the budget. The hatred that he aroused among conservatives and unionists in the following years confirmed the extent of his achievement. He was excluded from negotiations between the main British parties from June to November 1910, but when these failed to result in a compromise – to his great relief – a second election was called in December. It confirmed the verdict of January, after which the government proceeded to abolish the lords' veto and replace it with the ability to delay 'ordinary' (non-budget) bills for two parliamentary sessions.

The home rule crisis, 1912–14

This measure was followed in April 1912 by the introduction of a third home rule bill, which was expected to come into effect in summer 1914. In many respects its terms were disappointing for Irish nationalists. A wide range of powers would be retained by London, and the number of Irish MPs in Westminster would be reduced from 103 to forty-two. Ireland would be treated as an entity, although to Redmond's dismay Asquith warned privately that at a later stage concessions might have to be made to the Ulster unionists. However, it seemed certain that this bill would be enacted, unlike its two Gladstonian predecessors, and Redmond gave it his full support. He claimed that it would be a final settlement of the quarrel between the two islands.

Like Asquith, Redmond rejected proposals whereby Ulster counties could vote on whether they wished for inclusion or exclusion. But for him this was a new problem; in the past his concern had been to win over southern landlords rather than the unionist majority in Ulster. While prepared to offer inducements (such as the over-representation of Ulster in a home rule parliament), he was adamant in his rejection of partition. He and Asquith realised that at this stage any compromise would be unacceptable to the conservatives and unionists. They hoped that as the final enactment of home rule grew nearer the unionists would become desperate and that therefore they would be satisfied with fewer concessions. This strategy has been much criticised, and with the benefit of hindsight it seems clear that the government's position in 1914 would have been strengthened if it had shown greater generosity towards unionist Ulster in drafting the home rule bill. But in 1912 it was difficult or impossible to foresee the ferocity of later conservative and unionist resistance.

Redmond was genuinely shocked when his opponents, led by Edward Carson, threatened and planned an Ulster rebellion, and he dismissed their threats as bluff. He had always believed in constitutional methods and parliamentary procedures, and he felt that now the unionists were changing or breaking the rules. In 1910 his first biographer had written: 'Redmond is more for times of peace: Parnell for times of war' (Redmond-Howard, *Redmond*, 138). Unexpectedly 'times of war' now lay ahead, and he was ill-equipped for the challenge. He was determined not to follow the unionists' example and to form a nationalist paramilitary force; to do so would be

to abandon his hard-earned image of a responsible statesman to whom power could safely be entrusted, throwing away his partial triumph over British prejudices against the Irish. He was aware that Carson and the unionists had a freedom of manoeuvre (and also a sense of desperation) which nationalists did not share.

But the formation of the Ulster Volunteers was emulated by other, more radical nationalists, and Redmond was embarrassed when they created a rival volunteer force in November 1913. He was being undermined from within at a time when he believed that it was imperative to display unity under his leadership. His problems were compounded by the Dublin lock-out of 1913–14, which he saw as a distraction from the struggle for home rule – exactly the sort of internal division that he had always deprecated. His (and his party's) sympathy with tenant farmers did not extend to urban workers.

He urged the government to remain firm, but from November 1913 onwards he encountered pressure to compromise and to accept the exclusion of certain Ulster counties from the home rule area. He remained convinced that 'mutilation' would be unacceptable to his followers. Asquith warned that there was a danger of civil war and a possibility that the king might dismiss the government in an effort to avert such a disaster. The dissolution of parliament would ensure that, at best, the whole home rule debate would start all over again – an unwelcome and unlikely prospect.

The following March Redmond made a series of concessions, finally agreeing that individual Ulster counties would be allowed to opt out of home rule for a period of six years. This would give the conservatives two opportunities to gain power in general elections, in which case they could be expected to make exclusion permanent. On the one hand, Carson rejected this suggestion as a sentence of death with a stay of execution, while on the other, many nationalists were appalled by Redmond's acquiescence in partition.

Subsequent events – the Curragh 'incident' and the Larne gun-running – made violence more probable, but Redmond advised against any provocative response such as prosecuting the gun-runners. Instead he decided to neutralise potential opposition within Irish nationalism. In June 1914 he confronted the standing committee of the Irish Volunteers, pointing out that its members held their positions through self-appointment and that they were all Dublin-based. He demanded that his party should nominate half of the standing committee, and he threatened to disrupt the Volunteers if his terms were not accepted. A majority of the members gave way, with an understandable ill-grace. Belatedly and unwillingly he had followed Carson's example.

In late July 1914 Redmond and Dillon joined leaders of the liberals, conservatives, and unionists in the Buckingham Palace conference, a last attempt to reach a compromise over Ulster. They failed predictably to agree on the 'excluded' areas. The unionists were implacably opposed to county option, but they were now prepared to accept six- rather than nine-county exclusion. They demanded Fermanagh and Tyrone, which had small nationalist majorities. Tension grew with the approach of the parliamentary deadline, the date by which the home rule bill would have to be passed, amended by agreement, or abandoned. It was heightened further by the Howth gun-running and the subsequent killings at Bachelor's Walk. Then, just as the crisis was due to be resolved in one form or another, the first world war broke out.

The impact of war, 1914–16

From the very beginning Redmond supported the British war effort. In his speech in the house of commons on 3 August 1914 he urged that all British troops should be withdrawn from Ireland and that the hitherto rival Volunteer forces would defend the island. This would have the attraction of bringing the two communities together and would therefore help to maintain a united Ireland. He consulted only a few colleagues before making this statement, and Dillon and

other nationalists were later to be deeply critical of his action, but any other response would have been uncharacteristic and probably ill-judged. Home rule had not yet been enacted, and he still needed the liberal government's goodwill. A European war provided the opportunity for Irish nationalists to prove their claim that home rule would not threaten British strategic interests. And Redmond believed that Germany was responsible for the war.

His public support was unconditional, but in private he continued his pressure on Asquith. This soon produced results. Home rule became law on 18 September 1914, although it would not be implemented till a date not later than the end of the war, and not till special amending legislation had been passed for Ulster. After decades of effort, patience, and disappointment, home rule was on the statute book at last, and nationalist Ireland celebrated its triumph. But the enactment (and simultaneous postponement) of home rule turned out to be a pyrrhic victory, and the events of the next few years would show that the unionists had greater cause for rejoicing.

Two days later Redmond addressed a group of Irish Volunteers who were drilling at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, encouraging them to join the British army and to fight as far as the firing-line extended. The Volunteers' standing committee, which he had recently packed with his own supporters, was ignored. As in his support for Parnell, Redmond 'committed himself sparingly but completely . . . The code of honour behind this commitment can be seen as self-indulgent or heroic' (Maume, *Long gestation*, 119). Eoin MacNeill and the other original Volunteer leaders did not wish their followers to join the British army, and these remarks precipitated a split in the force. The vast majority supported Redmond rather than MacNeill; the ratio was 15:1 in his favour. However Dillon and other colleagues were dismayed by what they saw as his excessive enthusiasm for the war effort.

Like most other observers Redmond expected the war to end quickly, and in that event his gamble would probably have succeeded. But early enthusiasm vanished as the conflict dragged on interminably and as the death toll rose steadily. The war's unpopularity rubbed off on those, like Redmond, who encouraged Irishmen to enlist and were seen as recruiting sergeants. He became increasingly out of touch with nationalist opinion, rarely visiting Ireland except to relax in Aughavanagh, and he lost valuable financial support from Irish-American groups who opposed any involvement in 'England's war'. He also encountered suspicion and obstruction from those whom he wished to help. The War Office was hostile to his romantic idea of an 'Irish brigade' or division, it ignored the Irish Volunteers in its recruiting campaign, and it indulged in gratuitous snubs towards nationalists. By contrast, Carson and his followers received preferential treatment, and in political terms the 36th Division was more thoroughly 'Ulster' than the 16th was 'Irish'.

When a coalition government was formed in May 1915 Redmond was offered a cabinet post, but he followed the party's traditional policy and declined. He did not propose what he felt *should* have been offered: a cabinet seat without portfolio and without a salary. His refusal was in accordance with traditional party policy, but in the circumstances it was probably a mistake – and the fact that his rival Carson entered the cabinet as attorney general put Irish nationalists at a disadvantage.

Throughout the early years of the war Redmond had virtually no input into Irish policy. One important exception was his achievement in ensuring that Ireland would be exempt when conscription was imposed on the rest of the UK in January 1916; Irishmen would be spared when the English, Scots, and Welsh were dispatched to the battlefields. Another was his – ultimately self-destructive – advice to Dublin Castle to show patience and restraint towards the provocations of republican extremists. (Later he blamed himself for having reassured the chief secretary that there was no danger of a rebellion in Ireland.) Preparations began for a transfer of limited powers after the war, and he was briefed on his future responsibilities, but it was revealing that while he had struggled constantly to achieve home rule he seems to have made no detailed plans for using it.

Rebellion

With the enactment of home rule the party no longer had a goal, and its machinery, already rusty through disuse, fell into further neglect. Yet although voters were apathetic it still maintained a wide if shallow support base, and home rulers won all the six by-elections they contested between the outbreak of war and late 1916. Redmond remained optimistic about his prospects once the conflict would come to an end.

The Easter rising was, if only incidentally, an assault on him and all that he stood for. He expressed his detestation and horror at the insurrection and claimed that the Germans had plotted, organised, and paid for it. Nonetheless he appealed to Asquith, both in private and public, for leniency towards those who had not been involved in planning the rebellion – even threatening to resign as party leader. As the executions continued he became more depressed and more desperate, aware of the damage they would cause to moderate nationalism. He shared Dillon's views that the British were 'washing out our whole life work in a sea of blood' (Lyons, *Dillon*, 381). In private he talked about retirement.

But the rising also provided him with an unexpected opportunity. Asquith decided on a new initiative to resolve Irish problems during wartime, and he delegated Lloyd George to negotiate with nationalists and unionists – separately, rather than face-to-face as had been the pattern in July 1914. These discussions, characterised by 'creative ambiguity and well-intentioned elision' (Jackson, *Home rule*, 170), lasted two months, from May to July, and Redmond was led to believe that home rule would be granted during the war. However, his position had been seriously weakened, and from the beginning it was taken for granted that six counties rather than four were to be excluded from the home rule area. There would be no county plebiscites, and the nationalists would have to abandon Tyrone and Fermanagh. Lloyd George was deliberately vague about the duration of 'exclusion', but in private both sets of leaders realised that a temporary arrangement was unlikely to be reversed. The number of Irish MPs in Westminster would remain unchanged. Against expectations Redmond won the support of a nationalist convention in Belfast, although he was obliged to threaten his own resignation if the plan were rejected.

Southern unionists were horrified by the prospect of imminent home rule for most of Ireland and they feared that nationalism would fall into the hands of republican supporters of the Easter rebels. Assisted by allies in the conservative party they undermined Redmond and the moderate nationalists who, even at this late stage, might have offered them a more attractive future. They schemed successfully against the plan, imposing terms impossible for home rulers to accept: a reduction in the number of Irish MPs at Westminster and public recognition that partition would be permanent. He broke off the negotiations, protesting that he and his colleagues had been deceived.

The result was disastrous. Redmond's morale was shattered and he was widely blamed for the failure to build on an opportunity presented to him by the Easter rebels. The immediate implementation of home rule, even in the aftermath of a failed rebellion, might possibly have revitalised moderate nationalism, but the failure of the negotiations made the party seem naive, incompetent, and futile. It stagnated, and public opinion drifted away from the cause of home rule. Redmond made no public appearance for months.

Decline, 1917–18

The following January, after a decisive defeat in the Roscommon North by-election, Redmond alarmed his colleagues by planning to announce that the party was ready to make way for other, younger men if the people so wished. Throughout 1917 the home rule movement was overshadowed by the new mass Sinn Féin party.

However, in June he was presented with what he saw as yet another chance to reach a settlement. Lloyd George, by now prime minister, offered him immediate home rule for the twenty-six counties or, alternatively, an Irish convention representative of all sections of Irish opinion. He guaranteed the enactment of any 'substantial agreement'. Unwisely Redmond chose the latter option, unable to resist the temptation to negotiate, and the result was a long, incompetently managed series of meetings in TCD. The omens for the convention were poor, Sinn Féin boycotted it, and both Dillon and O'Brien refused to have any involvement. Redmond soon suffered a personal blow when his brother Willie was killed in the battle of Messines.

But depression and declining health did not prevent him from throwing his weight behind this last effort to reach a compromise settlement. Nationalists sought to expand the degree of autonomy which they would exercise under home rule, while Ulster unionists, whose position had already been secured, objected to the prospect of tariff barriers being raised against Britain. Convention members observed confidentiality, and this repeated the problems posed during the 1916 negotiations: Redmond was once again effectively silenced and invisible to the Irish public, but now at a time when his republican opponents were active. He concentrated on reaching an agreement with the southern unionists who were, like his own party, weak and demoralised. Eventually a coalition of catholic bishops and nationalist politicians sabotaged his proposals on the grounds that he was giving too much away. One of his parliamentary colleagues recalled Redmond's reaction: 'everything, in his judgment, was wrecked; he saw nothing ahead for his country but ruin and chaos' (Gwynn, *Last years*, 325).

It was a miserable end to his career, although at least he was spared the final disaster. After an operation for gallstones in London he died of heart failure on 6 March 1918. Within weeks the Irish convention failed to reach 'substantive agreement' and the British decided to impose conscription on Ireland, thereby radicalising nationalists and propelling large numbers into the ranks of Sinn Féin. In the general election of December 1918 the home rule party was wiped out in southern Ireland, winning only six seats to seventy-three for Sinn Féin.

More clearly than is the case with most politicians, Redmond's career ended in failure. Had he died four years earlier, in sight of the promised land, his life would be seen very differently. He had been a great orator and parliamentarian. For years he had attempted to win over and conciliate his opponents, although he was unable to persuade enough of his followers to share his views; unionist fears that he was not representative of his party were sometimes justified. He was an ideal advocate of Irish nationalism in Britain, and particularly in Westminster, but he became increasingly out of touch with Irish opinion. Like all politicians he sometimes stooped and trimmed. He was courageous and adaptable, and under changed circumstances the critic of the liberal alliance in the 1890s had become its principal advocate by the 1910s. Over many years he persevered in the fight for home rule, coping with hostility from the conservatives and indifference from the liberals.

He responded with varying success to the rapidly changing fortunes of his final years. He showed skill and determination in exploiting the opportunities provided by a first upheaval, the political crisis initiated by the house of lords. But his background and temperament left him unable to respond effectively to a second 'revolution': the abandonment of normal constitutional procedures by conservatives and unionists, and the ensuing militarisation of Irish public life. He was widely seen as being too anxious to trust the promises and assurances of British ministers. He was spectacularly unlucky in the timing of the first world war and – like very many others – he miscalculated its duration. Ultimately he and his party fell victim to the rival extremes of Ulster unionism and Irish republicanism.

Nonetheless he was a worthy and noble representative of the Irish political tradition, he proved that patience, negotiation and compromise could bring about important reforms, he helped to

embed parliamentary procedures in the habits and instincts of Irish nationalists, and he played a significant role in transforming Ireland in the decades before the first world war. The miscalculations and failures of his later years have obscured his many achievements.

Written by Michael Laffan

Sources: NLI, Redmond papers; TCD, John Dillon papers; J. L. Redmond-Howard, *John Redmond: the man and the demand* (1910); S. Gwynn, *John Redmond's last years* (1919); D. Gwynn, *The life of John Redmond* (1932); F. S. L. Lyons, *John Dillon* (1969); J. O'Brien, *William O'Brien and the course of Irish politics, 1881–1918* (1976); P. Jalland, *The liberals and Ireland: the Ulster question in British politics to 1914* (1980); P. Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890–1910: Parnellites and radical agrarians* (1987); A. Gailey, *Ireland and the death of kindness: the experience of constructive unionism, 1890–1905* (1987); N. Mansergh, *The unresolved question: the Anglo–Irish settlement and its undoing* (1991); F. Callanan, *The Parnell split, 1890–91* (1992); P. Bew, *Ideology and the Irish question: Ulster unionism and Irish nationalism, 1912–1916* (1996); F. Callanan, *T. M. Healy* (1996); P. Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891–1918* (1999); A. Jackson, *Home rule: an Irish history, 1800–2000* (2003); J. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish unity, 1912–1918* (2004); D. Meleady, *Redmond: the Parnellite* (2008)

Edward Carson

Carson, Edward Henry (1854–1935), Baron Carson of Duncairn, lawyer and politician, was born 9 February 1854 at 4 Harcourt St., Dublin, second son among six children of Edward Henry Carson, architect and civil engineer, and Isabella Carson (née Lambert). He was educated at Arlington House school, Queen's Co. (Laois), and at TCD; he qualified as a barrister at the King's Inns, Dublin, in 1877.

Early career, 1881–92

Carson began his career defending the farmer interest in different valuation cases arising out of the 'fair rent' provisions of the land act of 1881; but he swiftly expanded his repertoire to include criminal actions. He also came increasingly to appear for landed clients and for the crown, and particularly after the launch of the Plan of Campaign in 1886. His work was by now commanding the attention of his political and judicial masters, notably Peter O'Brien (later lord chief justice of Ireland, 1889–1913) and Arthur Balfour (chief secretary for Ireland, 1887–91). Just as the Gladstonian land act had provided a spur to his career in the early 1880s, so the Balfourian crimes act of 1887 provided opportunities at the end of the decade: in the summer of 1887 Carson was appointed as counsel to the attorney general for Ireland, and for the following years served Dublin Castle in the fight against the Plan of Campaign. He was a crown prosecutor in some of the most celebrated trials of the period, and forged a reputation that he carried for the rest of his career. The prosecution of William O'Brien after the 'Mitchelstown massacre' (9 September 1887) in itself served to win Carson the lasting contempt of nationalists, and an equally deep admiration within Irish loyalism. Balfour and the Castle establishment were impressed by this and by other displays of moral courage or forensic ability: Carson was appointed as a QC in 1889, and – shortly before the fall of the second Salisbury administration in 1892 – served briefly as solicitor general for Ireland. He had Balfour's support when, fighting in the liberal unionist interest, he contested one of the Dublin University parliamentary seats at the general election of 1892. Carson had helped to underpin the success (from the British perspective) of Balfour's administration, but the process was reciprocal, as Balfour freely acknowledged: 'I made Carson, but Carson made me'.

Law and politics, 1893–1910

In 1893 Carson moved his legal practice to London, an upheaval that coincided with his debut in the house of commons. The two events provided a platform for the launch of what Joseph Chamberlain lauded as ‘a new force . . . in politics’. Carson’s maiden speech (2–3 February) incorporated a devastating critique of the liberal government’s crimes policy, and was further enlivened by his quick-witted handling of interruptions: the result was an instant metropolitan celebrity for a man who, though well known in Ireland, had as yet made no impression within the British political arena. The speech, and subsequent parliamentary performances (particularly over the second home rule bill), served as a showcase for his courtroom skills; and his business began to accumulate. He took silk at the English bar in 1894, and became embroiled in some of the most celebrated trials of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. In April 1895 he defended the marquis of Queensberry in the first of the trials that took Oscar Wilde to Reading gaol; and in 1896 he was part of the defence team that sought to extricate Dr L. S. Jameson and his fellow raiders from the tentacles of the foreign enlistment act (on this occasion he was unsuccessful, due partly to the windy perorations of his leader, Sir Edward Clarke). His parliamentary achievements kept pace: he was returned again for Dublin University at the general election of 1895, and was appointed to the Irish privy council in 1896. He distinguished himself as a critic of the new unionist government’s Irish administration, mounting an especially ferocious assault on the land bill of 1896. This often highly tetchy opposition underlined the extent to which Carson – even by the standards of the 1890s – was an unconventional, indeed unreliable, party member; it underlined, too, the extent of his independence, even from patrons such as Arthur Balfour. Above all, it was an expression of his concern for the rights of property, and for the integrity of the old, waning landed interest.

The ferocity of Carson’s political passions here, as later in his career, raises the issue of the nature of his convictions. As a debater at Trinity he embraced a number of radical causes: he entered politics in the mid-1880s as a liberal (he was enrolled into the National Liberal Club in June 1886, although by this time he had also professed his unionist convictions). His early legal reputation had been founded on his defence of the farming community and its claims. As late as 1908 he remarked, half ironically, to Lady Londonderry that he looked back with sympathy to the time of the French revolution, when he jokingly imagined that he would have found employment working the guillotine; but the humour was not entirely without point. He grew more conservative with age, however; and by the 1890s he had emerged as the single most gifted champion of the landed establishment. Later he defended the constitutional rights of the house of lords, and led the Ulster unionist fight against home rule; at the end of his life he came out of retirement to champion the cause of British India. In the course of his long career he reversed his stand on women’s suffrage.

There are dangers in an over-eager search for consistency, even with a career such as Carson’s: but there are, none the less, clearly defined principles or themes within his biography. His devotion to the courts and to legal process was unflagging, even allowing for his association with militant Ulster unionism. His unionism was immovable. He was contemptuous of political fashion: it might be argued that much of his career was spent fighting the tide of history. He was suspicious of the expansion of the Edwardian state; and alarmed by what he saw as government interference in the judicial process or legal right. It is well known that he had strong associations, through his mother’s family, with the landed interest; but he had also connections (through his wife’s family) with the tenant cause. His enthusiastic landlordism may perhaps be seen as an expression, not of family sentiment, but rather of fear at politically motivated interference in the law of contract and of property.

Carson's career of dissent in the later 1890s in some ways may have strengthened his claims on ministerial preferment; for talented dissidents were threats to the stability of the still vulnerable unionist alliance, and were not infrequently silenced through promotion (T. W. Russell is another Irish example of the rewards of disloyalty). Despite considerable competition, Carson was appointed to the solicitor generalship for England in 1900, acquiring a knighthood on the way; the post meant a reduction in income (Carson by this time was earning around £20,000 a year at the bar), but it was a recognised stepping-stone towards either further ministerial preferment or a senior post in the judiciary. As solicitor general Carson successfully prosecuted Arthur Lynch for high treason, and George Chapman (Severin Klosowski) – one of the contenders for the title of 'Jack the Ripper' – for murder; he acted for the British government in the complex arbitration over the boundary dividing Alaska and Canada. He spurned both ministerial and judicial advancement: in January 1905 he was offered and declined the presidency of the divorce court, and in March 1905 he declined the offer of the chief secretaryship for Ireland. With the fall of the unionist government (December 1905) the possibilities of office for the likes of Carson all but disappeared; but, as a parting gesture, Balfour appointed his former protégé to the privy council. There were other comforts to be drawn from the fall, and subsequent electoral humiliation, of the unionists: while the rout of the British unionists was near complete, their Irish colleagues survived relatively unscathed. One of the eighteen Irish unionists who returned to the house of commons in January 1906 was Carson; and, as one of the relatively few ministerial survivors from the deluge, he was well placed to consolidate his standing, not just within Irish unionism, but within the leadership of the British conservative party.

Out of office, and as yet relatively untrammelled by the demands of Irish politics, Carson spent much of the later Edwardian period in the courts. This was, perhaps, the apex of his legal career: he was involved in actions where (by the standards of the time) fantastic sums of money were at stake, to say nothing of lives and careers and wider issues of principle. In July 1907 he represented Lever Brothers in a celebrated libel action against the *Daily Mail* and other newspapers within the Harmsworth empire; Carson and the plaintiffs triumphed, extracting damages and costs that reached almost £220,000. In November 1909 he found himself defending the press in a similar action, a case brought by Cadbury Brothers against Standard Newspapers: here again the jury decided in favour of the plaintiffs, but such was the power of Carson's advocacy that the damages awarded to Cadbury's amounted to merely one farthing. By far the most celebrated action of this time, indeed perhaps of Carson's entire career, was his defence of George Archer-Shee, a naval cadet at Osborne, against a charge of stealing a five-shilling postal order. Archer-Shee's case was tried in July 1910, with Carson's most formidable antagonist – Sir Rufus Isaacs – leading the case for the crown. The result was a famous victory for Carson and the complete exoneration of the hapless cadet. Carson, who has entered literary biography as the persecutor of Oscar Wilde, has simultaneously been deified in fiction as the frostily omniscient Sir Robert Morton, KC, in Terence Rattigan's 'The Winslow boy'. This somewhat ambiguous literary fate properly reflects the complexities of Carson himself.

Unionist leader, 1910–14

In February 1910 Carson was invited to assume the chairmanship of the Irish unionist parliamentary party, a position that gave him some claims to lead the wider Irish unionist movement. Carson's acceptance is sometimes read as a withdrawal from British political life, and a renunciation of his claims within the British conservative leadership; it is also sometimes read as an unremarkable or natural development. But the position had been treated by its previous occupant, Walter Long, as a temporary commitment, which could be used for British political advantage: there was, in

any case, little to indicate in February 1910 that a leadership contest would soon be in the offing. When in November 1911 the contest for the succession to Balfour came, Carson could still have credibly, even perhaps successfully, pursued his claims. His acceptance did not signal, therefore, any retreat into the minutiae of Ulster loyalism. Nor was the offer of the chairmanship a foregone conclusion: Carson was a Dubliner and had little professional or personal experience of Ulster. He was essentially a southern Irish lawyer who for almost twenty years had lived and practised in England. In addition he had been soft on some – for Orange unionists – pivotal issues, such as the establishment of a catholic university. Carson may well have been chosen, not so much for his transcendent abilities or reputation, but rather simply because there was no Ulster unionist whose claims were preeminent.

Though it could scarcely have been predicted in February 1910, Carson's new role placed him at the head of the campaign against the third home rule bill. He was a central figure in all the different aspects of Ulster unionist strategy: he was the key speaker at momentous public demonstrations such as that at Craigavon House in September 1911 (when he was first introduced to his loyalist following) or at the Balmoral show grounds in April 1912 (a meeting described as the 'marriage' between toryism and unionist Ulster). He was the centrepiece of the speaking tour that culminated in Ulster Day (28 September 1912), when just under half a million men and women signed a covenant pledging to use 'all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a home rule parliament in Dublin'. He was also the generalissimo in charge of the unionists' parliamentary and high political assault on the home rule bill. In January 1913 he proposed the exclusion of the nine counties of Ulster from the operation of the bill. In December 1913 and January 1914 he met Asquith privately in order to chart the prospects for a settlement. In July 1914, on the eve of the great war, he attended the Buckingham Palace conference, where he argued for the permanent exclusion of six counties from the home rule bill.

Two of the most controversial issues arising from the Ulster unionist campaign were militancy – or the threat of militancy – and the demand for partition. Carson, however, should not be seen as either an uncomplicated partitionist or an untrammelled militant. He was an Irish unionist, who supported the constitutional union between Great Britain and all of Ireland; but he was also an essentially pragmatic politician who by October 1913 (if not earlier) had come to realise that southern unionism was a forlorn hope. Given that an all-Ireland unionism was impracticable, Carson was interested in the notion of a broad federal settlement whereby the constituent territories of the United Kingdom might be given assemblies. Ireland would of course be included in this grand scheme, although the north would of necessity remain bound to the imperial parliament: Carson saw this connection as probably no more than a temporary arrangement. But while such a sweeping constitutional revision interested a few unionist intellectuals and others, it failed to win a wider popularity in 1913–14. Carson threw out some feelers on the issue in May 1914, but was rebuffed by his own supporters: he was forced back on to the expedient of exclusion, firstly in a nine-county formulation, and later in a six-county scheme. Nine-county exclusion, or partition, originally interested Carson because it appeared to represent an effective means of undermining the entire home rule project; later he seems to have been convinced that it offered the best means of guaranteeing both Ulster unionist rights and wider issues of justice; he also seems to have been convinced that it offered the best avenue towards an equitable scheme of reunification. But neither the liberals nor the Irish nationalists were ever likely to endorse the proposal; and more significantly – from Carson's perspective – the unionists of eastern Ulster were (notwithstanding the pledges of the Solemn League and Covenant) relatively unconcerned about the minority unionist communities beyond the heartland of the movement. From the autumn of 1913 it became clear to Carson that the six counties provided the best political vantage-ground upon which to make a stand.

Carson's militancy was also problematic. Numerous letters and platform speeches embody his apparently uncomplicated militant convictions: he told James Craig in July 1911 that he was 'not for a mere game of bluff, and, unless men are prepared to make great sacrifices which they clearly understand, the talk of resistance is no use'. He sanctioned the formation of the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force in January 1913; and he helped to found the Ulster provisional government of September 1913. The British government had banned the importation of weapons into Ireland on 4 December 1913; but in January 1914 Carson inaugurated the gun-running adventure that culminated at Larne (24–5 April). On the other hand, there is evidence that depicts Carson battling to moderate the hardliners within his own movement: at key unionist meetings on 15 December 1912 and in May 1913 Carson counselled restraint. Although he alone was responsible for setting in motion the gun-running conspiracy, he seems to have been under very considerable pressure at this time from within the ranks of the Ulster Volunteer Force. After January 1914 it is arguable that the relationship between Carson and his militant support changed, and that the disciplined paramilitarism that he had helped to fashion and sought to control now obtained a momentum and vitality of its own. In January 1914 – at the time when he was under pressure from the UVF – Carson 'confessed' to Horace Plunkett 'his inability to control his own forces'; in April 1914 he emphasised to Plunkett that he wanted a settlement, but that if one were not forthcoming and the Ulster unionists acted illegally or put 'themselves hopelessly in the wrong' or compelled troops to intervene, then 'in such an event he would very likely resign the leadership'. Given his political sensitivities, and later fondness for histrionic resignations, this testimony carries some conviction. 'Nobody supposes that at my age I prefer strife to peace', Carson proclaimed on 29 April 1914; 'only a fool would fight if there is a hope of accommodation', he affirmed on 5 May. Throughout 1914 Carson's speeches were often tinged by calls for public order. All this should not be seen as evidence for an essentially quietist Carson. It is clear, however, that Carson was more cautious and pragmatic than has often been grasped; and that his uncertain, even manic, temperament, as well as his very finely tuned strategic sense, gave rise to more nuanced political signals than has often been allowed. Carson seems to have believed in the political usefulness of paramilitary menace; but he also seems to have believed in the potentially disastrous nature of paramilitary violence.

World War 1, 1914–18

The outbreak of the European war ended Carson's career as a rebel, and gave him the opportunity to augment his majesty's troops (through the offer of the Ulster Volunteers) rather than conspire to shoot them. In addition, the formation of the Asquith coalition government brought the first ministerial appointment that had come his way in ten years: on 25 May 1915 he accepted the post of attorney general of England. But his tenure was brief: he was increasingly alarmed by the prodigious waste of lives and resources during the British campaign in Gallipoli, and he was appalled by what he saw as the Allied betrayal of Serbia. He resigned on 12 October 1915, retiring to the backbenches from where he coordinated a wider assault on the coalition government: in January 1916 he was elected leader of a parliamentary ginger group, the unionist war committee, whose purpose was to encourage a more vigorous mobilisation of British military resources. The position suited Carson, who was now in effect leader of the opposition: by November 1916 he had joined forces with Lloyd George and a reluctant Bonar Law in order to divert the listless Asquith away from the war effort.

Asquith struggled to maintain his ascendancy, but on 5 December was forced into resignation: Robert Blake has said that 'more than any single person, [Carson] was responsible for Asquith's fall'. Carson was now at the peak of his parliamentary influence, with nomination to the

premiership a clear, if still remote, possibility. He was content, however, to subordinate his own claims, and to accept the first lordship of the admiralty from Asquith's successor, Lloyd George. He held this, one of the most demanding of wartime offices, between December 1916 and July 1917: these were months of mounting U-boat attacks on Allied shipping, with associated threats to the supply of food and other essential materials to the home front and the trenches. Criticism of Carson and of his *laissez-faire* managerial style grew; and on 30 April Lloyd George descended to the admiralty building, where he demanded, and won, changes. Convoy protection for merchant shipping was introduced, and helped to reduce losses. Carson and his most trusted admiral, Jellicoe, had considered this initiative, but too hesitantly for the taste of Lloyd George; other necessary reforms seemed unlikely to be enacted by the plodding first lord and his nervous subordinates. Carson was therefore moved out of the admiralty in July 1917, ostensibly in a promotion to the war cabinet as a minister without portfolio. But the particular responsibilities that he was given in his new role were of secondary importance; and the 'promotion' could thus barely disguise the taint of failure and humiliation. In January 1918, after barely five months tenure, he resigned from his new post, in part because of the dismissal of Jellicoe, but professedly because of the looming crisis in Ireland.

Carson's ministerial preoccupations inevitably meant a slackening interest in Irish politics. He was involved in the Lloyd George negotiations of May–July 1916, and succeeded in winning support in Belfast for the enactment of home rule beyond the six north-eastern counties of Ulster: but the wider initiative was rejected by southern unionist sympathisers within the cabinet. He was alarmed by the Irish Convention (1917–18), and by the direction taken by the southern unionist representatives led by Lord Midleton; it was partly in order to reserve his position on the Convention that he resigned from the war cabinet in January 1918.

Disengagement, 1918–35

In the December 1918 general election he stood for the newly formed Duncairn division of Belfast, and was returned with a triumphant majority of some 9,200 votes over his nearest (nationalist) rival. But on the whole these were years of disengagement from Ulster unionism and indeed from mainstream politics. In July 1919 he threatened to call out the UVF in a speech that appeared unacceptably extreme to British opinion. While Carson resumed his legal career, his lieutenant James Craig served successfully as a junior minister in the new coalition government, and emerged in 1920 as a significant influence over the evolving government of Ireland bill; Craig was perceptibly warmer towards this, the founding charter of Northern Ireland, than was Carson. Despite the overt sympathy between the two men, differences were opening up: in January 1921 Carson was offered the chance to lead the new northern government. But he passed the invitation over to Craig in an irritating and slighting manner. He resigned from the leadership of Ulster unionism on 4 February 1921. But some of his subsequent actions created political difficulties for Craig: Carson was, for example, a bitter opponent of the Anglo–Irish treaty, and his parliamentary speech on the question (14 December 1921) 'greatly embarrassed' and angered his former lieutenant.

On 21 May 1921 Carson accepted a lordship of appeal in ordinary, and took the title of Lord Carson of Duncairn. He served as a law lord till November 1929, when ill health and old age compelled his resignation. But his time in the lords provided a certain symmetry to his long career; for an abiding concern here was the condition of the community into which he had been born – the loyalists of the south of Ireland, and their travails under the Free State dispensation. His education as an ultra-tory was now reaching completion: in his last years he denounced what he saw as the weak-minded revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and the betrayal of the

empire-builders in India. In the early 1930s he was a contemptuous observer of the dismantling of the treaty of 1921.

Family matters provided some, not always happy, distraction in his later years. Carson's first wife, Sarah Annette Foster Kirwan, whom he married on 19 December 1879, died on 6 April 1914 after a series of strokes; the couple had two sons and two daughters. The marriage had been happy, although not altogether without troubles: Annette never fully adjusted to the grand manner of living that was expected of Edwardian legal stars; and some of their children proved equally wayward. Carson married his second wife, Ruby Frewen, on 17 September 1914. There was one child, a son, from this union. Edward Carson died 22 October 1935 at his home in Kent.

Assessment

Carson had been a brilliantly successful lawyer; and a gloriously eloquent advocate of lost causes in politics. He began his career as a liberal unionist, and he retained a whiggish devotion to the landed interest, and to the British constitution, at least in its pre-1911 formulation. He had a ferociously emphatic professional and political style. But he matured as an ultra-tory; and his determined public manner obscured a degree of private pragmatism, even hesitation. He had the temperament of a manic depressive. His time in government, except perhaps for his periods as a law officer, was undistinguished: his somewhat neurotic and disengaged manner was unsuited to the demands of (especially wartime) ministerial responsibility. On the other hand, his years in opposition, whether as an advocate of Ulster unionism in 1912–14 or as a critic of the Asquith coalition in 1916, displayed his formidable gifts to the full. Carson unquestionably contributed to the success of the Ulster unionists' demand for six-county exclusion, even though this form of settlement held little intrinsic appeal. Equally, he contributed decisively to the overthrow of Asquith in December 1916, even though he profited little from this, and came swiftly to despise Lloyd George ('a mass of corruption'). However indirect his contribution, Carson may none the less be seen as an architect of the British victory in 1918, and of the partition settlement of 1920.

He contributed a stylistic legacy, too. Given throughout his political and legal career to brilliantly argued but often emotive or even belligerent speechifying, he had a weakness for melodramatic exits from uncongenial political debates or negotiations. He preferred resignation and disengagement to political wars of attrition. He was happiest as a prosecution counsel, rather than in what might have been seen as more constructive roles. He was one of the founding fathers of modern unionism, and an example of the faith to his successors. To these he bequeathed a model of tactical brinkmanship and histrionic style.

Written by Alvin Jackson

Sources: PRONI, Carson papers; Ronald McNeill, *Ulster's stand for union* (1922); Edward Marjoribanks and Ian Colvin, *Life of Lord Carson* (3 vols, 1932–6); H. Montgomery Hyde, *The life of Sir Edward Carson, Lord Carson of Duncairn* (1953); A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster crisis: resistance to home rule, 1912–14* (1967); id., *Edward Carson* (1981); Alvin Jackson, *The Ulster party: Irish unionists in the house of commons, 1884–1911* (1989); id., *Sir Edward Carson* (1993); John Hostettler, *Sir Edward Carson: a dream too far* (1997); Geoffrey Lewis, *Carson: the man who divided Ireland* (2005)

Isabella Tod

Tod, Isabella Maria Susan (1836–96), feminist and reformer, was born 18 May 1836 in Edinburgh, daughter of James Banks Tod, merchant, and Maria Isabella Tod (née Waddell). There was at least one other child, a brother who became a prosperous merchant in London. Tod seems to have had no formal education but was encouraged by her mother in studies at home. Maria Tod (a native of Co. Monaghan) was related to Charles Mastertown, an influential presbyterian minister, and to Hope Mastertown Waddell (1804–95), who was the first missionary from an Irish presbyterian background; he worked in Jamaica for thirteen years and then with Jamaican colleagues founded the Calabar mission in west Africa in the mid 1840s. The Tod family moved to Belfast when Isabella was in her twenties, and she became involved in charity work with poor people in the city. Her strong presbyterian religious beliefs and her experiences in Belfast prompted her to develop radical views on social issues and women's rights. She wrote anonymously in the 1860s and 1870s for the *Dublin University Magazine* and the *Banner of Ulster*, and in the early 1880s for the *Northern Whig*.

Like many of her contemporaries, she had her first experience of politics in response to the contentious provisions of the contagious diseases acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869. In an effort to combat venereal diseases among soldiers, the government had proposed such stringent controls of prostitution that middle-class women recognised, in some cases for the first time, that implicit in the legislation were double standards of sexual morality and of the social constraints that adversely affected the lives of all women. Tod was active in organisations set up to demand the repeal of the acts, notably the Ladies' National Association, founded in 1869. She served on the London-based executive committee of this body until 1889.

Her work to reform the law with respect to women's education and married women's property (she was the only woman called to give evidence to the parliamentary select committee on the married women's property bill in 1868), combined with her temperance and charity work, convinced her that women were best suited to the work of reforming society, but that their success in this would depend on gaining the right to vote. It was because of this realisation that she was the main force behind the establishment of the Northern Ireland Society for Women's Suffrage in 1871, acting as secretary until the 1890s. This was the first organisation in Ireland that displayed a recognisably feminist political agenda. Tod campaigned vigorously for women's right to be considered as full members of society; she spoke at meetings throughout the country and in Britain, and was an effective lobbyist. She formed friendships with prominent suffragists in Ireland and Britain, and utilised contacts and networks assiduously in efforts to change society's attitudes. It was largely as a result of her work that Belfast women were allowed to vote in local elections in 1887, eleven years ahead of other Irish municipalities, and that in 1896, subject to property qualifications, women were permitted to become poor law guardians.

Her first public statement was a speech on women's education, delivered for her at a meeting in 1867 of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. She campaigned for the provision of secondary and higher education for women, and was involved with the foundation of several schools offering academic and practical education for girls – notably the Ladies' Institute in Belfast (1867). The intermediate education bill of 1878 was intended to organise examinations and to award prizes based on their results, but it referred solely to male education. Consequently, Tod and Margaret Byers, organised a delegation to London to urge the inclusion of girls in the bill. Their efforts were successful, and the intermediate education act gave awards to schools for all students who passed examinations, whether male or female. A year later (1879) the government introduced a new university bill, and Tod immediately formed a committee to lobby for the inclusion of women in any benefits that the bill would produce. She was the prime mover in the establishment (1880) of the Ulster Schoolmistresses' Association, intended to act as a pressure group to foster female education.

Tod was a strict teetotaler and very involved in temperance work, seeing in this an important focus for women's efforts to improve society. She was a founding member with Margaret Byers of the Belfast Women's Temperance Association (formed 1874), and acted (1877–92) as vice-president of the British Women's Temperance Association. The Belfast group set up a number of projects intended to ameliorate life in the city: temperance eating-houses, a home for alcoholic women and another for destitute girls, and classes in hygiene and cookery for working-class women. The WTA split in 1893 and Tod became vice-president of the Women's Total Abstinence Union, a position she held until her death.

Tod's career took another direction when she threw herself into opposition to Gladstone's first home rule bill of 1886. She believed that an Irish-based assembly, bereft of the mitigating influence of the large numbers and wealth of the educated classes of the United Kingdom, would inevitably fall into illiberal and divisive modes of government, and that such a government would be inimical to all the causes for which she had campaigned. In 1886 she organised a Liberal Women's Unionist Association in Belfast to formulate a policy of opposition. Tod cared so passionately about this issue that she campaigned in England as well as Ireland on behalf of the liberal unionists. The split between unionists and nationalists over home rule was mirrored within the suffrage movement, and Tod was estranged, sometimes permanently, from some of her suffragist friends who supported the bill.

In 1884 a testimonial worth £1,000 was presented to her, and she was honoured in 1886 by the presentation of a portrait. She lived, unmarried, with her mother, who died in 1877. For many years her secretary, Gertrude Andrews, was a constant companion. After years of illness, Tod died 8 December 1896 at her home at 71 Botanic Avenue, Belfast. In October 1898 a memorial portrait of her by Margaret Rothwell (1890) was unveiled in the Free Public Library of Belfast. It is now held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast. Annual scholarships of £30 are awarded at QUB in Tod's memory.

Written by Georgina Clinton and Linde Lunney

Sources: *Belfast News Letter*, 10 Dec. 1896; James Dewar (ed.), *A history of Elmwood church* (1900); Maria Luddy, 'Isabella M. S. Tod (1836–1896)', Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (ed.), *Women, power and consciousness in nineteenth-century Ireland* (1995); Maria Luddy, 'Women and politics in nineteenth century Ireland', Maryann G. Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd (ed.), *Women and Irish history* (1997), 89–108; Diane Urquhart, 'An articulate and definite cry for political freedom: the Ulster suffrage movement', *Women's History Review*, xi, no. 2 (2002), 273–92; information from Eileen Black, Ulster Museum, Belfast; Tomás O'Riordan, 'Isabella Tod', http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Isabella_Tod (photo) (internet material downloaded July 2006)

Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington

Skeffington, (Johanna) Hanna Sheehy- (1877–1946), political activist, was born 24 May 1877 in Kanturk, Co. Cork, eldest among two sons and four daughters of David Sheehy, millowner and later nationalist MP, and Elizabeth ('Bessie') Sheehy (née McCoy), both of Co. Limerick. The family, having lived in Co. Cork and Co. Tipperary, moved to Dublin in 1887. Hanna was educated at the Dominican Convent, Eccles St., Dublin, where she won a number of prizes and exhibitions and showed a flair for languages. The threat of incipient tuberculosis in 1895 interrupted her studies and she travelled to France and Germany as a strategy for recovery. Later that year she won a scholarship to St Mary's University College, run by the Dominican order, and in 1899 graduated from the Royal University of Ireland with an honours BA in modern languages. She was awarded an MA in 1902. After graduation Hanna was employed on a part-time basis with the Dominicans in Eccles Street.

Hanna met her future husband Francis ('Frank') Skeffington, the only child of Joseph Bartholomew Skeffington, inspector in the national schools system, and Rose Skeffington, in 1896. When the couple married (1903) they took each other's surnames as a symbol of the equality of their relationship. While Hanna was politically aware and had been one of the founders (1902) of the Women Graduates' and Candidate Graduates' Association, established to promote the advancement of women in university education, she claimed that it was Frank who was responsible for her ardent commitment to the women's movement. Their son, and only child, Owen, was born in 1908. The couple were committed to many causes, particularly feminism, pacifism, socialism, and nationalism.

In 1902 Hanna joined the long-established Irishwomen's Suffrage and Local Government Association, which campaigned for women's access to the franchise through the genteel methods of lobbying politicians and holding meetings. The formation in London in 1903 of the militant suffrage organisation, the Women's Social and Political Union, revitalised the suffrage campaign. Hanna was aware of the activities of the WSPU and in 1908, with Gretta (Margaret) Cousins and two other women, organised the Irish Women's Franchise League, an independent, non-aligned, and militant group. By 1912 the IWFL claimed a membership of over 1,000, making it the largest suffrage group in Ireland. Hanna was a strong nationalist but did not join either Inghinidhe na hÉireann on its formation in 1900 or Cumann na mBan in 1914. She believed that women involved in nationalist organisations played a subordinate role to men (an issue

much debated in the period), and that it was only through the acquisition of the vote that true citizenship would be attained.

In May 1912 the first issue of the suffrage paper *The Irish Citizen*, edited by Frank Sheehy Skeffington and James Cousins, appeared. When the Cousinses left for India in 1913, the Sheehy Skeffingtons took over the management of the paper, and after Frank's murder in 1916 Hanna edited the paper, intermittently, until 1920. The socialist thought of James Connolly greatly influenced her thinking and she assisted in Liberty Hall during the 1913 Dublin lock-out. The failure of the Irish parliamentary party to support women's suffrage led to the first militant suffrage activity in Ireland. On 13 June 1912 a number of women of the IWFL, including Hanna, broke some windows in government buildings. The women were arrested and imprisoned for a month. In prison they immediately and successfully lobbied for political status. The treatment of two English suffragettes by the Irish authorities led Hanna and a number of other suffragettes to go on hunger strike, a strategy they were to continue whenever they were imprisoned. Because of her feminist activities Hanna was sacked from her German teaching post at the Rathmines School of Commerce. She now devoted more time to suffrage and to her work on the *Irish Citizen*, corresponding with suffragists in England and the United States. Hanna and Frank took a strong pacifist position in relation to the growing militarism of the time. On the outbreak of the 1916 rising Frank was involved in organising anti-looting bands. He was arrested and shot without trial on the orders of Capt. J. C. Bowen-Colthurst, a British army officer. Hanna was thrown into personal and emotional turmoil by that event.

An inquiry into the murder left too many questions unanswered for her satisfaction. She refused all offers of compensation from the government and decided to bring the facts of the case before the American public. At the invitation of the friends of Irish Freedom Hanna toured the USA from October 1916 to August 1918, speaking at over 250 meetings; this was the first of four American tours. Her major speech from her first tour, *British militarism as I have known it*, was published in New York in pamphlet form in 1917.

In late 1919 Hanna was elected as a Sinn Féin candidate to Dublin corporation, and when a truce was declared in July 1921 she was the director of organisation for Sinn Féin. She was also on the executive committee of the Irish White Cross, a relief organisation funded by the American Committee for Relief in Ireland. She opposed the Anglo-Irish treaty and in 1922–3 accompanied Linda Kearns (Linda MacWhinney) and Kathleen Boland to the USA on a fund-raising trip for the relief of the families of Irish republican soldiers held as prisoners in the Irish Free State. Hanna was also a member of the Prisoners' Defence Association and helped form the Women Prisoners' Defence League in 1922. In August 1923 she was sent to Paris by Éamon de Valera, in an unsuccessful attempt to put the case to the League of Nations against the recognition of the Irish Free State.

Hanna was also a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a pacifist organisation, of which she later became a vice-president. In May 1926 she was one of four women appointed to the executive of the new Fianna Fáil party. But when de Valera entered the dáil she split with the party. While she was politically disturbed by the nature of Irish government during the 1920s and 1930s, she remained an active feminist. During these years she supported herself and Owen through her journalism, writing extensively for the *Irish World*, and gave many public talks and lectures. In 1926 she led protests against the staging of Sean O'Casey's *The plough and the stars* at the Abbey theatre, claiming that it derided the men and women who had taken part in the 1916 rising.

In August 1930 Hanna went as a delegate of the Friends of Soviet Russia to study the Soviet system of government and, like many of her contemporaries, she remained an active sympathiser

with the communist system. She contributed to, and later became assistant editor of, *An Phoblacht* and its successor *Republican File*. In January 1933 she was arrested and imprisoned after a public speech in Newry, having defied an exclusion order that had been imposed on her by the Northern Ireland government. She opposed the 1937 constitution and, through the Women Graduates' Association, campaigned publicly against its provisions. In November 1937, as a consequence of misgivings about the new constitution, Hanna was instrumental in establishing the Women's Social and Progressive League as a women's political party that declared itself to be non-sectarian and non-party. She stood unsuccessfully as a candidate for the party in the 1943 general election. Her health deteriorated in 1945 and she died of heart failure on 20 April 1946 and was buried beside her husband Frank in Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin.

The most extensive collection of papers, including photographs, relevant to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington is to be found in the Sheehy Skeffington papers, housed in the NLI. There is some correspondence from her, dating from 1926, in the Fianna Fáil party archives, Dublin. Her correspondence with Alice Parks is in the Alice Parks collection, box no. 19, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, California.

Written by Maria Luddy

Sources: Leah Levenson and Jerry H. Natterstad, *Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington: Irish feminist* (1986); Maria Luddy, *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington* (1995); Margaret Ward, *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington: a life* (1997)

James Connolly

Connolly, James (1868–1916), socialist and revolutionary leader, was born in Cowgate, Edinburgh, on 5 June 1868, the youngest in a family of three boys. His father, John Connolly, and his mother, Mary McGinn, were both born in Ireland in 1833, possibly in Co. Monaghan, and emigrated to Scotland. From their marriage in St Patrick's parish, Cowgate, in 1856, they lived among the Irish immigrant community in that slum quarter of Edinburgh where John worked as a manure carter for the city council. Mary was a domestic servant who died at the age of fifty-eight in 1891; her husband survived her by nine years before he died of a cerebral haemorrhage in 1900.

Early life and socialist beginnings

Of the three Connolly children, the eldest, John, born in 1862, worked as a labourer until he joined the army in 1877, and served in India before returning to work in Edinburgh as a temporary carter in the late 1880s. He became active in the growing labour and socialist movements in the city until his political activity caused his council employers to dismiss him. Of the second son, Thomas, born in 1866, almost nothing is known apart from his having worked as a compositor's hand before emigrating, after which no trace of him remains. An early beneficiary of the introduction of universal primary education, James attended St Patrick's catholic primary school in Cowgate until 1878. Thereafter he went to work successively as a printer's devil, a bakery hand, and a factory labourer in a mosaic works. Although his formal education was brief and minimal, he became and remained an avid and reflective reader. In 1882 he followed in his brother John's footsteps by enlisting in the first battalion the King's Liverpool Regiment, and though almost nothing is known of his seven years or so in the army, he may have served in India and almost certainly served in Ireland, probably at Cork, Castlebar, the Curragh, and Dublin. It was in Dublin that he met Lillie Reynolds, a domestic servant from a Wicklow protestant family. They married in Perth, Scotland, in April 1890.

Very soon after his marriage he found work in Dundee, but later in 1890 they settled in Edinburgh, where Connolly worked, like his father, as a manure carter. Connolly was still a practising catholic and the couple undertook to rear the children of the marriage as catholics, which they duly did – all six daughters and one son receiving a catholic education. While he abandoned religious practice and religious belief in the early 1890s, Connolly returned to the catholic fold in the last days before his execution.

The time of his marriage and return to Edinburgh coincided with the upsurge of the ‘new unionism’ in Britain and Ireland – that is, the development, for the first time in the history of urban labour, of militant, mass-membership trade unions of general workers. It also coincided with a significant growth of socialism, both Marxist and Christian, and in industrial Scotland these developments were especially marked. James followed his brother John in active involvement in both developments, joining the Socialist League in Dundee in 1889 and helping to organise trade unionism among the carters of Edinburgh in 1890. It is evident that his love of reading took him deeply into the socialist literature of the time, and he began associating with leading figures of the Scottish labour movement. One of the most important of these, who became his mentor and lifelong friend, was John Leslie, who, like the Connollys, came from the working-class Irish immigrant community of Edinburgh. A founder of the Scottish Socialist Federation in 1889, Leslie wrote a brilliant pamphlet, *The present position of the Irish question* (1894), which was undoubtedly the most decisive influence on the young Connolly apart from Marx and Engels.

It was Leslie who brought Connolly actively into the socialist movement, to which he remained passionately committed for the rest of his life. Another influence was James Keir Hardie, the Ayrshire miners’ leader, the first independent, working-class socialist to be elected to the house of commons, and the founder in 1893 of the political mass movement the Independent Labour Party (ILP). James succeeded his brother John as secretary of the Scottish Socialist Federation in 1892 and in the following year he joined Hardie’s party. It was in this context that Connolly began to develop his direct, trenchant, and critical writing style, contributing reports to the Marxist Social Democratic Federation’s journal, *Justice*, and articles to local Scottish papers and labour journals.

The move to Dublin

In these years, between 1890 and 1896, his and Lillie’s first three children, Mona, Nora, and Aideen, were born; having lost his job as a carter in 1894 and failed as a cobbler, Connolly became dependent on his developing abilities and energies as propagandist for socialism and the labour movement precariously to support his growing family. His desperate straits led him to consider emigration to Chile, but in 1896 an appeal by John Leslie in the pages of *Justice* led to the offer of employment in Dublin as organiser for the Dublin Socialist Club, at £1 per week. However small the socialist movement may have been in Britain in the nineteenth century, in Ireland it barely existed. Robert Owen in the 1820s, the chartists in the 1840s, the First International in the 1860s and 1870s, and William Morris’s Socialist League and Henry Hyndman’s Social Democratic Federation in the 1880s had all failed to make an imprint on Irish soil. In the 1890s there were very small groups of Fabian socialists and branches of the ILP in Belfast and Dublin, the latter forming the Dublin Socialist Club, which included the brothers Thomas, Daniel, and William O’Brien (d. 1968), the last of whom was destined to be one of Connolly’s closest associates in Dublin and who came to dominate the Irish labour movement for four decades after Connolly’s death.

Given the minuscule membership of the socialist organisations and the hostile climate for socialism and socialists in Ireland, Connolly’s livelihood as a professional propagandist continued to be precarious and had to be supplemented by various labouring jobs. Still he brought to his new role in Dublin all the passion and commitment to the cause of working people and socialism that he had developed in Scotland. His arrival in Dublin in May 1896 constituted a decisive break in his career, entailing as it did for any socialist the need to confront the challenge of nationalism. His earliest Scottish years as an activist showed no especial concern for or, interest

in, Ireland or in the politics of Irish identity, though the very Irish names he gave his children clearly testify to a strong ethnic consciousness, and the interest that his mentor Leslie took in the Irish question should be taken into account. However, from the moment of his arrival in Ireland Connolly had no choice but to take a position on the ideology that dominated Irish political life.

He rapidly arrived at a view that the future for socialism and the working class in Ireland lay in an independent republic rather than in continued union with Britain or in a federal arrangement involving home rule. This was quickly reflected in his and his colleagues' decision to disband the Dublin Socialist Club and to establish in its place the Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP). His manifesto for the new party was radical indeed, calling for free education and child health care, nationalisation of transport and banking, and a commitment to the further extension of public ownership. He expounded his developing views on the interrelationship of Irish socialism and republicanism in articles he sent to Keir Hardie's newspaper, *Labour Leader*, and to the Belfast nationalist journal, the *Shan Van Vocht*. In 1897 these were brought together and published by the ISRP as the booklet *Erin's hope*. Here, as in his propaganda in public meetings at Dublin's Custom House and Phoenix Park, he drew on the ideas of the Irish nationalist revolutionary of 1848, James Fintan Lalor, whose writings called for the creation of an agrarian cooperative republic. While his fellow British socialists were sympathetic to Irish nationalist aims, they stopped at the point where home rule might begin and were not prepared to envisage a separate republic across the Irish Sea.

Connolly persisted and developed his views on socialism, nationalism, and the workers' cause extensively in the pages of his own weekly journal, the *Workers' Republic* which he began in 1898 with the aid of a £50 loan from Keir Hardie. It brought him to prominence in Dublin radical circles as he joined with Irish advanced nationalists in verbal attacks on the monarchy, the empire and British rule in Ireland. Indeed, his agitation in 1898 led to a police raid on the ISRP's premises and the temporary destruction of his printing press. The paper folded after twelve issues but he managed to relaunch it briefly in 1899.

The development of Connolly's socialism

Connolly's growing reputation in Dublin was due in equal measure to his work for trade union organisation in the capital and his journalism. His was a strong voice for the new trade unionism of general labour as distinct from the traditional and conservative craft unions. In 1901 he was elected a delegate to the Dublin trades council where he represented the United Labourers' Union. From the outset of his public career Connolly combined his commitment to trade unionism and socialism in a way that made his version of Marxism distinctive. His approach differed from the state socialist Marxism of the Second International, the Leninist orthodoxies of the Third International, and the Marxism of the Social Democratic Federation. He developed a Marxist syndicalist position, distinguished by his own perspective, understanding, and strategy, which was to make a major contribution to that tradition in international socialism in his later years, and especially from 1910 to 1913. Yet his syndicalism also differed profoundly from its continental European counterpart in that the latter had an aversion to politics and relied exclusively on the revolutionary potential of the general strike.

These matters were to become evident in later years, but from the turn of the century Connolly engaged in electoral politics as much as in trade union organisation and socialist evangelism. He sought election to Dublin city council in the municipal elections of 1902 and 1903, with a marked lack of success but he made sufficient impact to be attacked in press and pulpit as an atheist, which he certainly was not: he was to develop a distinctive position also on the relationship of socialism and religion.

In the meantime his circumstances went from bad to worse. His propaganda appeared to be making few converts and his ISRP colleagues did little to inspire or support him: his wages were often unpaid even as his family expanded with the birth of a fourth child, Ina, in November 1896, a fifth child, Maire, and then a sixth, a son, Roddy, in 1901. Money he managed to raise for the *Workers' Republic* was diverted by his colleagues into subsidising a drinking club for ISRP members – the last straw for Connolly, who was a strict teetotaler. He managed to supplement his uncertain income by speaking tours in England and Scotland, and in 1902 secured an invitation from Daniel DeLeon's Socialist Labour Party of America to undertake a lecture tour in the United States from September 1902 to January 1903. On his return, a row over the use and abuse of ISRP funds, which he had raised, led to bitter recriminations, his resignation, and the collapse of the party. The success of his American tour, however, made it possible for him to return to the USA in September 1903, where he would work as socialist agitator and union organiser for the next seven years. It was the hope of the Marxist revolutionary Socialist Labour Party (SLP) that Connolly would win many Irish American workers to their cause.

The American years, 1903–10

Connolly's seven years in America saw him working initially as an insurance salesman and collector in Troy, New York, which enabled him to bring his family to join him in the autumn of 1904; tragically, his eldest daughter, Mona, died in an accident on the very eve of their departure. Having lost his insurance employment, he worked for the Singer Sewing Machine Company in Newark for a year. During this time he was active in the SLP and was later elected to its national executive, despite a bruising doctrinal quarrel with its leader, DeLeon. This dispute centred on three items in the credo of the SLP, namely, the 'iron law of wages', the question of marriage, and the position of socialism in regard to religion. Connolly's debate with DeLeon on these matters was presented initially in his article, 'Wages, marriage and the church', published in the SLP's *Weekly People*, in April 1904. Connolly dissented from the official party line concerning the 'iron law of wages', originally laid down by the German socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, which stated that every nominal wage increase gained by workers would be quickly and exactly offset by a corresponding increase in prices. Connolly argued that Marx himself had rejected this proposition. Although a technical point, it had implications for Connolly as a syndicalist, who saw in mass trade unionism an instrument for effecting economic and social change.

Of greater significance was their disagreement over the issue of conventional morality respecting monogamous marriage and the relationship of socialism to religion and morality. Against the prevailing Marxist orthodoxy on historical materialism and atheism, Connolly tried to argue that socialism was concerned exclusively with economics and politics, and that the holding of certain religious beliefs was entirely consistent with being a socialist; furthermore, to the extent that a given set of religious beliefs might involve an egalitarian and humanitarian commitment, they could assist the cause of socialism. In addition, at a practical or strategic level, it made no sense to antagonise potential socialist support by irrelevant attacks on religious beliefs or those who held them. Connolly had abandoned the practice of his catholicism from around 1893, but he never launched attacks on it in America, Britain, or Ireland. Further disputes with DeLeon arose in 1907, leading DeLeon to denounce Connolly and Connolly to sever his links with the sectarian SLP and join the much larger reformist Socialist Party of America, led by Eugene Debs. Having lost his job with Singer, Connolly was eventually able to secure a regular, if modest, income as speaker and organiser for Debs's party in 1909.

By that time Connolly was already involved in a major new development, launched in 1905 when Big Bill Haywood established the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or 'Wobblies'

as they came to be known. A militant new labour organisation, the IWW promoted the ideology of revolutionary syndicalism or industrial unionism, recruiting among the huge mass of unskilled and general labour in the USA. The IWW aimed to pursue social and economic revolution through the agency of 'one big union', using mass action and sympathetic strikes. Joining it soon after its launch, Connolly became one of its most active and prominent propagandists, gaining widespread recognition in the movement for his tract *Socialism made easy*, published in Chicago in 1909. In industrial unionism he saw the potential for a socialist movement that, while remaining democratic, would be capable of developing the structures for a socialist republic. He himself successfully recruited Irish and Italian workers in New York for the IWW.

Return to Ireland

His commitment to promoting socialism among the Irish was evident in his foundation of the Irish Socialist Federation in 1907, and it was through its agency that he began to re-establish links with socialists in Ireland, notably with his former ISRP colleague, William O'Brien. By 1908 both he and O'Brien's Dublin socialists were considering the possibility of his coming back to be organiser for the newly emerging Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI). In January 1908 he established a radical journal, *The Harp*, as the organ of the Irish Socialist Federation and in 1909 he transferred its production to Dublin. In the next year he accepted an offer of speaking engagements in Ireland, Scotland, and England, and arrived back in Ireland on 26 July 1910. The Dublin to which he now temporarily returned was much changed in its radical politics, with the arrival on the scene three years before of the syndicalist agitator and union organiser Jim Larkin. His establishment of the Irish Transport Union as 'one big union' in 1909 was to transform labour relations in Ireland and the politics of the labour movement. It was mainly Larkin who persuaded the SPI to try to raise the finances that would enable Connolly as its national organiser to resettle permanently in Ireland. At the end of 1910 Connolly brought his family back to Dublin.

The period after his return saw much of the most significant theoretical and practical work of his life. In 1910 he published the important tract *Labour, nationality and religion*, written to rebut the attacks of the Jesuit Father Kane on socialism and to contest the contemporary orthodoxy that catholicism and socialism were irreconcilable. In the same year he also brought to publication his most famous work, *Labour in Irish history*. This was the first substantial exposition of a Marxist interpretation of Irish history. Highly original in some of its findings, it argued for the continuity of a radical tradition in Ireland, and sought to debunk nationalist myths about Ireland's past and to expose the inadequacies of middle-class Irish nationalism in providing a solution for Ireland's ills.

Trade unionism in Belfast

From being national organiser for the SPI in 1910 he went on in 1911 to become Ulster organiser for the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU). In Belfast he encountered the stranglehold of sectarianism and although he managed a limited success in recruiting catholic workers into the union he never really came to terms with the nature and strength of working-class political unionism. In May 1911 he issued 'A plea for socialist unity in Ireland' in the pages of the Scottish labour journal *Forward*, attacking the Belfast Independent Labour Party for its opposition to home rule. He thereby precipitated a famous controversy with the Belfast socialist William Walker, who argued that the future of socialism depended on the continuing union with Britain. For Connolly, Walker's position was one of false internationalism, and the only true socialist internationalism lay in a free federation of free peoples.

While he continued his promotion of industrial unionism he also continued to promote the political dimension of the labour movement in Ireland. With Larkin, O'Brien, and other radical elements in the Dublin trades council he managed to get the Irish Trade Union Congress at its meeting at Clonmel in 1912 to commit to the formation of the Irish Labour Party. That special combination of syndicalism and politics was reflected nominally in the new title, the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party. In the midst of his hectic political and union organising activities Connolly continued to write, notably on the theme of socialism and nationalism at a time (1911–14) when the constitutional future of Ireland went into political crisis. Much of his writing at this time appeared in book form in 1915 as *The reconquest of Ireland*, where he argued that Irish freedom meant securing the common ownership of all Ireland by the Irish. Yet his experience in Belfast made it clear that a significant proportion of its working class had no time for Irish freedom, and that some of the north's socialist leaders sought the triumph of socialism within the continued political union of Britain and Ireland.

Whatever Connolly hoped to achieve in Belfast in terms of union growth and socialist progress was quickly overtaken by the events of the lockout and general strike in Dublin from August 1913. He was summoned to Dublin to assist Larkin in the leadership of this conflict, and, when the struggle was lost and Larkin left for America in 1914, Connolly took over as acting general secretary of the defeated Transport Union. At the same time he took over the editorship of Larkin's *Irish Worker* paper, as well as being commander of the Irish Citizen Army, which had been set up in November 1913 as a workers' defence force.

Revolutionary activities and the Easter rising

To the disastrous defeat of the locked out and striking workers was now added the calamitous outbreak of world war. This drove him into an advanced nationalist position and, though he never abandoned his socialist commitment, the social revolution took a back seat. The growing militancy of Ulster unionist opposition to home rule, the British government's postponement of plans for home rule in the face of unionist opposition, the growing prospect of the partition of Ireland, the outbreak of world war, and the consequent collapse of international socialism, all contributed to his adopting an extreme nationalist stance. As he wrote in *Forward* in March 1914: 'the proposal of the Government to consent to the partition of Ireland . . . should be resisted with armed force if necessary'. Added to this, the 'carnival of slaughter' that was the world war drove him to incite 'war against war', and to make tentative overtures to the revolutionary IRB. By late 1915 his increasing militancy at a time when the IRB had decided on insurrection caused them in turn to approach him; by late January they and he had agreed on a joint uprising. The Transport Union headquarters at Liberty Hall became the headquarters of the Irish Citizen Army as he prepared it for revolt. It was ironic that Connolly, who had in the distant past denounced 'Blanquism' or 'insurrectionism' and who had ever argued that political freedom without socialism was useless, now joined forces with militant nationalists in an insurrection that had nothing to do directly with socialism. It appears that he had become convinced that national freedom for Ireland in the prevailing circumstances was a necessity before socialism could advance.

In the event he led his small band of about two hundred Citizen Army comrades into the Easter rising of 1916. His Citizen Army joined forces with the Volunteers, as the only army he acknowledged in 1916 was that of 'the Irish Republic'. As commandant general of the republic's forces in Dublin he fought side by side with Patrick Pearse in the General Post Office, until surrendering on 29 April. Badly injured in the foot, he was court-martialled along with 170 others, was one of ninety to be sentenced to death, and was the last one of the fifteen to be executed by

firing squad. He was shot dead, seated on a wooden box, in Kilmainham jail on 12 May 1916. He was buried in the cemetery within Arbour Hill military barracks. His wife and six of his children survived him.

Reputation and legacy

Along with his executed comrades, Connolly entered the pantheon of Irish national heroes. However, for one whose public life until almost its end had been committed to the working classes of Britain, America, and Ireland, and to the cause of international socialism, the impact of this commitment is problematic. It can be argued that the great achievement of his final years, as a revolutionary socialist, was to bring the most militant elements of the Irish labour movement to the forefront of the anti-imperial fight against the British empire, giving Irish labour a central place in the national struggle. Thereby he gave national and international significance to a body of labour militants far in excess of what was warranted by their numbers. He was, however, to prove irreplaceable, and those who followed him in the leadership of socialism and the labour movement in Ireland, whatever their strengths and abilities, lacked that unique combination of personal passion, vision, insight, experience, and charisma, and the movement under his successors failed to capitalise on the position he had secured for it. The syndicalist ideal of 'one big union' as the vehicle for the realisation of the workers' republic, though it looked promising with the revival of ITGWU fortunes from 1917, failed to materialise, and in the end fell victim to the disruptive power of Jim Larkin's mercurial personality and to the entrenchment of a socially conservative ruling class.

Recognition of the significance of his social and economic writings came quickly, if critically, from unlikely quarters – notably in 1920, when another Jesuit, Fr Lambert McKenna, published *The social teachings of James Connolly*. However, despite biographical studies by Desmond Ryan, Nora Connolly-O'Brien, R. M. Fox and others, the writings themselves remained unpublished until the 1960s. From late in that decade a new generation began to revisit his life and make his work available in the context of a new phase of political and social conflict in Ireland. There is no James Connolly archive as such. There is a valuable discussion of his letters and writings in Donal Nevin's *James Connolly, 'A full life'* (2005). Manuscript sources relating to his career and its aftermath are in the NLI (William O'Brien papers, Thomas Johnson papers, Cathal O'Shannon papers, Dublin trades council minutes, Adolphus Shiels papers) and UCD Archives (Thomas McPartlin papers, Desmond Ryan papers). An extensive bibliography is to be found in W. K. Anderson, *James Connolly and the Irish left* (1994), and T. Horikoshi (ed.), *The political writings of James Connolly* (1980) has a comprehensive list of his journalistic work.

Connolly's memory is preserved in many different forms in Ireland and elsewhere. One of Dublin's three main railway stations, that in Amiens Street, was named Connolly Station in his memory in 1966. On the eightieth anniversary of his execution (12 May 1996) a memorial by Eamonn O'Doherty, located near the Custom House in Dublin and facing Liberty Hall, was unveiled by the Irish president Mary Robinson. His name is borne by several trade union and Labour Party halls and buildings, including those of SIPTU (The Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union) in Cork, Shannon, Thurles, Tipperary, Tralee, and Waterford, and by streets in places including Ballina, Clonakilty, Middleton, and Sligo. There are well-known drawings and portraits of him by Seán O'Sullivan and Robert Ballagh (first exhibited in 1971; latterly in the NGI). A famous set of labour murals in what was originally the headquarters of the Dublin bakers' trade union, Four Provinces House, Harcourt Street, was destroyed when the building was demolished for development. A photographic record (in private hands) was made

of the murals, which included a fine representation of Connolly speaking at Belfast's docks. His Belfast years are also marked by a plaque on the Falls Road, where he and his family lived during 1911–13. A plaque in his honour was erected in June 1968 on George IV Bridge, near his birth-place in Cowgate, Edinburgh, through the efforts of the Edinburgh and District Trades Council. There is a fine bust of Connolly with a commemorative plaque in Troy, New York, where he spent the years 1903–5.

Written by Fergus A. D'Arcy

Sources: L. McKenna, *The social teachings of James Connolly* (1920); D. Ryan, *James Connolly: his life, work and writings* (1924); H. W. Lee and E. Archbold, *Social democracy in Britain* (1935); N. C. O'Brien, *James Connolly: portrait of a rebel father* (1935); R. M. Fox, *James Connolly: the forerunner* (1946); C. D. Greaves, *The life and times of James Connolly* (1961); O. D. Edwards and B. Ransom, *James Connolly: selected political writings* (1968); O. D. Edwards, *The mind of an activist: James Connolly* (1971); *James Connolly: selected writings*, ed. P. Berresford Ellis (1973); S. Levenson, *James Connolly: socialist, patriot and martyr* (1973); C. Reeve and A. B. Reeve, *James Connolly and the United States: the road to the 1916 rebellion* (1978); *The political writings of James Connolly*, ed. T. Horikoshi (1980) (incl. list of journalistic writings); H. Patterson, *Class conflict and sectarianism: the protestant working class and the Belfast labour movement, 1868–1920* (1980); B. Ransom, *Connolly's Marxism* (1980); R. D. Edwards, *James Connolly* (1981); James Connolly, *Collected works* (2 vols, 1987–8); A. Morgan, *James Connolly: a political biography* (1988); E. O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland* (1988); K. Allen, *The politics of James Connolly* (1990); W. K. Anderson, *James Connolly and the Irish left* (1994) (incl. bibliography); J. L. Hyland, *James Connolly* (1997); Donal Nevin, *James Connolly, 'a full life'* (2005)

Michael Davitt

Davitt, Michael (1846–1906), radical nationalist, was born 25 March 1846 in Straide, Co. Mayo, to Martin Davitt and Catherine Davitt (née Kielty), small farmers. Martin had been an ardent O’Connellite and Ribbonman. Both parents were pious Catholics who spoke Irish at home, though only the father was literate – in English and Irish. The rich core of affection and high-mindedness Davitt inherited from both parents formed a central part of his own personality. In September 1850 they were evicted for non-payment of rent and their cottage was burned down. Catherine was particularly distraught and refused to go to the poorhouse when she learned Michael would be separated from her. Memories of that terrible day fuelled Davitt’s lifelong sense of indignation and his exasperation at the Irish peasantry’s abject failure to resist such treatment. Asked much later in a fascinating sixteen-question questionnaire for his idea of happiness, he replied: ‘Ignorance of poverty or misery among men’ (TCD MS 9344/454).

The Davitts followed neighbours to the small textile town of Haslingden in Lancashire where, aged eleven, Michael lost his right arm in a mill accident. His parish priest agreed to his attending the Methodist school, the town’s best. There he flourished, adding evening classes at the mechanics’ institute, where he read newspapers and books on Irish history. In 1861 he began working for Haslingden’s postmaster/printer, and became particularly skilled at left-handed typesetting. A budding working-class intellectual, he was greatly influenced by a visit to Haslingden of the veteran English Chartist Ernest Jones – ‘the first man after my father whom I ever heard denouncing landlordism, not only in Ireland but in England’ (Moody, 21), and arguing that the interests of Irish nationalism and British democracy were identical.

Fenian and prisoner

In 1865, aged 19, Davitt joined the IRB. He quickly became ‘centre’ of the fifty-strong Rosendale circle, and in 1867 took a squad of young Haslingden Fenians to attack Chester castle; but the plot was betrayed, and they were lucky to get home safely. In 1868, ostensibly a pedlar, he was appointed IRB organising secretary and arms agent for England and Scotland. On 2 April 1870 he sent his parents to join his three sisters at Scranton, Pennsylvania, and on 14 May was arrested at Paddington railway station in London, carrying £153 to buy fifty pistols from Birmingham. He duly pleaded not guilty (as Fenian rules required), and on 18 July, after a widely reported, three-day trial at the Old Bailey, was sentenced to fifteen years’ penal servitude for treason-felony;

he declared that, if he ever regained his liberty, his services would be placed at Ireland's disposal.

After ten months at Millbank picking rope, he spent six and a half years at Dartmoor prison. Breaking stones and labouring outside in winter severely damaged his health, and he smuggled out a letter complaining of his treatment, which appeared in Dublin's *Freeman's Journal* on 3 September 1872. Occasionally American papers came his way, and he learned of the amnesty committee, the formation of which he had secretly suggested. On 18 December 1877 he was released on ticket of leave and immediately elected to the IRB supreme council for the north of England. He and three released Fenian soldiers, including Colour-sergeant Charles Heapy McCarthy, were hailed as national heroes when they reached Dublin on Sunday 13 January 1878, and Davitt made his first speech, acknowledging the reception. At a hotel breakfast two days later, Sgt McCarthy collapsed and died.

Only the Carmelite church in Clarendon St. would take his body, and the funeral procession to Glasnevin on 20 January was said to be the largest since O'Connell's. McCarthy's death boosted the amnesty campaign; and on 7 March at a crowded meeting at St James's Hall, Piccadilly, to raise money for McCarthy's family and other freed Fenians, Davitt spoke and, despite some shyness, was received rapturously. His speech formed the basis of his first publication, the forty-page pamphlet *The life of Michael Davitt written by himself*. It was now clear he could make a living by political writing and public speaking, and he embarked on a successful lecture tour of England and Scotland. On 26 January he returned to Mayo, accepting the invitation of James Daly (d. 1911), editor of the *Connaught Telegraph* and champion of Mayo's small farmers, to stay with him at Castlebar. What Davitt saw in Mayo clearly confirmed his prison ponderings that only the land question could unite all shades of Irish nationalist opinion.

The 'new departure'

Davitt's claim that he came out of Dartmoor with a plan to found the Land League was really retrospective wish-fulfilment. It was not until he met John Devoy after landing in New York (4 August 1878), in the first of ten American visits, that he was introduced to the credo of James Fintan Lalor, 'The soil of Ireland for the people of Ireland', to be secured by a general rent strike. Davitt's public lectures for Clan na Gael were so successful that they were extended through New England and the Midwest. On 25 October Devoy published a cable in the New York *Herald*, intended for Charles Stewart Parnell, promising Irish-American support for a more aggressive, non-sectarian parliamentary party embracing self-government and vigorous agitation for peasant proprietary. Davitt saw the huge political potential of this latest Fenian departure from contempt for parliamentary reform, which the Clan executive endorsed. However, Davitt failed to sell his 'new departure' to the IRB supreme council in Paris in January 1879. According to Devoy (there as special envoy), Charles Kickham, the blind and deaf president, exasperated Davitt so much that he burst into tears and left the room (although Devoy's plying the teetotal Davitt with table wine may also have had some effect).

To organise opposition to Irish landlordism Davitt helped found the National Land League of Mayo at Castlebar on 16 August; its manifesto was drafted by Davitt and declared 'the land of Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland'. This followed three months of meetings throughout Connacht organised by Davitt, the largest the Irishtown rally on 20 April 1879, attracting c.7,000 farmers from all over Mayo and beyond. Davitt persuaded Parnell to launch the Land League at the Imperial Hotel, Sackville St., Dublin, on 21 October. Parnell, the only protestant on the executive, was elected president, with Davitt one of three unpaid secretaries. The seven-man executive bravely blended Fenians and militant home rule MPs, while its committee of fifty-four comprised an imposing miscellany of Irish nationalists, newspaper editors,

and catholic priests. From December Davitt organised local branches and addressed meetings. By February 1881, he proudly recalled in 1902, there were 1,000 branches with *c.*200,000 members – tidy figures but uncheckable. On 14 March 1880 he organised a meeting in Phoenix Park, Dublin, to demonstrate the community of interest between urban workers and farmers, and attracted perhaps 7,000.

In 1889 Davitt told the *Times*–Parnell commission that he had rejoined the IRB in 1878 ‘to convert it into a movement of open and constitutional action’, but he had apparently stopped attending their meetings from autumn 1879 and was expelled from the supreme council on 8 May 1880. Yet there was always ambiguity in his attitude to violence as a last resort. He carefully emphasised the importance of avoiding violence in resisting unfair rents, and, though he did not invent the phrase ‘passive resistance’, he popularised it long before Arthur Griffith or Gandhi. But he did not disdain secretly resuming the import of arms for hard-pressed tenants, even claiming privately in February 1880 to have directed their use. This was probably to make sure the peasantry had the wherewithal to resist intimidation by police or army rather than to engineer the outright revolution that many Irish and American Fenians hoped for. On 19 November 1879 he was arrested for having used seditious language at a land meeting at Gurteen, Co. Sligo, but the trial was abandoned.

The League’s impact was already clear in the triumph of Parnellites in the April 1880 general election, and Davitt also encouraged the League to contest elections for poor law guardians. He believed strongly in the importance of advertising the League abroad. On 10 February 1880, returning from a few days in Paris, he and Patrick Egan, the treasurer, were delegates in London at the first meeting of Charles Bradlaugh’s Land Law Reform Association, which expressed warm English sympathy with the Irish National Land League. Davitt’s ‘Appeal to the Irish race’ of September 1879 was a manifesto mainly for Americans, and his regular pieces in Patrick Ford’s *Irish World* and John Boyle O’Reilly’s *Boston Pilot* from October 1879 provided both useful publicity and much-needed personal income. From 19 May 1880 he skilfully directed the League’s activities on both sides of the Atlantic for six months from his office in Washington Square, New York, as elected secretary of the ‘Irish National Land and Industrial League of the United States’ reinforced by a twelve-week tour as far west as California.

His mother’s sudden death at Manayunk on 18 July 1880 left him wracked with guilt, as he had earlier been at his father’s death in December 1871: Davitt blamed himself for forcing them into exile. ‘What a miserable life mine has been no one knows but myself’ he told his diary (DN/7, 18–20 July), which he kept fairly regularly from 1878. He paid her funeral expenses and debts, but apparently could not afford to take her remains home to Ireland.

The crisis of 1881–2

Davitt was back in Dublin on 22 November 1880 and full of optimism. On 16 December he boasted to Devoy that the League now virtually ruled Ireland, with league courts, nearly 200,000 members, organisers in all four provinces, and an income of £100 a day. In response, Gladstone’s government promised both repression and remedies, and on 24 January 1881 the chief secretary, W. E. Forster, introduced a coercion bill to arrest ‘village tyrants’ without trial. Davitt proposed a general rent strike and the setting up of a national convention in Dublin by the Irish parliamentary party, but found little support.

With their arrest imminent, on 26 January Davitt induced the executive to create the Ladies’ Irish National Land League, despite strong opposition from Parnell, John Dillon (1851–1927), and Thomas Brennan (now full-time secretary). One of the first Irish women’s political organisations, it was led by Parnell’s younger sister Anna. On 2 February, after a speech at Kilbrin, Co.

Cork, warning of ‘the wolfdog of Irish vengeance’ bounding over the Atlantic, Davitt’s ticket of leave was revoked, and he was sent to Portland prison, Dorset. However, this time he was given a warm, well-lighted cell in the infirmary, books – even the memoirs of Wolfe Tone – and writing paper. Here he began drafting on 12 September the ‘Jottings in solitary’ which grew into *Leaves from a prison diary; or, Lectures to a ‘solitary’ audience* (2 vols, 1885). Addressed to his pet blackbird Joe, it was his first and most original book, free from passionate polemics, providing an interesting analysis of Dartmoor criminals, rare prison memoirs, and an exploration of social evils.

Not permitted newspapers or letters, he was virtually oblivious of events outside – apparently even of the Land League’s suppression on 20 October 1881 and his own election, unopposed, for Co. Meath on 22 February 1882 (overturned because he was a convict). Nor did he hear of the ‘Kilmainham treaty’ until Parnell, Dillon and J. J. O’Kelly (1845–1906) collected him on 6 May 1882 with the astonishing news that he could thank the treaty for a new ticket of leave, and that land agitation was to be ended in return for an amendment of the recent land act. Returning to London in high spirits, their joy was shattered within hours by news of the Invincibles’ assassination of the new chief secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the under-secretary, T. H. Burke. ‘My God! Have I got out of Portland for this? For the first time in my life I despair’ (Henry George, jr, *Life of Henry George* (1900), 373). Davitt immediately denounced this ‘horrible deed’ in a manifesto signed with Parnell and Dillon. He was interviewed on 11 May by Howard Vincent of the CID, who reported that Davitt declared he was no longer a Fenian and was prepared to assist the authorities by every means in his power; he believed his own life was in danger and that only imprisonment had saved him from assassination.

His campaign to save the Land League failed, despite desperately mustering support in America in June/July for a broader ‘National Land and Industrial Union of Ireland’. This carried no weight with Parnell, who took ruthless advantage of Davitt’s conversion to land nationalisation, which he had rashly announced in Liverpool on 6 June. This was the fruit of Henry George’s *Progress and poverty*, which he read four times, and discussions with George on the land question. Parnell invited Davitt to his Avondale estate in Co. Wicklow, along with Dillon and Brennan, on 13 September 1882 and adroitly engineered the ‘Avondale treaty’. It was Davitt’s last chance to reassert his old authority, but he was outmanoeuvred by Parnell. Davitt agreed to a new body, the National League, which was supposed to embody a compromise on land policy, but allowed Parnell to define this in the programme. Above all, he failed to have its council made a wholly elected body. The sequel to this phase of his career, however, was not entirely an anti-climax: he was always busy, in five main areas.

Attacks on landlordism

These continued for the rest of Davitt’s life, even after the arrears act of 18 August 1882 (amending the 1881 land act) enabled the poorest tenants to have their rents fixed by the land courts. An ‘inflammatory speech’ at Navan on 26 November 1882 earned him another seventeen weeks’ imprisonment – his only spell in an Irish gaol, Richmond bridewell – after refusing to pay recognisances of £1,100 for twelve months’ good behaviour.

1887 was a particularly turbulent year with 3,869 evictions, and Davitt joined the Plan of Campaign launched by Dillon, T. C. Harrington and William O’Brien, to force rent abatement on landlords after shrinking agricultural prices increased the burden of land court rents. In December 1886 during his fourth American tour he married Mary Yore of St Joseph, Michigan, ‘a nice quiet little girl . . . 24, slightly built, not handsome, but good looking enough for me . . . She is a very religious and retiring girl and I am satisfied she will make me a very good little wife’

(8 Oct. 1886, 62/1). Since she was portionless, Davitt allowed her to accept, as a £400 wedding gift from friends, the 'Land League Cottage' at Ballybrack, south Co. Dublin; for the queen's Golden Jubilee she fashioned a banner reading 'Evictoria' to hang over the front door. In intellect and beauty she was no match for his cousin Beatrice Walshe, foundation member of the Ladies' Land League, to whom Devoy claimed Davitt had been engaged. But Mary provided Davitt with the warm nest of catholic home life and affection he had not enjoyed since childhood, together with five children. Occasionally she helped in the campaign. Returning with him on 24 July to distribute medals and money rewards at Bodyke in Co. Clare, where on 2 June he had wished to God 'we had the . . . weapons by which freemen in America and elsewhere have struck down tyranny' (*Freeman's Journal*, 3 June 1887), Mary eloquently rejected the Ennis magistrate's claim that the women he sent to prison had acted in an 'unwomanly' manner: 'Surely women are never more true to the instincts of our sex than when they stand up in defence of the homestead wherein their greatest influence may be said to lie' (*Irish Times*, 25 July 1887).

Davitt's judicious, seven-day defence of himself and the Land League before the 'Parnellism and crime' commission (24–31 October 1889) was outstanding (published as *The defence of the Land League* (1891)). The president, Sir James Hannen, congratulated him on putting his arguments 'with great force and ability'.

On 25 October 1889 he joined the council of the Tenants' Defence Association, formed to continue the Plan of Campaign against organised landlord resistance. This struggle continued during the 1890s, and Davitt joined O'Brien's United Irish League, launched on 23 January 1898 at Westport, Co. Mayo, to redistribute large estates to small tillage farmers. He became one of the League's stalwarts and its president for Connacht. Efforts by Healyite priests to prevent the election of UIL candidates in the first elections under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, contributed to his growing exasperation with the church. In 1900 he secured the election for Mayo South of John O'Donnell, the imprisoned UIL secretary, ahead of Cumann na nGaedheal's Maj. John MacBride.

Davitt regarded the 1903 (Wyndham) land bill as the latest tory plot for killing home rule with kindness; his last pamphlet, *Some suggestions on a final settlement of the land question* (October 1902), complained it was over-generous to landlords, and that the UIL constitution required *compulsory* purchase for agricultural labourers and town workers (two groups often neglected by the land movement). Yet, always a democrat, he accepted the overwhelming support for the bill at the national convention in April. His last and longest book (752 pages) was *The fall of feudalism, or the story of the Land League revolution*, published in May 1904. In it he warmly saluted Anna Parnell's 'thorough revolutionary spirit' and was astonished when she accused him of 'several wanton, malicious, and impudent libels on me'. But he did not live to see her jaundiced, 70,000-word 'The tale of a great sham', serialised in O'Brien's *Irish Peasant* a year after his death, which rubbished his book as 'one of the greatest acts of treachery known in the published history of the world' (*The tale of a great sham*, ed. Dana Hearne (1986), 23, 25, 27, 32).

Journalism and trade unionism

Davitt still depended precariously on freelancing for a living, and in October 1883 added Joseph Winter's Melbourne Catholic *Advocate* to the five American and one Canadian newspaper he wrote for. Despite financial difficulties he resisted all proposals to pay him a tribute, noting in his diary: 'If human happiness is at all attainable in this world, it is by disowning & not receiving favours. Ireland shall owe me – and not me Ireland' (6 May 1884, 9441/2). He set off with Baedeker guidebooks on a two-year tour of the Continent and beyond and, after visiting Louis Kossuth (a childhood hero) in Turin, attended two special masses conducted by the pope in the

Sistine chapel, though the British embassy ensured he did not receive a private audience. He got as far as Egypt and Palestine, where he entered Jerusalem on horseback on Palm Sunday.

On 26 September 1890 in London he launched *Labour World* as a sequel to the halfpenny weekly *Democrat* which he, Helen Taylor (John Stuart Mill's stepdaughter), and William Saunders had published in London from October 1884. *Labour World* was a pioneering penny weekly, which assembled labour news worldwide, and its second issue sold 60,000 copies. Davitt told Archbishop Thomas Croke that only the Parnell split, which led him to turn it into a strongly anti-Parnellite organ, had ruined it. A devout catholic, Davitt had become alienated from Parnell, who had lied to him about the affair with Katherine O'Shea and his editorial of 22 November, advising Parnell to retire temporarily, went unheeded. On 25 April 1891 H. W. Massingham succeeded him as editor, and in May Davitt tried to get to Australia, taking his family as far as California, but in the end settling for lectures in America and Canada.

He also found time for other interests, such as sport. On 1 November 1884 he became with Parnell and Croke a founding patron of the GAA, and wrote the preface to the GAA rule book (1888). On 20 March 1892 he laid a fresh sod of Donegal shamrocks at the opening of Glasgow Celtic's new stadium, and became a club patron and occasionally an enthusiastic spectator at Celtic Park. He was also active in trade unionism in Ireland and Britain, notably the 1889 Liverpool dock strike, and helped organise the first Irish trade union congress in 1894. He also took the 1898 centenary of the 1798 rebellion very seriously and, when Mary's inheritance arrived, contributed more than half the cost (£100) and the solemn inscription on the memorial to the martyrs of 1798 unveiled outside Dublin's old Newgate prison on 4 August 1904.

In 1895 he was exhausted by an eight-and-a-half-month tour (with his Kodak camera) of Australia and New Zealand. He gave seventy lectures, some to Irish bush audiences as small as 400, in contrast to the tens of thousands he recalled addressing in Trafalgar Square with John Burns. Warmly welcomed everywhere, he was excited by the world's first labour parties in 'the most progressive countries in the world' and by Irish successes in colonial farming and politics.

However, money still worried him, especially after suffering bankruptcy in 1892–4, until Mary's wealthy Californian aunt helped them financially after Davitt's rash attempt to become a London mine agent in 1896–7; in 1904, when he was contemplating migrating in despair to America, Mary's aunt bequeathed her £90,000, though 'the priests' apparently got £60,000. 'Thus all my family are now well provided for, and I feel a free man for the first time in my life' (H. M. Hyndman, *Further reminiscences* (1912), 56).

Home rule and parliament

Davitt's parliamentary career began with his maiden speech (at 46) on 11 April 1893 during the second reading of Gladstone's second home rule bill. On 15 February 1886 (the year he also became a Dublin sheriff) he voted for home rule as a member of Dublin corporation, but in 1887 told Wilfrid Blunt he was keeping out of parliament, not only because he could not hold his tongue about land nationalisation, but because he declined to take the oath of allegiance. That had not, however, stopped him from swapping abuse with Parnell in two by-elections, having been appointed secretary of the New National Federation (10 March 1891), nor from contesting and narrowly losing on 23 December a bitter Waterford city by-election against John Redmond. Even when he was elected for Meath North in July 1892, he was unseated after costly court proceedings found clerical interference by Bishop Thomas Nulty.

Having taken the oath of allegiance in February 1893 after his election for Cork North-East, he contributed an impressive speech (twenty-one columns in Hansard) to the marathon home rule debate. But his triumph was short-lived. His insolvency in May obliged him to resign

from parliament. An undischarged bankrupt until June 1894, he managed to pay debts totalling £1,800, apparently with Croke's help. Compared to middle-class colleagues, his nationalism had already cost him dearly, though he must have enjoyed Edna Lyall's rapt celebration of him in her novel *Doreen: the story of a singer* (1894).

In 1895 he was again elected, while in Australia, to two seats – Kerry East and Mayo South – 'without my leave'. He sold Land League Cottage ('this costly white elephant') and moved his family to 67 Park Road, Battersea, London. Still as energetic, persistent and outspoken as ever, he became virtually the parliamentary conscience of the whole British empire. Justin McCarthy judged him a very successful parliamentarian, much admired for his 'sweet and courteous manners and [his] unpretentious disinterestedness' (*Reminiscences* (1899), 405). T. P. O'Connor agreed: 'A soft rich voice, a manner well controlled, a moderation of stating his case, a careful arrangement of all material he comes down with. He is listened to eagerly whenever he rises' (*T. P.'s Weekly*, cited in *Advocate* (Melbourne), 1 Oct. 1904, 7).

In 1898 Davitt spoke 176 times in the house, usually briefly, with succinct questions on many topics (double the score of the voluble Tim Healy), including the fate of imprisoned and exiled nationalists across the globe. Dr Sun Yat-sen thanked him (from Tokyo) for asking on 5 April 1898 about his banishment from Hong Kong.

The agreement over the Venezuela–British Guinea border signed in September 1896 evidently owed something to him. But the Anglo–American treaty of February 1897 for compulsory arbitration of unresolved disputes was another matter; in April 1897 Davitt rushed over to America, rousing Irish-American objections and persuading the senate not to ratify it.

In May 1897 Oscar Wilde, who asked Davitt to write a preface to *The ballad of Reading gaol*, thanked him for raising questions about his prison conditions in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* (27 May 1897): 'No one knows better than yourself how terrible life is in an English prison' (Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis (ed.), *Complete letters of Oscar Wilde* (2000), 870–71). Davitt's outstanding parliamentary triumph was the 1898 prisons bill. On 28 March he scathingly denounced its 'small and timid spirit of progress' (*Hansard* 4, lv, col. 1185). His resolution reinforced by meeting Irish political prisoners at Dartmoor and Portland over Easter weekend, he persuaded the commons to make several important amendments, including adding a doctor skilled in mental disease to the prison commission. T. P. O'Connor credited Davitt with passing the amended bill, and congratulated him on taking so noble a revenge for many years of suffering, noting that it 'will have the effect of destroying for ever the system of scientific suffering in our prisons' (*Hansard* 4, lvi, col. 55) For once, Davitt admitted satisfaction with his actions.

He supported Dillon's election to leadership of the Irish party on 18 February, and helped him organise the Irish Race Convention 1–3 September 1897, though it failed to cement party unity. In 1898 his *Life and progress in Australasia* was published to mostly rave reviews. In the London *Sunday Weekly Sun* O'Connor hoped that the 'extreme and almost morbid self-distrust' (20 Feb. 1895, 46), which he believed had inhibited Davitt's development and prosperity, would be cured by the book's success but, in the event, its sales were disappointing.

South Africa

On 8 June 1899 Davitt delivered a precocious onslaught on British war crimes at Omdurman, claiming that after the battle Sudanese and Egyptian soldiers under British officers had slaughtered women and children in the nearby town. Over the next four months he watched with dismay as the British government prepared for war in South Africa. Finally, when the appropriation bill was debated on 25 October 1899, Davitt announced his resignation from the house in protest, claiming that the war 'would rank in history as the greatest crime of the nineteenth century'

(*Hansard* 4, lxxvii, col. 614–22). A member of the Irish Transvaal Committee, at a rally of over 20,000 in Beresford Place, Dublin, on 1 October he had denounced Britain's desire to 'gobble up the two little republics'. Covering the war for Hearst's *New York Journal* and other American papers and the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* from the Boer side, he regularly denounced British cruelty and duplicity. In contrast, he was profoundly impressed by Boer military courage: 'this deep, all-pervading love of liberty and country, and hatred of oppression . . . made the war the most memorable ever fought for nationality and freedom' (*The Boer fight for freedom*, v). Davitt was home in July 1900, writing *The Boer fight for freedom* in response to Conan Doyle's *The great Boer war*. By now his alienation from English society was complete. In 1898 he had already told the *New York Herald* that all his ties, except birth and politics, were American. His parents were buried there, and his wife was American; 'my children are now in America, and my only regret is that my two boys are not old enough to fight for Old Glory' (*New York Herald*, 15 Jan. 1898).

Russia, anti-Semitism, and Tolstoy

On 10 May 1903 Hearst's *New York Journal* urgently asked Davitt to investigate the recent massacre at Kishinev in Bessarabia and the recrudescence of Russian anti-Semitism. Davitt's investigations led to his *Within the pale: the true story of anti-Semitic persecution in Russia* (1903). After his arrival in New York with his family in 1904, Hearst immediately invited him to visit Russia again. On 9 June he met Tolstoy, who congratulated him on going to prison for Irish tenants. They found they had much in common – especially admiration for Henry George and for Australian and New Zealand democracy. They met again six months later when Davitt returned to report on the 1905 revolution. Tolstoy, who admired Davitt's naturalness and honesty, warmly welcomed him and informed him that Russia wanted economic rather than political revolution, brought about 'by sacrifice such as Mr Dayvitt [sic] has made'. Asked by Tolstoy about his religious beliefs, Davitt replied: 'I'm a free catholic, recognising neither the pope nor the priests' (Dusan Makovicky, *Yasnaya Polyana notes*, Literary Heritage Series, xc, book 1 (Moscow, 1979), 139–40). In the last months of his life his relations with the catholic hierarchy were severely strained by his bitter quarrel with Bishop Thomas Edward O'Dwyer of Limerick over education, and his conviction that universal free and secular education in America was 'the best all-round plan yet devised' (*Freeman's Journal*, 22 Jan. 1906).

His efforts early in 1906 to establish a new paper, the *Irish Democrat*, were interrupted by illness after a dental operation. Blood poisoning set in and he died just after midnight, on 31 May 1906 at Lower Mount St. private hospital, Dublin. He was taken the same day to St Teresa's, the Carmelite church that had accepted McCarthy's remains twenty-eight years previously, and over 200,000 people shuffled past his coffin to pay their respects.

Reputation

Davitt died with his dogged optimism about home rule reinforced by the Liberal/Labour landslide in the January 1906 election, when he finally made peace with Keir Hardie (speaking for him at Merthyr), after their long alienation over Parnell, and over Davitt's dependence on the Liberals. But he had also spoken, among many others, for John Burns and Henry Hyndman, who were not in the Labour Representation Committee, even threatening to resign from the nationalist party if it opposed Hyndman. Davitt joined in the great victory celebration at Queen's Hall on 16 February. Hardie called him 'a thoroughly good and great man' and declared that 'the people of Ireland owe more to him than to any of the rebel chiefs of their race'. In the marvellous letter which Arthur Griffith published after the *Freeman's Journal* rejected it, Francis

Sheehy-Skeffington argued that Davitt was in some respects even greater than Parnell: 'Greater in his comprehensive sympathy with the oppressed all the world over . . . greater in the untarnished selfishness of his devotion to his country's cause; greater, above all, is his absolute sincerity and straightforwardness' (*Sinn Féin*, 9 June 1906). The *Manchester Guardian* credited him with bringing 'a great motive force' to Irish politics; his foundation of the Land League 'meant nothing less than the reconstruction of a whole society' (31 May 1905).

In his will (1 February 1904) Davitt left all his property to his wife, and stipulated that he be buried at Straide 'without any funeral demonstration'. That did not prevent a procession over a mile long to the old graveyard, with prayers but no oration and no sign of senior clergy. It was a unique Irish funeral for a unique Irishman. He stipulated that his diaries were only to be published with his wife's permission and that nothing 'harsh or censorious, written in them about any person, dead or alive, who has ever worked for Ireland, be printed, published or used, so as to pain any friend or relative. To all my friends I leave kind thoughts; to my enemies the fullest possible forgiveness, and to Ireland the undying prayer for the absolute freedom and independence which it was my life's ambition to try and obtain for her' (*Freeman's Journal*, 1 June 1906).

An oil portrait by William Orpen is in Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane, and his black chalk sketch in the NGI. Apart from the diaries, Davitt kept a huge collection of letters, as well as thirty-three volumes of press cuttings and illustrations, added to by Mary, who sought original copies of his correspondence with many people, Dillon included. Their survival is due to three of their five children, Eileen Davitt (1892–1974), a schoolteacher, Dr Robert Emmet Davitt (1899–1981), and Cahir Davitt, president of the high court, who deposited them with TCD in 1978. His other children were Kathleen (1888–95) and Michael (1890–1928), a sponsor of the Irish National Aid Association in 1916.

Written by Noel McLachlan

Sources: Davitt papers, TCD; Francis Sheehy Skeffington, *Michael Davitt; revolutionary, agitator, and labour leader* (1908); Valeria Emmanuilovna Kunina, *Maikl Devitt, syn irlandskogo naroda: stranitsy i borby* (Moscow, 1973); T. W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish revolution 1846–82* (1981) (photos); John Dunleavy, *Michael Davitt and Haslingden* (1997); Carla King, *Michael Davitt* (1999); Sean McConville, *Irish political prisoners, 1848–1922* (2003); outline family tree of the Davitt family, 1796–2000, compiled by Patrick M. Davitt; assistance from Fr Thomas Davitt, C.M.

James Larkin

Larkin, James (1874–1947), labour leader, was born 28 January 1874 at 41 Combermere St., Toxteth, Liverpool, England, second eldest of three sons and three daughters of James Larkin, foundry labourer, and Mary Ann Larkin (née McNulty, McAnulty, or McNalty). His birth certificate gave no middle name, though he was married as James Joseph.

Family and early life

Both his parents were recent immigrants of Irish catholic tenant-farmer stock – his father hailed from Lower Killeavy, south Armagh, and his mother from Burren, south Down – and Larkin was to be a lifelong Irish nationalist. From 1909 at latest, he always insisted that he was an Ulsterman, born in the maternal family homestead at Tamnaharry, near Burren. Larkin received a ‘poverty-stricken’ education at Our Lady of Mount Carmel catholic church school, Chipping St., Liverpool. At the age of seven he became a ‘half-timer’ – a pupil permitted to divide the day between lessons and work – and left school aged 11. After employment as a butcher’s assistant, paper-hanger, french polisher, engineering apprentice, and seaman, he worked on the Liverpool docks from about 1890.

A brash, temperamental, and restless adolescent, from his early teens Larkin took off tramping on foot away from home, and stowed away for the Americas in 1893 and 1901. A serious side to his personality emerged during convalescence from a dockland accident, when he studied socialism, and during a brief imprisonment in New York after his discovery as a stowaway. On being deported to Liverpool in 1893, he joined the Independent Labour Party (ILP), and later the Clarion movement, and evolved as a fairly typical member of the ILP, for whom socialism was a humanist religion rather than a science, driven by moral outrage and underpinned by a personal code of ethics. He did not pilfer ship’s cargo, gamble, drink, or smoke – though he would later enjoy a cigar or a pipe. His free time was given to the ILP, charitable work in the slums, and reading. With his natural commanding presence, other workers would often seek his advice. In 1903 he became a foreman docker with T. & J. Harrison, a permanent post paying £3. 10s. per week. In the same year, in a civil ceremony, he married Elizabeth Brown, daughter of Robert Brown, 58 Ashbourne Road, Toxteth Park, a baptist lay-preacher who ran a dockland temperance café which Larkin frequented. The couple lived with Larkin’s widowed mother at 37 Roche St., Toxteth Park. It was a marriage of ‘chalk and cheese’. Elizabeth was given to home-making and good works, and grew to yearn for a quiet life. They would have four sons: James (1904–69), Denis (1908–87), Fintan (1909–81), and Barney (1914–78).

Trade unionist, 1898–1913

Larkin initially held the socialist view of trade unions as palliatives of capitalism. Though he helped to form a branch of the Workers' Union in Liverpool in 1898, only when obliged did he join the National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL) in 1901. In 1905 he struck with colleagues, and was recognised as a powerful leader and orator in the struggle. The strike cost him his job, and he accepted a post as an organiser with the NUDL, becoming a general organiser in 1906. After successful work in the north of England and Scotland, he was sent to Belfast in January 1907. In Belfast he adhered to the NUDL's policy of moderation, until rank and file spontaneity and strikebreaking by the employers caused him to unleash his instinctive militancy. After selective strikes (April–May) and escalating violence – Larkin himself was charged with assaulting a scab on 31 May but was ultimately acquitted – he called a general strike in Belfast port in June. Already his most celebrated talent, his oratory, had made a dramatic impact on the city. The generalised strike created a highly charged atmosphere. On 24 July the police mutinied and fraternised with the strikers, prompting the government to rush in troops. Larkin's willingness to generalise action also alarmed the NUDL general secretary, James Sexton, who took control of the strike and negotiated a weak settlement (August). Feeling humiliated in Belfast, Larkin turned to Dublin and the south. His leadership of further strikes of unskilled workers in Dublin and Cork (November, December 1908) stretched his strained relations with Sexton and led to his suspension as an NUDL official on 7 December.

On 28 December Larkin founded the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) from breakaway NUDL branches, arguing that Irish workers needed Irish unions. As general secretary, he would run the union in a dictatorial manner. Now his own boss, he revealed a streak of insecurity about finance, and pursued a restrained policy up to 1911. Moreover, he faced opposition from Sexton and conservative trade unionists. Elected to the parliamentary committee of the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC) in 1908, he failed to get the ITGWU recognised at the 1909 congress, but won admittance in 1910, and was reelected to the ITUC parliamentary committee in 1911. He also indicated a preference for trade-union politics and journalism over the mundane work of union organisation, and indulged increasingly his penchant for personal attacks on his enemies. His production (January–June 1910) of a Dublin edition of James Connolly's paper, the *Harp*, resulted in repeated threats of libel action. On 17 June 1910, with Sexton's connivance, he was sentenced to twelve months' hard labour for misappropriation of union funds raised in Cork in 1908. The harsh sentence won him badly needed sympathy and he was released after a public memorial on 1 October.

The extension of a wave of industrial unrest from Britain in the summer of 1911 enabled Larkin to come into his own. The ITGWU responded with growing confidence, expanding to about 20,000 members by 1913. In 1912 Larkin was elected to Dublin corporation as a labour councillor, and in 1913 became president of the ITUC. He enjoyed notable success as editor of the *Irish Worker*, which he issued from May 1911. The paper supported 'Irish-Ireland' organisations, and promoted syndicalist ideas such as sympathetic action, industrial unionism, and the development of a workers' counter-culture. In its headquarters, Liberty Hall, the ITGWU organised music, dance, and drama classes. In August 1913 it rented Croydon Park estate, where carnivals and sports were provided for union members. His theatricality and charisma made Larkin a folk hero, and he encouraged a shameless personality cult, on which he developed a dependence.

Dublin lockout, 1913–14

By the summer of 1913 Larkin was at the height of his power, and Dublin's puissant capitalist, William Martin Murphy, determined to resist him. When Larkin started to recruit his

employees on the trams and in Independent Newspapers, Murphy began dismissing ITGWU members. The union responded with a strike on 26 August 1913. In September 400 employers joined Murphy, locking out over 20,000 workers for belonging to, or supporting, the ITGWU. The scale of the conflict, violent clashes between workers and police, and repeated arrests of Larkin and other union leaders, made the struggle famous internationally. About £150,000 in foreign aid was sent to Dublin, the bulk of it from the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) and leftist British groups such as the Daily Herald League. Larkin believed that only sympathetic action in Britain could defeat the lockout, and he toured Britain, speaking to huge audiences in his 'Fiery cross' campaign. British union leaders were nervous of syndicalism, and Larkin's open identification with the 'rebels' of the British left, and personal abuse of his critics, alienated the TUC leadership. On 9 December a TUC special conference voted overwhelmingly against approving direct action to help Dublin. On 18 January 1914 Larkin was compelled to advise ITGWU members to return to work as best they could. The defeat had a shattering effect on him. Suffering from bouts of depression, he avoided union work, but took an increasing interest in nationalist politics. As commandant of the Irish Citizen Army, formed on 13 November 1913, he transformed the force from a picket-militia into a uniformed pocket army, and associated it with the Irish Volunteers. He also denounced partition and Irish support for Britain in the world war. His relations with ITGWU officials continued to deteriorate, and on 25 October he departed for New York on what was to be a world speaking tour. It was thought in Dublin that he would return after a few months recuperation. Whether he intended to come back is unclear.

America, 1914–23

Larkin disembarked in New York on 5 or 6 November 1914. His immediate contacts were with the Socialist Party of America (SPA) and Clan na Gael. The Clan arranged a few speaking appointments on the east coast, only to find that Larkin's confrontational style of oratory and propensity for personal abuse drew a negative response. He was better received on the west coast in the summer of 1915, but failed to make a living from it. In September he took a job as organiser for the Western Federation of Miners. This was not the work he wanted, and in October – through John Devoy of Clan na Gael – he arranged with German embassy attachés to receive money in return for anti-war agitation. In November 1915 he travelled to Chicago to give an oration at the funeral of Joe Hill, and made the city his base. Over the next two years German funding allowed him to issue an edition of the *Irish Worker* and travel extensively around the United States. After repeated appeals, Elizabeth and the two eldest boys joined him in December 1915, before returning to Dublin in August 1916. The ITGWU too felt neglected by him. With a secretive nature and a dislike of explaining himself, Larkin maintained little contact with the union. He was dismayed by Connolly's decision to lead the Citizen Army into the Easter rising; more for being upstaged than for any political differences with Connolly. After the rising he paid homage to Connolly. But in private he resented Connolly's status as a national martyr. After America's entry into the world war, Larkin was subjected to arrest and harassment from the authorities, and spoke of going to Russia. In October 1917, his career as a secret agent ended in Mexico city, when the Germans broke with him for refusing to undertake industrial sabotage.

After collaboration with the Industrial Workers of the World in San Francisco (December), Larkin settled in New York, where he joined the SPA. Jealousy and egotism caused him to co-found his own group, the New York James Connolly Socialist Club, on St Patrick's day 1918. He requisitioned a club premises by breaking into his SPA branch rooms in West 29th St. and moving in with the only possessions he needed: a mimeograph, a cooker, and a frying pan. When John Reed addressed the club in May on events in Russia, Larkin was captivated, and plunged

into transforming the SPA into a communist party. The Connolly Club became the national hub of the project, housing the editorial offices of the left SPA faction's *Revolutionary Age* and Reed's *Voice of Labor*. In February 1919 Larkin helped to organise a left section of the SPA in New York, in June he topped the poll in elections to the national left-wing council, and in September he supported the foundation of the Communist Labor Party. In practice, he remained a syndicalist, drawn superficially to communism by its apparent success. Theory – of any variety – or Bolshevik tactics meant little to him. On 8 November 1919 he was arrested in the 'red scare' that gripped America, and on 3 May 1920 sentenced to five to ten years imprisonment for 'criminal anarchy'. During his time in Sing Sing, Clinton, and Comstock prisons, he again achieved international renown as a political prisoner, and was honoured with election to the Moscow soviet in February 1922. He kept an eye on Ireland and violently denounced the Anglo–Irish treaty as a betrayal of national aims. When the 'red scare' abated, the governor of New York released him on a free pardon on 17 January 1923. He remained subject to police harrassment, was prevented from entering Canada, and on 21 April was deported to Southampton.

Communist, 1923–32

Arriving back in Dublin on 30 April 1923, Larkin had no great appetite for resuming work as ITGWU general secretary. Zinoviev had appealed to him to visit Moscow, and he nursed the ambition of becoming Russia's commercial representative in Ireland. However, his personality had acquired a negative, destructive mentality, suggesting that egotism had degenerated into egomania. He and Elizabeth separated, and for the rest of his days Larkin would live with his sister Delia and her husband, at 17 Gardiner Place and, from 1931, at 41 Wellington Road, Dublin. In May 1923 he toured ITGWU branches and repeatedly called on republicans to disarm, though he remained a vehement opponent of the Free State. On 3 June, in a sudden switch of tack, he denounced the ITGWU leadership in a bid to restore his absolute control of the union. Led by William O'Brien, who became an obsessive enemy, the ITGWU executive suspended him as general secretary. Offering no coherent rationalisation, Larkin went on to attack the Irish Labour Party and TUC leadership, reissued the *Irish Worker* (June), launched his own political movement, the Irish Worker League (IWL) (September), and fought a legal battle before the master of the rolls for control of the ITGWU, which he lost on 20 February 1924. On 14 March he was expelled from the union. On 15 June, acting against his advice, Larkin's brother, Peter, and son, young Jim, formed the Workers' Union of Ireland (WUI). Sixteen thousand ITGWU members, two-thirds of the membership in Dublin, defected to the new union.

Big Jim meanwhile was in Moscow, to attend congresses of the Comintern and Profintern. The Soviets believed his personality could be restrained by party discipline and that he would be an important asset in the English-speaking world. Larkin was elected to the executive committee of the Communist International, and became general secretary of the WUI on his return to Dublin in August. In January 1925 Peter Larkin signed an agreement in Moscow providing for the WUI to affiliate to the Profintern and the IWL to be turned into a communist party. Big Jim expected Russian financial aid, and preferment in Soviet commercial relations with the Free State in return; expectations that were largely disappointed.

Over the next four years, Larkin went to inordinate lengths to prevent the creation of a communist party. The split in the ITGWU had worsened his personality problems, as both sides exchanged merciless abuse. While Larkin could dish out the insults, he was remarkably sensitive himself. His jealousy and persecution complex had reached near-paranoiac proportions, he found it impossible to work with those who would not accept his leadership uncritically, and he had a fear of being accountable. He did mobilise the IWL for the September 1927 general

election. The League fielded three candidates, and Larkin himself was returned in Dublin North, the only communist ever elected to Dáil Éireann. The Labour Party prevented him from taking his seat as an undischarged bankrupt. Aware that the Comintern intended to bypass him through Irish students being trained as cadres in the International Lenin School in Moscow, and through its developing links with republicans, Larkin broke with the Soviets in 1929. He continued to admire the Soviet Union, while expressing misgivings privately about its increasing authoritarianism. He was also disillusioned with revolutionary trade unionism. Membership of the WUI had fallen to about 5,000 by 1929. After the break with Moscow, the WUI adopted a reformist policy, and membership rose to about 10,000 by 1940. Larkin still represented the IWL as 'communist', and as such was elected to Dublin corporation in September 1930 for electoral area no. 2, comprising Clontarf, Drumcondra, and Glasnevin. After a disappointing vote in the 1932 general election, and against the backdrop of violent hostility to communism from the catholic church, he finally abandoned revolutionism, discontinuing the *Irish Worker* after 12 March and retiring from the IWL.

Labourist, 1933–47

From 1933 to 1941 Larkin styled himself as 'Independent Labour'. He lost his seat on Dublin corporation in 1933, but was again elected for electoral area no. 2 in July 1936, and remained a councillor until his death. In municipal politics he took a robust interest in housing, served as chairman of the council's housing committee from 1939, and was instrumental in securing a government inquiry into housing in Dublin in 1939–40. In 1937 he narrowly secured a dáil seat in Dublin North-East, and entered Dáil Éireann for the first time, losing his seat in 1938. Larkin's admiration for de Valera was rewarded in January 1939 with his appointment to the commission on vocational organisation. An enigmatic nominee, he expressed reservations about the commission's fascist potential, attended few sessions, and did not sign the final report in 1943.

From 1936 Larkin enjoyed a gradual rehabilitation in the labour movement, and as he continued to mellow, he reestablished friendships with some old antagonists in the movement. In 1936 the Dublin trades council overrode the implacable opposition of the ITGWU to welcome the WUI into affiliation. Larkin served on the council executive from 1937, and was president of the council from 1943 to 1945. While the ITUC continued to reject the WUI's annual application for membership, Larkin attended annual congresses from 1937 to 1942 as a trades council delegate. Still a powerful speaker, he recovered some of his political credibility in campaigning against the wartime wage freeze and the Trade Union Act, 1941. Although his strictures on fellow trade-union leaders for their perfunctoriness towards these campaigns led to his exclusion from the ITUC annual congresses after 1942, he was admitted into the Labour Party in 1941, and elected again for Dublin North-East in 1943, losing his dáil seat in 1944. His entry to the parliamentary Labour Party caused the ITGWU to sponsor the breakaway National Labour Party. When the ITGWU left the ITUC in 1945, the WUI was quickly admitted. It claimed a membership of just over 9,000. Larkin's hopes of crowning his municipal career with a term as lord mayor of Dublin were frustrated, but he enjoyed the vicarious honour, in March 1946, of initiating the conferment of the freedom of the city on George Bernard Shaw. Larkin had always taken a lively interest in literature and drama, and was the subject of plays, poems, and songs in his lifetime. From 1939 he renewed acquaintance with Sean O'Casey, arguably his greatest admirer, who took him as the model for 'Red Jim' in his play 'The star turns red' (1940).

Notwithstanding their long estrangement, Elizabeth's death on 2 December 1945 had an unsettling effect on her husband, and in the summer of 1946 he told the ITUC that he was 'going down rapidly to the grave'. In late 1946, while supervising repairs in the WUI's Thomas Ashe

Hall, he fell through the floor and suffered internal injuries. He died in the Meath Hospital on 30 January 1947, and was buried in Glasnevin cemetery on 2 February. William Norton delivered the graveside oration. Young Jim succeeded him as general secretary of the WUI. Before his death Larkin was attended by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid and reconciled with the catholic church. Of material wealth, he left £4. 10s., the balance of his weekly wages, and a personal estate to the gross value of £16. 2s. 6d.

Assessment

Larkin revolutionised Irish trade unionism in two respects. In developing the ITGWU he delivered a terminal blow to the crippling policy of dependence on British labour, and laid the basis of the modern Irish labour movement. In industrial relations, he introduced a method of struggle that made possible the unionisation of unskilled workers, and he ennobled strike tactics into a morality of struggle. He is remembered especially not for what he did, but in image and idea; in the image of Dublin workers as a 'risen people' in 1913, and the idea of workers' solidarity as a code of honour. Significantly, he has been celebrated more in art and literature than in historical scholarship.

Archives and images

Larkin left no private papers or major writings, though he published an as yet unknown number of ephemeral articles, unsigned contributions, and editorials in various newspapers, notably the *Irish Worker*. The substantial material on Larkin in Russian state archives is cited in detail in *IHS*, xxxi (1998–9), 357–72. The numerous images of Larkin include a life-size bronze statue by Oisín Kelly in O'Connell St., Dublin; a bust by Mina Carney in the Hug Lane Gallery, Dublin; drawings by Sir William Orpen, done in Liberty Hall, Dublin, in 1913; a drawing of Larkin in 1942 by Seán O'Sullivan, now in the NGI; a pastel drawing of Larkin in 1946 by Seán Keating, now in Liberty Hall; a mural by Nano Reid of 'Larkin speaking in College Green, Dublin', a colour slide of which hangs in the Irish Labour History Museum, Dublin; two postal stamps, designed by Peter Wilbur, issued in 1974; numerous photographs; and representations on union banners and posters. Larkin has also featured in plays, poems, songs, and novels: see 'Larkin in literature and art', Donal Nevin (ed.), *James Larkin: lion of the fold* (1998), 406–11.

Written by Emmet O'Connor

Sources: NLI, William O'Brien papers; Rossiiskii Gosudartsvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoi Istorii (Russian State Archive for Social and Political History); Federal Bureau of Investigation file, 'James Larkin' (no call number), Washington, DC; NA, Workers' Union of Ireland file, 369T A, 369T B; *Irish Worker*, 12 Aug. 1911, 4 Jan. 1913, 9 Aug. 1913, 24–31 Oct. 1914, 5 Jan. 1924, 1–15 Nov. 1930, 27 June–18 July 1931; Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, *The attempt to smash the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union* (1924); *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 403–18, 456, 1594 (27 Apr.–25 May 1938); xci, 2460 (18 Nov. 1943); Irish Labour History Archive, *Dublin housing inquiry, 1939: verbatim report of proceedings* (1946); Emmet Larkin, *James Larkin: Irish labour leader, 1876–1947* (1965); C. Desmond Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union: the formative years, 1909–1923* (1982); John Gray, *City in revolt: James Larkin and the Belfast dock strike of 1907* (1985); John Newsinger, 'A lamp to guide your feet: Jim Larkin, the *Irish Worker*, and the Dublin working class', *European History Quarterly*, xx (1990); Donal Nevin (ed.), *James Larkin: lion of the fold* (1998), 63–99; Emmet O'Connor, 'Jim Larkin and the Communist Internationals, 1923–9', *IHS*, xxxi (1998–9), 357–72; Pádraig Yeates, *Lockout: Dublin 1913* (2000)

Douglas Hyde

Hyde, Douglas (de hÍde, Dubhghlas) (1860–1949), Gaelic scholar, founder of the Gaelic League, and first president of Ireland, was born 17 January 1860 in Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, fourth child among three sons and two daughters of the Rev. Arthur Hyde (descended from the Hydes of Castlehyde, Co. Cork), Church of Ireland rector of Kilmactrine, Co. Sligo, and Elizabeth Hyde (née Oldfield). In 1866 Arthur Hyde became rector of Tibohine, Co. Roscommon, resident at Frenchpark in that county. The Frenches (Lords de Freyne) were related to their rector, and allowed his family to shoot over their land. Douglas Hyde's biographers do not relate whether the Hyde family were directly affected by the bitter land agitation on the estate, carried on intermittently from the Plan of Campaign in the late 1880s to the early years of the twentieth century; however, Hyde remained close enough to the Frenches to lament the deaths of the then Lord de Freyne and his brother in the first world war, and the relationship was sometimes cited against him in internal Gaelic League disputes.

First contacts with the Irish language

At Frenchpark Douglas learned Irish by speaking to country people, keeping a notebook in which he phonetically transcribed words and expressions. He later began to collect songs and stories. He developed a considerable gift for languages; when asked what was his first language, Hyde said he dreamed in Irish. The area was no longer predominantly Irish-speaking, though the older people still knew the language; the 'Roscommon Irish' which Hyde spoke was often commented on adversely by purists. (Hyde believed it more important that Irish should be spoken at all than that it should be spoken correctly; if the language was kept alive by the former method, the latter would surely follow.) He was so close to a gamekeeper and old Fenian, Seamus Hart (d. 1875), that some commentators have suggested Hyde regarded Hart as a second father.

He was educated at home by his father after a brief and unhappy experience at school in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) in 1873. His upbringing distanced him from the more polished and anglicised urban protestant middle-class. (His father disliked the effect that the cosmopolitan atmosphere of TCD had on his two elder sons, claiming during an 1878 quarrel with Douglas that it had turned one son into an 'undisciplined scoundrel' and the other into 'an agnostic'.) Hyde maintained many characteristics of the Connacht squireen (including fondness for snipe-shooting and poteen – in the 1930s he remarked wistfully that the latter had

never seemed *really* illegal when it was the British government which collected the tax); casual acquaintances thought him a simple countryman. Relations with his father (who was brilliant but erratic and given to drinking-bouts) were tense; this encouraged identification with the Irish-speaking peasantry. The self-concealment involved fostered a sense, widely felt by those who came into contact with him, that Hyde had different personae which he expressed through different languages, and that a discernible sense of mischief underlay his high-mindedness; jokes were sometimes made linking Hyde to Robert Louis Stevenson's story *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, which Hyde himself greatly enjoyed.

Antiquarianism, poetry and nationalism

From the late 1870s Hyde collected Irish printed books, forming the nucleus of his collection at the auction of the books of John O'Daly, whom he knew slightly, after the bookseller's death. His first encounter with organised antiquarianism came when he joined the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language in 1877, in the process making the acquaintance of Thomas O'Neill Russell, a close associate in his early linguistic activities. Hyde joined the Gaelic Union in 1878 and served on its council. From 1879 he published original Irish-language poems in the quasi-separatist weeklies *The Shamrock* and *The Irishman* (both edited by Richard Pigott), under the pen-name 'An Craoibhín Aoibhinn' ('the pleasant little branch'). The pen name minimised possible repercussions from the aggressively nationalist views expressed; one poem celebrated the activities of the Craoibhín's (fictitious) grandfather in 1798 and lamented the failure of the rising. In later years the poem was revised to refer to the Fenians of the 1860s, with Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa as its protagonist. Hyde's views on the celebrated Fenian, Irish-speaker, and advocate of dynamite appear to have been ambivalent. An 1880 verse on Rossa's exhorting the unarmed peasantry to rise up against the soldiers can be read either as eulogy or as satire; but on a June 1891 visit to New York he went to see Rossa and passed the day with him. Hyde's admiration for the Fenian leader and Gaelic scholar John O'Mahony was less equivocal. In December 1887 he wrote a widely praised poem, 'O'Mahony's lament', in which the old Fenian is made to say that amid the wreckage of his life's struggles and hopes 'I have rescued nought but my honour only / and this aged, lonely and whitening head.'

In 1880 Hyde entered TCD as a divinity student, partly under pressure from his father (who wished at least one son to follow him in the ministry), partly because Irish was studied in the faculty of divinity. Though graduating BD (1885), he did not proceed to ordination because of religious doubts. Hyde remained a lifelong practising member of the Church of Ireland but ignored and disliked theological distinctions in general, in response to the bitter polemical controversies between and within denominations in nineteenth-century Ireland. (His father appears to have been mildly high-church, and Hyde's diary mentions occasional arguments with ultra-evangelicals.) He retained a general religious sense and a general view that 'materialism' was a bad thing; Hyde is frequently cited as a case-study in support of the theory that the Irish cultural revival was profoundly influenced by discontented sons of the Church of Ireland rectory, seeking to supersede or substitute for the theological braces of their parents.

Like other Trinity contemporaries with liberal/nationalist views, Hyde moved in literary circles around the Contemporary Club, the short-lived *Dublin University Review* (to which he contributed literary articles), and the Young Ireland Society. Hyde's diaries (excerpted in Dominic Daly, *The young Douglas Hyde* (1974)) are an important source for this milieu, which brought him into contact with a wide range of people ranging from unionists such as the scientist G. F. Fitzgerald, later a staunch opponent of the Gaelic League, to physical-force separatists, and where he encountered W. B. Yeats. Hyde assisted Yeats's collections of folk-tales, but their relations

were strained. Hyde found Yeats condescending; Yeats was disappointed that Hyde lacked his own sense of poetic mission and was prepared to subordinate both his poetic gift and individual self-assertion to the central mission of saving the Irish language. In his memoirs Yeats complains that while he fought for higher literary standards Hyde ‘sat dreaming of his old white cockatoo in County Roscommon’ (the cockatoo perches on Hyde’s shoulder in one of the photographs reproduced between pp 242–3 of the Dunlevy and Dunlevy biography); and the late poem ‘Coole Park, 1929’ claims that after his late 1890s collaboration with Lady Gregory (whom he tutored in Irish while she assisted him with his collection of folkloric material) and the literary movement, Hyde ‘had beaten into prose / That noble blade the Muses buckled on’.

Academic career; publications

In 1884 Hyde took a first class honours BA; he transferred to law in 1886, graduating LLB (1887) and LLD (1888), but never practised. Instead, he sought an academic career. Between October 1890 and May 1891 Hyde taught English at the University of New Brunswick as *locum tenens* for his college friend William Stockley, taking an interest in the language and customs of the local Micicete Indians. He returned via the north-eastern US, making contact with Irish literary circles in Boston and New York. Hyde hoped for an academic position, but his career was severely hindered by his concentration on spoken Irish – academic study of Irish then focused on medieval and early modern written Irish, with the spoken form seen as degenerate. Hyde also came to believe that his career had been injured by his nationalist views and that such Trinity dons as George Salmon (who had expressed strong dissent at a March 1885 Theological Society paper in which Hyde argued that the Church of Ireland ought to show greater sympathy to Irish nationalism), while outwardly friendly and even supplying him with references, had secretly worked against his applications for academic vacancies. Hyde’s suspicions have not been independently confirmed, but are not implausible; they contributed to his growing estrangement from Trinity.

From 1889 Hyde published numerous bilingual collections of Connacht folk tales and folk poetry. The best-known are *Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta* (1889), *Love songs of Connaught* (1893), *Poems ascribed to Raftery* (1909), and *Religious songs of Connacht* (1906). Previous Irish folklorists freely rewrote the material they collected and ignored its provenance; Hyde deployed the more advanced techniques of Scots folklorists, setting new standards in reproducing the names, locations, and Hiberno-English speech of informants. Some of Hyde’s lyric translations from the Irish, such as ‘My grief on the sea’ are highly praised in their own right; there has been speculation that some of the Irish-language ‘original’ lyrics may also have been composed or improved by Hyde. A collection of his acknowledged original Irish verse, *Ubhla de’n Chraoibh*, was published in 1900. He also published a survey of early Irish literature (1895) and a *Literary history of Ireland* (1899). This last, the work of twenty years, deals exclusively with literature in Irish and expresses the view that the works of Irish writers in English cannot properly be called Irish literature; it remained a useful survey of the subject for many years after its publication.

‘De-anglicising Ireland’; the Gaelic League

In 1892 Hyde became president of the National Literary Society. His inaugural address, ‘The necessity for de-anglicising Ireland’, delivered on 25 November, argued that political nationalism, however necessary, had by propagating itself through English-language media, and drawing popular attention to debates at Westminster, blinded the Irish people to the fact that they were losing their national identity along with the language. In terminology reminiscent of Young Ireland (and with echoes of the Arnoldian belief in Celtic racial characteristics) Hyde declared

that the loss of the language had left the Irish people culturally impoverished and degraded, while their residual sense of Irishness left them both unable and unwilling to be completely absorbed by the arrogant and materialistic civilisation of England. Since the Irish could never become English they must recover their identity by reviving the Gaelic language and thereby re-establishing contact with their ancestral traditions. The lecture inspired the formation of the Gaelic League in July 1893; Hyde became its first president.

The paper drew on several articles Hyde had written over the years; his writings have been praised for their acute sense of cultural devastation through language loss (based on Hyde's own observations in Connacht) and criticised for conflating anglicisation and degeneration with inevitable products of modernisation (displacement of oral culture by mass-produced print media) or incidental changes in fashion (replacement of knee-breeches by trousers). Although Hyde saw the Irish language as the basis for an all-embracing national identity (part of its appeal lay in its offer to bridge the divisions between the 'two Irelands' caused by the land war and home rule controversies and the more recent divisions of the Parnell split, which had left nationalist Ireland demoralised and disheartened), his criticism of the Anglo-Irish tradition as imitative and superficial was exploited by aggressive polemicists such as D. P. Moran to identify 'Gael' and 'catholic'.

Hyde married (10 October 1893), in Liverpool, Lucy Cometina Kurtz, a wealthy Englishwoman of remote German descent. They had two daughters, Nuala (d. 1916 of tuberculosis) and Una. The marriage suffered from tensions caused by Lucy's belief that the Gaelic League was exploiting and demeaning Hyde; she came to detest the League, the language, and the Roscommon countryside where they lived. (They initially leased Ratra House near Frenchpark from the de Freyne estate; when the estate was sold under the Wyndham land act the Gaelic League bought the freehold and presented it to Hyde, to the despair of Lucy, who had tried to persuade him to sell up and move to Dublin.) A few years after marriage she became a chronic invalid. Her ill health (possibly neurasthenia) persisted until her death in 1938; Hyde devoted considerable effort to caring for her.

Unlike earlier revivalist groups, the League sought mass membership. In 1899 Hyde organised resistance to the attempts of the Trinity academics J. P. Mahaffy and Robert Atkinson to remove Irish from the school curriculum; this aroused public interest and helped make the League a mass organisation. Hyde's 1903 satirical play 'Pleusgadh na bulgóide' ('the bursting of the bubble') depicts 'Magaffy' and 'Hatkin' magically compelled to speak Irish. Between 1901 and 1905 Hyde wrote several plays in Irish, in extensive though under-acknowledged collaboration with Lady Gregory. On 21 October 1901 his comedy 'Casadh an tsúgáin' ('The twisting of the rope') became the first all-Irish play to receive theatrical production. His other plays were 'An tincéar agus an tsídheóg', first performed in the Dublin garden of George Moore on 19 May 1902, with Sinéad Flanagan (later de Valera) as the sídheóg, 'An pósadh' (1902), 'An naomh ar iarraidh' (1902/3), 'Dráma breithe Chríosta' (1902; which attracted some hostility from catholic and protestant clerics both for dramatising the Nativity and for folkloric additions to the Gospel narrative), 'Teach na mBocht' (1902; later reworked by Gregory as 'The workhouse ward'), 'Rí Séamas' (reworked as Gregory's 'White cockade'), 'An cleamhnas' (1904), and 'Maistín an Bhéarla' (1905; a savage depiction of the mistreatment of Irish-speaking schoolchildren by a monoglot English-speaking schoolmaster), which concluded his main period of dramatic productivity. Hyde himself sometimes acted in such roles as the disreputable Connacht poet who tries to seduce a Munster bride in 'Casadh an tsúgáin' and the benevolent ghost of Raftery in 'An pósadh'. Daniel Corkery later recalled (in an article honouring Hyde's nomination as president of Ireland) that witnessing Hyde in a 1903 Dublin performance of the latter play was the first time he had seen a living writer. For Corkery, and many others like him, such experiences confirmed

the view of Hyde as the ideal of a writer from an ascendancy background who had come to identify with the people; although intended to do him honour, such views exaggerated the extent of his supposed early alienation from 'the people' and ignored the extent to which he retained contact with his protestant and small-gentry roots.

The League and politics

Hyde's presidency of the League was marked by a series of balancing acts aimed at keeping the League from being torn apart by rival political and linguistic factions. In 1904 he refused a nationalist seat in parliament offered by John Redmond (a classic example of the Irish parliamentary party's habit of attempting to take over independent grassroots organisations and turn them into its auxiliaries). Hyde maintained immense personal popularity, greatly assisted by personal charm and diplomacy and by occasional threats to resign if internal feuds were not resolved. (Acid comments about Munster dialect, separatist 'footpads', and clericalists – three groups which were not coextensive but sometimes overlapped, particularly in the Dublin-based Keating branch – were reserved for correspondence and his private jottings.)

Behind the scenes Hyde disliked the 1904–5 campaigns to insist that the post office accept parcels addressed in Irish, and that Irish-speakers be allowed to place their names on their carts in Irish rather than English (he feared that these would provoke government hostility which might seriously disrupt the League organisation and hinder its activities); he outwardly acquiesced in these tactics rather than alienate more enthusiastic activists, while privately working for compromise. Hyde remained a nationalist, but he had moved from the fiery separatism of his youth to see cultural revival as the precondition of national rebirth. Yeats humorously contrasts Hyde's diplomacy with the storms around the Abbey Theatre in 'At the Abbey Theatre' ('Dear Craobhin Aoibhinn, look into our case'). There was a certain barb to the humour; Hyde's concern to preserve the Gaelic League from damage by Abbey controversies led to such incidents as his public declaration – in response to an angry request from John Devoy – that the League did not endorse the Abbey's 1911 performances of Synge's 'Playboy' in America.

In 1905–6 Hyde undertook an American fund-raising lecture tour organised by John Quinn. Hyde's diplomacy (which included opportunistic appeals to catholic religious sentiment, and defusing possible Orange hostility in Toronto by emphasising his own genuine interest in Scots Gaelic) was eminently successful. His exhortations to save the language from the 'foul and glutinous jaws' of the 'demon of anglicisation' were well received, and the League's finances were replenished for years to come. (Hyde's placating of Devoy over the 'Playboy' was partly due to concern for another fundraising tour then being undertaken by Fionan Mac Coluim and Fr Michael O'Flanagan.)

In 1909 Hyde became first professor of Irish at UCD, holding the post until 1932; during his tenure of the post the Hydys wintered in Dublin and only spent the summer at Ratra, to Lucy's relief. He led the successful Gaelic League campaign to make Irish compulsory for matriculation in the new NUI. Hyde resigned the League's presidency in August 1915 after an ard-fheis voted to make it a specifically nationalist organisation. Although this had long been the case, Hyde chose to make a stand on his original vision that it should remain open to well-disposed unionists in the name of national reconciliation. The wisdom of the decision continues to provoke debate; Hyde later commented that the decision might after all have been for the best, while Eoin MacNeill, one of the principal movers behind the change, later believed that Hyde had been correct and that the Gaelic League had been severely damaged by linking its fortunes to a political movement.

Senator and president

Hyde continued to lecture at UCD with infectious enthusiasm and to publish, mainly on folkloric topics. He was coopted to the Free State senate in 1925 but defeated in the nationwide senate election later that year, partly because of a smear campaign against protestant senators who had voted for a procedural motion allowing a debate on divorce. (Hyde publicly declared that his vote had been misrepresented, and that he was opposed to divorce.) In 1931 he was nominated to the Irish Academy of Letters.

On retirement Hyde returned to Ratra full-time, caring for Lucy (whose illness severely strained family finances), shooting, and socialising with locals of all classes. David Thomson, then tutoring at Woodbrook House, whose Kirkwood owners were related to Hyde, met him occasionally at the de Freynes; in later years, having discovered from his reading Hyde's true stature, Thomson regretted that 'my ignorance prevented me from listening to him properly' and his only memory of 'this great man' was of a 'ludicrous' parlour game in which the octogenarian Hyde got down on all fours and took one end of a chocolate bar in his mouth, while girls bit off as much as they dared. In 1937 Hyde served briefly in the reconstituted senate, vacating his seat on becoming first president of Ireland under the 1937 constitution. (This possibility had been spoken of for some time, and the 1937 publications of the memoir volumes *Mise agus an Connradh* and *Mo thuras go hAmerice* may have been partly intended to bolster his image as an elder statesman.) Hyde was seen as representing the Gaelic Revival in culture and politics, giving force to the declaration by Éamon de Valera at the presidential inauguration (26 June 1938) in St Patrick's Hall, Dublin castle (whose ceiling was painted with representations of the Irish kings surrendering to Henry II), that the Irish people saluted Hyde as the rightful successor of their native princes, resuming the national life after a long foreign usurpation. His protestantism was useful in asserting the claim that the Irish state was religiously tolerant and potentially receptive to the protestants of Ulster (a view imperfectly shared by the local catholic parish priest of St. Paul's, Arran Quay, who demanded that Hyde pay him parish dues on the grounds that whatever his personal beliefs he was president of a catholic country). Hyde's age and non-political status also disarmed fears that the president might become a dictator. Lucy was too ill to take up residence in the Phoenix Park and died at Ratra on 31 December 1938; Hyde's sister Annette was his official hostess.

In November 1938 the GAA removed Hyde (who had composed its anthem) as a patron, for attending an international soccer match in his official capacity. Hyde chose not to make an issue of it, though de Valera later complained that no organisation should dictate to the president on the performance of his official duties. (The principal GAA stadium in Roscommon was named after Hyde on its opening in 1969.) Hyde also attracted some hostility from populists, who attacked his large official salary (a favourite theme of critics of earlier lords lieutenant and governors-general), and from IRA supporters, who accused him of complicity in de Valera's actions against the IRA. In April 1940 Hyde suffered a stroke which confined him to a wheelchair. Despite his figurehead status and fragile health Hyde established important precedents by referring controversial legislation to the supreme court for rulings on its constitutionality, and insisting on taking advice from his staff before granting a dáil dissolution to de Valera in 1944.

Final years

Hyde declined a second presidential term and spent his last years in the former residence of the private secretary to the viceroy (renamed 'Little Ratra'). He died there on 13 July 1949 and was buried at Frenchpark. Catholic politicians and officials remained outside St Patrick's cathedral

during his funeral service, reflecting contemporary catholic teaching; this provoked criticism (including a poem by Austin Clarke, 'Burial of a president'). His house was bequeathed to the language movement, sold off and demolished, a plaque subsequently being erected on the site. Gaelscoileanna have been called after him in Tallaght and Roscommon, and his father's old church at Frenchpark has been converted into a museum in his honour; in 1978 TCD opened the Douglas Hyde Gallery (used for art exhibitions). The principal collections of his papers are in the NLI and the folklore archives, UCD.

Hyde ignited cultural debates which have raged ever since; although latterly few would share his complete identification of Irishness with the Gaelic tradition, and much of his scholarship has been superseded by more academically rigorous successors, his status as a pioneer is secure. This outwardly simple man was a complex blend of Ireland's traditions; those who chose him to symbolise the new state wrought better than they knew.

Written by Patrick Maume

Sources: Diarmid Coffey, *Douglas Hyde: president of Ireland* (1938); Dominic Daly, *The young Douglas Hyde* (1974); David Thomson, *Woodbrook* (1974); Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Patrick Pearse: the triumph of failure* (1977); Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.), *Douglas Hyde: language, lore and lyrics* (1986); id. (ed.), *Douglas Hyde: language, lore and lyrics. Essays and lectures* (1986); Janet Egleson Dunleavy and Gareth W. Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde: a maker of modern Ireland* (1991); Patrick Maume, *'Life that is exile': Daniel Corkery and the Irish Ireland movement* (1993); James Lydon, *The making of Ireland: a history* (1998); ODNB

William Butler Yeats

Yeats, William Butler (1865–1939), poet and dramatist, was born 13 June 1865 at Georgeville, Sandymount Avenue, Dublin, the eldest child of John Butler Yeats (1839–1922) and Susan Mary Yeats (née Pollexfen; 1841–1900). The couple had six children: besides William there were two other sons, one of whom died in infancy, and three daughters, one of whom also died in infancy.

Family background and early years

Susan Yeats came from Sligo town, where her family had established a notable mercantile and shipping dynasty, while John Butler Yeats had strong Sligo connections, as his grandfather had served as rector of Drumcliff parish church in that county. The marriage was unhappy and John Butler Yeats, who abandoned a career at the Irish bar for the risky avocation of portrait and landscape painter, spent time in England apart from his wife and family during Yeats's childhood. During these separations Susan Yeats lived with her children at her father's house in Sligo, where the poet-to-be was powerfully affected by the western landscape, which he would later celebrate in verse. The family spent happier times together from 1879 to 1881, when they lived at the artists' colony at Bedford Park in London, and from 1881 to 1884 (though without Yeats's brother Jack) at Howth, Co. Dublin. From 1884 to 1887 the Yeatses resided at 10 Ashfield Terrace, Terenure, in Dublin. Yeats was educated at the Godolphin School, Hammersmith, at the Erasmus Smith High School, Dublin, and at the Metropolitan School of Art, Kildare Street, Dublin.

John Butler Yeats as a young man had forsaken the Church of Ireland orthodoxy of his family tradition and his clergyman father, and taken up positivism in the mould of Auguste Comte, a belief system that his elder son found uncongenial to his imagination. From his late teens Yeats, reacting against Darwinian thought and scientific reductionism, was drawn to religious speculation and was open to heterodox ideas, which formed the basis of a life-long passion for occult knowledge. Friendship with George Russell (AE), whom he met at art school, brought him among the members of a Dublin branch of the Theosophical Society, whose principal prophet was Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. When the family moved from Dublin to London in 1887 Yeats had the opportunity to join those who looked to her in person for spiritual guidance.

First works

Yeats began writing poetry and drama in 1884. His early efforts were markedly derivative of the English tradition. It was the old Fenian John O'Leary, whom he met in Dublin in 1885, who introduced him to Irish literature in English, which encouraged him to believe that he could himself extend a distinctively national tradition. The works of Standish James O'Grady had popularised Celtic saga material and Yeats found in this the inspiration for his own vision of a heroic Irish past, in which the figure of Cuchulain (Cú-Chulainn) played a major part throughout his career as a writer.

Yeats's first publication in booklet form, the privately printed *Mosada: a dramatic poem*, appeared in Dublin in 1886, but it was *The wanderings of Oisín and other poems*, published in London in 1889, which served notice that a remarkable poet was in the making. The long title poem in this volume was an impressive work, which employed Irish legend to contrast a vitally pagan Celtic antiquity with the Ireland inaugurated by the coming of the Christian St Patrick. This poem expressed in symbolic terms Yeats's developing conviction that the occult traditions he had been exploring in Dublin and London had links with the pagan religious spirit of pre-Christian Ireland. The poet's immersion in occultism deepened in 1890 when he was initiated in London into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a Rosicrucian and Kabbalistic esoteric society which practised ritual magic.

Throughout the 1890s the order preoccupied Yeats to a marked degree, feeding his imaginative life and infusing his increasingly hierophantic verse with symbolic implications. The volumes *Poems* (1895) and *The wind among the reeds* (1899) were the work not only of a poet who had learned his symbolism from Shelley and Blake (Yeats with Edwin John Ellis had edited and published a three-volume edition of Blake's works in 1893) and from the French symbolists (to whose poems a friend, the poet and critic Arthur Symonds, had introduced him) but also of one who yearned for the powers of a magus.

The resettling of the Yeats family in London (once again without Jack) in 1887 not only allowed Yeats to satisfy his occult interests but to acquaint himself with the literary life of the capital. He attended lectures at William Morris's house (where his sister Susan Mary Yeats trained as a designer and seamstress). He was a member of the Rhymers' Club, which met in the Cheshire Cheese pub in Fleet Street after c.1891, and had meetings with Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. The family home, which from March 1888 was at 3 Blenheim Road, Bedford Park, gave Yeats a base from which to launch himself as a poet and man of letters in *fin de siècle* London.

In this the cultivation of an Irish and Celtic identity was something of an advantage, conferring a certain fashionable exoticism on the young poet. Yeats attended the Southwark Irish Literary Club and in 1892 helped to found an Irish Literary Society in London and the central National Literary Society in Dublin. He deliberately adopted the ideology of an Irish cultural nationalism as he sought in prolific editorial and reviewing work to promote the ideal of an Irish cultural renaissance. He believed that the death of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1891 and the defeat of the second home rule bill in 1893 had left Ireland like soft wax which could be moulded creatively. This work took him frequently to Ireland, where his hopes for a circulating library of republished Irish literary and historical works were largely disappointed in 1893. His nationalism was also expressed in political republicanism (he may have taken the IRB oath in the 1880s), in which he was encouraged by his friend, the beautiful and redoubtable Maud Gonne. Yeats had met Gonne, the daughter of an English mother and a soldier father, in 1889 and had become deeply enamoured of her beauty and impressed by her revolutionary ardour. She became the object of his romantic longing, a muse courted in his 1890s verse in a way that associates her

with Cathleen ni Houlihan as a figure of Ireland herself. She refused his proposal of marriage in August 1891.

In 1894 Yeats met Augusta Gregory, of Coole Park, Co. Galway, who became one of his most generous patrons. Their friendship lasted until Gregory's death in 1932. In 1895 Yeats left the family home to share rooms with Arthur Symons at Fountain Court in the Temple. In February 1896 he moved to rooms at 18 Woburn Buildings, near Euston station, since he wished to conduct an amatory relationship with the married novelist Olivia Shakespear. Their love affair was short-lived, but it was replaced by another of the poet's most lasting friendships. Woburn Buildings remained Yeats's London home until his marriage in 1917. In December 1896 Yeats met John Millington Synge for the first time, in Paris. Synge's premature death in 1909 affected Yeats profoundly.

Theatre and politics, 1897–1916

Between 1897 and 1915 the Gregory house and estate provided the poet with a retreat and sanctuary where he spent summers recuperating from the stresses of increasingly public life in Britain and Ireland. It was in 1897, shortly before Yeats's first extended stay at Coole, that he and Gregory, together with Edward Martyn (artistic patron and playwright), conceived the idea of a 'Celtic' theatre; this developed into the Irish Literary Theatre, which mounted its first plays in Dublin in May 1899. The inaugural season included Yeats's own drama 'The Countess Cathleen', which met with theological objections before the production was staged and condemnation by Cardinal Logue after its premiere. The play, set in famine times, revolves around an aristocratic lady who sells her soul to pay for relief of the starving peasantry. While catholic objections to it focused on the morality of making one who sells her soul a heroine, nationalist sensibilities were also offended: others remembered how during the famine protestant proselytisers had traded food for souls, and it seemed to them a historical travesty to portray a representative of the ascendancy as a self-sacrificial victim of famine. Yeats was discovering that the cultural wax in Ireland was not as malleable as he had believed.

Events in 1898 had also been enforcing that lesson. In February 1897 in London Yeats was elected chairman of a committee to organise a commemoration of the United Irish rebellion of 1798. This involved him in a great deal of travelling in Britain and Ireland, many public meetings, and in June 1897 a riotous gathering in Dublin. The commemoration in Dublin in August 1898 drew large crowds, when a foundation stone was laid at the north-west corner of St Stephen's Green for a monument to Wolfe Tone, though it was never erected on that site. However, Yeats's hopes that this occasion would prove the stimulus for an effective, peaceable secessionist movement which would quickly dissolve the union of Ireland and Great Britain proved illusory. This was confirmed in 1900 when Queen Victoria visited Ireland to considerable popular acclaim and to a protest letter from the poet in the nationalist press.

Yeats's personal life in the final years of the nineteenth century and in the first years of the twentieth was also marked by disappointments and frustrations. In December 1898 Gonne told him of her liaison with a French Boulangist, Lucien Millevoye, with whom she had two children out of wedlock, a son who had died, and a daughter, Iseult. She now seemed willing to marry the poet, but a shocked Yeats balked, preferring to contract what they together thought of as a 'spiritual marriage' with each other. The highpoint of their relationship was Gonne's appearance in the title part of 'Cathleen ni Houlihan', the nationalistic and republican play Yeats and Lady Gregory co-authored, which was produced in Dublin in April 1902. The nadir came in February 1903 when Yeats learned that Gonne, having converted to catholicism, had married the nationalist and

hero of the Boer war John MacBride. The fact that the marriage, which produced one son, Seán MacBride, quickly became unsustainable, reportedly in sordid circumstances, added to the poet's pained responses to what seemed like a betrayal.

The turn of the century brought further changes for Yeats and his family. In 1900 his mother died in London after a long period of semi-invalidism. In 1901 his father left Bedford Park for Dublin, to be joined by his daughters. In south Co. Dublin 'Lily' (Susan Mary Yeats) and 'Lollie' (Elizabeth Corbet Yeats) established in 1902, with Evelyn Gleeson, the Dun Emer Industries, a design and print workshop in the Arts and Crafts tradition; the enterprise included a printing press, whose first published volume was a book of verse by the sisters' brother 'Willie', *In the seven woods* (1904). Following a split with Gleeson, the Yeats sisters in 1908 founded Cuala Industries and its associated Cuala Press. For Yeats, who served as a literary consultant to Cuala and who sometimes had to provide financial assistance to his sisters' ventures, the press remained an interest and concern for the rest of his life. Many of his books were first published under the Cuala imprint.

In 1901 Yeats first corresponded with the New York lawyer John Quinn, whose support for Yeats later proved invaluable, and whose financial generosity to John Butler Yeats when he moved permanently to the United States in 1907 was the sharing of a considerable burden. Quinn introduced Yeats to the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche in 1902, and Yeats immersed himself in the German philosopher's work, absorbing from it the conviction that conflict in art as in life could energise in dramatic, even heroic ways. This view found expression in Yeats's first play to take Cuchulain as hero, 'On Baile's strand' (1904). And it was Quinn who organised Yeats's 1903–4 lecture tour of the United States, which proved both remunerative and a boost to the poet's self-confidence, then at a low ebb following Gonne's marriage and attacks on his national credentials in the nationalist press in Ireland of the same kind as had been made during 'The Countess Cathleen' controversy.

In December 1904, under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre Society (successor of the Irish Literary Theatre), of which Yeats was president, the Abbey Theatre mounted its first productions. The opposition that Yeats could expect in such a venture had been suggested in 1903, when John Synge's play for the Irish National Theatre Society 'In the shadow of the glen' had drawn patriotic ire (including that of Maud Gonne) for impugning the purity of Irish womanhood. For the rest of the decade Yeats was heavily involved with theatre business, somewhat to the detriment of his poetic creativity. Seeking to establish an art theatre (influenced by Edward Gordon Craig's conception of 'total theatre') in competition with more commercial houses in Dublin, he was hampered by what he thought were his actors' inadequacies, and at the same time had to fight for his vision of a poetic drama (in which battle he was robustly supported by Lady Gregory) in the face of the critical depredations of advanced nationalism. This struggle reached a climax on the first night in January 1907 of Synge's comic masterpiece 'The playboy of the western world', when the stage action was terminated by a riotous crowd. Yeats resolutely defended Synge but attributed his untimely death in 1909 to the after-effects of the 'Playboy' controversy. In May 1907 Yeats, Lady Gregory, and her son visited Italy together.

In 1908 an eight-volume collected edition of Yeats's work in poetry, drama, and prose appeared. He had published little verse since 1904 and this publication seemed to confirm him as a *fin de siècle* figure whose poetic achievement, in its dreamy other-worldliness, was the quintessence of the 'Celtic twilight'. Collections published in 1910 (*The green helmet*) and 1914 (*Responsibilities*) signalled, however, considerable poetic development. These volumes were marked by a willingness to engage, in dramatic lyrics, with the actual conditions of an Ireland in which the poet found himself increasingly embattled. The protracted delay on the part of Dublin corporation in

providing an appropriate home for a collection of pictures that Lady Gregory's nephew Sir Hugh Lane had donated to the city, particularly aroused his satirical contempt in the latter volume.

In 1910 Yeats was granted a civil list pension by the UK government. He began to be pre-occupied by spiritualist experiments and from 1912 onwards he attended many séances as his involvement in the Order of the Golden Dawn and in the Irish theatrical and political scenes began somewhat to wane. In late 1913 and early 1914 he and the young American poet Ezra Pound shared a residence, Stone Cottage, near Ashdown Forest, Sussex, from where Yeats left on a second tour of the United States in January 1914. He spent extended periods at Stone Cottage with Pound and his wife, Dorothy, in 1915 and 1916; Pound acted as his amanuensis and literary companion at a period during the first world war when Yeats felt alienated from England's military preoccupations and oddly remote from pressing Irish concerns. He turned to Japanese Noh drama, to which Pound introduced him, as a model for his own dramatic experiments and completed an autobiographical work in prose which appeared as *Reveries over childhood and youth* in 1915.

The Easter rising and its aftermath

The Easter rising of April 1916, which he heard about in England, and its sacrificial aftermath, greatly surprised and disturbed the poet. He had doubted that the capacity for heroic tragedy existed in modern Ireland. He spent the summer of 1916 with Maud Gonne in Normandy. He proposed again, once more without success, and then discussed the possibility of marriage with Iseult. From this summer and early autumn came Yeats's famous poem on the rising, 'Easter 1916', which he did not publish until October 1920. His play, based on Noh drama, 'The dreaming of the bones' (1919), also dealt with these events.

The Easter rising focused Yeats's attention more fully on Ireland again. In March 1917 he purchased a Norman keep at Ballylee, Co. Galway with the intention of making it habitable as his Irish residence. On 20 October 1917 he married Bertha Georgie Hyde Lees (1892–1968; see Bertha Georgie Yeats), known as George, only daughter of William Gilbert Hyde, afterwards Hyde Lees, army officer, and Edith Ellen Woodmass. Together they supervised the renovation of Thoor, Ballylee, in 1918, intending that it should be their Irish home; in the autumn of that year they occupied the cottage beside their tower for the first time. Yeats gave up his rooms at Woburn Buildings in mid 1919. In the early years of their marriage the young wife and her middle-aged husband resided at various addresses in Britain and Ireland, Oxford and its environs providing some domestic stability during the uncertainty of the war of independence. In 1920 Mrs Yeats accompanied her husband on a five-month lecture tour of the United States. On 26 February 1919 their daughter, Anne, was born and on 22 August 1921 their son, Michael (d. 2007), completed the family; Anne was to become a painter, Michael a politician. In March 1922 the Yeateses settled more permanently at 82 Merrion Square, Dublin.

During the Yeateses' honeymoon George discovered a capacity for automatic writing. The poet was fascinated and for several years they conducted together, employing automatic script and dream material, what they believed was spiritualist contact with 'communicators', who supplied Yeats with an account of the forces governing historical change and human personality. The scheme that emerged, dialectical and cyclical, began to provide metaphors for Yeats's poetry and a means of comprehending more generally in his writings the violence and chaos of the times. Yeats found his collaboration with George in this enterprise personally and imaginatively renewing. The month after their wedding he published a slim Cuala Press volume of verse, *The wild swans at Coole*. In 1919 this was reissued by his London publishers, Macmillan, with new poems, to make

a much more ample volume. It was followed in February 1921 by a further collection, *Michael Robartes and the dancer*, which contained not only poems of marital satisfaction, but one of Yeats's most resonant poems on historical apocalypse (which drew on imagery and ideas supplied by the automatic script), 'The second coming'.

The Yeatses spent some of the worst months of the civil war in 1922 at Thoor, Ballylee, where a bridge was blown up by anti-treaty forces. In December of that year the poet was appointed a senator in the Free State parliament and awarded an honorary D.Litt. by TCD (further honorary degrees followed from the universities of Aberdeen, 1924, and Oxford, 1931). In November 1923 he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature.

As senator Yeats contributed conscientiously to debates on social and cultural matters. His speech of 11 June 1925 on divorce was a robust defence of personal liberty that aroused considerable controversy. In 1926 he was appointed chairman of a committee charged with the design of a new coinage for the state; the images chosen raised objections because of their lack of Christian iconography. Also in 1926 the play about the Easter rising by Sean O'Casey for the Abbey Theatre, 'The plough and the stars', provoked a near riot. Once again Yeats was forced into the public arena to defend a work of art. At the beginning of 1926 there appeared Yeats's prose work *A vision*, which adumbrated at length the historical and psychological schema his wife's mediumship had made available. Yeats hoped its vision of conflict as a creative force in human affairs and in the life of the mind would alleviate sterile controversy in post-civil-war Ireland. The assassination of Kevin O'Higgins on 10 July 1927, which troubled Yeats deeply, indicated how profoundly the new Ireland was destructively divided.

In November 1927 Yeats visited Spain and the south of France. He became seriously ill with congestion of the lungs and was forced to convalesce at Cannes in early 1928. On his recovery he travelled to Rapallo in Italy, where he and George rented an apartment in which they hoped to winter in future years. They vacated their house in Merrion Square, leaving it in July 1928, and took an apartment in Fitzwilliam Square in early August. Yeats left the senate in September 1928, though not before he had registered in print his opposition to the bill that prepared the way for the Censorship of Publications Act, 1929. The autumn of 1928 and much of 1929 were spent in Rapallo, where he became acutely ill with Malta fever in December of the latter year. His recovery was in doubt. He recuperated in Italy, returning to Ireland only in July 1930.

The tower (1928), which many critics consider Yeats's finest single volume of poetry, has as one of its themes the kind of bodily decrepitude that had begun to afflict the poet before its publication. It sets an ageing, self-questioning poet against the turbulence of a violent history in which the consolations of art and occult knowledge and the memories of love seem only partial bulwarks against a tragic sense of life. These themes are in tune with Yeats's versions of Sophocles' 'Oedipus the king', first performed at the Abbey Theatre in December 1926, and a version of 'Oedipus at Colonus' from September 1927. Some of *The tower's* darkest passages evoke the horrors of both the war of independence and the civil war in Ireland. Only the dramatic energy of the language suggests how the poet defeated the temptation to despair.

Last years

Between July 1930 and July 1932 the Yeatses led an unsettled life. They moved for a time to a house at South Hill, Killiney, in February 1931, where they remained until May of that year, before returning to Fitzwilliam Square. In 1931 and 1932 the poet spent much of the autumn and winter at Coole, where Lady Gregory was terminally ill. She died on 22 May 1932. In July 1932 the Yeatses moved to Riversdale, Rathfarnham, Dublin, the poet's last home. In the autumn, following the foundation of an Irish Academy of Letters, which Yeats organised to

oppose literary censorship, the poet departed for what would prove his last visit to the United States. Back in Ireland, in the summer of 1933 he became excited by the short-lived, quasi-fascist Blueshirt movement and offered his support. The disillusionment with democratic politics that this step represented found anguished expression in some of the poems collected in *The winding stair and other poems*, which was published in September 1933. A concern with the body and with explicit sexuality in this book marked a new direction that his work had taken since the start of the 1930s. His *Collected poems* appeared in November 1933 and his *Collected plays* in November 1934.

In April 1934 Yeats underwent the Steinhach operation in the hope that it would revive his sexual potency. Whatever its effect, Yeats, between bouts of ill health, conducted a series of erotic dalliances with a number of women in the final years of his life, as his work in poetry and drama became daringly open about sexual desire. In 1934 he began amatory friendships with a young actress, Margot Collis, and with the novelist Ethel Mannin (1900–84). In 1934 he also met the poet Dorothy Wellesley, who offered Yeats a retreat at her Sussex home and a romantic entanglement conducted through the shared medium of verse making.

In 1935 Yeats's longest friendship ended when AE died. At the end of the year, with the publication of *Dramatis personae*, he completed the autobiographical prose reflections on his early life and career, begun in *Reveries over childhood and youth* and continued in *The trembling of the veil* (1922). In November the poet sailed for Majorca in the company of Shri Purohit Swami, with whom he intended to work on a translation of the Upanishads (they appeared as *The ten principal Upanishads* in 1937). In late January 1936 he once more became dangerously ill. His wife was summoned. By April he had recovered but his new-found health was disturbed in May when Margot Collis arrived in Majorca, exhibiting symptoms of the insanity that would eventually incapacitate her. Yeats returned to Ireland in June. In November *The Oxford book of modern verse*, which Yeats had edited, appeared to considerable controversy. He had excluded from his anthology, among others, the war poet Wilfred Owen, and had included in it work by friends to a degree that some found excessive (the poetry of Dorothy Wellesley was extensively represented).

In 1937 Yeats was elected to membership of the Athenaeum, made several broadcasts for the BBC, and published a revised version of *A vision* (upon which he had spent many years). In May he announced his retirement from public life. His personal life was enhanced by a new friendship, with the journalist Edith Shackleton Heald. In 1938 Yeats spent January to mid-March in the south of France, where he returned in November, leaving Ireland for the last time. In the final year of his life he worked to put both the Cuala Press and the Abbey Theatre on sound footings. His new play, 'Purgatory', was produced at the Abbey in August, rousing some theological controversy. Its implied argument that miscegenation with the native Irish was a cause of Anglo-Irish degeneration derived from Yeats's interest in eugenics (he was a member of the Eugenics Society). An elitist fear of mass society, an aversion from middle-class politics, and a wish for population control found even franker, rebarbative expression in a pamphlet he completed in 1938 (*On the boiler*, published posthumously in 1939). These attitudes influenced some of the pieces in *New poems*, published in May 1938, finding expression in verses based on broadside ballads, in a way that indicated the poet's desire to sing 'the Irishry' in a traditional mode and defy a degraded modernity.

Death and legacy

Yeats died at the Hôtel Idéal-Séjour, Cap-Martin, in the south of France on 28 January 1939. He was buried at Roquebrune cemetery (his remains were disinterred and laid to rest in Drumcliff churchyard, Co. Sligo, in 1948). His posthumous volume, *Last poems and two plays* (which

included the testamentary ‘Under Ben Bulben’ and the play completed on his death-bed, ‘The death of Cuchulain’), appeared in July 1939.

On his death Yeats was widely recognised as one of the great poets of the era. T. S. Eliot described him in 1940 as ‘one of those few whose history is the history of their own time, who are part of the consciousness of an age which cannot be understood without them’ (James Hall and Martin Steinmann (ed.), *The permanence of Yeats* (1961), 307). Since then his reputation has increased, as he has come to be recognised as one of the greatest of English-language poets, whose extraordinary development as an artist took him from the other-worldly reveries of the ‘Celtic twilight’ and from Shelleyan Romantic idealism to tragic engagements with the modern, in poetry that shared something of the experimentalism of the high Modernist period. His achievements as a dramatist have never received quite the same acclaim, though his innovations in theatrical technique are now identified by critics as among the significant influences on the dramaturgy of Samuel Beckett.

Yeats’s papers are deposited in many libraries in Ireland, Britain, and the United States, including the Berg Collection, New York Public Library; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the British Library; the Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; the Houghton Library, Harvard University; the Lilly Library, University of Indiana; the Kenneth Spenser Research Library, University of Kansas; the NLI; the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin; the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

There are statues of Yeats in Sligo town and at St Stephen’s Green, Dublin. Among the principal portraits of the poet are those by Augustus John (etching, 1907, Manchester City Galleries; oils, 1930, Glasgow City Art Gallery), John Singer Sargent (charcoal, 1908, private collection), and John Butler Yeats (oils, 1900, NGI).

Written by Terence Brown

Sources: Allan Wade, *A bibliography of the writings of W. B. Yeats*, 3rd ed., rev. Russell K. Alsbach (1968); William H. O’Donnell, ‘Preliminary checklist of portraits of W. B. Yeats’, *Yeats Annual*, iii (1985), 99–103; R. F. Foster, *W. B. Yeats: a life*, i: *The apprentice mage* (1997); Terence Brown, *The life of W. B. Yeats: a critical biography* (1999); Ann Saddlemyer, *Becoming George: the life of Mrs W. B. Yeats* (2002); R. F. Foster, *W. B. Yeats: a life*, ii: *The arch-poet* (2003); John Kelly, *A W. B. Yeats chronology* (2003)

Part 3.
Pursuit of sovereignty
and the impact of partition
1912-1949

Patrick Pearse

Pearse, Patrick Henry (1879–1916), writer, educationalist, and revolutionary, was born 10 November 1879 at the family home, 27 Great Brunswick Street (latterly Pearse St.) Dublin, the elder son and second of the four children of James Pearse, stone carver and monumental sculptor, originally of London, and his second wife, Margaret, a shop assistant, daughter of Patrick Brady, coal factor, of Dublin.

Education and formative influences

He was educated at Mrs Murphy's private school, 1887–91, and the CBS, Westland Row, 1891–6. Already convinced of the centrality of the Irish language to a distinctive Irish identity, he joined the Gaelic League in 1896. His father's commercial success allowed him to enrol for a BA (RUI) in Irish, English, and French at UCD, while also taking law courses at King's Inns and TCD, 1898–1901. Despite devoting much time to Gaelic League work, he achieved good results in both degrees, reflecting his feel for language and his intense work ethic. Though called to the bar (1901), he practised little.

Pearse's vaunting ambition from an early age found expression not only in his founding the New Ireland Literary Society in 1897, but in his publication in 1898 of the three papers he delivered to the society, 'Gaelic prose literature', 'The intellectual future of the Gael', and 'The folk songs of Ireland' – the first two before he was yet 18 – as *Three lectures on Gaelic topics*. Impressive in the range of their vocabulary and in the intensity of his reading for his age and his curriculum-constricted education, they provide a rich repository for students of his later years, revealing many of the personality traits of the adult Pearse, however much his views on specific issues might change. Here can be found already the pronounced tendency to speak in absolutes and superlatives, the axiomatic certainty reflected in the use of words like 'undoubtedly' ('among modern nations those which have contributed most to the intellectual welfare of mankind are undoubtedly Italy, England and Germany') (*Collected works: songs*, 222); the tendency to sanctify the cause of the moment and invoke the blessing of the Deity (as in the climactic exhortation to save the Irish folk song – 'The cause is a holy one – God grant it may succeed!') (*ibid*, 215); the insistence on the glories of ancient Irish literature (*ibid*, *Literature*, *passim*); the emphasis on love

of nature (ibid, 226 ff); the affirmation that ‘every great movement that has ever been carried out on this earth has been carried out simply and solely by enthusiasts’ (ibid, 195–6); the place of Ireland in civilisation, which ought to be ‘fascinating not only to men and women of Gaelic race, but to all who have at heart the great causes of civilisation, education and progress’ (ibid, 218).

Not the least of his enthusiasms was hero-worship, ‘in its highest form . . . a soul-lifting and an ennobling thing’ (ibid, 218). Although his great-aunt Margaret had inculcated in him in childhood particular admiration for Irish heroes, he now ranged as widely as his education permitted, in wondering: ‘What would the world be without its heroes? Greece without her Hercules and her Achilles, Rome without her Romulus and her Camillus, England without her Arthur and her Richard, Ireland without her Cuchulainn and her Fionn, Christianity without its Loyolas and its Xaviers’ (ibid, 228). Pearse was already a visionary, but in what he dismissed as the political wasteland of 1897 it was in cultural rather than political terms he expounded his vision of a distinctive Irish future: ‘The morning will come, and its dawn is not far off. But it will be a morning different from the morning we have looked for. The Gael is not like other men; the spade, and the loom, and the sword are not for him. But a destiny more glorious than that of Rome, more glorious than that of Britain awaits him; to become the saviour of idealism in modern intellectual and social life, the regenerator and rejuvenator of the literature of the world, the instructor of the nations, the preacher of the gospel of nature-worship, hero-worship, God-worship.’ (ibid, 221). Aware of John Henry Newman’s vision of a future Ireland as a centre of world scholarship, he salutes the Gael as ‘*the* idealist amongst the nations: he loves . . . painting, sculpture, music, oratory, drama, learning, all those things which delight and ravish the human soul. What the Greek was to the ancient world the Gael will be to the modern; and in no point will the parallel prove more true than in the fervent and noble love of learning’ (ibid, 230). Anticipating the charge that all this ‘is a mere ideal picture’, he retorted that he intended it to be, because ‘if you wish to accomplish anything great place an ideal before you, and endeavour to live up to that ideal’ (ibid, 233).

Pearse’s correspondence as secretary of the publications committee of the Gaelic League from June 1900 conveys utter commitment as well as an imaginative approach towards promoting the language, and an inclusive attitude towards the use of the different dialects, which earned him the hostility of those who championed the superiority of their own versions. His work rate made him indispensable to the League, and helped win him the editorship of its bilingual weekly newspaper, *An Claidheamh Soluis* (The sword of light) in 1903. During his editorship (1903–09), he acted on the belief that ‘The Gaelic League stands for the intellectual independence of Ireland’ (Ó Buachalla, *Letters*, xvii), by striving to make it the cutting edge of ‘native thought’ (Edwards, 65). An innovative editor, though so expansionist that he had to be quickly reined in for fear of bankrupting the League, his range of interests left him writing most of the paper himself, to a remarkably high level.

With a keen appreciation of the reading market, he was impatient with the purists whose priority was linguistic correctness rather than spreading the word. For all his idealisation of folk culture, he was an active moderniser, insisting that ‘a living modern literature *cannot* (and if it could, should not) be built up on the folktale’. Irish literature must of course ‘get into contact on the one hand with its own past’ but ‘on the other with the mind of contemporary Europe – this is the twentieth century, and no literature can take root in the twentieth century which is not of the twentieth century’ (*An Claidheamh Soluis*, 26 May 1906).

Pearse practised what he preached, writing several short stories in Irish, of which the best-known was perhaps ‘Íosagán’, and the best perhaps ‘An dearg-daol’. Though of uneven literary quality, his stories helped pioneer modern prose writing in Irish by breaking away from stylised

inherited conventions, in that they were partly based on the life and language of Connemara, especially the area around Rosmuc. Here he acquired a cottage in 1907, and here he would spend as much time as he could salvage from the press of affairs in Dublin.

Educationist

To promote the role of Irish as a modern language he took an active part in the dispute over the demand that Irish be made mandatory as a matriculation subject for entry to the newly established NUI. Education remained his abiding passion. If only, he felt, the education system could be inspired with a true love of learning, if only the child could be made the centre of education, a soul might come into Ireland. Nor did he compromise politically at the expense of his educational ideals. He supported the Irish council bill of 1907, which even John Redmond rejected as a poor substitute for home rule, because it would extend more native control over education. Within education his passion was Irish language teaching through bilingual techniques. Scouring the international horizon in search of the best bilingual pedagogy, his visit to Belgian schools in 1905 to observe bilingual teaching methods provided him with material for numerous enthusiastic reports in *An Claidheamh Soluis*.

Excited by this concrete Belgian example, he turned towards establishing his own school from 1906, which he eventually realised with the opening of St Enda's in Cullenswood House on Oakley Road in 1908. St Enda's proved a remarkable experiment, above all because of the inspirational personality of Pearse himself and his commitment to a child centred approach to education to which many of the pupils responded enthusiastically. Although Pearse retained his schoolboy emphasis on the importance of heroic inspiration for inculcating idealism in the young, he advertised St Enda's as offering a modern education, including 'special attention to science and "modern" subjects generally, while not neglecting the classical side' (Edwards, 129). As Pearse explained to an enquiring parent in 1910, St Enda's 'was founded . . . with the object of providing a secondary education distinctively Irish in complexion, bilingual in method, and of a high modern type generally, for Irish catholic boys . . . what I mean by an Irish school is a school that takes Ireland for granted. You need not praise the Irish language – simply speak it; you need not denounce English games – play Irish ones; you need not ignore foreign history, foreign literatures – deal with them from the Irish point of view. An Irish school need no more be a purely Irish-speaking school than an Irish nation need be a purely Irish speaking nation; but an Irish school, like an Irish nation, must be permeated through and through by Irish culture, the repository of which is the Irish language.' 'Nature-Study', he went on, 'forms an essential part of the work . . . in an attempt to inspire a real interest in and love of beautiful things. Practical gardening and elementary agriculture are taught as part of this scheme' (Pearse to Mrs Humphreys, 10 May 1910, *Letters*, 152–3). In his mind respect for nature fostered kindness to animals and to children, St Enda's being noted for a reluctance to use corporal punishment in the common British and Irish manner.

His wider reading, once he escaped the strait-jacket of the examination-obsessed school curriculum against which he protested so passionately in *The murder machine* (1912), led him to reconsider his earlier antagonism towards modern European literature. By 1913 he had broadened and deepened his schoolboy sense of literary appreciation – reflected at its most uncomprehending in his initially dismissive attitude towards W. B. Yeats – as his sensibilities developed beyond the confines of his education. What was striking was less the narrowness of his original sympathies than his interest in literature at all, and then his developing an awareness of its riches to the extent of inviting Yeats himself to talk at St Enda's. Although continuing to

insist on the role of literature in fostering national consciousness, he came to accept that much of the best literature was not explicitly didactic at all, and that it was the first duty of the artist to probe the subject-matter unflinchingly from an artistic perspective. This shift in his viewpoint allowed him to come to revere Ibsen, and revise his view of John Millington Synge, overcoming his earlier revulsion at what he saw as the gratuitous romanticisation of violence in the ‘Playboy of the western world’.

Pearse exalted teaching as a vocation to a level of dedication that few could be expected to achieve. His published papers on education, collected in *The murder machine*, a searing indictment of the English educational system in Ireland, couched as usual in absolutes, consciously extolled the unique virtues of ancient Irish education as a way of boosting the long battered self-respect of Irish children. *The Irish Review* in February 1913 summarised his educational impact: ‘He is an educationalist who is incidentally a poet and a playwright – but it is in the realm of educational ideas that Mr Pearse has made the most effective innovation. He has established a secondary school, in which Ireland is taken for granted, and in which, moreover, practical effect is given to ideas which correspond with the newest discoveries in the method of education’ – which the writer identifies as those of Maria Montessori.

A leading authority on the history of education, and on Pearse, reinforces this verdict: ‘his educational theories on freedom and inspiration in education, on individual differences, on nature study and school environment, on language teaching and bilingualism, and on the role and status of the teacher, place him securely within the ‘New Education’ movement. The principles on which he conducted St Enda’s, the wide curriculum on offer, his concern for the individual student’s needs, the environment of self-motivation and freedom which he created for his pupils’ placed him in the front rank of innovative European thinkers on education of his time (Ó Buachalla, *Educationalist*, xxiv).

For all his occasional fulminations against the pretensions of the ‘modern’, Pearse preached simultaneously a commitment to what he saw as the best of the modern. But that modern was to be honed to achieve the alleged ideals of the Gaelic past. As was his wont, once Pearse had adopted an ideal himself, he proceeded to attribute the reality to the ancient Gaels, living in his imagination of them. If the textbooks and the laboratories would inculcate knowledge, the sagas would teach character. With a keen sense of theatre, Pearse peopled his past with his ideal type characters, from Cuchulainn to Colum Cille, acting as the stage director of Ancient Ireland, as well as paying close attention to the staging of school plays, either in St Enda’s itself, or even the Abbey, where Yeats was supportive.

So strident is his invocation of the sagas, of the virtues above all of Cuchulainn, that the unwary can be led into thinking that Pearse dwelt in a perpetual Celtic mist. But the relationship between past and present in his mind was more complicated than that. He regularly invoked the past to legitimise his image of the future. But he ensured the past could be safely summoned to his side. For this past was not the historical past. It was an imaginary past reconstructed in the image of his ideal future. He himself would observe in 1913 that ‘Cuchulainn may never have lived and there may never have been a boy corps at Eamhain’ (Ó Buachalla, *Educationalist*, 361). Whether Cuchulainn ever existed was not the point. The point, a normal part of the reconstruction of self-respect for defeated peoples, was to endow Ireland with a noble past to enhance its self-respect in the present. Pearse found in the past whatever he needed for his own polemical purposes.

Pearse founded St Ita’s School for girls along the same general lines as St Enda’s in Cullenswood House in 1910, when he turned St Enda’s into a boarding school by moving to the Hermitage in Rathfarnham. But it proved an ill-judged move in business terms. The flourishing family

firm gradually fell into decay after his father died in 1900; Pearse's devoted younger sculptor brother, Willie, possessed neither the business nor artistic acumen of his father, and the firm went out of business in 1910. As Pearse's educational vision took little account of his overstretched financial resources, he was forced to close St Ita's in 1912, the enlarged St Enda's itself increasingly undermining the precarious financial basis of the enterprise.

Politics and political writings

The struggle to sustain St Enda's may have influenced whatever psychological factors drove Pearse towards an increasingly assertive expression of an Irish right to independence. More certainly, his attitude towards politics began to change as home rule became a possibility from 1911. Although a speech on Robert Emmet that year – Emmet had often visited the Hermitage – anticipated later impulses toward sacrificial rebellion, it is simply unhistorical to deduce from this that Easter 1916 had already sprung fully formed from his mind, and that his every subsequent activity constituted a straight line towards 1916. On the contrary, his move towards politics of any sort, even home rule, much less rebellion, was halting. His insurrectionary impulses could coexist with a range of policy positions. Now forced to consider the potential of a native parliament, his warning in March 1912 that there would be war in Ireland if the British reneged again on home rule can obscure the fact that he not only supported home rule, but explicitly avowed that he believed a good home rule act could be extracted. He even went so far as to rebuke William O'Brien for claiming that it would not be passed in the present parliament, insisting that 'it *must* be enacted' (Laegh Mac Riangabhra [Pearse] to O'Brien, 30 Mar. 1912, *Letters*, 259).

Although he was still only sporadically active in politics, the calls on Pearse's time were increasing sufficiently to begin diverting his attention from his schools, leading him to warn himself in May 1912 to 'devote your attention to Sgoil Éanna and to Sgoil Íde and disregard political affairs' (Laegh Mac Riangabhra to Pearse, 11 May 1912, *Letters*, 265). Instead it was his own injunction he disregarded, drifting further into politics, initially supporting home rule, and then, as unionist forces in Ulster increasingly barred the way, towards the idea of rebellion. The pledge of Ulster unionists to resist home rule, by rebellion if necessary, in the Solemn League and Covenant of September 1912, proved intoxicating for Pearse. This crucial change in his thinking, which gradually took clearer shape in the light of unfolding events during 1913–14, was induced by his realisation of, and excitement at, the importance of the unionist initiative in challenging British authority as the ultimate determinant of the framework within which Irish public life could be conducted.

Nevertheless, while he had by 1913 begun contemplating the possibility of rebellion, he was still struggling to reconcile his gradualist approach of 1912 with his perception of the growing improbability of home rule. The contradictory impulses can be gleaned from his behaviour throughout the year when he continued to retain hope of home rule while moving, should it founder, to contemplate the alternative of rebellion. This dual track approach was also in accord with his own instinct to strive for unity among disputatious ideologues, though he could propound his own views vigorously. His earlier response to the incessant conflicts in the Gaelic League had been to insist that fostering the language itself was much the most important national objective, and that internal squabbles simply subverted that prime purpose (Edwards, 36). As his entry into politics exposed him to the ferocious faction fighting along the spectrum of nationalist movements, he proposed in June 1913 that 'we take *service* as our touchstone, and reject all other touchstones; and that, without bothering our heads about sorting out, segregating and labelling Irishmen and Irishwomen according to their opinions, we agree to accept as fellow-nationalists

all who specifically or virtually recognise this Irish nation as an entity and, being part of it, owe it and give it their service' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 144). In January 1914, in 'The psychology of a Volunteer', he reiterated this plea for unity: 'I challenge again the Irish psychology of the man who sets up the Gael and the Palesman as opposing forces, with conflicting outlooks. We are all Irish, Leinster-reared or Connacht-reared . . . and he who would segregate Irish history and Irish men into two sections – Irish-speaking and English-speaking – is not helping toward achieving Ireland a Nation' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 105–6).

Reading Pearse poses demanding challenges. His style lent itself to ringing declamations, whose apparent finality leaves him particularly vulnerable to being taken out of context. But the martial vigour of Pearse's prose, and his apparently growing impatience for rebellion, can disguise the functional purpose of much of his writing.

As so much of this is heavily tactical, interpretation of his motives on many issues must be necessarily speculative. The written word must be constantly tested against his actual behaviour. Much of his writing, while ostensibly pronouncing immutable truths, was intended for particular audiences. As he came to the conclusion throughout 1913 that a willingness to take up arms might be necessary, he sought to establish relations with the main existing organisation committed to the idea of rebellion, the IRB, whose leadership, particularly Tom Clarke, Seán Mac Diarmada, and Bulmer Hobson, would have to be convinced that his prominent support for home rule did not denote lack of true revolutionary fibre. If he wielded a powerful pen, he had neither an organisation behind him, nor a track record of revolutionary ardour. On the other hand, if the IRB had both, they lacked an inspiring voice, whether on paper or platform. Yet, when he claimed in 1915 that he had begun in June 1913 the notable series of articles, 'From a hermitage', in *Irish Freedom*, an IRB paper, 'with the deliberate intention, by argument, invective, and satire, of goading those who shared my political views to commit themselves definitely to an armed movement' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 142), he characteristically overlooked that it was rather the other way round, that it was he who had to persuade them of the genuineness of his commitment. It was they who had to be convinced that he had now moved far enough towards them to allow him become one of them.

In seeking to convince them Pearse embarked on a strident campaign of persuasion, while at the same time striving to keep options open in case home rule might actually emerge. Yet the metallic certainty of Pearse's hortatory rhetoric can conceal the degree of uncertainty, or at least flexibility, in his thinking. His invocation in June 1913 of Theobald Wolfe Tone's example, 'to set our faces towards the path that lies before us' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 57), seems clearly to indicate he had now fully adopted the revolutionary route; he seemed to confirm this with a reference to the 'very passionate assertion of nationality' which 'this generation of Irishmen will be called upon to make in the near future'. This surely reads like a call to imminent rebellion – until he qualifies it immediately with the observation that this 'must depend upon many things, more especially upon the passage or non-passage of the present Home Rule bill' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 147). If it passed, 'the assertion of which I speak will be made by the creation of what we may call a Gaelic party within the Home Rule Parliament, with a strong following behind it in the country' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 155). However martial his rhetoric, he was still groping his way along a two-stage path, imagining independence emerging through home rule rather than as an alternative to it.

In December 1913, the same month in which he was finally admitted to the IRB, he made the type of ringing declaration of the right to rebellion that appears to leave no doubt of his commitment to insurrection as the only route to independence: 'unarmed men cannot make good their claim to anything which armed men choose to deny them . . . surely it is a sin against

national faith to expect national freedom without adopting the necessary means to win and keep it. And I know of no other way than the way of the sword: history records no other, reason and experience suggest no other'. That appears to demolish the two-stage interpretation – until he immediately proceeds, in characteristic fashion, to the qualification 'when I say the sword I do not mean necessarily the actual use of the sword: I mean readiness and ability to use the sword'.

A month later, he expresses this two-stage approach in more concrete terms, arguing that an armed Volunteer movement 'would make home rule, now about to be abandoned in deference to an armed Ulster, almost a certainty', while adding 'should home rule miscarry, it would give us a policy to fall back upon' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 203). Nor did the potential uses of home rule vanish from his mind even while he was planning rebellion. As late as May 1915, one of his hypothetical cases of 'Why we want recruits' was if a tory or coalition government, then imminent, were to 'repudiate the Home Rule Act' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 123). This too could be read tactically. But even as late as his penultimate pamphlet, *The spiritual nation*, published in February 1916, Pearse did not shrink from reaffirming his earlier belief in the stepping stone approach in the then circumstances. In vigorously defending Thomas Davis against the charge that he was not a separatist, he drew the analogy with himself: 'The fact that he would have accepted and worked on Repeal in no wise derogates from his status as a separatist, any more than the fact that many of us would have accepted home rule (or even devolution) and worked on with it derogates from our status as separatists. Home rule to us would have been a means to an end: Repeal to Davis would have been a means to an end' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 319).

Revolutionary

In 1913 however, as he strove to convince the IRB leaders of the genuineness of his revolutionary aspirations, he embarked on a publication campaign which could at times strike strident notes. A classic example was *The coming revolution* in November 1913, in which he announced the shift from cultural to political in his priorities, now disingenuously presenting his Gaelic League years as having been intended from the beginning as merely an apprenticeship for the political struggle. In order to dispel the image of him as a 'harmless' cultural nationalist, he virtually set about reinventing himself in a manner likely to appeal to the 'hard men' of the IRB. He exulted at the sight of arms in Orange hands, taking up the theme of Eoin MacNeill's phrase that 'the North began' when the UVF began to challenge the monopoly of British gun power in Ireland earlier in the year. But he went far beyond MacNeill in extolling bloodshed as a spiritual value in itself, in some of the most sanguinary phrases in his entire work: 'I am glad that the Orangemen have armed, for it is a goodly thing to see arms in Irish hands. I should like to see the A.O.H. armed. I should like to see the Transport Workers armed. I should like to see any and every body of Irish citizens armed. We must accustom ourselves to the thought of arms, to the sight of arms, to the use of arms. We may make mistakes in the beginning and shoot the wrong people; but bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed; and slavery is one of them' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 98). If the conclusion here echoes standard 'western' ideology, the spiritual value attributed to bloodshed as a value in itself reflects a distinctly minority rhetorical tradition.

Pearse's heightened political profile throughout 1913 enabled him to seize the opening offered by the broader nationalist response to the UVF. He acquired his first organisational foothold on becoming director of organisation of the Irish Volunteers established under the leadership of

Eoin MacNeill in November 1913. Though heavily infiltrated by the IRB, the Volunteers were intended to reinforce the campaign for home rule, not to subvert it. However, his acceptance into the IRB in December marked a significant shift in his perception of the possibilities of political action. Henceforth, open though he would remain to alternative scenarios, his propensity for highly charged rhetoric became ever more pronounced, culminating in his inspirational address over the Fenian grave of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in August 1915.

Nevertheless joining the IRB, however important in institutional terms, was not a crossing of an ideological Rubicon. It was still the growing financial plight of St Enda's that dominated Pearse's purpose when he went on a fundraising trip to America from March to June 1914. The American visit may have proved conducive to the drift of his thinking towards rebellion, and he honed his rhetoric in America to appeal to insurrectionary impulses among his potential donors. But when he returned from America it was still with the intention of returning in 1914–15 to continue his fundraising for St Enda's.

Events closer to home gradually brought a shift of approach. The Curragh mutiny in March 1914, and the Ulster unionist gun-running at Larne in April, made partition in some shape highly likely, given superior unionist gun power. Redmond seized control of the Volunteers in June, marginalising the potential rebels. Events now moved quickly beyond Irish control. If the UVF provided focus, the Bachelor's Walk killing of civilians by the British army, following the landing of the relatively small number of guns for the Volunteers from the Howth gun-running in July, roused Pearse to a pitch of excitement at the thought of blood spilt – however involuntarily – for Ireland. Then when the British decision to declare war on Germany on 4 August seemed to offer a fresh opportunity to foment rebellion, Pearse was seized with excitement at the beckoning prospects: 'A European war has brought about a crisis which may contain, as yet hidden within it, the moment for which the generations have been waiting' (*Collected works. Political writings*, 87). Redmond's call to join the British army split the Volunteers. Pearse remained with the small minority of about 12,000 under Eoin MacNeill who retained the title of Irish Volunteers, while about 170,000 joined Redmond's new National Volunteers. This might have seemed a decisive defeat for the minority, but in fact it strengthened their position. If the Volunteers who followed MacNeill left Pearse with far fewer numbers to organise, these were also far more committed to the idea of rebellion. The figures are deceptive. There was no correlation between numbers and energy. Indeed, fewer than 30,000 of the National Volunteers appear to have actually joined the British army as Redmond's recommended route to home rule, and the organisation virtually imploded.

Pearse, whose platform persona concealed his formidable skills as a committee man, quickly used the new opportunities opened by the war, which made plausible the prospect of substantial aid from Germany, to improve his position. In October 1914 he was appointed press secretary of the Irish Volunteers, a useful position for enhancing his profile. In December he became director of military organisation, enhancing his value for the IRB, for it would be through his ability to mobilise the Volunteers that the much smaller IRB could hope to mount a credible insurrection. In March 1915 he presided over a meeting of the four commandants of the Dublin Volunteer battalions to discuss a possible rising in September. His appointment as director of military organisation in the three-man military committee that the IRB itself established in May 1915 confirmed that he had made himself a pivotal figure in the planning process. It was a meteoric rise. A member for only a year and a half, he had enjoyed virtually vertical ascent in an organisation that had hesitated to admit him at all.

When the rebellion, which the IRB decided in September 1914 to mount before the war ended, might actually occur, depended heavily on the supply of guns – as well on the war not

ending before they got around to a rising. Pearse now focused on getting guns. While Easter 1916 would be heavily invested with resurrectionary symbolism, the contemplated September 1915 rising might have occurred had the tentative plans for securing German guns materialised at that stage. The protracted search for arms obliges revision of the image of Easter 1916 as simply a blood sacrifice. There are passages in Pearse glorifying both blood and sacrifice, not least with regard to the world war. When he wrote in December 1915 that ‘War is a terrible thing, but war is not an evil thing. It is the things that make war necessary that are evil’ (*Collected works. Political writings*, 216), he was simply reiterating the standard position of the belligerents. But in his intoxication with the idea of bloodshed for love of ‘fatherland’ in general, he went beyond conventional war rhetoric in actually celebrating the bloodshed: ‘It is good for the world that such things should be done. The old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of the battlefields. Such august homage was never offered to God as this, the homage of lives given gladly for love of country’. There was one conspicuous exception to this celebration of the purifying power of bloodshed. He bitterly denounced Redmond for sacrificing the blood of allegedly 50,000 Irish war dead.

The passages in Pearse that exalt the idea of sacrificial bloodshed have made it tempting, and easy, to depict him as hysterically blood-crazy. That dimension is there. But the publication of his *Letters* in 1980 by Séamas Ó Buachalla compelled attention to a very different side of his personality. As F. S. L. Lyons put it in his foreword:

‘Here it is enough to point to their most outstanding feature . . . the rigorous exclusion of the poet and dreamer from a scene dominated by the able organiser . . . future biographers will have to weigh this pragmatic correspondence against the flamboyance, sometimes even the barely suppressed hysteria of Pearse’s published writings from 1914 onwards. In doing so, perhaps they will come at last to a balanced view’ (Ó Buachalla, *Letters*, foreword, vii, ix).

The evidence for interpreting the rising as solely a blood-sacrifice in Pearse’s mind has been regularly cited, above all the climactic quote from MacDara, in his 1915 play, ‘The singer’: ‘One man can save a people, as one man redeemed the world. I will take no pike. I will go into battle with bare hands. I will stand up before the Gall as Christ hung naked before men on the tree!’ This capacity for self-identification with Christ on the cross provides a striking insight into one part of Pearse’s psychology. It would partly resurface at his trial. But it has to be set against other more prosaic evidence. For Pearse was desperately trying for two years to get as many weapons as possible ‘to act with tremendous effect’, as he told his American contacts in October 1914 (Pearse to J. McGarrity, 19 Oct. 1914, *Letters*, 332). Even the commitment to rebellion has to be set against a much less quoted but quite explicit defence of Thomas Davis in February 1916 against the criticism that he was not committed to revolt: ‘That Davis would have achieved Irish nationhood by peaceful means if he could, is undoubted. Let it not be a reproach against Davis. Obviously if a nation can obtain its freedom without bloodshed, it is its duty so to obtain it. Those of us who believe that, in the circumstances of Ireland, it is not possible to obtain our freedom without bloodshed, will admit thus much. If England, after due pressure, were to say to us, “Here, take Ireland”, no one would be so foolish as to answer, “No, we’d rather fight you for it”. But things like that do not happen. One must fight, or at least be ready to fight’ (‘The spiritual nation’ *Collected works. Political writings*, 323–4).

Pearse’s sacrificial impulses, however powerful, were not his sole driving force towards rebellion. A blood-sacrifice rising did not require the elaborate planning necessary to give it military credibility. Pearse the dreamer might hang as MacDara on his cross, but the Pearse of the military council of the IRB worked on the ground. The main IRB reason, with Pearse to the fore, for dissuading James Connolly from rising in January 1916 with his tiny Citizen Army was precisely

because such a rising would have been pure blood-sacrifice, and they needed to wait until the planned arrival of the guns from Germany at Easter to mount a serious revolt.

That the Easter rising was obviously doomed has led to an understandable fascination with the blood-sacrifice passages in Pearse, to the relative neglect of other emphases. Those passages form a legitimate part of any critique. But interpreting everything said and done over previous years through the distorting prism of the Easter rising exposes the danger of reading history backwards, the negation of thinking historically. The prism is distorting because it is so easy to forget that neither Pearse nor anyone else planned the actual rising that occurred. It was the rising no one planned. It cannot be made the basis for inferences about intentions. Historians are not at liberty to scour earlier sources for premonitory signs for a type of rising none foresaw, exhuming every word pointing in one direction only, and dismissing the rest.

The Rising

The military council of the IRB planned a rising to begin on Easter Sunday, 23 April, under cover of a mobilisation order by Pearse for Volunteer manoeuvres, which the IRB intended to turn into rebellion. About ten times as many Volunteers were to be involved, with far greater firepower, as was in fact the case on Easter Monday. The intended rising, if still highly likely to be crushed, was to have been a far more formidable military effort than the actual rising.

A sequence of unforeseen events at the last moment subverted the plans. The decisive one was the confusion that resulted in the *Aud*, the ship carrying 20,000 rifles from Germany, being captured by the British navy off the coast of Kerry on Good Friday. This led Eoin MacNeill, the head of the Volunteers, who had been kept in the dark about the plans for a rising, to publish a countermand in the *Sunday Independent*, throwing the plans into chaos. It was only when the plans imploded that the leaders sought to salvage what they could by mounting a rising on Easter Monday, 24 April. We do not know what transpired at the crisis meeting of the leaders on Sunday morning following the publication of MacNeill's cancellation order, but Tom Clarke seems to have been the only one who wanted to proceed on Sunday.

Pearse was chosen as the president of the republic they intended to proclaim. How that happened remains unclear. Clarke, the senior figure among them, was the first signatory of the proclamation of the republic, and the presumptive president. Pearse's appointment may have been due to the belief that public relations would be crucial during a rising whose duration, even then, no one could foresee, and that Pearse was the supreme communicator among the signatories, whereas Clarke's talents lay more in conspiracy than in communication. The following day, Pearse duly read out the proclamation of the republic after the rebels seized the General Post Office, which became their HQ. Mainly his own composition, the proclamation stands as the final published statement of his ideals. Part of it was no more than war propaganda. The reference to the support of 'gallant allies in Europe', was natural in the light of the promised guns from Germany, even if they would now never arrive. But at his trial, Pearse exposed the hollowness of that piece of propaganda when emphasising its purely functional purpose, for 'Germany is no more to me than England is' (Edwards, 318). To him 'German domination was as odious as British' (ibid, 223). Phrases to the effect that the rebels were 'striking in full confidence of victory', after 'patiently waiting for the right moment to reveal itself', were also patently war propaganda.

If the abrupt change of plans affected the war propaganda sections of the proclamation, the bulk of the text, the core justification of Ireland's right to independence, and the outline of the basic values of the republic, were timeless arguments. The commitment to 'equal rights and equal opportunities' for all may have been influenced by the socialist James Connolly. If so

Connolly was pushing an open door. There was no necessary contradiction between the thinking of Pearse and Connolly at this level. The opening salutation, 'Irishmen and Irishwomen', expressed Pearse's life-long commitment to equality for women, as did the promise of universal suffrage 'for all her men and women'. The manner in which Pearse came more specifically under Connolly's influence was in formulating the last of the four underlying propositions of the proclamation, contained in *The sovereign people*, his final pamphlet, published on 31 March (*Collected works. Political writings*, 337): '(1) The end of freedom is human happiness. (2) The end of national freedom is individual freedom; therefore individual happiness. (3) National freedom implies national sovereignty. (4) National sovereignty implies control of all the moral and material resources of the nation.'

The proclamation was hopelessly out of touch with reality in its view of Ulster unionist resistance to home rule, which Pearse romanticised just as he did so much else in Irish history. The issue is brushed aside, enveloped in the guarantee that the republic was committed to 'cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past'. The rebels might be 'oblivious of the differences', unionists were not. The proclamation contains no trace of blood-sacrifice doctrine. When it speaks of 'having waited patiently for the right moment to reveal itself' for the rebellion, the 'right moment' purported to be for 'victory'. That the proclamation committed the rebels to Ireland's 'exaltation among the nations' is quintessential Pearse.

President

Whatever the motives behind his selection as president, Pearse seemed intoxicated with the sense of having achieved this unique status. It was as if he indeed now incarnated Ireland, as broodingly intimated in his poem 'Mise Éire'. He issued bulletins redolent of his preeminence. Typical war bulletins, they exuded expectations of victory even in the face of inevitable defeat, announcing imminent success until close to the end. Even at the end Pearse eschewed the sacrificial theme, claiming the rebels would have won but for MacNeill's countermanding order. Nevertheless he also characteristically exonerated MacNeill from blame, acknowledging that he too had acted in the best interests of Ireland, thus facilitating a subsequent closing of Volunteer ranks. It must be doubtful if Clarke, bitterly critical of MacNeill during the week, could have employed so conciliatory a tone.

Death

Clarke too might have been slower to contemplate surrender. After he had hesitated about surrendering initially, the sight of the shedding of innocent blood seems to have revolted Pearse as much as the rhetoric of blood had excited him. Earlier in the week, however appalled by the looting, he refused to follow his own injunction to shoot captured looters. Now, after seeing three civilians with a white flag shot down, Pearse surrendered, in the hope of saving civilians and his followers, on 29 April. Sentenced to death on 2 May after a trial in which his bearing won the admiration of the presiding English officer, he played out his presidential role to the full, summoning shades of MacDara in proposing himself as the sole sacrifice. He was executed at 3.30 a.m. on 3 May. He used the short respite to snatch a final propaganda victory in composing a poem to the beauty of nature and farewell letters to his brother Willie, himself shortly to be executed, and to his mother, all of which would contribute to the beatific public profile he would soon come to enjoy.

Legacy

The task of rescuing Pearse from the clutches of his idolaters and demonisers continues. ‘The balanced view’, for which F. S. L. Lyons argued, has yet to fully emerge. As an interim verdict on Pearse’s political significance, it may be surmised that there would have been a rising without him. But in terms of public image there could not have been *The Rising* without him. It may even be ventured, remembering that Pearse republished in 1916 *The murder machine*, and *An mháthair agus sgéalta eile*, as if intent on reasserting the continuing centrality of education, and of the Irish language, to his thinking, that in the longer run his cultural legacy will prove at least as significant as his political.

Written by J. J. Lee

Sources: NLI, Pearse papers and letters (MS 5049), Seán T. O’Kelly papers (MSS 8469, 10,192), J. J. Doyle papers (letters from Pearse); *Collected works of Pádraic H. Pearse. Songs of the Irish rebels. Specimens from an Irish anthology. Some aspects of Irish literature. Three lectures on Gaelic topics* [1917] (repr. 1924); *Collected works of Pádraic H. Pearse. Political writings and speeches* (1922; 1966); Raymond J. Porter, *P. H. Pearse* (1973); Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Patrick Pearse: the triumph of failure* (1977); Cathal Ó Háinle (ed.), *Gearrscéalta an Phiarsaigh* (1979); Séamas Ó Buachalla (ed.), *The letters of P. H. Pearse* (1980), with a foreword by F. S. L. Lyons; Séamas Ó Buachalla (ed.), *A significant Irish educationalist: the educational writings of P. H. Pearse* (1980); Brian P. Murphy, *Patrick Pearse and the lost republican ideal* (1991); Liam de Paor, *On the Easter proclamation and other declarations* (1997); Elaine Sisson, *Pearse’s patriots: St Enda’s and the cult of boyhood* (2004); Regina Uí Chollatáin, *An Claidheamh Soluis agus Fáinne an Lae 1899–1932; Anailís ar phríomhnuachtán Gaeilge ré na hAthbheochana* (2004)

Éamon de Valera

De Valera, Éamon ('Dev') (1882–1975), teacher, revolutionary, taoiseach, and president of Ireland, was born 14 October 1882 in the Nursery and Child's Hospital, Lexington Avenue, Manhattan, New York, the only child of Juan Vivion de Valera and Catherine ('Kate') Coll (1856–1932); he was christened Edward (although recorded as 'George' in the baptismal register) at St Agnes church, 141 East 43rd St., on 3 December 1882. Catherine Coll was born 21 December 1856 in Bruree, Co. Limerick, eldest among four children of Patrick Coll and Elizabeth Coll (née Carroll); aged 17 when her father died, she had already been working as a maid for neighbouring farmers and on 21 September 1879, aged 22, she emigrated to Brooklyn, New York. While working there for a French family in 1880 she met Vivion de Valera, who had been born (1853) in Spain's Basque country, where his father was an army officer who later brought his family to Cuba; Vivion moved to New York in the 1870s to advance his career as a sculptor. According to de Valera's own account, his parents' marriage took place on 19 September 1881 in Greenville, New Jersey, where his mother was then working; they then returned to New York, where they lived first in Brooklyn and then at 61 East 41st St., Manhattan (UCDA P 150/1). That there is no documentary evidence of the marriage fuelled rumours of de Valera's illegitimacy sporadically disseminated by political opponents; other local rumours that he was the son of a Limerick farmer named Atkinson, for whom his mother had worked as a maid before emigrating, must be discounted on chronological grounds. Vivion de Valera had suffered from bronchial illness before he was married, and when it recurred (1884), he took medical advice to go west to a drier climate. Edward de Valera, who was not yet two years old, never saw his father again. His notes on a bible he won as a school prize indicate that his father died in November 1884, in Denver or in Minneapolis: 'he was 5' 7" or 5' 8" [1.7–1.73 m] in height & could wear mother's shoes' (Farragher, 8). His mother did not learn of his father's death until the spring of 1885, when financial necessity dictated her return to domestic service as a nursemaid with a Dr Dawson in Fifth Avenue; as a temporary expedient she put her own child out to nurse with a Mrs Doyle, another Bruree immigrant, of Grand St., Manhattan. 'My mother had to surrender me in order to earn her living', recalled de Valera seventy years later, and he claimed to remember a 'woman in black . . . a rather slim woman, pale face, with a handbag', visiting him (UCDA P150/87).

The return to Ireland on medical advice of his mother's brother, Edward ('Ned') Coll, then working in Connecticut, provided an enduring expedient, involving the permanent separation of mother and son: Uncle Ned brought the infant Edward back to Knockmore, Bruree. De Valera, although then only two and a half, later claimed that his arrival at 'Cove' on the SS *City of Chicago* on 18 April 1885 was 'the second event clearly recorded in my memory' (UCDA P150/1). The other members of the Coll household were his 49-year-old grandmother, Elizabeth Coll, and his 15-year-old Aunt Hannie, of whom he became very fond but who also went to America in 1887; shortly afterwards his mother briefly visited Bruree before returning to New York, where she married Charles E. Wheelwright (1857–1927), a non-catholic Englishman, who worked as a coachman for a wealthy family in Rochester, New York; they lived over the stables in the grounds of the estate and had two children, both reared as catholics: Annie (1889–97), and Thomas (1890–1946) who was ordained as a Redemptorist priest in June 1916.

Early life and education

When de Valera arrived in Bruree the Colls were moving into a new government-built, three-roomed, slate-roofed labourer's cottage with a half-acre of land; asleep in the old pre-famine, one-room, mud-walled, and thatched family home he recalled 'waking up in the morning and screaming . . . alone in a strange place' and being told that his uncle was in 'the new house' (UCDA P150/87). He also remembered saving hay, picking blackberries and mushrooms, and avoiding the police while grazing cows on the 'long acre' by the roadside. There was very little fresh meat, only bacon; no electricity, but candles and paraffin lamps; water was usually drawn from open wells; hay and corn were cut with scythes. There were few books and the first novel he read was Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Edward de Valera received his primary education at Bruree national school (7 May 1888–9 October 1896), where he was known as Eddie Coll. He regarded his grandmother's death, on 31 July 1895 when he was only 12, as 'a definite milestone'; she had hoped that he might become a priest; his uncle wanted him to become a monitor in the local school. De Valera, who had thought of joining his mother in America, felt he must plan his own future, and he emulated another boy from Bruree who had won a scholarship to the CBS at Charleville. Although it was seven miles away and the only train left Bruree at 7.40 a.m., he started school there on 2 November 1896; he often walked home as there was no evening train and a bicycle was beyond his means – he sometimes rode into Charleville on a donkey. When he learnt in 1898 that he had won a junior grade exhibition worth £20, he felt his 'life's ambition had been realized' and that he 'was now . . . on the road to success'. A chance encounter on holiday in Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare, between the local curate and the then president of Blackrock College, led to an invitation to go there on the understanding that the amount paid in the exhibition would be accepted in lieu of fees (£40) (UCDA P150/13, Farragher, 13).

Admission to the Holy Ghost Fathers' secondary school for the catholic elite was a giant step up the ladder of social mobility. 'From the time I heard that I was to go to Blackrock', he recalled, 'I was really walking on air. No more trudging over the interminable distance, as it seemed, from Knockmore to Charleville or from Charleville to Knockmore. No more chopping of turnips for the cows, or the drawing of water, or the attempts to do my lessons in the intervals . . . I remember well how happy I was on that night – my first night in the College. I could not understand why boys coming to such a place should be weeping. I had heard some sobbing; but for me this coming was really the entry into heaven' (P150/22). That a child whose father had died and whose mother had 'surrendered' him before he was three should have so immediately identified with Blackrock College as home was unsurprising. He spent his first Christmas as a boarder there

rather than returning to Bruree, and chose to live most of his life, and to die, in close proximity to the college.

De Valera's standing as a scholarship boy in Blackrock depended on repeating his success in public examinations, and he duly won middle grade and senior grade exhibitions in 1899 and 1900. The best student in his class, John D'Alton, the future cardinal and archbishop of Armagh, later described him as 'a good, very serious student, good at mathematics but not outstanding otherwise'. De Valera's own recollections show that what he 'relished from the start were the long uninterrupted hours in the study hall in the early morning before class and again throughout the evening'; in his textbooks, which he preserved and later presented to the college, he wrote his name 'Edward de Valera, French College, Blackrock . . . several times even on the same page . . . staking out what were his most cherished personal possessions, and perhaps asserting a new identity' (Farragher, 35, 17). That identity was shaped by a religious and Victorian ethos: the prize books he won included Walter Scott's *The lady of the lake*, Macaulay's *Essays and lays of ancient Rome*, and Isaac Disraeli's *Miscellany of literature*. Unlike Blackrock contemporaries such as Pádraic Ó Conaire he did not attend Irish-language classes and showed no interest in the language revival; nor was he among the handful of more nationalist-minded boys who refused to raise their caps and cheer when Queen Victoria's carriage passed the college en route from Kingstown in April 1900.

Williamstown Castle had been acquired by Blackrock as a civil service college in 1875, and from 1881 it also housed a department to prepare students for the examinations of the Royal University, offering a four-year degree in arts which de Valera entered in the autumn of 1900. He also participated in the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society and visited the patients of the nearby Linden Convalescent Home, where he lived his last days. In 1903–4 de Valera accepted an appointment as a replacement teacher of mathematics and physics in Rockwell, the Holy Ghost Fathers' sister college near Cashel, Co. Tipperary. He remembered his two years there as the happiest of his life – it was there that he was first nicknamed 'Dev'. The toils of teaching were relieved by rugby – he was captain of the combined team of masters and boys in 1904 – and what he later laughingly described as "totty twigging" excursions to Stewart's Hotel in Cashel, where he 'played the gallant' with the proprietor's daughter (Farragher, 64, 77–8; Edwards, 37). Despite returning to Blackrock outside teaching term to study, such distractions – coupled with the grind of teaching in both Blackrock and Rockwell – may have contributed to his failure to achieve the honours to which he aspired in the Royal University's BA examination in mathematical science in October 1904. 'He was thoroughly disgusted and was to regret it all his life' (Farragher, 83). De Valera had been so comfortable in the constant company of priests and would-be seminarians that he had intermittently considered entering the priesthood; and it was also in 1904, after a weekend retreat with the Jesuits in Rathfarnham Castle, that he claimed to have abandoned all ideas of a religious vocation – although he again raised the subject with the president of Clonliffe College in 1906 (Coogan, 37–8).

His real vocation seemed to be teaching, and there followed a string of temporary, part-time appointments that included Belvedere College (1905–6); Dominican College, Eccles St., Dublin (1906–8); Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin; St Mary's College, Rathmines, Dublin; and, most significantly, the Teachers Training College of Our Lady of Mercy, Carysfort, Blackrock, where he was grandiloquently described as professor of mathematics from September 1906 until October 1912, and where he claimed to have trained over 1,000 women as teachers. His reluctance to sever his almost familial ties with Blackrock was reflected in his obtaining permission to live in the Castle, which was only ten minutes' walk to Carysfort, where he taught from 9.00 to 11.00, leaving him time to cycle around the city to his other teaching engagements but little time for postgraduate research, despite his attending courses in TCD and UCD.

1908 – the foundation year of the NUI, which made Irish a compulsory subject for matriculation and created pressure for its inclusion in the Carysfort syllabus – was a pivotal year in de Valera's life. He determined to learn Irish and moved into lodgings in nearby Merrion View Avenue, where his landlady was a native Irish-speaker from Mayo. He also joined the Gaelic League, where he was immediately smitten by his Irish teacher, Sinéad (Jane) Flanagan (Sinéad de Valera), who was four years older and a primary school teacher and amateur actor. Their engagement was short – 'we hardly knew each other until we were engaged' recalled Sinéad (de Valera, 107) – and they married (8 January 1910) in St Paul's church, Arran Quay, Dublin; after a short honeymoon at a hotel in Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, they lived briefly at Vernon Terrace, Booterstown, Blackrock, before moving into 33 Morehampton Terrace, Donnybrook. Although de Valera had insisted on being married through Irish, he still signed his 1911 census return as 'Edward' rather than as 'Éamonn' (transmuted to 'Éamon' in the late 1920s), the name by which he was always henceforth known – he entered his languages on the census form as 'English and Irish' and Sinéad's as 'Irish and English'. In 1910–13 de Valera brought the zeal of the convert to his work in the Gaelic League; he became a delegate to the *ard fheis*, and when the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) thwarted his nomination to the executive committee he wrongly blamed Sinn Féin. He was also appointed a director of the summer school in Tawin, an Irish-speaking island in Galway Bay, for a three-year term in 1911.

His pass degree and lack of postgraduate qualifications (other than his 1910 higher diploma in education from the NUI) blighted his hopes for a permanent academic appointment in the NUI: in April 1912 he applied for the chair of mathematical physics in UCG but withdrew in favour of a better qualified candidate; and in May 1913, despite strong canvassing on his behalf by priests and by members of the Gaelic League, he was defeated in a contest for the same post in UCC, whose president, Bertram Windle, resisted the chair's becoming 'a fief of insurgent linguistic nationalism' (Edwards, 42). But in October 1912 he was appointed temporary lecturer and head of the department of mathematics and mathematical physics in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, a recognised college of the NUI, for which he had been invited to apply by Daniel Mannix, then about to relinquish the presidency of Maynooth for the archbishopric of Melbourne, Australia.

Revolutionary nationalist, 1914–1918

Like many Irish-speaking nationalists, de Valera's political horizons were confined to a full measure of home rule, but that changed dramatically when he joined the Irish Volunteers at their inaugural meeting in Dublin's Rotunda Rink (25 November 1913). Believing that the upshot would be armed conflict, he overcame the inhibitions of a married man with three children under three years old. His commitment was unqualified, and diligent attendance at weekly drill meetings and more advanced military exercises led to his promotion as captain of the Donnybrook company. He bought his own Mauser pistol for £5 and participated in the Howth gun-running (26 July 1914), ferrying rifles around Dublin in the sidecar of the motor-cycle he had bought to get to and from Maynooth. He rebuilt his much depleted company after siding with the small minority who opposed the call of John Redmond in September 1914 for the Volunteers to enlist in the war against Germany. In March 1915 he was appointed commandant of the 3rd Battalion, comprising the companies in the south-east of the city, after he had satisfied Patrick Pearse of his willingness to participate in a rising; he then became adjutant to Thomas MacDonagh, the brigade commander. Disconcerted to discover that others in his battalion knew more than he did about the impending rising, he complained to MacDonagh, who explained that this was because he was not a member of the IRB, the secret oath-bound organisation that had infiltrated the Volunteers and effectively controlled its executive. De Valera, who identified with the

catholic church's opposition to secret societies, demurred about taking the required oath. He resolved his dilemma by a fudge characteristic of other pedantic compromises that studded his political career. He agreed to be sworn in by MacDonagh on the understanding that his oath only involved accepting the orders of the Volunteers' executive, and that he would attend no meetings and know no secrets (including the names of other members) of the IRB, which he left after the rising of Easter 1916.

During the rising de Valera's battalion occupied Boland's Mill, commanding the south-east approaches over the Grand Canal; isolated and without scouting parties, they knew little of what was happening elsewhere. Understandably unsure of how best to deploy his hundred-strong force, which saw so little fighting that its casualties were in single figures, de Valera's military leadership was indecisive but hyper-active, and he went without sleep for five days. But what he did in the rising mattered little when set against the iconic stature he acquired in its aftermath as the only surviving commandant, when his sentence of death on 8 May by a military court was commuted to life imprisonment. Although his wife got the American consul to intervene – 'I had his baptism certificate showing that he had been born in America and . . . [as] he had never taken out naturalisation papers here . . . he was an American citizen' (Farragher, 113) – his escape owed more to luck. When General John Maxwell decided to proceed with the execution of James Connolly on 12 May (notwithstanding a telegram telling him to stop the executions from Asquith, the British prime minister), he asked the crown prosecuting officer, W. E. Wylie, whether de Valera, who was next on the list, was important. 'Wylie made the immortal reply: "No. He is a school-master who was taken at Boland's Mill"' (Coogan, 78) and de Valera's life was spared.

De Valera's imprisonment, first in Mountjoy jail and then in four English prisons (Dartmoor, Lewes, Maidstone, and Pentonville), massively enhanced his standing among revolutionary nationalists. Age and education (he was older and much better educated than most fellow prisoners), military seniority, and schoolmasterly authority contributed to his meteoric emergence as leader. So, too, did his self-sufficiency, intelligence, capacity for independent thought, communication skills, and readiness to confront the prison authorities. He was initially opposed to Sinn Féin's participation in electoral politics which began to gather momentum after the release of all untried political prisoners at Christmas 1916, arguing that 'as soldiers' Irish Volunteers 'should abstain *officially* . . . and no candidates should in future be *officially* recognized as standing in our interests or as representing our ideals' (Longford & O'Neill, 56–7). He drafted the letter from a Lewes prisoner, Joseph McGuinness, refusing nomination in the Longford by-election in May 1917, but 'never mentioned the word "republic"', referring instead to "Ireland's freedom", "absolute independence" and "the independence position"' (Laffan, 242); but his opposition was disregarded by the leadership in Ireland, and McGuinness won the seat. When all the convicted prisoners were finally released, it was de Valera who paraded them before boarding the boat on their triumphal return from Holyhead on 18 June 1917.

He had been selected as the candidate for a by-election in Clare East before his release and he now abandoned his reservations about running on the Sinn Féin ticket. He campaigned in his Volunteer uniform, telling audiences that they 'must be prepared to fight against England' and that every vote was 'as good as the crack of a rifle' (Laffan, 210); but he denied that he was an anarchist or an atheist, saying that 'all his life he had been associated with priests, and the priests knew him and were behind him in this election'. While he insisted that the 1916 rising 'had saved the soul of Ireland', he also declared that 'another Easter week would be a superfluity'; but 'he and his friends' 'would not altogether eliminate physical force from their programme' when that 'would mean that John Bull could kick as much as he liked' (Miller, 393–4). This tightrope act between the poles of clerical and revolutionary support fashioned a two-to-one majority that

began forty years of uninterrupted election victories in Clare and signalled de Valera's emergence as a popular hero. His leadership was endorsed by his election as president of Sinn Féin on 25 October 1917, a post he held until 1926; on 27 October he was also elected president of the Irish Volunteers (more generally known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) from 1919). When the Sinn Féin ard fheis had split between republicans and those, like Arthur Griffith, who opposed proclaiming the party's aim as a republic, it was de Valera who formulated the unanimously accepted compromise: 'Sinn Féin aims at securing the international recognition of Ireland as an independent Irish Republic. Having achieved that status the Irish people may by referendum choose their own form of government.' It was 'not the time for discussion on the best forms of government', he told the ard fheis; they all wanted 'complete and absolute independence. Get that and we will agree to differ afterwards' (Moynihan, 7–8). As president of Sinn Féin, de Valera was voted an annual salary of £500 a year that enabled him to improve the material circumstances of his family he was to see so rarely before 1925 – they now had five children – by renting a house in Greystones, on the railway line fifteen miles south of Dublin.

The campaign against the British government's threat to impose conscription further enhanced de Valera's stature. Nationalists of every hue came together at the Mansion House conference on 18 April 1918. De Valera impressed older nationalists such as William O'Brien (1852–1928) who wrote of how 'his transparent sincerity, his gentleness and equability captured the hearts of us all. His gaunt frame and sad eyes buried in their sockets had much of the Dantesque suggestion of "the man who had been in hell". His was that subtle blend of virility and emotion which the Americans mean when they speak of "a magnetic man". Even the obstinacy (and it was sometimes trying) with which he would defend a thesis, as though it were a point in pure mathematics, with more than French bigotry for logic, became tolerable enough when, with a boyish smile, he would say: "You will bear with me won't you? You know I am an old schoolmaster?"' (Longford & O'Neill, 72). The conference coincided with the spring meeting of the catholic hierarchy. De Valera, already in communication with Archbishop William Walsh, proposed that they send a deputation, on which he played a key role, to seek their support; 'I have lived all my life among priests', he reassured Tim Healy who was apprehensive about bearding the bishops in their den. When the hierarchy received de Valera at Maynooth, they conferred on Sinn Féin 'the moral sanction of a legitimate political party and removed it from the realm of theological and moral suspicion' (Miller, 404, 413). The bishops' proclamation that the people had the right to resist conscription, by every means consonant with God's law, set the seal on his emergence as the leader of nationalist Ireland. Although the British government eventually shrank from the consequences of extending conscription to Ireland, de Valera was among the seventy-three Sinn Féin leaders arrested on 17 May on trumped-up allegations of plotting with German agents.

After a brief spell in Gloucester jail, he was sent to Lincoln jail in early June. Imprisonment meant that de Valera remained cut off from the party leadership in Ireland for eight months that spanned both the general election of December 1918 (when he was returned unopposed for Clare East, and when Sinn Féin ousted the Irish parliamentary party) and the inaugural meeting of Dáil Éireann on 21 January 1919. The terms of confinement for unconvicted internees, which included freedom of association, were lenient and he spent much of his time reading and writing in his cell; his appreciation of Machiavelli dates from this time. Although he exercised regularly, his aloofness and the awe he inspired among his fellow-prisoners was eloquently symbolised by his playing handball alone. His escape from Lincoln jail on 3 February 1919, engineered by Michael Collins and Harry Boland, won him headlines worldwide. De Valera felt he could best advance Ireland's case for self-determination by going to the US and bringing Irish-American pressure to bear on President Woodrow Wilson. His colleagues were dismayed that he planned again to absent himself from Ireland, and Cathal Brugha, the temporary president of Dáil Éireann, went

to Manchester where he was in hiding and persuaded him to return; he was smuggled back to Dublin on 20 February and secreted in the gate lodge of Archbishop's House in Drumcondra with the connivance of the archbishop's secretary.

President of Dáil Éireann, 1919–22

De Valera was preoccupied with his family during his three months in Ireland – a sixth child had been born in his absence in August 1918. The political highlight was his first attendance on 1 April at Dáil Éireann, of which he was elected president. On 10 April the dáil unanimously passed his motion later interpreted as legitimising the IRA's guerilla war: 'that members of the police forces acting in this country as part of the forces of the British occupation and as agents of the British government be ostracised socially by the people of Ireland . . . They are spies in our midst. They are England's janissaries. The knowledge of our sentiments and feelings and purposes, which they derive either from their own hearts, because they are of our race, or from intercourse amongst us, they put liberally at the disposal of the foreign usurper in order to undo us in our struggle against him. They are the eyes and ears of the enemy' (*Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 67). When it became clear that the Irish delegation sent to Paris would not be received by the peace conference, de Valera's resolve to go to the US hardened and he left Ireland on 1 June.

The objectives of de Valera's American mission were threefold: to seek official recognition of the Republic, to dissuade the US government from pledging to maintain Ireland as an integral part of the UK, and to spearhead the launch of an external loan. He failed in the first two but succeeded in raising nearly \$6 million – more than was raised in Ireland. His first public appearance (23 June), at New York's Waldorf-Astoria before excited crowds, foreshadowed the shape of things to come. Deluged with invitations, he employed Kathleen O'Connell, who continued to act as his personal secretary until her death in 1956. Criss-crossing the country, he addressed public meetings and state legislatures and received a plethora of honorary doctorates. Such was his eminence during his American mission that he was frequently, albeit incorrectly, described as 'president of Ireland'. But there were hazards in such adulation, and a travelling companion, Patrick McCartan, detected 'an unconscious contempt' for the opinion of others. The Chief, as he was now commonly addressed, 'presides and does all the talking. Has a habit of getting on to side issues and shutting off people who want to speak and thus makes a bad impression if not sometimes enemies. Tends to force his own opinions without hearing from the other fellows and thus thinks he has co-operation when he only gets silent acquiescence' (Fanning, 3). This authoritarian streak compounded his entanglement in Irish-American factional disputes and he made enemies of John Devoy and Judge Daniel Cohalan, who bitterly criticised as inconsistent with Irish sovereignty his so-called 'Cuban' declaration – in the course of a press interview de Valera had asked why Britain would not do with Ireland as the US had done with Cuba and declare a Monroe doctrine stipulating that an Irish government must never enter into a treaty with any foreign power.

Although de Valera, stung by Irish-American criticisms, abandoned the Cuban analogy thereafter, it remains the classic example of the prescience, originality, and sophistication of his thinking about international relations. 'With a free Ireland, *the preservation of its independence* would be as strong a moving force as *the recovery of its independence* has been a moving force in every generation since the coming of the Normans. An independent Ireland would see everything to lose in losing its independence – in passing under the yoke of any foreign power whatsoever. An independent Ireland would see its own independence in jeopardy the moment it saw the independence of Britain seriously threatened. Mutual self-interest would make the people of these two islands, *if both [were] independent*, the closest possible allies in a moment of real danger

to either . . . Ireland, deprived of its freedom by Britain – in dependence, and persecuted because it is not satisfied to remain in dependence – is impelled by every natural instinct and force to see hope in the downfall of Britain and hope, not fear, in every attack upon Britain. Whereas, in an independent Ireland, the tendency would be all the other way’ (author’s emphases). De Valera reiterated his understanding that foreign policy must be conducted on the basis of *realpolitik* in the open letter to Woodrow Wilson on 27 October 1920 that accompanied his abortive petition, as president of the Republic of Ireland to the president of the United States, seeking Ireland’s recognition as a sovereign, independent state: ‘Ireland is quite ready by treaty to ensure England’s safety and legitimate security against the danger of foreign powers seeking to use Ireland as a basis of attack against her’ (Moynihan, 34, 41).

The imminent enactment of the government of Ireland bill that partitioned Ireland and satisfied Ulster unionist demands – coupled with the IRA’s spectacular successes on Bloody Sunday (21 November 1920) and at Kilmichael (28 November), which made nonsense of British army claims that they were on the verge of a military victory – triggered the first indications that the British premier, Lloyd George, might negotiate with Sinn Féin. It also prompted de Valera to return to Dublin. He arrived on 23 December, the very day the government of Ireland bill was enacted, and immediately made plain his distaste for guerilla warfare to a bemused Richard Mulcahy: ‘You are going too fast. This odd shooting of a policeman here and there is having a very bad effect, from the propaganda point of view, on us in America. What we want is one good battle about once a month with about 500 men on each side’ (Coogan, 198). This attitude, based on his innate conservatism, his anxiety to mute episcopal criticism and, perhaps, his lingering nostalgia for the set-piece modalities of 1916, found expression in the destruction of Dublin’s Custom House (23 May 1921); the only armed action discussed and approved by the *dáil* cabinet, it was a military disaster resulting in the capture of some hundred members of the IRA’s Dublin brigade and the deaths of several others. But it was his stature as a political negotiator rather than as a military leader that interested the British, who ordered that he should not be arrested: ‘speculation has been rife as to the whereabouts of de Valera’, recorded an intelligence report for the week ending 4 January 1921; ‘several of our raiding operations have been viewed by the public as searches for him, whereas the policy is to leave him alone’ (NAUK W.O. 35/90/2). Although he remained in hiding – first in Loughnavale (on Strand Road, Merrion) and, from 18 May, in Glenvar (another house in its own grounds off Mount Merrion Avenue in Blackrock) – when he was inadvertently arrested (22 June) he was promptly released on the instructions of Alfred Cope, Lloyd George’s go-between in Dublin Castle. It was Cope who had arranged de Valera’s clandestine but pointless meeting on 5 May with James Craig who was in Dublin visiting the lord lieutenant, which unsurprisingly came to nothing, given that both Craig and de Valera thought the meeting had been requested by the other.

The king’s speech appealing for reconciliation when he opened the Northern Ireland parliament on 22 June was the platform for a truce, which came into effect on 11 July. A series of four meetings in 10 Downing St. between de Valera and Lloyd George began on 14 July and ended inconclusively on 21 July, when de Valera rejected an offer of what was in effect dominion status with safeguards for British defence interests. A prickly correspondence between the two men continued until 30 September, when de Valera accepted an invitation to a conference in London ‘with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British empire may best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations’ (Moynihan, 53).

De Valera’s refusal to participate as one of the Irish plenipotentiaries, in the conference that began on 11 October and culminated with the signing of the treaty in the early hours of 6 December, annoyed his colleagues and has earned him enduring obloquy for shirking the responsibilities of leadership. His many retrospective explanations suggest that he himself ‘seems to

have felt he had a serious case to answer'. These included 'that he remained at home to avoid compromising the Republic, as a reserve against the tricks of Lloyd George, to be in a better position to rally a united nation . . . to oblige the delegates to refer home before taking decisions . . . [by creating] through himself, a final court of appeal to avert whatever Britain might attempt to put over' (Murray, 50–51). De Valera knew from his own talks with Lloyd George in July of the extreme difficulty of the negotiations that lay ahead, yet, as he admitted to the dáil on 14 September, 'negotiations were necessary because we held one view and the British another' (*Dáil Éireann deb. (private session)*, 90). He knew, too, that any Irish negotiating team would be callow and inexperienced compared with their British counterparts, who would also enjoy the advantage of playing at home. In theory, de Valera's seeking to diminish the significance of whatever happened in Downing St. by insisting that the final decision be taken in Dublin made perfect sense. In practice it proved fatally flawed. First, because de Valera failed adequately to explain his reasoning to the plenipotentiaries in advance of the negotiations; so unquestioned was his authority that he probably saw no need for explanation, and so deferential were the plenipotentiaries (at least to his face) that they accepted his decision. Second, the personal chemistry and bonding that took place between the plenipotentiaries on their wearying journeys by sea and rail and during their sojourns in London silently corroded de Valera's authority; this culminated in their chairman, Arthur Griffith, effectively setting himself up as an alternative source of authority when he threw the delegation into disarray by announcing, in front of the British, that he would sign the treaty irrespective of whether his fellow plenipotentiaries would follow suit.

The dramatic collapse of the extraordinary deference unreservedly accorded de Valera as leader since 1917 accounts for his reaction when told that the treaty had been signed without his authority: initial disbelief was swiftly succeeded by outrage and anger that led him publicly to oppose it before he had even discussed its terms, and their reasons for signing it, with the plenipotentiaries.

The most significant variations between the treaty and what de Valera now proposed in his so-called 'document number 2' were, first, that the treaty provided that the Irish Free State would not be an independent republic but a self-governing dominion within the British empire; de Valera posited a constitution in which the source of all authority would be the Irish people. And, second, the treaty laid down that the king's representative as head of state in Ireland would be a governor general, and that members of the parliament of Irish Free State would swear an oath of allegiance to the constitution of the Irish Free State and fidelity to the king 'in virtue of common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of . . . the British commonwealth of nations'. De Valera proposed 'external association of this independent Ireland with the major states of the British commonwealth for certain affairs of common concern . . . i.e. association on a basis of equality of right' and the recognition of the king only 'as head or president, so to speak, of the association'; he also proposed 'an oath to *obey* this constitution (very different from the constitution in the treaty, which includes the British king as head of Ireland), to *abide* by the treaty of association, and to *recognise* the British king as head of the association' (Moynihan, 96). Although de Valera's self-confidence was such that he believed he would win majority support, the dáil approved the treaty by 64 votes to 57 on 7 January 1922. He resigned as president of Dáil Éireann but stood for reelection and was even more narrowly defeated, by 60 votes to 58, on 10 January.

Civil war and opposition

De Valera's refusal to accept those votes as a final verdict ensured that the treaty split became the great divide in the party politics of independent Ireland. Although he did not inspire the repudiation of Dáil Éireann by extremist elements in the IRA, neither did he condemn their

occupation of the Four Courts in Dublin; his more incendiary utterances, such as his St Patrick's day prediction that, if the treaty were accepted, the IRA 'would have to wade through Irish blood, through the blood of the soldiers of the Irish government, and through, perhaps, the blood of some of the members of the government in order to get Irish freedom' (Fanning, 12), enhanced the likelihood of widespread violence. De Valera was never part of what had by now become the fount of real power: the provisional government set up under the chairmanship of Michael Collins on 14 January to prepare for the establishment of the Irish Free State. The electoral pact he agreed with Collins before the general election of 16 June 1922 was a vain attempt to evade a democratic decision on the treaty by freezing the balance of power encapsulated in the dáil vote on the treaty. In effect, that election affirmed and enlarged the pro-treaty majority and conferred a democratic mandate on the provisional government. De Valera was pushed even further into the sidelines when the outbreak of the civil war on 28 June heralded the shift of power among the opponents of the treaty into the hands of the militarists. Although he reenlisted in his old unit (the 3rd Battalion of the IRA's Dublin brigade), that he did so as a private symbolised his powerlessness for as long as the civil war continued.

'Reason rather than faith has been my master . . . I have felt for some time that this doctrine of mine unfitted me to be leader of the republican party', de Valera despaired to Mary MacSwiney in September 1922. 'I must be the heir to generations of conservatism. Every instinct of mine would indicate that I was meant to be a dyed-in-the-wool tory or even a bishop, rather than the leader of a revolution' (UCDA P 150/657; Ferriter, 91). In February 1923 he was still fretting at his own impotence: 'I have been condemned to view the tragedy here for the last year as through a wall of glass, powerless to intervene effectively. I have, however, still the hope that an opportunity may come my way' (UCDA P 150/1800). It came with the defeat of the militarists when, on 27 April 1923 in close coordination with a ceasefire declaration by Frank Aiken, de Valera simultaneously published a proclamation of his political principles, notably: '(1) that the sovereign rights of the nation are indefeasible and inalienable; (2) that all legitimate governmental authority in Ireland . . . is derived exclusively from the people of Ireland; (3) that the ultimate court of appeal deciding disputed questions of national policy and expediency and policy is the people of Ireland' (Moynihan, 113). The primacy of a democratic mandate in his thinking led him to insist that Sinn Féin contest the general election of August 1923, although purist republican logic demanded the rejection of the election machinery as well as all the other institutions of the Free State; they won 44 of the 155 dáil seats. By then he had decided upon the only policy 'with a chance of success' and had drafted the blueprint that he was to implement so successfully when he returned to power: '(a) maintaining that we are a sovereign state and ignoring as far as possible any conditions in the "treaty" that are inconsistent with that status – a policy of squeezing England out by a kind of boycott of Gov General [*sic*], etc. (b) breaching the "treaty" by the oath, smashing thro' that first and then compelling England to tolerate the breaches or bring her to a revision which lead to something like the Doc. 2 position' (UCDA P150/1807). Even before the 1923 election he was already pondering entering the dáil; but the enforced interlude of another jail term (he was arrested by Free State troops on 15 August 1923 and not released until 16 July 1924) interrupted his sinuous efforts to wriggle out of what he was by then describing as 'the straightjacket of the republic' (UCDA P150/1584).

De Valera's breach with Sinn Féin was further postponed when the party's ard fheis in 1925 evaded the issue, but an IRA convention in November – adopting a new constitution, freeing the IRA from political control – sharpened the divide. De Valera grasped the nettle when he convened an extraordinary ard fheis on 9 March 1926 to discuss his motion that, once the oath of allegiance had been removed, entering the dáil became 'a question not of principle but of policy'; when it failed to win majority support he resigned as president of Sinn Féin. A month

later he announced the formation of a new republican party, Fianna Fáil, with the first objective of 'securing the political independence of a united Ireland as a republic'; its other objectives were the restoration of the Irish language, a social system of equal opportunity, land re-distribution designed to maximize the number of families on the land, and economic self-sufficiency. The ensuing election (June 1927) marked a decisive step in de Valera's quest for a majority: Fianna Fáil won 44 seats while the government party slumped from 63 to 47. The issue of how de Valera might finesse entering the dáil came to a head after the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins, when the government introduced an electoral amendment bill providing that candidates must henceforth declare before nomination their intention, if elected, to take the prescribed oath. De Valera advised Fianna Fáil's national executive that they must choose between entering the dáil or giving up political action. He devised a characteristically self-righteous fudge to sugar the pill of the oath in the form of a press statement stating that 'the required declaration is not an oath; that the signing of it implies no contractual obligation, and that it has no binding significance in conscience or in law; that, in short, it is merely an empty political formula which deputies could conscientiously sign without . . . obligations of loyalty to the English crown' (Moynihan, 150). Well might de Valera's opponents ask why what could be treated as an empty formula in 1927 could not have been so treated in January 1922; but what mattered was not the ritual of reservation but the reality of participation. De Valera had achieved his objective: mainstream republican opposition was henceforth conducted within parliament; the abstentionism of Sinn Féin and the IRA was no longer significant, and parliamentary democracy was no longer seriously flawed. There followed a tied vote of confidence in the government and (15 September) another election, when Fianna Fáil increased their seats to 57. Although Cumann na nGaedheal, with 61 seats, retained office, they were soon seen as a 'lame duck' government, increasingly under siege after the worldwide economic collapse of 1929.

De Valera devoted much energy in opposition to raising money for a national newspaper to sustain Fianna Fáil's bid for power. He went twice to the US to raise funds (December 1927–February 1928, December 1929–May 1930) and, having established a limited liability company in Dublin with himself as controlling director, invited Margaret Pearse, the mother of Patrick and William, to press the button that started the presses rolling for the first edition of the *Irish Press* on 5 September 1931. He also burnished his republican credentials in opposition: in May 1928, by a vain attempt to present a petition under article 48 seeking a constitutional amendment to abolish the oath of allegiance, and in February 1929, when he defied an exclusion order in Northern Ireland and was detained for a month in Belfast jail. He struck a different populist chord with his promise to retain for the Irish exchequer the land annuities (the repayment of loans made by the British government to Irish tenant purchasers under the pre-independence land acts). This, together with the promise to abolish the oath, took pride of place in Fianna Fáil's 1932 election manifesto that also undertook to reexamine other payments (notably for RIC pensions) negotiated under the Anglo–Irish financial agreements of 1923–6. De Valera 'had played his hand superbly . . . Promises of larger and more comprehensive doles, of protection and industrialisation, coupled with repudiation of the British debts, constituted a nice amalgam of nationalism and democracy. They clinched the wide and durable support which Fianna Fáil enjoyed among the poorer classes' (MacDonagh, 109).

Rewriting the treaty

On 9 March 1932 the dáil elected Éamon de Valera president of the executive council by 81 to 68, a majority dependent on Labour Party and some independent support in addition to the 72 Fianna Fáil deputies. More than any other incoming head of government in independent Ireland,

de Valera knew exactly what he wanted to do with power: expunge the repugnant elements in the treaty and loosen the British connection so as to win the independence he had argued for since 1922. He took on the external affairs portfolio in conjunction with the presidency of the executive council (taoiseach after 1937) because he believed that foreign policy was too sensitive to be entrusted to other hands; the post-traumatic stress of the treaty split hardened his resolve to run his own Anglo–Irish policy. His style of chairmanship was benevolent but authoritarian. He allowed interminable discussion but no votes in marathon cabinet meetings; liberty to discuss never meant liberty to decide if de Valera wished to decide otherwise. On 14 March his ministers meekly agreed that he would make press statements on policy and ‘that no such communication should be made by any member of the executive council without previous consultation with the president’ (NAI, CAB 1/4/7). Yet his innate conservatism made him resistant to change for the sake of change. One of his first acts, on 10 March (the day after he took office), was to advise all the official heads of government departments that he had no intention of dismissing any of them. To the chagrin of his many supporters who wanted a spoils system, he sought only to bend the machinery of government to his purpose, not to dismantle it. He made particularly effective use of a troika of senior officials in the Department of External Affairs he had inherited from the previous government: Joe Walshe, secretary of the department 1922–46; John Hearne, the department’s legal adviser who provided many of the first drafts for de Valera’s constitutional revolution; and John W. Dulanty, the Irish high commissioner in London.

De Valera’s first task was the abolition of the oath; he so advised the British government on 22 March and introduced the necessary legislation on 20 April, but the Constitution (Removal of Oath) Bill was not enacted until 3 May 1933 because of the senate’s opposition. His government also embarked on a campaign of degrading the office of Britain’s governor general by humiliating the incumbent, James McNeill. Using the constitutional device that the king must act on the advice of his ministers, de Valera then advised the king to dismiss McNeill, which he did on 1 November 1932; he used the same device to secure the appointment of a nondescript supporter, Domhnall Ó Buachalla, whose only function was to sign acts of the oireachtas and who further degraded the office by refusing to live in the viceregal lodge and by never appearing in public.

De Valera’s cautious, crablike approach in regard to the governor-generalship was characteristic of his conduct across the broader spectrum of Anglo–Irish relations and was designed to minimise the prospect of British retaliation. His insistence that he was acting constitutionally was underpinned by the statute of Westminster, enacted by the Westminster parliament in December 1931, which provided that no law of the UK should extend to any of the dominions without their consent; he obtained numerous legal opinions to the effect that the statute ‘leaves it open to the Irish Free State to amend the [1922] constitution in any way it pleases’ (NAI, T/D S. 4469). But the British did retaliate when he refused to transfer the land annuities, notwithstanding his having received a legal opinion in 1929 that there was no legal reason why he should do so. After de Valera had refused an offer of commonwealth arbitration and two fruitless meetings with the British premier in London on 10 June and 15 July, the British imposed a 20 per cent duty on about two-thirds of Irish imports, and the Irish government replied in kind.

De Valera had no interest in seeking a financial solution to the economic war of 1932–8, because for him the essence of the problem was political. If the British prevailed, he told the Fianna Fáil ard fheis in November 1932, ‘then you could have no freedom, because at every step they could threaten you again and force you again to obey . . . What is involved is whether the Irish nation is going to be free or not’ (Moynihan, 227). The economic war was a godsend to de Valera because at a time of worldwide economic recession it enabled him to introduce protectionism under the guise of patriotism. National prosperity, moreover, had no place in his thinking for, as he had told the dáil in July 1928, an independent Ireland that preferred freedom

to the luxuries of empire must accustom itself to 'frugal fare' (Moynihan, 154); he now portrayed the economic austerity of his first years in government as the price demanded for freedom. He was sufficiently confident of the electoral appeal of this strategy to call a snap general election in January 1933, despite the misgivings of most ministerial colleagues. Fianna Fáil's success – 49.7 per cent of the vote and 76 seats – gave him an overall majority and forced the British government to recognise that he would be in power for the foreseeable future.

His strategy, he told an Easter rising commemoration in 1933, was to 'yield no willing assent to any form or symbol that is out of keeping with Ireland's right as a sovereign nation' but to 'remove these forms one by one, so that this state we control may become a republic in fact' (Moynihan, 237). In November 1933 he enacted three constitutional amendments – abolishing the right of appeal to the privy council and the governor general's right to withhold his assent from bills, and transferring his function of recommending money bills to the executive council. He instructed John Hearne to begin work on the heads of a new constitution at the end of April 1935, and on 29 May told the dáil of his intention 'to bring in a new constitution which, so far as internal affairs are concerned, will be absolutely ours' (Moynihan, 264). In August 1936 he 'mentioned' – the wording of the cabinet minute is redolent of his absolute control of Anglo-Irish policy – to his ministers that he intended so to advise the new king, Edward VIII (NAI, CAB 1/6/315). Nothing happened during de Valera's absence in Zurich from March to May 1936 for treatment for his deteriorating eyesight, a cause of 'great anxiety' to his family since 1933 (de Valera, 57). But the abdication crisis gave him the chance to put in place the key feature of his new constitution. His reaction reflected what his wife described as his 'capacity for making a grave decision with astonishing speed if he thought this was vital' (ibid., 165). On 10 December, the day of abdication, the cabinet agreed to delete all mention of the king and of the governor general from the 1922 constitution and 'to make provision by ordinary law for the exercise by the king of certain functions in external matters' (NAI, CAB 1/7/35–6). By 12 December he had rushed through the oireachtas two bills, the Constitution Amendment (No. 27) Bill and the External Relations Bill, giving effect to the abdication and recognising the crown for the purposes of diplomatic representation and international agreements. This surgical strike accomplished the most sensitive element of his constitutional revolution. The British were unlikely to risk controversy about the relationship between monarchy and the dominions in the immediate aftermath of the abdication scandal, so again, as with his previous amendments, they chose not to retaliate.

The paradox inherent in the 1937 constitution is that its architect designed it more as an end than as a beginning: its purpose was not to inaugurate a brave new world but to drop the curtain on the old world of the Irish Free State. Published on 1 May, approved by the dáil on 14 June, endorsed by referendum on 1 July, it came into effect on 29 December 1937. It affirmed the Irish nation's 'inalienable, indefeasible, and sovereign right to choose its own form of government, to determine its relations with other nations, and develop its life, political, economic, and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions' (art. 1) and declared that 'Ireland is a sovereign, independent, democratic state' (art. 5) whose head of state would be a president elected by direct popular vote to hold office for seven years (art. 12). Again de Valera shrank from the strait-jacket of the republic, preferring to name the state 'Éire' ('Ireland') rather than 'Poblacht na hÉireann' ('The Republic of Ireland'). This ambiguity, like the external relations act of 1936, wreathed Ireland's relationship with the commonwealth in a haze of uncertainty designed to deter British retribution that might entail the loss of rights of Irish-born citizens in Britain or, even worse, their enforced repatriation and the closure of the safety valve of emigration. When the name of the state was changed to 'The Republic of Ireland', moreover, as de Valera explained to the 1937 Fianna Fáil ard fheis, he wanted 'to see it in operation, not for twenty-six counties alone, but for

the whole thirty-two counties' (Moynihan, 331). He also hoped that even a vestigial commonwealth link might make it easier to end partition in order that, as he naively explained to the British, 'when Northern Ireland came in, the contact with the crown which they valued so highly should not be entirely severed' (Fisk, 63).

De Valera kept tight control of drafting the new constitution through a committee of four officials (he excluded ministers) working directly to him – John Hearne, Maurice Moynihan, Philip O'Donoghue, and Michael McDunphy. He held the religious article (44), omitted from the first three drafts, in an even firmer grip, drafting it himself although his eyesight was by then so bad that 'he could only write by using a pen with a very large nib, which meant that vast amounts of paper overflowed from his desk on to the floor' (de Valera, 51). The wording of that article was not revealed until the text of the constitution went to the cabinet on 27 April, and it went unchanged for final printing next day. De Valera's catholicism had remained unshaken by the hierarchy's joint pastoral of October 1922 excommunicating those who persisted in the war against the provisional government. He never fulminated against the church, but instead sought support from countervailing forces within the church – such as Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne and the Irish College in Rome – and he never behaved as if he himself had been excommunicated. Once in office, Fianna Fáil asserted their catholic credentials: a cabinet meeting in April 1932 favoured suspending sittings of the oireachtas on church holidays, opening dáil sittings 'with an appropriate form of prayer' and displaying a crucifix in the dáil chamber (NAI, CAB 1/4/47–8); the eucharistic congress of June 1932, when de Valera and his ministers paraded cheek by jowl with bishops and cardinals in front of vast crowds, set the seal on the process. But de Valera rejected the demands of leading catholic churchmen such as Cardinal Joseph MacRory and John Charles McQuaid, then president of Blackrock College and later archbishop of Dublin (1940–72) for a wording more fully consonant with catholic teaching, and he circumvented the prospect of their public criticism by sending Joe Walshe on a secret mission to secure the Vatican's tacit acquiescence. From a liberal perspective the 'special position' conferred on the catholic church under article 44 was clearly offensive, but from de Valera's perspective it was a compromise, and its explicit references to protestant denominations and to the Jews denied the catholic church the exclusive recognition it would have preferred.

The end of de Valera's quest to reconcile sovereignty with majority rule marked the end of ambiguity in his attitude to the IRA, with whose rejection of the 1922 constitution and withholding of allegiance to the institutions of the state he had at first identified. But now that he had secured the legitimacy of the state to his own satisfaction, those who took up arms against it could expect no mercy. 'The moment the constitution was enacted by the people', he told the dáil when introducing the treason bill (providing for the death penalty for treason as defined in article 39) in February 1939, 'treason had a new meaning . . . Once the constitution was passed, treason was defined as an act of treachery against this state, and nothing else.' Now the Irish people 'had established a state in accordance with their wishes, those who tried by violent means to overthrow that state should be held here, as in other countries, to be guilty of the most terrible crime of a public character which is known in civilised society' (*Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxiv, 966–7).

In November 1937, against a back-drop of looming war-clouds in Europe and with Ireland on the verge of becoming an independent republic in all but name, de Valera sought to enter into negotiations with Neville Chamberlain's government. His purpose was to address the only remaining restriction on Irish sovereignty: Britain's retention of the harbour defences at Berehaven, Cobh (Queenstown), and Lough Swilly under the defence annexe to the 1921 treaty. That restriction, unlike the restrictions de Valera had demolished in 1932–7, could not be dismantled unilaterally: he could not force the British to leave the treaty ports but would have to

persuade them to depart if he were to achieve his objective of Ireland's remaining neutral in the event of a European war. When the presidency of the council of the League of Nations had fallen by rotation to the Irish Free State in 1932 he had argued in his presidential address that 'smaller states, whilst being given a voice, have little real influence in the determination of the league's action' (Moynihan, 221), and the league's subsequent inability to protect smaller states from attack by stronger neighbours prompted de Valera to link the imperative necessity for Ireland's remaining neutral with the league's deficiencies. 'We want to be neutral', he told the dáil on 18 June 1936, but he also reassured the British that they would not 'be attacked through foreign states that might attempt to use this country as a base . . . that the full strength of this nation will be used to resist any attempt by any foreign power to abuse our neutrality' (Moynihan, 277). His commitment to neutrality likewise explained his unwavering refusal to declare for Franco in the Spanish civil war, notwithstanding intense pressure from the *Irish Independent* and other newspapers, from opposition spokesmen in the dáil, and in the pastorals and sermons of catholic bishops and priests.

Persuading Neville Chamberlain that Ireland would never be used as a base for attacking Britain in the event of war was fundamental to de Valera's conduct of the negotiations that began on 17 January and, punctuated by the German occupation of Austria in March, ended on 25 April 1938 with three separate agreements: on finance, trade, and defence. The financial agreement resolved all disputed financial claims in return for an Irish lump-sum payment of £10 million, and the trade agreement provided that Anglo-Irish trade should be freer, if not as fully free as it had been before 1932; taken together, they ended the economic war. But in the context of independence the defence agreement, providing that all defence facilities retained by the British should be handed over to the Irish government, was incomparably the most important. Its effect, de Valera told the dáil, was 'to hand over to the Irish state complete control of those defences, and it recognises and finally establishes Irish sovereignty over the twenty-six counties and the territorial seas' (Moynihan, 346).

Éamon de Valera's pledge to prevent Germany using Irish territory in a war with Britain bore first fruit on 31 August 1938, even before the ports had been formally transferred to Irish control, at a secret meeting in London between Joe Walshe, Dulanty, and a British intelligence officer, which inaugurated the close cooperation between MI5 and Irish military intelligence on counter-espionage and other security matters. Further talks in October 1938 resulted in the establishment, at the request of de Valera's government, of a regular channel of communication between Irish military intelligence and MI5 which ran by diplomatic bag through the Department of External Affairs and the Irish high commissioner's office in London and was in place before the war began. When the IRA, as the self-styled 'government of the Irish Republic' declared their own war on the UK and launched a bombing campaign in England, de Valera reinforced the Treason Act with the Offences against the State Act, 1939. When IRA overtures to Hitler's Germany threatened to give Britain the excuse to infringe Irish neutrality, he enacted in 1940 even more ruthless emergency powers legislation. IRA prisoners were interned without trial; some were executed after trial by military tribunal; he allowed others to die on hunger-strike. His government had 'been faced with the lesser of two evils', he told the dáil, 'the lesser evil is to see men die rather than that the safety of the whole community should be endangered' (Moynihan, 421).

The second world war and its aftermath

'Life will never be the same again', a 'glum and sad' de Valera said softly to his sons after they listened to the broadcast of Neville Chamberlain's declaration of war on 3 September 1939 (de Valera, 191). He saw neutrality, now duly proclaimed as his government's policy, as a means to

an end, not as an end in itself, which is why it had found no place in his constitution. He also understood that neutrality was also the outer limit of independence for, as he had explained to the dáil in his speech on the defence agreement, 'once we were free and wanted to maintain our freedom, we would be anxious to see that Britain was strong and that Britain was not attacked – through us as the backdoor at any rate'; an independent Ireland was 'interested in seeing a strong Britain as a shield and a barrier between her and the dangers of the Continent' (Moynihan, 352). Hence the twin themes in de Valera's conduct of an independent foreign policy throughout the war: the first expressionist, the second preservationist. The apparent maintenance of an even-handed neutrality was the ultimate and public expression of absolute sovereignty. The substantial but secret assistance given to Britain and to the US was dictated by the preservationist impulse to protect Irish independence from a German victory that would have destroyed it. De Valera's government, as the bitterly anti-Irish British dominions secretary, Viscount Cranborne, was constrained to admit in February 1945, 'have been willing to accord us *any* facilities which would not be regarded as *overtly* prejudicing their attitude to neutrality' (author's emphasis). And he appended a remarkable fourteen-point list that included permission for over-flights of Irish territory, transmission of coast watching and meteorological reports, staff talks between British and Irish officers to facilitate cooperation in the event of a German invasion of Ireland, facilitating free movement between Ireland and Britain of those wishing to serve in the British armed forces, and agreeing to the establishment of a radar station for use against German submarines (Fanning, 124–5).

Public opinion knew nothing of this, thanks to a draconian emergency powers act that came into effect with the outbreak of the war. De Valera's appointment of the anglophobic Frank Aiken as minister for the coordination of defensive measures ensured a rigid regime of censorship; neutrality appeared to be administered impartially, as de Valera's notorious courtesy call on the German minister in Dublin to pay his condolences on the news of Hitler's death most notably demonstrated. The Americans, even more than the British, were outraged, but behind closed doors (and de Valera was a firm believer in shrouding his conduct of foreign policy in secrecy to the point where not even his cabinet colleagues knew of the full extent of Ireland's cooperation with the allies) things were very different; so much so that the Pentagon naively recommended awarding the American Legion of Merit to three of the highest-ranking officers in the Irish defence forces for 'exceptionally meritorious and outstanding services to the United States' (Fanning, 124). Although Ireland was a lucky neutral because geographical accident made her much less vulnerable to invasion than most European states, de Valera's diplomatic skill 'in convincing all parties that he would oppose by force the first power that tried to interfere with Irish neutrality' persuaded both warring blocs that 'the advantages to be derived from any attempted occupation were not greater than the costs, moral and military, involved in such an operation'. There was an intrinsic merit in 'the secrecy within which de Valera shrouded his ultimate intentions and wishes' because it enabled both belligerent blocs to interpret his statements 'according to their desires and in a sense favourable to themselves. De Valera in fact appears never to have told any one, even in his cabinet, everything that was in his mind' (Williams, 25–6). The consistency of his foreign policy and his reputation for meaning what he said were also important; 'queer creature as he is in many ways, he is sincere, and . . . he is no enemy of this country', Neville Chamberlain had concluded in January 1938 (Martin, 95). His successful resistance to the pressure to abandon neutrality applied by both Churchill's and Roosevelt's governments enhanced his stature as a statesman both at home and abroad. Neutrality 'has become a question of honour', noted Elizabeth Bowen in 1942; 'it is something which Ireland is not ashamed of, but tremendously proud' (Fanning, 127). All-party support for neutrality reinforced de Valera's authority and renewed his claim to the mantle of national leadership he had lost in

1922, a perception cast into sharp relief by his celebrated exchange of radio broadcasts with Churchill when the war ended in Europe in May 1945. De Valera's dignified rebuke, in response to Churchill's self-congratulation at not having reoccupied the treaty ports and his sneering references to Irish neutrality, caught the public imagination and sealed the identification of neutrality with independence.

His refusal to compromise independence also underpinned de Valera's rejection of the feelers put out both by Chamberlain in 1940 and by Churchill in 1941 purporting to offer a united Ireland in return for the abandonment of neutrality. Ireland's sovereign right to determine its relations with other countries was embodied in the first article of his constitution, and in February 1939 he had gone on record, in a senate speech distributed as a white paper, that he would not sacrifice that right for a united Ireland: 'although freedom for a part of this island is not the freedom we want . . . this freedom for a portion of it . . . is something that I would not sacrifice, if by sacrificing it we were to get a united Ireland' (Moynihan, 373). This subordination of reunification to the imperatives of sovereignty was always intrinsic in de Valera's thinking and explains why the Ulster clauses in the treaty and in his 'document number 2' do not differ significantly. He saw 'no solution' to the problem of partition, he told the Fianna Fáil ard fheis in 1931. 'Force is out of the question. Were it feasible, it could not be desirable. The only hope that I can see now for the reunion of our country is good government in the twenty-six counties, and such social and economic conditions here as will attract the majority in the six counties to throw in their lot with us' (Fanning, 138). The irredentist claims embodied in articles 2 and 3 of his constitution – claiming that the 'national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland' and asserting the right to exercise jurisdiction over that territory – merely paid lip service to that Augustinian aspiration while seeking to protect his republican flank against IRA accusations of betrayal. While he retained rigorous control of northern policy for as long as he was taoiseach, his response to approaches from the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland was always cautious and often cool, and in 1933 and 1937 he blocked proposals that Fianna Fáil become a thirty-two-county party. But not until he had left party politics, in a *New York Times* interview in 1963, did he reveal the essence of his thinking: 'Ireland is Ireland without the North' (Bowman, 312).

The preoccupation with sovereignty, coupled with de Valera's jaundiced view of Ireland's experience in the League of Nations, also explains his unenthusiastic reaction to the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. The key question, he told the dáil in July 1946, was 'in what way, either by joining or not joining, are we most likely to preserve the independence of this country?' In the short term, the Soviet Union's veto of the Irish application to join, first presented in August 1946, rendered such questions redundant; but de Valera's ambivalence resurfaced in New York in April 1948 when he admitted that he was 'rather glad' that Ireland had not been admitted to the UN (Moynihan, 486, 504).

Marking time, 1945–59

By 1945 de Valera had accomplished his primary objectives. His last terms as taoiseach – 1944–8, 1951–4, and 1957–9 – were a mere coda to the high drama of his political career, as even his official biographers, who give it a mere twenty-one of their 500 pages, acknowledge. In 1946 his government was tainted by a charge of corrupt business practices levelled against a junior minister, Con Ward. De Valera lanced the boil quickly: although a tribunal of inquiry, which reported a mere month after it was established in June 1946, exonerated Ward on most counts, his income tax returns were incomplete and he resigned. Cocooned against industrial unrest since 1941 by a wages standstill order, de Valera's government was now afflicted by a rash of strikes as the trade unions began flexing their muscles. A teachers' strike in Dublin from March to October

was especially damaging: disenchanted teachers provided recruits and organisational skills for Clann na Poblachta, a new republican party with a left-wing social programme, founded by Seán MacBride in July 1946 around a nucleus of committees formed to help republican prisoners and internees released at the end of the war; it also caused a breach in de Valera's close relationship with Archbishop McQuaid (who showed sympathy for the strikers). The Clann's first electoral success came in October 1947 when they defeated Fianna Fáil in two out of three by-elections, putting MacBride into the dáil. De Valera decided to deny the Clann the chance of building on their success and called a snap election for 4 February 1948. The stratagem worked, insofar as the Clann won only half the seats they had expected. But although Fianna Fáil won the same percentage vote and one more seat than in 1943, this time all the opposition parties were united by a common purpose to put de Valera out, and they formed an inter-party government under John A. Costello as taoiseach and with MacBride as minister for external affairs.

De Valera reacted to loss of power after the 1948 election with determination; 'he'll not get my left flank', he said of MacBride to his son on the day the dáil reassembled (de Valera, 269). As leader of the opposition, in response to Clann na Poblachta criticisms of Fianna Fáil for having no plan to end partition, he launched a spectacular worldwide propaganda campaign to put an anti-partition girdle round the earth. Accompanied by Frank Aiken, he left Ireland on 8 March and, after a month in the US, moved on to Australia and New Zealand (27 April–11 June) and then to India (14–16 June); there followed anti-partition tours of Britain in October and November. The fantasy of reunification loomed larger as the appetite for independence was finally satiated by the Republic of Ireland act in December 1948; it repealed the external relations act and provided for a declaration, in de Valera's phrase, that 'the state that exists under the 1937 constitution is a republic' (*Dáil Éireann deb.*, cxiii, 410). Publicly, de Valera welcomed the end of controversy about Ireland's constitutional status, but privately he questioned the wisdom of the inter-party government's interpretation that the act marked a final breach with the commonwealth. Asked by Churchill in 1953 if he would have taken Ireland out of the commonwealth, he answered 'no': 'he had no objection ever to Ireland being a member of the commonwealth. What he had an objection to was an oath of allegiance to the king as king of the commonwealth . . . he had come to the conclusion that the commonwealth was a very useful association for us because the commonwealth countries (especially Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) had a strong interest in Ireland' (Keogh, 190–91). The inter-party government's rejection of the invitation to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in January 1949, like the Republic of Ireland act, affirmed their inability to escape from de Valera's agenda. He endorsed MacBride's explicit linkage of partition with neutrality when he told a press conference in March 1949 that, if he were in power and 'if the partition business were out of the way', he, too, 'would advocate entrance into the pact if Ireland was united' (*Irish Times*, 22 Mar. 1949). The unanimous if futile demand for reunification had also found expression in the all-party, anti-partitionist Mansion House committee on 27 January, and two of de Valera's future biographers, Frank Gallagher and T. P. O'Neill, were among the civil servants seconded to participate in what proved to be no more than a propaganda exercise churning out anti-unionist bombast.

But de Valera had no illusions about the prospects of reunification, and told the dáil on his return as taoiseach in 1951: 'If I am asked, "Have you a solution for [partition]?", in the sense "Is there a line of policy which you propose to pursue which you think can, within a reasonable time, be effective?"', I have to say that I have not and neither has anybody else' (Moynihan, 543). Now that he had nothing left to prove in regard to sovereignty, he relinquished the external affairs portfolio to Frank Aiken, the most absolutist of his ministerial colleagues on neutrality. In August 1952 his eyesight again deteriorated when he suffered a detached retina; it was only after six operations in Utrecht that the retina was reattached and he did not return to Dublin

until December; thereafter he had only peripheral vision, restricting all his movements except in places he knew well. In June 1954 he again went into opposition on the return of a Costello-led coalition government.

De Valera was never at ease with the politics of economics that increasingly characterised party politics, and his near-total blindness – he could now read nothing – well symbolised a lack of economic vision for which he was unapologetic in the dáil in 1956: ‘We have to tighten our belts . . . I am against external loans . . . The policy of self-reliance is the one policy that will enable our nation to continue to exist.’ He even reiterated what he had told the people in 1917 of the choice between independence and continued incorporation in the British empire: ‘We have the choice of the humble cottage instead of [being] lackeys partaking of the sops in the big man’s house’ (*Dáil Éireann deb.*, clix, 1614). The resonance with his notorious St Patrick’s day broadcast of 1943 and its Arcadian dream of an Ireland which ‘would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort’ (Moynihan, 466) are unmistakable; but, with emigrants now fleeing to the bright lights of British and American cities in their hundreds of thousands, it was a measure of how out of touch he had become. His conservatism and concern for stability were also revealed by his shelving a 1955 report by a Fianna Fáil committee arguing for a more proactive policy on partition that included a proposal to appoint a minister for national unity, and in 1956 he opposed a proposal that northern nationalist elected representatives be admitted to the dáil.

The March 1957 general election inaugurated de Valera’s last term as taoiseach and, although none then knew it, another sixteen years of Fianna Fáil government. When the IRA campaign in Northern Ireland that began in December 1956 intensified in July 1957, he reintroduced the Offences against the State (Amendment) Act of 1940, again providing for internment without trial. It was also in July 1957 that he denounced the Fethard-on-Sea boycott, directed against protestants after Sheila Cloney, the protestant wife of a catholic farmer, Seán Cloney, refused to send her children to a catholic school and fled with them to Belfast, as ‘ill-conceived, ill-considered, and futile . . . unjust and cruel’ (*Dáil Éireann deb.*, clxiii, 731); and he worked covertly with Jim Ryan, whom he appointed minister for finance in 1957 and who came from Wexford, to end the boycott. He firmly rejected criticism, strongest in the US, of the non-aligned policy, most notably in regard to the recognition of communist China, pursued by Frank Aiken at the UN, to which Ireland had been admitted in 1955. The major historical landmark of 1958 was *Economic development*, the revolutionary policy document that emanated from the Department of Finance; that such a dramatic new departure also bore his imprimatur as the then taoiseach copper-fastened its immunity to criticism within Fianna Fáil. But socio-economic change lay in the future and, notwithstanding the success of his political revolution, ‘when Éamon de Valera departed from active politics in 1959 he left Irish society very much as he had found it’ (Murphy, 9).

Lap of honour, 1959–75

Despite de Valera’s success in the presidential election of June 1959, his five-to-four majority over Seán Mac Eoin, and his failure to carry the referendum held on the same day, proposing the abolition of proportional representation, showed that he was still a divisive figure in Irish politics, as did a narrower election victory over Thomas F. O’Higgins (1916–2003) in 1966. But he acquired increasingly iconic stature during his fourteen years in Áras an Uachtaráin when he hosted formal and informal visits from many foreign dignitaries including Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco (1961); US presidents John F. Kennedy (1963) (whose funeral in Washington he also attended) and Richard Nixon (1966; October 1970 as president); the presidents of Pakistan, India, and Zambia (all in 1964); the king and queen of the Belgians (1968);

U Thant, the secretary general of the UN (1968); and former French president Charles de Gaulle (1969). He also attended the coronation of Pope Paul VI in 1963 and paid a presidential state visit to the US in 1964 as well as attending the reinterment of the remains of Roger Casement in 1965 and a host of celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter rising in 1966. Although he scrupulously avoided all comment on party politics, he was strongly supportive of Jack Lynch during the arms crisis of 1970 and confided in Desmond O'Malley (who, as minister for justice, had to attend when judges received their seals of office in the Aras) that 'the disloyalty which Lynch had to suffer is appalling . . . the worst ever . . . I had disagreements and ministers disagreed with me but none of them were ever disloyal to me' (author's interview with Desmond O'Malley, 16 Jan. 2008). While publicly he silently acquiesced to Ireland's entry into the EEC, which he saw as 'inevitable', privately he still harboured 'very strong reservations regarding loss of sovereignty' (de Valera, 228).

When he and his wife left Áras an Uachtaráin for the last time (24 June 1973) they took up residence in Talbot Lodge, Linden Convalescent Home in Blackrock, where de Valera had visited the patients when a student at Blackrock College. Such was his lack of interest in material wealth (he had refused to accept an increase in his allowance as president when ministerial salaries had been last increased) that his doctor advised the taoiseach, Jack Lynch, that he was suffering from depression because of fears that his pension would be inadequate to cover the constant nursing care his wife now required, and his allowance was subsequently adjusted (Ferriter, 364–5). Sinéad de Valera died 7 January 1975 on the eve of their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. Éamon de Valera died aged 92 after a brief illness on 29 August 1975, and, after a state funeral at which his grandson (an tAthair Shan Ó Cuív) celebrated mass, was buried on 2 September in a simple grave adjoining the republican plot in Glasnevin cemetery. He was survived by six of his seven children: Vivion de Valera, Máirín de Valera, Éamonn de Valera (1913–86; professor of obstetrics & gynaecology at UCD), Ruairí de Valera, Emer Ó Cuív (wife of Brian Ó Cuív), and Terry de Valera (1922–2007), taxing master of the supreme and high courts (1969–92); his third son, Brian, had been killed, aged 20, in a riding accident in Phoenix Park in 1936.

Assessment

'Éamon de Valera is the most significant figure in the political history of modern Ireland. This is a statement of incontrovertible historical fact, and it does not necessarily involve a laudatory judgment . . . If there were no other reasons for de Valera's importance, he was at the centre of political life in this country for forty-three years, not including the fourteen-year period as president. We have here a span of political power and influence virtually unparalleled in contemporary Europe and in Irish history' (Murphy, 1–2). He is also the most controversial figure in the history of modern Ireland. The burden of his past, the resentment and the hatred which for so many was the enduring legacy of his actions in 1921–2, have had the effect of denying him due credit for his later achievements. De Valera's cardinal sin was, of course, his rejection of the treaty and his consequent culpability for the civil war. That charge is incontrovertible. If de Valera had been prepared to swallow his pride, and with it his legitimate complaint that the plenipotentiaries had broken their word not to sign the treaty without first referring it back to Dublin, the treaty split might have been contained. He opposed the treaty not because it was *a* compromise but because it was not *his* compromise – not, that is, a compromise that he had authorised in advance of its conclusion. Would there have been a civil war if de Valera had denied his support to those who fought against the treaty? Perhaps there would have been violence from IRA extremists not susceptible to his control, but there was a fair chance that what turned out to be such a devastating split might instead have been only a splinter. De Valera, in other words, was

largely responsible for the dimensions, if not for the fact, of the civil war. By allowing those who took up arms against the treaty to draw on his authority, he conferred a respectability on their cause it could never have otherwise attained. His behaviour in the immediate aftermath of the treaty, in sum, was petulant, inflammatory, ill judged, and profoundly undemocratic. Part of the explanation for his intemperate reaction lies in the depths of the deference accorded him since 1916. Although there is no evidence that de Valera demanded such unquestioning compliance, he accepted it as a matter of course. ‘An Irish immigrant mother – a Spanish-American father dying while he was very small – a return to Ireland, his mother remaining in America – an upbringing by an uncle in what he himself has called a labourer’s cottage’, even his official biographers acknowledged that ‘no psychiatrist could forecast the outcome of such an inheritance and early environment’ (Longford & O’Neill, 471–2). Add to that an amalgam of his separation from his senior colleagues during his many months in jail and his eighteen-month absence in America, an aloof and ascetic temperament, a sense of distance reinforced by his profession as a schoolmaster and by his elevation (on the eve of the treaty split) to the chancellorship of the NUI (a post from which he was separated only by death), even perhaps by his height (6 ft 1 in. (1.85 m) – hence his sobriquet ‘the Long Fellow’): the end result was a carapace of extraordinary self-sufficiency and self-confidence that also later served him well in enduring the affliction of blindness.

But however lamentable de Valera’s failure in 1921–2, it must be reconciled with his subsequent greatness. The case for ascribing greatness to de Valera rests on his conduct of foreign policy, which gives him a larger claim than any other twentieth-century Irish politician to the title of statesman. He was the kind of statesman who, like Churchill and de Gaulle, portrays ‘his country’s inner image of itself and of its character and history’ and who ‘has no doubts or hesitations and by concentration of will-power, direction, and strength . . . is able to ignore a great deal of what goes on outside him. This very blindness and stubborn self-absorption occasionally, in certain situations, enables him to bend events and men to his own fixed pattern’ (Isaiah Berlin, *Personal impressions* (1982), 9, 27). De Valera understood the importance of vision in politics: that, as John A. Murphy has argued, ‘when a small nation has been placed by the facts of geography and history in uncomfortable proximity to a great power, the people of that small nation scarred by such a history, crave not only material progress, not only political sovereignty, but a psychological independence as well’ (Murphy, 14), and he translated his personal vision of sovereignty into a political reality. He also demonstrated extraordinary diplomatic skills for, while the British resented and resisted his constitutional changes, the clarity with which he telegraphed his intentions ensured that resentment and resistance never turned into retaliation. De Valera was the architect of the independent Irish state, and his blueprint was a constitution which also ‘brought much needed stability after the hectic constitutional changes of 1922–37; a constitution which, on the whole, has operated as a salutary check on the other branches of government and which has promoted the protection of individual rights’ (Hogan, 320).

De Valera’s Ireland: the phrase is too often used only in a pejorative sense; as a catch-all term for all that was socially, economically, and culturally backward about Ireland in the 1950s. Many historians and political scientists, preoccupied with social and economic history rather than with political history, focus less on his achievements than on what he did not try to achieve. In this version of history de Valera stands condemned not for what he did as for what he never tried to do, a cast of mind well captured by the title of Tom Garvin’s book, *Preventing the future: why was Ireland so poor for so long?* (2004). A no less apposite question is *Creating the future: why was Ireland independent so soon?* Nor are suggestions that prosperity would have come if de Valera had bowed out earlier well founded – if, say, he rather than Seán T. O’Kelly had gone to Áras an Uachtaráin in 1945 and allowed Seán Lemass to become taoiseach. It is far from certain that

Lemass, who was never popular in certain quarters of Fianna Fáil, would have secured the party leadership in 1945 when O’Kelly was tánaiste. The postwar period would also have been a much more difficult and testing time for any other Fianna Fáil taoiseach than it was for de Valera. Ireland’s wartime neutrality had left an enduring residue of resentment – especially among the British and the Americans – and the prevailing economic climate was much harsher than during the Lemass years. The defining characteristics of the 1950s – Britain’s chronic sterling crisis and its implications for Ireland, high unemployment, the haemorrhage of emigration – these were but some of the circumstances outside the control of any taoiseach, as John A. Costello’s two terms of office well testify. Indeed, there is a case to be made that at such an economically depressed and volatile time de Valera’s continuance as taoiseach provided an important element of stability.

Ireland’s entry into the EEC in 1973 signalled that by then independence had long been taken for granted. Yet without Éamon de Valera Ireland might never have achieved independence, and certainly would not have achieved it before the second world war, the only international crisis that has so far threatened to engulf its shores. For de Valera’s Ireland also means a truly independent Ireland, an Ireland spared further decades of corrosive and sterile debate on the pros and cons of the British connection, an Ireland whose people were consequently self-confident enough about their own sovereignty by 1972 to dilute that sovereignty by voting massively in favour of joining Europe. There is a fine symmetry, which might have appealed to de Valera as mathematician, about the timing of the joint admission of Ireland and Britain to Europe in 1973 – the same year that British–Irish interdependence in regard to Northern Ireland found first expression in the Sunningdale agreement: for the last year of his presidency was the moment when the doctrine of interdependence he had first dimly delineated in 1920 became the core of national policy.

Written by Ronan Fanning

Sources: Éamon de Valera papers, UCDA P150; Sean O’Faolain, *De Valera* (1939); T. Desmond Williams, ‘Ireland and the war’, Kevin. B. Nowlan and T. Desmond Williams (ed.), *Ireland in the war years and after, 1939–51* (1969); The earl of Longford and Thomas P. O’Neill, *Éamon de Valera* (1970); David W. Miller, *Church, state and nation in Ireland, 1898–1921* (1973); Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: the union and its aftermath* (1977); Maurice Moynihan (ed.), *Speeches and statements by Éamon de Valera 1917–1973* (1980); John Bowman, *De Valera and the Ulster question 1917–1973* (1982); Joseph Lee and Gearóid P. Ó Tuathaigh, *The age of de Valera* (1982); Ronan Fanning, *Independent Ireland* (1983); Robert Fisk, *In time of war – Ireland, Ulster and the price of neutrality 1939–45* (1983); John A. Murphy, ‘The achievement of Éamon de Valera’, J. P. O’Carroll and John A. Murphy (ed.), *De Valera and his times* (1983), 1–16; Sean P. Farragher, *Dev and his alma mater* (1984); Deirdre McMahan, *Republicans and imperialists: Anglo–Irish relations in the 1930s* (1984); Owen Dudley Edwards, *Éamon de Valera* (1987); Brian Farrell (ed.), *De Valera’s constitution and ours* (1988); J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985* (1989); Tim Pat Coogan, *De Valera: long fellow, long shadow* (1993); Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-century Ireland: nation and state* (1994); Pauric Travers, *Éamon de Valera* (1994); Ronan Fanning et al. (ed.), *Documents on Irish foreign policy, i: 1919–22* (1998); Michael Laffan, *The resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Féin party, 1916–1923* (1999); Patrick Murray, ‘Obsessive historian: Éamon de Valera and the policing of his reputation’, *RIA Proc.*, ci C, 37–65 (2001); Ged Martin, ‘De Valera imagined and observed’, Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (ed.), *De Valera’s Irelands* (2003); Terry de Valera, *A memoir* (2004); Tom Garvin, *Preventing the future: why was Ireland so poor for so long?* (2004); Catriona Crowe et al. (ed.), *Documents on Irish foreign policy, iv: 1932–36* (2004); *v: 1937–39* (2006); Gerard Hogan, ‘De Valera, the constitution and the historians’, *Ir. Jurist*, xl (2005), 293–320; Charles Townsend, *Easter 1916: the Irish rebellion* (2005); Diarmaid Ferriter, *Judging Dev* (2007)

Arthur Griffith

Griffith, Arthur Joseph (1871–1922), journalist and politician, was born 31 March 1871 in Dublin into a working-class family, son of Arthur Charles Griffith, printer, and Mary Griffith (née Whelan). He attended the CBS schools in St Mary's Place and Great Strand St., both in the north inner city, but his formal education ended before he was aged thirteen. An autodidact who devoted his spare money to books, he often spent his evenings in the National Library and read voraciously for the rest of his life.

Policies and propaganda

After working as an office-boy, Griffith followed his father's profession and became apprenticed as a printer. He was employed as a compositor and copywriter in the Franklin Printing Works, the *Nation*, and the *Irish Daily Independent*. Like many printers he held radical views, and he belonged to societies and clubs such as the Young Ireland League and the Celtic Literary Society. He was present at the first meeting of the Gaelic League. As a young man he was a committed Parnellite, and later he reminisced about having been among those who bade farewell to their leader as he made his last political journey in September 1891, ten days before his death.

Despite his later association with monarchist ideas, Griffith embodied austere Roman republican virtues. He was an honest and unworldly man, and at times could be priggish – as in his hostility to J. M. Synge's 'Playboy of the western world' (1907). Taciturn and imperturbable, except in the last, stressful months of his life, he was persevering to the point of obstinacy. He was self-effacing, yet aggressive. He was a sociable man who was loyal to his friends, but could be a ferocious and unforgiving opponent; he was jailed for horsewhipping an editor whom he blamed for an attack on Maud Gonne. In physical appearance he was a short, stocky man with a heavy moustache and thick glasses.

At least partly for reasons of health Griffith went to South Africa in January 1897 and he remained there for nearly two years. At first he worked as editor of the first of his many newspapers, the *Middleburg Courant*. Its British readers were alienated by his support for the Boers, while Afrikaners preferred to read papers in their own language, and the *Courant* soon folded. He moved to Pretoria and then to Johannesburg, where he was employed as a supervisor in a gold mine. While in South Africa he acquired a deep affection for the Boers and he was a sharp critic of British designs on their territory.

Meanwhile in Ireland plans were being made to launch a radical nationalist weekly newspaper, and Griffith's close friend Willie Rooney was invited to become the editor. Rooney already had a job in Dublin, and he generously proposed that the post should be offered to Griffith as a means of luring him home. Griffith returned to Dublin in autumn 1898, and together they launched the *United Irishman* the following March. Griffith was devastated by Rooney's premature death in May 1901.

Despite later distractions and responsibilities Griffith remained at heart a journalist for the rest of his life. He was a lucid writer with a vivid turn of phrase, and – appropriately for an admirer of Jonathan Swift and John Mitchel – was often harsh in his treatment of his numerous opponents. R. M. Henry referred to his 'varied tones of appeal, denunciation, mockery and argument' (*Studies*, xi (Sept. 1922), 351). Although he wrote much of his newspapers' material, and often set the type himself, he could also persuade numerous gifted writers to contribute articles, stories, and poems.

(James Joyce defended Griffith against the complaint that he accepted contributions from people such as Oliver St John Gogarty, asking: 'How do you expect him to fill his paper: he can't write it all himself' (Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (1959), 246). His approach was didactic and he tried to educate the Irish people in the demands and opportunities of nationalism. He ranged widely in his search for illustrations and parallels; for example, the first issue of *Sinn Féin* in May 1906 contained articles on events in nine countries spread over four continents. He believed that it was 'from the little countries Ireland must learn the way to steer her course' (*Sinn Féin*, 13 Sept. 1913) and he studied them closely, inundating his readers with demographic, financial, and other statistics. He wrote ballads with titles such as 'Twenty men from Dublin town' and 'Little black coffins of different sizes' (an attack on British treatment of Afrikaner children during the Boer war).

A libel action brought about the end of the *United Irishman* in April 1906, but this newspaper was followed within weeks by another, *Sinn Féin*. From August 1909 to January 1910 it was published every day. Despite the generous support of friends and allies – such as the IRB and Clan na Gael – its circulation declined steadily, falling by more than half, and he was forced to resume weekly publication. It was characteristic of his habits and energy that when he was jailed in Reading in 1916, and later in Gloucester in 1918–19, he produced manuscript newspapers to entertain and enlighten his fellow prisoners.

Like many other nationalists, Griffith was a geographic determinist. Irrespective of their background or religion, all the people living on the island were Irish and were equal members of the Irish nation – whether they liked it or not. He believed in the rights of nations and the duties of their citizens; individuals should sacrifice themselves for the common good. But he was unusual in thinking of the state as well as the nation, and he wanted to develop an Irish counter-state so that British rule and influence would wither away.

He advocated a dual monarchy which would link the two islands through the person of a common sovereign, and believed that such a programme could be supported by all nationalists from home rulers to republicans. The Irish people and their representatives should no longer recognise the act of union, and Irish MPs should withdraw from Westminster and establish an independent Irish parliament in Dublin.

Griffith supported his case by drawing two parallels. The first of these was based on an uncritical and unhistorical admiration of Grattan's parliament and the 'constitution' of 1782. His argument that the renunciation act of 1783 denied Britain the right to legislate for Ireland conveniently ignored the basic principle of the British constitution: any parliament can undo any actions of its predecessors. Believing that many Irish unionists would accept independence, and that they would be satisfied if the link with the crown were to be maintained, he proposed

the creation of a fully independent Ireland which would be associated with Britain only through a shared king. Unionists never showed any interest in this scheme, home rulers ridiculed it as impossible, and republicans dismissed it as inadequate. Nonetheless Griffith persevered with his model, reviving it from time to time, and ultimately became an enthusiast for what had originated as a compromise proposal.

He also used a different analogy, which he hoped would evade the disapproval aroused in many quarters by the 'king, lords, and commons' of 1782. He held out as an example the revival of Hungary after its defeat by Habsburg forces in 1849, and its peaceful achievement of equal status with Austria in the *Ausgleich* of 1867. But he was a propagandist rather than a scholar and – as in his treatment of other topics – ignored aspects of Hungarian history that weakened his case. Between January and July 1904 he developed this argument in a series of weekly articles in the *United Irishman*, and at the end of the year these were reprinted in book form under the title *The resurrection of Hungary*. It was reported to have sold 5,000 copies on its first day of publication and it provoked widespread interest and controversy, but it failed to make significant numbers of converts. However, several of the ideas that Griffith put forward would be implemented in 1919–21.

If Irish MPs would not act as a parliament, Griffith suggested as an alternative the 'council of three hundred' – an idea that Daniel O'Connell had floated and then abandoned – which would consist of local government representatives. The new Ireland would be democratic. He despised the British electoral system and believed that proportional representation 'must appeal to every one who believes in real freedom' (*Sinn Féin*, 2 May 1908).

Originally a republican, he became more moderate in his views and left the IRB, while remaining on good terms with the organisation and many of its members. He was wary of physical force and convinced that independence could be achieved by political methods, but he was not a pacifist. He believed that although violence would be justified in an effort to get rid of British rule, in practice any rebellion would fail. The Boer war confirmed his certainty that Britain could not be defeated by force of arms.

Another distinguishing feature of his nationalism was his preoccupation with the economic aspects of Irish independence, his determination that Ireland should be a modern, prosperous state. He was a pragmatic man and was concerned with issues such as industrialisation, mining, afforestation, over-taxation, and the protection of Irish goods against foreign (specifically, British) competition. He overlooked the fact that Belfast, the only industrialised area in Ireland, depended for its wealth on free trade within the UK.

Griffith was a meritocrat who had no sympathy for the abuses of capitalism, and he outlined imaginative schemes for rehousing the Dublin poor – such as building cottages on municipal land. He attacked the idea of a 'wealthy' country which contained many impoverished and unemployed people. Although sympathising broadly with trade unionism, he campaigned fiercely against Irish links with British unions and against what he saw as internecine class conflict which would undermine Ireland's national interest. He criticised the welfare legislation of the prewar Liberal government, claiming that the new insurance scheme placed Irish mothers on the same level as English harlots; virtuous Ireland would have to pay for English bastardy.

His hostility to the tactics of James Larkin in the lock-out of 1913–14 has harmed his reputation in certain quarters. Even more damaging were his occasional racist and anti-Semitic remarks. While in South Africa, he opposed the exploitation of blacks by whites, and he rejoiced that Japan's defeat of Russia had shattered 'the prestige of the white face' in India. But he was also able to praise civilised Indians in contrast to the 'Blackfellows' of Australia, while his admiration of Mitchel led him to excuse his hero's support of slavery and to protest that no excuse was needed 'for an Irish nationalist declining to hold the negro his peer in right' (preface, Mitchel, *Jail*

journal (1918), pp xiii-xiv). Although he supported Zionism, he attacked Jewish ‘cosmopolitans’ such as the ‘Jew-Jingo brigands’ of Johannesburg (*United Irishman*, 21 Oct. 1899). In general these were habits or prejudices of his youth and, with occasional lapses, he outgrew them.

Griffith never wavered from his demand for a fully independent Ireland, and everything else was subordinated to this one aim. He admired W. B. Yeats but felt that his work should be more populist; national drama should educate the people. His view of history was similarly utilitarian, and he believed that the past should not be recalled if it ceased to provide inspiration for the future. He backed the cause of women’s suffrage but was concerned that this worthy aim might distract attention from the demand for independence. He was single-minded and narrowly focused.

His exceptional interest in foreign affairs was dominated by anglophobia. He approved of the dowager empress of China because she was hostile towards Britain; he switched his support from France to Germany after the Entente Cordiale; and he defended Leopold II’s record in the Congo against ‘calumny and mud-throwing’ (*Nationality*, 16 Oct. 1915). He sympathised instinctively with every anti-British interest and individual, however unworthy they might be.

He had exceptional energy and persistence, and in the course of almost two decades helped keep alive the spirit of radical nationalism, denouncing what he saw as supine and demoralising ‘parliamentarianism’. Erskine Childers, who had been a victim of Griffith’s belligerence, described him magnanimously as the greatest intellectual force stimulating the ‘national revival’ of 1916–19.

The Sinn Féin party

Griffith was aware of his own limitations and was a reluctant political and party leader. When he founded his own organisation, the National Council, he intended it to be an intellectual pressure group rather than a party. He wanted to develop a policy that would unite nationalists, rather than form a new body which would further divide them; he hoped to win over home rulers rather than to supplant them. But in 1904 and 1905 the council contested and won seats in Dublin local elections. At the group’s convention in November 1905, delegates from outside Dublin overcame resistance from Griffith and some of his colleagues, and ensured that it would become a political party with branches throughout the country. However, when a general election took place two months later, the National Council was unprepared and it decided sensibly not to run any candidates.

Griffith concentrated on his journalism, criticising the new Liberal government as relentlessly as he had attacked its Conservative predecessor. His party made little impact, and in its first ten months only twenty-one branches were founded. In April 1907 he was resentful when two other factions, Cumann na nGaedheal and the Dungannon Clubs of Bulmer Hobson, merged as the Sinn Féin League – a name that was already associated with him, and which was by now the title of his weekly newspaper. But by the time the National Council joined the new body a few months later the apparent success of his policies had strengthened his position. Two nationalist MPs were disillusioned by the Liberals’ failure to advance towards home rule and they resigned their seats. One of them, Charles Dolan of Leitrim North, had become convinced by the case for abstention from Westminster. Griffith was able to exploit this vindication when he merged his party with the Sinn Féin League; in effect he absorbed it and attached its name to his two-year-old National Council.

Dolan’s determination to seek re-election in Leitrim North forced Griffith to overcome his distaste for fighting elections; he threw himself into the campaign and he wrote weekly articles in *Sinn Féin* addressed ‘To the men of Leitrim’. The result was a clear defeat, and Dolan secured 27 per cent of the vote. The party advanced slowly, reaching a peak in 1909 with only 128 branches

throughout the country, and it declined rapidly. But Griffith's priorities remained unchanged: he preferred to educate Irish nationalists through propaganda, argument, scorn and invective rather than through political organisation, and Sinn Féin did not contest any more parliamentary seats.

Two general elections in 1910 left John Redmond and the home rule party holding the balance of power in Westminster. In both campaigns Griffith announced that his party would stand aside. He explained that he wished to give Redmond one last chance, but everyone knew that the improved prospects of home rule denied Sinn Féin any opportunity of making an impact. He abused the parliamentary party, but he lacked the support or resources to challenge it.

1910 was an important year for Griffith in several respects. The failure to contest the elections was a setback comparable to the collapse of his daily paper. His tentative flirtation with William O'Brien (1852–1928) and his All-for-Ireland League resulted in the departure of radical IRB members, who formed their own newspaper, *Irish Freedom*. But as if to compensate for problems and failures elsewhere, he married (November 1910) Maud Sheehan, whom he had courted for years. Two children, Nevin and Ita, were born of their happy marriage. Griffith was a poor man who had no interest in money, and shortly after his wedding a large group of friends and admirers combined to buy him a house.

As the home rule party's problems increased, Griffith attacked it and the government with characteristic vigour. He denounced the inadequacies of the home rule bill and was appalled by what he saw as Redmond's weakness in the face of Liberal pressure and the unionists' intransigence. But their opposition to the government's measure won his respect, and he saw them as providing a paradoxical application of Sinn Féin policies. They forced him to examine the Ulster question seriously for the first time. Until then he had thought it unnecessary to make any concessions to the unionists, and like almost all other Irish nationalists saw them as foolish and misguided. Now he was prepared to make substantial concessions – provided that they accepted the principle of Irish unity. But he still failed to appreciate the ferocity of unionists' opposition to Irish nationalism, and his admiration for the Ulster Volunteers' defiance of the British government blinded him to their rejection of his aims.

Rebellion and revival

The armed challenge to the cause of home rule precipitated another lurch by many nationalists towards radical measures, but in contrast to the pattern of 1907–9 the Sinn Féin party was not a beneficiary. It remained moribund, and in practice it consisted of little more than Griffith, his newspaper, and a small circle of followers. The formation in November 1913 of the Irish Volunteers, modelled on their Ulster counterpart, revived the prospect of a military struggle which Griffith had always believed would be futile. Nonetheless he welcomed the new force on the grounds that it strengthened the nationalist cause, that it created a public opinion with backbone, and that it made Irishmen 'more conscious of their duty as citizens, to associate the ideas of order and discipline with the idea of liberty' (*Sinn Féin*, 6 Dec. 1913). He joined the Volunteers and took part in the Howth gun-running of July 1914.

The IRB was closely associated with the Volunteers, and the Sinn Féin party was not. Nonetheless, since the IRB was obliged to act in secret while Griffith's newspaper and his party were widely known, if not widely supported, the new paramilitary force was often called 'the Sinn Féin Volunteers'. This title was resented by many Volunteers who rejected both Griffith's political methods and his moderate objectives, but it gave him (and later his policies) valuable publicity. The misappropriation of his party's name would prove to be a significant asset in the very different circumstances of 1917.

In the meantime Sinn Féin's decline continued until only a handful of branches remained. Griffith was unperturbed, and every week he attacked the home rule party, the British government and – after August 1914 – Irish involvement in the Great War. *Sinn Féin* was suppressed in November 1914, and it was followed by a short-lived publication which showed Griffith at his most imaginative: *Scissors and Paste*. This consisted largely of articles from newspaper and agency sources which had already been passed by the censor but which nonetheless managed to convey an anti-British message. For example, he juxtaposed two items from the same issue of the *Daily News*: Prime Minister Asquith's defence of small nationalities, and the announcement that Egypt had become a British protectorate. After ten weeks this paper, too, was banned. Finally in June 1915 he produced yet another weekly, *Nationality*, which survived until the Easter rising and was revived from February 1917 until its eventual suppression in September 1919. Like his earlier publications, these were subsidised by personal friends and by the IRB. Despite Griffith's conviction that a rebellion could not succeed, it has been claimed that he attended a meeting of separatists in September 1914 at which it was decided to stage a rising during the war. Subsequently his role was confined to journalism and – as a relatively minor interest – to politics.

In the crisis of Holy Saturday 1916, when Eoin MacNeill learned that he had been deceived by some of his Volunteer colleagues, and that an insurrection had been planned behind his back for the following day, Griffith was one of those whom he invited to discuss his response. It was decided to cancel Sunday's manoeuvres, which would provide cover for the rising, and Griffith carried the countermanding order to Bray.

According to some accounts he offered his support to the rebels in the GPO but was advised to keep his distance and remain free to write for the cause. Like many other nationalists who had not participated in the rebellion he was arrested in its aftermath, and on 3 May was interned in Richmond barracks; he was then sent to Reading jail, and remained there until Christmas Eve. He enjoyed himself in prison and followed events in Ireland closely. In his absence his Sinn Féin party experienced a modest recovery, reflecting the shift in nationalist opinion after Easter week.

He was released along with other internees who had not been court-martialled and sentenced, and in early 1917 he campaigned vigorously in the Roscommon North by-election. The anti-home-rule candidate was Count George Plunkett, father of one of the executed rebel leaders, and his supporters included former insurgents, disillusioned parliamentarians, and Griffith and the remnants of his party. After his election Plunkett announced his intention of following the abstention policy that Griffith had advocated for many years. But Sinn Féiners' jubilation was short-lived; Plunkett soon developed an unexpected taste for politics, and allied himself with radical republicans in an attempt to purge the movement of moderates such as Griffith. Michael Collins and other young IRB men were active on Plunkett's behalf.

Griffith fought back, strengthened by the growing support for Sinn Féin. He made speeches throughout the country, revived *Nationality*, and wrote much of its contents. Plunkett's attempt to form a rival political party soon collapsed, and his Liberty League merged with Sinn Féin; Griffith remained president and the party remained committed to its old aim of a dual monarchy.

Throughout late 1917 Sinn Féin continued to expand, but it was clear that many prominent members of the new mass movement still distrusted Griffith's moderation – even though some of them had supported home rule during the years when he had waged his lonely campaign against it. The idea of a dual monarchy seemed insufficient to those who had fought for a republic in Easter week, or who wished, or claimed, that they had done so. The release from prison of Éamon de Valera and his election as MP for Clare East in July 1917 provided them with a new leader. Eventually Griffith gave way. It was agreed that Sinn Féin should commit itself to the aim of a republic, and that after independence had been achieved the people could choose their form of government. At a private meeting Griffith agreed to stand down as president in favour of de Valera.

These changes were ratified at the party convention in October 1917, and Griffith was elected a vice-president. By now he had succeeded in one of his principal aims: winning over Irish nationalist opinion to the policy of abstention from Westminster. Sinn Féin had more than 1,200 branches throughout the country and probably at least 120,000 members. For the next four years, until the signature of the Anglo–Irish treaty in December 1921, he served loyally as de Valera’s deputy.

When the British government tried to impose conscription on Ireland in March 1918, Griffith was one of its most determined opponents. After the house of commons approved the conscription bill, Irish home rule MPs left Westminster in protest and returned to Ireland, thereby fulfilling a demand that he had made constantly for nearly twenty years. He gloated at their reluctant, belated conversion.

Griffith was chosen as the Sinn Féin candidate for the parliamentary seat in Cavan East, and he and de Valera represented the party at the Mansion House conference in April, an ad hoc coalition of all nationalists opposed to conscription. Before the by-election could take place he was one of seventy-three Sinn Féiners who were arrested on 17–18 May on the pretext that they had conspired with Germany. He spent the next ten months interned in Gloucester jail. His imprisonment cast him as a martyr who suffered to save the men of Ireland from the horrors of the war in France, and he was elected by 3,795 votes to 2,581 (20 June).

Griffith played no role in the events of late 1918, which climaxed in the general election when Sinn Féin gained seventy-three seats and the home rule party a mere six. He was returned unopposed for Cavan East, and also won Tyrone North-West by 10,422 votes to the unionist candidate’s 7,696.

Acting president of the dáil

The meeting of the first dáil on 21 January 1919 marked a symbolic implementation of Griffith’s policies: a large majority of Irish MPs proclaimed themselves an independent Irish parliament and later approved a government which did its best to administer the country.

Along with other internees Griffith was released on 6 March, and the following month was appointed minister for home affairs in the ‘rebel’ Irish cabinet. On de Valera’s departure for the US in June 1919 he became acting president of the dáil and its government, a position he held until after his final arrest at the end of 1920. He was in the happy position of presiding over the partial implementation of the ‘counter-state’ which he had advocated for so long. He was conscientious (for example, summoning cabinet meetings on average once a week) and was flexible (as in cooperating harmoniously with Collins, whose style and methods were vastly different from his own).

But in general Griffith was a chairman rather than a forceful or innovative leader, he was a part-time president who continued writing and editing. He gave his colleagues their heads, and while in private he expressed distaste and dismay at some of the IRA’s acts of violence he did not seek to restrain its activities. He had always been prepared to contemplate the use of force against British rule, and since bloodshed had produced substantial results (contrary to his expectations) he acquiesced in further attacks on the British. He turned a blind eye to the activities of Collins’s ‘squad’ and to the guerrillas in Munster – aware that he could not control them, and that their actions facilitated his government’s political and administrative programme. In public he blamed all violence on the crown forces. Yet he helped to ensure that, at least in theory, the IRA was subordinated to political and parliamentary authority; for example, he supported the proposal of Cathal Brugha in August 1919 that all its members should swear an oath of allegiance to the dáil. He was always a firm defender of democracy and the principle of civilian control over the army.

Griffith responded to requests from Irish landowners that his government should establish courts to control agrarian violence in several parts of the country. Here, as elsewhere, he put his theories into practice. Nevil Macready, the British commander-in-chief, was impressed that captured Irish documents revealed a policy for government almost identical to that outlined by Griffith in *The resurrection of Hungary*, written sixteen years earlier.

In autumn 1920 tentative discussions with the British took place through intermediaries, but while the process was under way Griffith was arrested on 26 November in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday. He spent the next seven months in Mountjoy jail – under far more pleasant circumstances than during his previous terms of imprisonment. When de Valera returned to Ireland at the end of the year he showed himself to be a more forceful head of government than Griffith had been during his long absence.

New general elections were held in May 1921 and Griffith headed the poll in the contested constituency of Fermanagh and Tyrone, while also being returned unopposed for Cavan. He was released on 30 June, having spent almost two of the previous five years in jail. He joined de Valera in meeting southern unionist representatives, and was one of the group which accompanied the president to London for his private meetings with Lloyd George.

On 26 August Griffith was appointed minister for foreign affairs in the new Irish cabinet, and the following month de Valera nominated him as the chairman of the Irish delegation which would negotiate with the British. There is no indication that he was dissatisfied with this role, although some fellow members of the cabinet were opposed to the concessions that he knew must be made if a settlement were to be reached. The dáil agreed unanimously that the delegates should be plenipotentiaries who would ‘be given a free hand in [the] negotiations and duly to report to the dáil’, but the cabinet privately limited their power and directed that *it* should have the final word on any agreement. Three cabinet ministers (Griffith, Collins and Robert Barton) were among the delegates, leaving only four members remaining in Dublin.

Negotiating the treaty

Long before the negotiations commenced on 11 October the British made it clear that they would not contemplate an Irish republic, and it soon became apparent that they also rejected de Valera’s visionary but (at the time) unrealistic alternative of ‘external association’. The new Irish state would be granted dominion status and would therefore have to take its place within the empire, rather than remain outside it.

The negotiations lasted nearly two months. At the beginning they took the form of plenary sessions, but these were replaced by private discussions in which Griffith and Collins met Lloyd George and other British leaders. The main contentious issues were ‘Ulster’, the crown, and British defence requirements. The Irish delegation was badly briefed; in particular the negotiations were already under way before de Valera revealed to Griffith what his policy on the Ulster question should be (and even then he had not shown it to his colleagues in Dublin). Not only were there internal divisions within the delegation, but as the talks continued a gap widened between the representatives in London and the rump cabinet in Dublin.

The Irish were determined that the negotiations should not collapse over the question of the crown, and the British were equally concerned to avoid a break over ‘Ulster’ where – as Lloyd George remarked to his colleagues – they had a very weak case. The Irish delegates demanded local plebiscites, but ultimately they were prepared to allow Northern Ireland to retain its existing area, parliament and government – provided that these would be subordinated to Dublin rather than to London. They sought ‘essential unity’ of the sort that James Craig and the unionists rejected.

Lloyd George proposed the establishment of a boundary commission, and he secured Griffith's private agreement that he would not embarrass the British government by repudiating such a plan; the Irish would not 'queer his position' vis-à-vis his Conservative and unionist critics. Griffith believed, and was encouraged to believe, that such a commission would transfer large areas of Northern Ireland to the Free State. He informed both de Valera and his fellow delegates of this assurance, but not that he had also approved a written summary of what had been agreed in a private meeting with Tom Jones, secretary to the British delegation during the negotiations. With its leader neutralised in this manner, the prime minister could assume that a united Irish delegation would not break off negotiations over the Ulster question. Gradually the Irish shifted from a position of external to one of internal association with the empire, and concessions were made to satisfy Britain's defence interests.

The British insisted on 'allegiance' to the crown, while the Irish were prepared to accept some vague form of association – provided that other matters were resolved satisfactorily. Lloyd George offered to include any phrase that would ensure that the role of the crown in the Irish Free State would not be greater than in Canada or any other dominion, and shortly afterwards the Irish delegation was presented with a draft treaty. The boundary commission clause was amended to ensure that the 'wishes of the inhabitants' would be qualified by a new reference to economic and geographic conditions.

This document was discussed at an acrimonious cabinet meeting in Dublin. Griffith argued in favour of accepting the British proposals and declared that he would not take the responsibility of breaking on the crown, but de Valera and others rejected the draft; however, no one proposed alterations to the 'Ulster' clauses, revealing either carelessness or *naïveté* on the part of all the Irish leaders. It was decided unanimously that the document should not be signed and that the oath of allegiance should be rejected, and (once again) the delegates were ordered to refer any draft agreement back to the cabinet in Dublin.

On their return to London Griffith and some of his colleagues implemented the cabinet's directive and resumed the doomed argument in favour of de Valera's policy of external association. It was rejected once more. In private discussions he urged the inclusion of a formula, however vague, which would recognise Irish unity. But at a crucial meeting on 5 December Lloyd George produced the boundary commission document Griffith had agreed with Tom Jones three weeks earlier, and after this Griffith felt that he would be unable to break on 'Ulster'. The discussions continued, and agreement was reached on various points such as coastal defence. In particular, the only oath of allegiance to be sworn by dáil deputies would be to the Free State constitution; they would be merely 'faithful' to the king. Lloyd George conceded fiscal autonomy, an issue close to Griffith's heart.

At this stage, unwisely and irresponsibly, Griffith declared to the British that he would sign the treaty even if his colleagues did not. Naturally Lloyd George insisted that all the Irish delegates must sign; otherwise, he warned, there would be no agreement, the truce would break down, and the war would be resumed. Led by Collins they eventually agreed to do so, in some cases with deep reluctance. They exercised the plenipotentiary powers granted by the dáil, ignoring both the cabinet's directive to refer back any agreement and their own commitment to do so. The ministers who remained in Dublin had given little help to the delegates in London.

Until the end of the negotiations Griffith had fought hard for a degree of independence greater than that which was ultimately obtained. But, although the term was not used in 1921, what he and his colleagues secured in the treaty was remarkably close to the dual monarchy which he had advocated in *The resurrection of Hungary*; Ireland would share a king with Britain but would otherwise be effectively independent. This achievement of his long-term aims had been brought about largely by the violent methods that he had always believed could not succeed.

Defending the treaty

The Irish cabinet supported the treaty by four votes to three. In the dáil debates that followed, Griffith was the principal speaker in favour of the agreement, and – confident that it enjoyed overwhelming public support – defended it with force and passion. He insisted that although the terms were not ideal they were the best available, and that the interests of the people must take preference over ideals and abstractions. Like Collins, he saw the treaty as part of a process rather than as a final settlement; he declared robustly that the issue should be decided by ‘the Irish people – who are our masters, not our servants as some think’ (*Dáil Éireann official report. Debate on the treaty*, 20 (19 Dec. 1921)). His arguments and his style were characteristically blunt, and in later debates he lapsed into personal abuse.

Finally on 7 January 1922 the dáil ended its deliberations and ratified the treaty by sixty-four votes to fifty-seven. De Valera later ran for re-election and was defeated by only two votes, after which Griffith was elected president of the dáil and formed a new government.

However, the treaty had to be endorsed by the ‘parliament of Southern Ireland’, consisting of *all* the MPs who had been elected in May 1921 for the area of the future Free State, including four unionists from TCD. Griffith convened this parliament and it approved a list of ministers whose names had already been chosen by his dáil cabinet – yet his own name was not on the list. Collins became chairman of the provisional government to which the British transferred their powers, and henceforth he was the dominant figure in the pro-treaty leadership. Griffith may have felt constrained by his earlier commitments that if elected president of the dáil he would occupy whatever position de Valera had held, and that he would keep the republic in being until the people voted for or against the establishment of the Free State. He may also have been content to make way for Collins, as he had done for de Valera in 1917. His dáil government remained in existence, useful mainly because it alone was recognised by opponents of the treaty.

Although in theory the two pro-treaty administrations worked in tandem, in practice there was considerable overlap between them. Griffith chaired twenty-two of the twenty-four meetings of the dáil cabinet, but he also attended most meetings of Collins’s provisional government and he allowed his own government to disappear. It faded away at the end of April.

Griffith had little power but he retained considerable influence, and he used it to reinforce civilian and political authority. He wanted early general elections to prove that the treaty enjoyed public support, thereby confirming and legitimising the positions occupied by himself and his colleagues. He was impatient with the chaos and violence associated with the republicans’ refusal to recognise the treaty, and was eager to begin governing the country in a normal fashion. He shared none of Collins’s forbearance towards his old comrades, and demanded constantly that the pro-treaty authorities should act firmly against those whom he regarded as anti-democratic militarists. Ministers would be ‘poltroons’ if, having stood up to British tyranny, they now submitted to ‘a tyranny just as mean and less supportable’ (*Dáil Éireann official report 1921–1922*, 461 (19 May 1922)). In turn republicans regarded him as a warmonger, and even his supporters were embarrassed by his intemperance.

He was unhappy at the decision to postpone an election until after the publication of the Free State constitution. But because he was trusted by the British, it was Griffith who went to London to explain this change of plan, and he defended skilfully a decision with which he had little sympathy. He also accompanied Collins to a meeting with Craig and Winston Churchill, and later to a conference with anti-treaty representatives. However, when Collins and de Valera agreed on a ‘pact’ which laid down that the treaty would not be an issue in the forthcoming elections, and that rival pro- and anti-treaty Sinn Féin dáil deputies would run for re-election as a united ‘panel’, Griffith was one of many who feared that the voters would be denied a genuine choice. Once again, however, he went to London to explain the Irish position.

The provisional government (along with Griffith, who was present at the relevant meetings) attempted to outmanoeuvre both Lloyd George and de Valera by drafting what was in effect a republican constitution under the auspices of the treaty. When the British refused to accept this 'republic in disguise' it was Griffith who led an Irish team to negotiate the changes that were considered necessary; he was a frequent visitor to London in 1922.

He enjoyed a final triumph in the June elections when, despite his earlier scepticism, the Collins–de Valera pact resulted in an election whose result was broadly representative of Irish public opinion. Candidates who supported the treaty obtained 78 per cent of the first-preference votes. Once again Griffith was elected for Cavan, receiving more votes than those cast for the other three candidates combined. He saw no need for further delay, and he urged Collins to confront those soldiers who continued to defy the government. But republican radicals urged the resumption of war against the British, and a series of events in late June pushed the two sides towards a military conflict. Less than two weeks after polling day the long-simmering violence boiled over into full-scale civil war.

Griffith was not a warrior, and despite his insistence that the government should act firmly against those whom he described as 'gunmen', he observed the fighting with dismay. He remained busy, and after his return from the constitutional negotiations in London attended forty-one of the forty-two provisional government meetings held between 23 June and 30 July. But his health broke down, and he was in St Vincent's nursing home, Leeson Street, when he died suddenly from a cerebral haemorrhage on 12 August 1922.

Although he was aged only 51 he seemed already a father-figure to the younger men around him, a relic of an earlier age. He died despondent, believing that many of his achievements were being undone and that his old suspicion of bloodshed had been vindicated at last. After the civil war he was almost forgotten by his ungrateful pro-treaty colleagues.

This was unjust. For over twenty years he had been a formidable editor and journalist, he was the founder of a party which (ultimately and briefly) dominated Irish politics, and he was a staunch champion of democratic values and institutions. Among Irish nationalists who fought against British rule he was unusual, if not unique, in one respect: by the time of his death he had achieved most of his objectives.

Written by Michael Laffan

Sources: UCDA, de Valera papers; Frank Pakenham (Lord Longford), *Peace by ordeal* (1935); Seán Ó Lúing, *Art Ó Gríofa* (1953); Thomas Jones, *Whitehall diary*, iii (1971); Richard Davis, *Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Féin* (1974); Joseph M. Curran, *The birth of the Irish Free State, 1921–23* (1980); Calton Younger, *Arthur Griffith* (1981); Arthur Mitchell, *Revolutionary government in Ireland: Dáil Eireann, 1919–22* (1995); Brian Maye, *Arthur Griffith* (1997); Ronan Fanning et al (ed.), *Documents on Irish foreign policy*, vol. i, 1919–1922 (1998); Michael Laffan, *The resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Féin party, 1916–1923* (1999); Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891–1918* (1999); Arthur Griffith, *The resurrection of Hungary* (UCD Press reprint 2003)

Michael Collins

Collins, Michael (1890–1922), revolutionary leader, chairman of the Irish provisional government, and commander-in-chief of the provisional government army, was born 16 October 1890 at Woodfield, Sam's Cross, west Co. Cork, last born of three sons and five daughters of Michael Collins, tenant farmer (aged 75 at Collins's birth), and Mary Anne Collins (née O'Brien), who continued to work on the family farm after being widowed, dying of cancer in 1907. Educated at Lisavaird and Clonakilty national schools, he left school aged 15 and moved to London to work as a clerk, first in West Kensington post office savings bank, then at a stockbroker's in the City (1910), and subsequently at the Board of Trade (1914). Before leaving London, he was employed by the Guaranty Trust Co. during 1915. He became an enthusiastic participant in GAA and Gaelic League activities, both as a player and as an administrator, and was sworn into the IRB in 1909. In 1914 he joined the Irish Volunteers, and was appointed treasurer of the IRB for southern England. His London experience in the enclosed exile nationalist community was more important than has often been allowed: he became an avid reader of popular fiction, notably Conan Doyle, and through his employment he accumulated invaluable administrative experience. Old London friends were to be key contacts later in his intelligence network.

Insurrection and politics

Collins returned to Ireland in January 1916 and became a financial adviser to Count Plunkett. He played a backroom role in the GPO as ADC to Joseph Plunkett during the Easter rising; he was strongly critical of the sacrificial philosophy and tactics of Pearse, but admired the dedication and ruthlessness of IRB leaders such as Tom Clarke and Seán Mac Diarmada. He was not court-martialled after the rising but was interned till December 1916 in Frongoch, north Wales, where he became a dominant figure in what has been described as the 'university of revolution', leading discussions on military tactics, confronting authority over prison conditions and participating in Irish-language classes, although he had no official rank. On release, through his contacts with Kathleen Clarke, widow of Tom Clarke, he took up work in the Irish National Aid and Volunteer Dependents' Fund and was instrumental in rebuilding the IRB; these two organisations became the basis for Collins's rise to dominance within advanced nationalist ranks. For all the importance he attached to secret society links, he well understood the need to become involved in public organisations, and played a significant part in persuading the imprisoned Joe

McGuinness to stand in the Longford South by-election of May 1917. Collins's prominence was publicly demonstrated for the first time in September 1917 by his brief, intransigent address at the funeral of Thomas Ashe. After shots were fired over the graveside he declared: 'Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian'.

Collins was elected to the Sinn Féin executive in October 1917 only narrowly, but was a more central figure in the reorganised Volunteers, becoming adjutant-general in March 1918 when Richard Mulcahy was regarded as the safer choice to be chief of staff. During 1917–18 Collins built up his intelligence service, taking advantage of the long-term alienation from Dublin Castle of the catholic professional middle class; a number of employees in the public service became key recruits to his intelligence system. His agents extended to the DMP and the Castle itself, and enabled him to give advance warning of the arrests connected with the 'German plot' in May 1918. Unlike Collins, the majority of the Sinn Féin leadership chose the option of winning publicity through imprisonment, which meant that Collins was a major influence in Dublin among advanced nationalists at the time of the December 1918 general election. Together with Diarmuid O'Hegarty and Harry Boland, he chose many Sinn Féin candidates, and was himself returned unopposed for Cork South.

In April 1919, some months after the establishment of the dáil government, he succeeded Eoin MacNeill as minister of finance and successfully organised the dáil loan. £380,000 was raised in Ireland by September 1920, which made it possible to establish the dáil government. Throughout the loan drive he kept in touch with local subscribers and ran the publicity. He also appears to have been president of the supreme council of the IRB in mid 1919, and was soon to be the IRA's director of intelligence. Unsurprisingly this caused many problems with regard to overlapping authorities and much resentment of his supremacy. Cathal Brugha and Austin Stack were to be increasingly critical of what they regarded as interference in the running of their defence and home affairs departments. Such tensions were increased by Collins's brusque and domineering personality; he inspired either devoted loyalty or bitter hostility among his contemporaries, none of whom could be indifferent to him. Cathal Brugha in particular developed a loathing of Collins. He was also intolerant of inefficiency and unpunctuality. He was impatient of what he regarded as the moderate and ineffective politicians within the movement, and the failure of other departments in the dáil government to establish viable administrations. He was particularly scathing about Stack's administrative limitations, and was one of the few Irish revolutionary leaders to be at ease with a card-index system.

Guerrilla war leader

Traditionally Collins has been depicted as the heroic leader of the IRA from the beginning of guerrilla warfare in January 1919, despite the facts that his role was that of an organiser rather than a fighter, and that he rarely journeyed outside Dublin. He advocated a cautious approach to any confrontation with British forces. To act on his intelligence information he established his notorious Squad, a group of gunmen, all IRB members; their first action was in July 1919. The Squad first eliminated the threat from the DMP by sundry assassinations and then moved on to deal with British intelligence agents, most notably in the killing of twelve men and wounding of several more on Bloody Sunday, 21 November 1920. He was also active in extending his intelligence system through the provinces, although there his organisation was much less comprehensive. Through his IRB links he was able to provide a limited supply of arms from the USA and Europe, and masterminded and directed jail escapes, in particular that of Éamon de Valera from Lincoln jail in February 1919. It was Collins's men in the ports and

on the ships who enabled de Valera to journey to the US in June 1919 and return to Ireland in December 1920. Whatever influence the IRA headquarters had in the provinces was largely brought about by Collins's personal contacts and energy, but it should be remembered how critical local initiative was in guerrilla warfare, and how resented was his refusal to grant requests for arms and ammunition.

He had a surer grasp of the limitations of his achievement than many of his biographers. His significance to a great extent lay in Dublin. The British obsession with Collins, and their failure to trace his movements, contributed to the Collins legend. He was able to cycle round Dublin and drink in various hotels in Parnell Square while billed as the most wanted man in the British empire. However, later attempts to arrest him may at times have been less than whole-hearted because of various peace initiatives. Between the arrest of Arthur Griffith (November 1920) and de Valera's return from the US (late December), Collins was acting president of the dáil government. In that December he was involved in protracted informal peace negotiations, centring on Archbishop Patrick Clune of Perth, Western Australia, which broke down on the British government's belated insistence that IRA arms be surrendered. In the first half of 1921 he became progressively more pessimistic about the war. The arrest of important intelligence agents, notably Ned Broy, reduced the effectiveness of his information, and his offices were raided by British forces (April 1921). There was a feeling that the net was closing around him, and Mulcahy was to claim in a memoir that if it had not been for the truce there would have been need for another purge of British agents. Collins became extremely critical of the failings of inactive IRA units. It was his realistic appraisal of the military situation, and particularly the dire shortages of arms and ammunition, that explains his acceptance of the truce in early July 1921. Plans for massive shipments of arms from Italy and Germany did not materialise; the Cork IRA leadership later blamed Collins for the failure to bring to fruition negotiations in Italy for arms.

Negotiator

After the truce, Collins was upset not to be chosen to accompany de Valera to London in July for the early stages of negotiations, but he was just as angry when, on de Valera's nomination, he was selected by the dáil (14 September) to negotiate with the British government at the forthcoming Anglo-Irish conference. In private correspondence he revealed his suspicions that he and Griffith had been 'set up' by de Valera to make a compromise the absent de Valera himself would not wish to make. He travelled to London on 9 October, a day after the other members of the delegation (Griffith, Robert Barton, Edmund Duggan, and George Gavan Duffy); he had stayed behind to celebrate his formal engagement to Kitty Kiernan, daughter of an hotelier in Longford town, on 8 October. In London he remained aloof from the other members of the negotiating team, staying separately with his personal entourage at 15 Cadogan Gardens.

Because of Griffith's poor health, Collins was at times effectively head of the delegation. The British government were soon aware that he and Griffith were the vital men to deal with, and increasingly Lloyd George and his close colleagues met with them alone. During the negotiations, Collins was in close touch with a political and literary set that included the society portrait-painter Sir John Lavery and his wife Hazel and the writer J. M. Barrie; this has led republican or anti-treaty critics to claim that his judgment was affected by social lionisation. Others believe that Collins in London, maturing as a statesman, came to see the virtues of dominion status. It is more realistic, however, and more in accordance with his behaviour after the treaty, to argue that he acted as a pragmatist, aware that a settlement based on dominion status was the maximum that could be extracted from a British government. He had become increasingly irritated by de Valera's belief that his 'external association' ideas could be incorporated in a settlement.

During the negotiations, British ministers saw that Collins was more flexible than his hard-line reputation had suggested; he refused to accompany the rest of the delegation when a final attempt was made to press de Valera's favoured option. On the last day of the conference (5 December), Lloyd George had a meeting with Collins alone, appearing flexible over the wording of the oath to the crown and holding out prospects for major changes in the boundaries of Northern Ireland resulting from the boundary commission. It is very doubtful, however, whether such assurances had any effect on the hard-bitten Collins. He signed the treaty realising that it would soon bring about the removal of the British military presence from the south and west of Ireland. He accepted the boundary commission only as a means of preventing the northern issue from blocking a settlement between the British and Irish governments.

Collins was aware that he would have major problems in reconciling republican opinion, and particularly the army, to the treaty. He had been the crucial signatory to the treaty and without his support it is extremely doubtful that the settlement could have proved viable. Many within the army declared: 'What is good enough for Mick, is good enough for me', and thanks to Collins most of the IRA GHQ and around one-quarter of the whole army supported the treaty. He used his powers of persuasion and offered jobs, not always successfully, to win the backing of old colleagues. Two key IRA leaders in the provinces, Michael Brennan in Clare and Seán Mac Eoin in Athlone, were swayed by their loyalty to both Collins and the IRB to support the treaty.

Provisional government

During the dáil treaty debates, Collins showed considerable ability as a political communicator and had to suffer vilification and abuse from Cathal Brugha and Countess Markievicz. Under the terms of the treaty, he became chairman of the provisional government (elected on 14 January by the Southern Irish parliament) and also minister for finance, a position he continued to hold under the authority of Dáil Éireann. The remainder of his life was spent trying to reconcile his acceptance of the treaty with his republican principles. Before the election and publication of the Free State constitution in June 1922, he sought to appease the republican opposition and to avoid confrontation, at the expense of testing British government patience to the limit. He therefore used his IRB influence to prevent any final split within the army, and was chairman of the committee that drew up a republican constitution. On 20 May the Collins–de Valera pact made provision for the establishment of a joint pro- and anti-treaty Sinn Féin panel to fight the election and for a coalition government. As a consequence of this apparent contradiction of the treaty terms, Collins and Griffith were summoned to London to face Lloyd George's wrath in late May. Reluctantly Collins had to accept that the constitution be made to conform to the treaty. Meanwhile the meeting of the IRA convention on 26 March, explicitly repudiating dáil or provisional-government control, had made clear the split within the army, and the need for a speedy build-up of the provisional government's army.

In the first six months of 1922 Collins put a high priority on the northern question. He was publicly associated with two pacts (21 January, 30 March) with James Craig, the Northern Ireland premier. These attempted to settle limited security and judicial issues and appeared to recognise implicitly the northern government within the six counties and to remove the boycott of northern goods. Secretly, however, Collins was promoting from January a joint IRA northern offensive with the twin aims of undermining the northern government and retaining IRA unity. The offensive, culminating in botched actions in May, proved a sorry failure and helped to intensify British suspicion of his motives. Meanwhile, rather than accommodating differences, the two pacts and Collins's offensive policy exacerbated divisions between the northern and southern

governments and between the majority and minority communities within the north. It remains unclear whether the primary motivation for Collins's northern policy was the desire to reconcile IRA divisions by focusing on the six counties, or a genuine commitment to bring down the northern government.

A day before the election of 16 June 1922 (in which he headed the poll with 17,106 first preferences in the eight-seat Cork Mid, North, South, South-East, and West constituency) Collins appeared to repudiate his agreement with de Valera by urging the electorate to vote in accordance with their preferred views. He was no doubt aware that any hope of reconciliation had long since passed. The election's confirmation of firm majority support for the treaty appeared to vindicate Collins's support of the settlement. On 22 June Sir Henry Wilson, ex-chief of the imperial general staff and arch-unionist, was assassinated in central London. Some oral evidence suggests that Collins may have given the orders to the two London IRB men who carried out the shooting; if so, it would demonstrate how close he remained to his secret-society roots. The British government sought to place responsibility for the assassination on the republican IRA and insisted that Collins end its occupation of the Four Courts, which had begun on 14 April: failing that, the British made provision themselves to deal with the situation. Aware of a split within republican military ranks, Collins may have hoped that fighting would be brief and limited to Dublin. He had little cause for confidence in the hastily recruited provisional-government army. Faced with an impossible dilemma, and with the greatest reluctance, he ordered the bombardment of the Four Courts on 28 June.

Civil war and death

During the early weeks of the ensuing civil war, Collins was in poor health and increasingly at odds with his political colleagues. He became commander-in-chief of the Free State army and gave up his chairmanship of the provisional government. Nevertheless he kept a close eye on political developments and was consulted regularly. There is no evidence that he had any thought of establishing a military dictatorship. Regretfully he had to abandon his aggressive northern strategy, ordering northern divisions of the IRA to leave their localities and be billeted in the Curragh. His conduct of the war was characteristically efficient and imaginative (e.g. the amphibious attack on Cork city). By early August, when the republicans had evacuated virtually all their urban strongholds and the provisional-government army had landed at various points on the coast, Collins embarked on a military tour of inspection of Munster, which was interrupted by the death of Griffith (12 August). It is clear that the purpose of his fateful journey was connected with his search for some kind of accommodation with the republican opposition, and he was arranging meetings with intermediaries. He had been opposed to any attempt to steamroller the opposition and had been against the introduction of a harsh censorship. On 22 August he was killed during a confused ambush in the remote valley of Béal na mBlath, close to his birthplace. The security of the new state appeared to have reached its greatest crisis.

Since then controversy has raged over responsibility for Collins's death, and the alleged involvement of British or provisional government intelligence. The prevailing consensus, however, points more to a single republican bullet than to an elaborate conspiracy. But his death was a prime factor in turning the civil war from a half-hearted affair to something resembling a national vendetta. Many within the Free State army, who had supported the treaty only out of loyalty to Collins, became progressively alienated from the new leadership; this would culminate in the army mutiny of 1924.

Myth and legacy

There has been considerable debate over the consequences of Collins's death for the long-term development of the new state; this involves consideration of Collins's political potential. For many, his departure left an enormous gap that was never filled, and the inward-looking petit-bourgeois character of the Free State had much to do with the loss of his leadership. It is true that the pro-treaty side lost its only popular figure – W. T. Cosgrave had none of his charisma, Kevin O'Higgins none of his popularity. Certainly the recovery of de Valera's political fortunes and the subsequent dominance of Fianna Fáil had much to do with the loss of Collins. Collins had also shown both administrative talent and considerable effectiveness as a public communicator and platform speaker. It is likely that he would have placed a much higher priority on the northern question than his political colleagues did; northern unionists had every reason to breathe more easily after his death. His secret-society methods would have continued to impose considerable strains on Anglo–Irish relations. While he had no ambition to become an Irish Mussolini, there is little evidence that he had any great breadth of economic and social vision. As demonstrated by his *The path to freedom* (Dublin, 1922), the published collection of his speeches, he had a limited Gaelic-revivalist philosophy and was strongly anti-socialist. As minister of finance, he allowed his civil service to achieve a control that resembled that of the Whitehall treasury. The bureaucratic conservatism of the Free State, therefore, arguably owed much to Collins.

For long de Valera's dominance of Irish politics prevented the establishment of a full-blown Collins myth. From the early 1960s, however, a Collins legend grew to rival that connected with C. S. Parnell. The centenary of his birth coincided with the publication of several biographies, and in 1996 the release of Neil Jordan's film *Michael Collins* occasioned intense debate and drew large audiences. His early death and the fact that so many questions remain unanswered guarantee the retention of interest. Much curiosity in the more permissive environment of late twentieth-century Irish society centred on his relationship with women and with drink. During the treaty negotiations he became engaged to Kitty Kiernan, but he also had relationships with Lady Lavery and Moya Llewelyn Davies, daughter of a Parnellite MP and wife of a leading British civil servant. Many colleagues swore that Collins drank only the occasional sherry, yet this does not tally with much contemporary testimony. The obsession with such issues may have revealed more about Irish society in the mid twentieth century than it ever did about Michael Collins. The leading Dublin Castle official Mark Sturgis provided a useful corrective to much of the romanticisation when he described him as resembling a prosperous cattle-dealer, fond of bad jokes. Nonetheless Collins does fit the bill as the archetypal Irish national hero – convivial and back-slapping, plain-speaking and direct, sociable and outgoing. All this contrasts vividly with the austere de Valera and even the enigmatic Parnell. Study of Collins's career has led some to depict him as an unswerving idealist, so reclaiming him for the republican pantheon; others see him as one of the first twentieth-century examples of freedom fighter (or terrorist) turned statesman. He justified his use of physical force by saying that it was always against definite, prescribed targets. While he went through an anti-clerical phase, he remained a practising catholic, frequently visiting Brompton Oratory alone, or attending mass at Maiden Lane church off the Strand, during the treaty negotiations. Through all the speculation, hero-worshipping, and revisionism, Collins can still be regarded as the essential man in the winning of a large measure of Irish independence.

Collins's papers are to be found in the NLI, NAI (Dublin), Kilmainham Museum, Dublin, and in private collections. A posthumous portrait (1923) by Leo Whelan hangs in Leinster House; Sir John Lavery's depiction of Collins lying in state (1922) is in Dublin City Gallery the

Hugh Lane, which also has a marble bust by Seamus Murphy. Bronze busts by F. W. Doyle-Jones (1923) and Albert Power (1936), along with Theodore Spicer-Simson's plasticine medallion and bronze cast (1922), are in the NGI. Sir Bernard Partridge's pen-and-ink sketch of Collins with Sir James Craig for *Punch* (1922) is in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

Written by M. A. Hopkinson

Sources: Margery Forester, *Michael Collins: the lost leader* (1971); Leon Ó Broin, *Michael Collins* (1980); R. Ormond and M. Rogers (ed.), *Dictionary of British portraiture*, iv (1981), 22; Michael Hopkinson, *Green against green: the Irish civil war* (1988); Joseph Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985* (1989); Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins. A biography* (1990); Michael Hopkinson (ed.), *The last days of Dublin Castle: the Mark Sturgis diaries* (1999); id., *The Irish war of independence* (2004); Peter Hart, *Mick: the real Michael Collins* (2005)

Constance Markievicz

Markievicz, Constance Georgine (1868–1927), Countess Markievicz, republican and labour activist, was born 4 February 1868 at Buckingham Gate, London, eldest of the three daughters and two sons of Sir Henry Gore-Booth of Lissadell, Co. Sligo, philanthropist and explorer, and Georgina Mary Gore-Booth (née Hill) of Tickhill Castle, Yorkshire. She was taken to the family house at Lisadell as an infant, and retained a strong attachment to the west of Ireland despite her frequent sojourns in Dublin and abroad.

She was born into a life of privilege. Descended from seventeenth-century planters, the Gore-Booths were leading landowners who entertained lavishly at Lissadell, and enjoyed country pursuits including riding, hunting, and driving. An active and demonstrative child, she was known for her skill in the saddle and for her friendly relations with the family's tenants. She and her favourite sister, Eva, were brought up in a manner that reflected their class and social standing. They are recalled as 'two girls in silk kimonos' in the poem 'In memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markievicz' (October 1927) by W. B. Yeats. Educated at home, they were taught to appreciate music, poetry, and art, and in 1886 they were taken by their governess on a grand tour of the Continent. Constance made her formal debut into society in 1887 when she was presented to Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

She hoped to study art, but faced opposition from her parents who disapproved of her ambition and refused to fund her studies. They finally relented in 1893, and she went to the Slade School of Art in London. On her return to Lissadell, she took up the cause of women's suffrage, presiding over a meeting of the Sligo Women's Suffrage Society in 1896. But she remained interested in art, and in 1898 her parents were persuaded to allow her to go to Paris to further her studies. While in Paris she met fellow art student Count Casimir Dunin-Markievicz, a Pole whose family held land in the Ukraine. They were married in London in 1900 and a daughter, Maeve, was born the following year. The couple returned to Paris in 1902, leaving their daughter in the care of Lady Gore-Booth. The family was reunited in Dublin in the following year, but from about 1908 Maeve lived almost exclusively with her grandparents at Lissadell.

Markievicz and her husband became involved in Dublin's liveliest cultural and social circles, exhibiting their paintings, producing and acting in plays at the Abbey Theatre, and helping to establish the United Arts Club. She and her husband separated amicably about 1909. Her conversion to Irish republicanism dates from about 1908 when she joined Sinn Féin and Inghinidhe

na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland). She also helped to found and became a regular contributor to *Bean na hÉireann* (Woman of Ireland), the first women's nationalist journal in Ireland. She continued to advocate women's suffrage, but devoted most of her time to overtly nationalist causes such as the establishment in 1909 of the Fianna Éireann, a republican youth movement. By 1911 she had become an executive member of Sinn Féin and Inghinidhe na hÉireann, and was arrested that year while protesting against the visit to Dublin of George V.

Markievicz became increasingly interested in socialism and trade unionism. She spoke in 1911 at a meeting of the newly established Women Workers' Union and remained a strong supporter. An advocate of striking workers during the lock-out of 1913, she organised soup kitchens in the Dublin slums and at Liberty Hall. Markievicz became an honorary treasurer of the Irish Citizen Army, and was instrumental in merging Inghinidhe na hÉireann with Cumann na mBan, a militant women's republican organisation which was established to support the Irish Volunteers. Fiercely opposed to Irish involvement in the British war effort, she co-founded the Irish Neutrality League in 1914, and supported the small minority who split from the larger Volunteer organisation over the issue of Irish participation in the war. She remained active in labour circles, co-founding in 1915 the Irish Workers' Co-operative Society, while also participating in the military training and mobilisation of the Citizen Army and the Fianna.

An aggressive and flamboyant speaker who enjoyed wearing military uniforms and carrying weapons, Markievicz was known for her advocacy of armed rebellion against British authority. She welcomed the Easter rising, acting as second-in-command of a troop of Citizen Army combatants at St Stephen's Green. As British troops occupied buildings surrounding the park, it became a deathtrap for the Citizen Army who were forced to seek refuge in the College of Surgeons. After a week of heavy fire, Markievicz and her fellow rebels surrendered. She was originally sentenced to death for her part in the rebellion, but this was commuted on account of her sex; she was transferred to Aylesbury prison and was released under a general amnesty in June 1917, having served fourteen months. While being held at Mountjoy prison just after her surrender, she had begun to take instruction from a Roman Catholic priest, and shortly after returning to Ireland she was formally received into the church. Notoriously ignorant of the finer points of catholic theology, she none the less embraced her new faith wholeheartedly, claiming to have experienced an epiphany while holed up in the College of Surgeons.

Markievicz threw herself behind Sinn Féin: she was elected to its executive board and was one of the many advanced nationalists arrested in 1918 on account of their alleged involvement in a treasonous 'German plot'. During her incarceration, she was invited to stand as a Sinn Féin candidate for Dublin's St Patrick's division at the forthcoming general election. She was the first woman to be elected to the British parliament, but like all Sinn Féin MPs she refused to take her seat at Westminster. On her release and return to Ireland in March 1919, she was named minister for labour in the first Dáil Éireann, a position that bridged her commitment to labour and to the fledgling republic. Arrested again in June for making a seditious speech, she was sentenced to four months hard labour in Cork, the third time she had been incarcerated in four years. After her release Markievicz continued to defy British authorities by maintaining her work for Sinn Féin and the dáil. Such political activity became more dangerous and difficult after the outbreak of the Anglo-Irish war in early 1919 and Markievicz spent much of this time on the run and in constant danger of arrest. She was arrested again in September 1920 and sentenced to two years' hard labour after a long period on remand. Released in July 1921 in the wake of a truce agreed between the British government and Irish republicans, she returned to her ministry, but any hope of political stability was dashed by the split in republican ranks over the Anglo-Irish treaty of December 1921. Dressed in her Cumann na mBan uniform, Markievicz addressed the dáil

in a characteristically theatrical fashion, condemning the treaty and reiterating her advocacy of an Irish workers' republic. Reelected president of Cumann na mBan and chief of the Fianna in 1922, she reaffirmed her opposition to the treaty through those organisations.

As an active opponent of the treaty, Markievicz refused to take her seat in the dáil and was once again forced to go into hiding while former comrades became embroiled in a civil war. She composed anti-treaty articles and continued to engage in speaking tours to publicise the republican cause. Elected to the dáil for Dublin South in August 1923, she refused to take the oath of allegiance to the king and, like other elected republicans, she thus disqualified herself from sitting. She was arrested for the last time in November 1923 while attempting to collect signatures for a petition for the release of republican prisoners, and went on hunger strike until she and her fellow prisoners were released just before Christmas. Removed from parliamentary politics and increasingly detached from her former republican colleagues – some of whom remained suspicious of female politicians and of Markievicz in particular – she remained committed to the republican ideal, producing numerous publications which focused more on former glories than on disappointing contemporary realities. She joined Fianna Fáil when it was established in 1926, finally breaking her ties with Cumann na mBan, which opposed the new political party. She stood successfully as a Fianna Fáil candidate for Dublin South at the June 1927 general election, but hard work and often rough conditions took their toll, and her health began to fail. She was admitted to Sir Patrick Dun's hospital and, declaring that she was a pauper, was placed in a public ward, where she died on 15 July 1927; she was buried in Glasnevin cemetery.

Written by Senia Pasetta

Sources: Eva Gore-Booth and Esther Roper, *Prison letters of Countess Markievicz* (1934); Brian Farrell, 'Markievicz and the women of the revolution', F. X. Martin, *Leaders and men of the Easter rising: Dublin 1916* (1967), 227–303; Anne Marreco, *Rebel countess: the life and times of Countess Markievicz* (1967); Jacqueline Van Voris, *Constance Markievicz: in the cause of Ireland* (1967); Sean O'Faolain, *Constance Markievicz* (1968); Elizabeth Coxhead, *Daughters of Erin: five women of the Irish renaissance* (1969); Eibhlin Ní Éireamhoin, *Two great Irish women: Maud Gonne MacBride and Countess Markievicz* (1971); Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable revolutionaries: women and Irish nationalism* (1983); Anne Haverty, *Constance Markievicz: an independent life* (1988); Diana Norman, *Terrible beauty: a life of Constance Markievicz* (1988)

William Thomas Cosgrave

Cosgrave, William Thomas (1880–1965), revolutionary and politician, was born 5 June 1880 at 174 James's St., Dublin, second son among three surviving children of Thomas Cosgrave and his wife Bridget (née Nixon). He had a stepbrother and sister from his mother's second marriage to Thomas Burke of Seskin, Co. Tipperary. The son of a publican whose small premises lay in one of the poorer parts of the city, Cosgrave observed at first hand the realities of the poverty and deprivation endured by the people of Dublin. This, together with a profound religious faith, and an attachment to the ideal of Irish independence, was to drive him in politics, firstly at municipal level as a reforming Sinn Féin member of Dublin corporation, as a member of the underground dáil government of 1919–21, and from August 1922 to March 1932 as head of the first governments of independent Ireland.

Upbringing

It would be as unwise to ignore Cosgrave's modest background as to harp on it. Although the Cumann na nGaedheal party which he founded and the Fine Gael party which he led came to be associated with the more prosperous and more conservative elements of Irish society – strong farmers, the professions, the worlds of finance and commerce – Cosgrave was of humbler stock and was proud of it. Educated by the Christian Brothers, he left school at 16 to work in the family business. Given his background, the Irish parliamentary party would have seemed an obvious political home: through it publicans and other vested interests already had a stranglehold on municipal politics in Dublin, and were notorious for wielding their influence to obstruct efforts at civic reform. But Cosgrave was cast in a different mould. In 1900 he wrote to a national newspaper to protest in fiery terms at the city corporation's decision to present a loyal address to Queen Victoria: 'it should be remembered that within three years of her majesty's accession . . . the population of Ireland was 9 millions. Now it is only 4 million'. He listed industries that had been crushed by English intervention, particularly deploring the ruinous taxation of whiskey, pointed to the 'havoc wrought' by the famine of 1847, and complained of the constant recourse to 'coercion' when faced with popular discontent. The queen's ministers, he concluded, were still bent on 'the extermination of the Irish race' (*Irish Daily Independent*, 12 Mar. 1900). This letter shows a side of Cosgrave which his later career as a sober and steady statesman tended to obscure, his early radicalism and his antagonism towards Britain as the source of Ireland's woes.

Sinn Féin councillor

In 1905 Cosgrave attended the first meeting of Sinn Féin in Dublin's Rotunda with his younger brother Philip. He joined the new party, and in 1908 he and twelve other Sinn Féin members were elected to the city corporation. In City Hall he made his name not as a firebrand but as an adroit reformer who mastered the art of steering committees towards desired conclusions. He gained a reputation across the political spectrum not only for integrity but for efficiency. By 1911 he was a member, and from 1915 he was chairman, of the influential finance committee – this despite the fact that by then his party's corporation representation had fallen to just three. He was also an effective if not a flamboyant public speaker, able to make his case concisely and on occasion with sharp wit. These were attributes which, along with his instantly recognisable shock of fair hair, also served him well during his years in national politics after independence. Almost alone of the revolutionary elite of 1919–22, he had already been successful in electoral politics and had experience of managing public affairs at the municipal level.

In 1910 Cosgrave declined an invitation to become a member of the oathbound IRB, refusing a further invitation in the week preceding the 1916 rising. He recalled that after the rising he was told that he 'had been given two opportunities of joining, and that there would not be a third'. He did, however, join the Irish Volunteers in 1913, becoming a lieutenant in the 4th Battalion. He was an active and diligent officer, and displayed initiative during the Howth gun-running in July 1914. In the spring of 1916 Thomas MacDonagh told him that there would soon be a rising and asked him for his views: 'I told him it would be little short of madness – as we lacked men and munitions . . . I was not impressed with gaining a moral victory', although he accepted that significant external developments such as 'neutralisation of the British fleet by submarines, importation of arms on a large scale', or the landing in Ireland of troops to assist a rebellion would alter the picture. He picked up further hints that a rising was planned, but like most of the Volunteers had no direct knowledge of what was envisaged for Easter 1916.

Easter rising

Cosgrave took part in the rising as a member of the force that occupied the South Dublin Union, adjacent to his home. The intention was to block the movement of British troops from barracks to the west of the city towards the city centre. Using his detailed knowledge of the locality he advised his commander Éamonn Ceannt on the best disposition of his small force around the complex. Among his comrades was Cathal Brugha, later to become the bitterest of all the anti-treaty leaders, who was wounded beside Cosgrave in the fighting. Cosgrave's young stepbrother, Frank 'Gobban' Burke, was killed by a sniper while on guard duty, something for which Cosgrave always felt partly responsible as he had encouraged him to join the Irish Volunteers.

W. E. Wylie, who prosecuted Cosgrave for his part in the rebellion, and who had previously known of him as a reforming municipal politician, noted his dignified demeanour in the face of likely execution. Cosgrave was at pains to emphasise his view that the rising was an autonomous and legitimate act by the Irish people, not an outbreak conceived and carried out under German sponsorship. While in prison in Dublin he conferred closely with Ceannt and with Maj. John MacBride about the conduct of the courts martial and their probable outcome. MacBride was taken from an adjacent cell for execution: 'Through a chink in the door I could barely discern the receding figures; silence for a time; then the sharp crack of rifle fire and silence again. I thought my turn would come next and waited for a rap on the door'. Cosgrave's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, at least in part because of his exemplary reputation in the affairs of Dublin corporation, as testified to by the lord mayor of Dublin. By 1919 he was a partner in

an insurance brokerage with fellow Sinn Féin TD Joseph MacDonagh; after Cosgrave's departure, the firm traded from 1920 as MacDonagh & Boland.

Dáil Éireann

Elected in a by-election as Sinn Féin MP for Kilkenny city in May 1917, not long after his release from prison in England, after a turbulent campaign which led to a police ban on the carrying of hurleys, Cosgrave was henceforth involved with the political rather than with the armed-force side of the independence movement. Elected in December 1918 for Kilkenny North (which he represented until 1922), he was also elected for Carlow–Kilkenny in 1921 and represented the latter constituency until September 1927, when he was also returned for Cork borough, which he represented until 1944.

He was appointed minister for local government in the government of Dáil Éireann in April 1919, a post to which he brought his extensive experience of municipal administration. With the help of his able assistant minister, Kevin O'Higgins, he achieved a good deal. They succeeded in destroying the authority of the local government board and in enforcing the will of the dáil government on most of the county councils outside Ulster. This was achieved despite the need for secrecy and the constant likelihood of police raids. Cosgrave particularly prided himself on arranging for the seizure by the IRA of Dublin corporation financial records, thereby freeing the corporation from their legal duty to produce these for audit and consequently from ferocious financial penalties. He encountered some difficulties with the dáil minister for finance, Michael Collins, who sometimes complained about Cosgrave – as he did about his other colleagues – to Éamon de Valera, and he was criticised for slipping out of Dublin to lie low for a time in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in November 1920. That surely indicated common sense rather than any lack of moral fibre: he had demonstrated his physical courage and resolve in 1916, and he was to continue to do so throughout his long career, travelling with only minimal protection once the civil war had ended despite the real risk of assassination: his car was fired on in 1928, and many threats were made against him and his family.

Civil war

Cosgrave was regarded as a de Valera loyalist in the dáil cabinet, but he disagreed with him on the composition of the Irish delegation to travel to London in late 1921 to negotiate an Anglo–Irish settlement, believing that the group should be led by de Valera rather than by Arthur Griffith. The dáil cabinet was split on the issue of whether to dismiss the plenipotentiaries who eventually signed the treaty in December 1921, and then whether to accept the document itself. In each case Cosgrave's was the deciding vote. He supported the treaty, despite earlier reservations about the oath of allegiance, as the best settlement that could be achieved. Thereafter he publicly defended the cabinet's decision and the treaty itself with resolution and without reservation. He maintained that the surest way to end partition was to operate the treaty faithfully and fully, although as a member of the provisional government he shared responsibility for its confused Northern Ireland policy in the spring of 1922; this envisaged preparations for sustained military action in conjunction with anti-treaty forces in order to relieve pressure on northern nationalists.

Cosgrave and Collins grew closer during the first few months of civil war, and were at one in agreeing that anti-treaty violence had to be confronted ruthlessly and relentlessly until it was completely eliminated. The sudden deaths in August first of Griffith and then of Collins saw Cosgrave unexpectedly become chairman of the provisional government and president of the dáil

government. Under threat of assassination, he wrote a note forgiving whoever might kill him. On 6 December 1922, on the formal establishment of the Irish Free State, Cosgrave became president of the executive council. He and his colleagues pursued military and political victory with resolution and ruthlessness, particularly after the assassination of a pro-treaty TD, Seán Hales, and the wounding of the deputy ceann comhairle of Dáil Éireann, Pádraig Ó Máille. What was the alternative to drastic measures in response? The government's approach ensured a decisive victory by May 1923. When republican prisoners went on mass hunger strike that autumn, the government held firm and the strike broke. Within a year all 11,000 prisoners had been released, and their political leader de Valera had embarked on a tortuous journey towards acceptance of the new state and its constitution.

Cumann na nGaedheal governments

However enduring the bitterness left by the civil war, the transition from widespread lawlessness to almost bucolic calm was extraordinarily rapid. There were, however, obstacles on the road to normalisation. In March 1924 a faction of army officers with grievances about demobilisation and promotions threatened mutiny; in the midst of this challenge Cosgrave fell ill, and it was left to his cabinet colleagues to deal with the crisis. Led by Kevin O'Higgins, they defused it through a combination of appeasement and firmness. The defence minister, Richard Mulcahy, was sacrificed, the loyal general staff was purged, a judicial inquiry into army administration was announced, and although finally arrested the ringleaders were never punished. O'Higgins emerged from the crisis with his personal authority enhanced, but there is no evidence that Cosgrave was seriously weakened.

The extent to which Cosgrave should take credit for the achievements and the failings of his ministers is one that all heads of government face. He was certainly not one to dictate policy or to interfere in details, but it does not follow that he failed to lead. Much has been made of the intellectual abilities and energies of other members of the executive council, in particular the three lawyers Kevin O'Higgins, Patrick McGilligan and Patrick Hogan, a coterie with a perhaps exalted idea of their own talents; on his death a former colleague, like that troika a UCD lawyer, spoke of the 'strong personalities' whom Cosgrave had around him: 'You can imagine what it is to have a driver driving a team of high-spirited horses'. Yet Cosgrave had little difficulty in holding firmly on to the reins of power throughout the triumphs and the setbacks of a decade in office, and of a further twelve years in opposition.

In terms of legislation, his administration worked prodigiously hard. None of the governments that succeeded them managed to pass remotely as many measures in a single year – sixty-two in 1924. Laws to establish new institutions and to reshape inherited ones flowed through the Oireachtas. The Garda Síochána was established, an unarmed police force which proved remarkably successful. The 1923 land act succeeded in taking the land issue out of national politics; the Courts of Justice Act, 1924, reformed the legal system; and the creation of the civil service commission put an end – more or less – to the jobbery that had characterised Irish administration under British rule, producing an impartial and competent if highly cautious public service. Endemic inefficiency and corruption in local government were addressed largely through taking control of personnel and financial matters out of the hands of elected councillors and entrusting them to professional administrators, culminating in the introduction of city and county management in 1929 (an innovation denounced as undemocratic by de Valera, but one which his government strengthened in 1941). Despite instinctive economic conservatism reinforced by the prevailing academic wisdom, the government also made a somewhat apologetic start to the development of state enterprise through the establishment of the Electricity Supply Board, the

Agricultural Credit Corporation, and the Industrial Credit Company, all of which played vital roles in national economic life for the succeeding fifty years.

From the outset Cosgrave and his ministers were clear that Anglo–Irish relations should be conducted on a basis not of subservience but of equality. The governor general was treated with courtesy but otherwise was rendered a cipher. Despite British pressure Ireland pursued her own course in the League of Nations, managed her own diplomatic relations, and became the first dominion to establish a legation in Washington. These developments were Cosgrave’s direct ministerial responsibility, as he dealt with external affairs until 1927.

Cosgrave made a very favourable impression internationally, earning a reputation for modesty, for decency, and for economy with words. In January 1928 he visited the US and Canada, making radio broadcasts extolling the achievements of the new Ireland in both countries. The trip was not without its hazards – he survived a train crash that killed an engineer while en route from New York to Ottawa – but politically it was highly productive. Notwithstanding the strength of republican sentiment in Irish émigré circles, in both countries he was greeted with considerable public as well as official enthusiasm. The Canadian prime minister Mackenzie King described him in his diary as ‘a fine character, simple, unassuming, [and] brave as a lion . . . I have the greatest admiration for him’ (Mackenzie King diary, 30 Jan. 1928). While on this trip his government lost a vote in the dáil, but once the whips did their job the crisis was overcome.

The calamitous outcome in 1925 of the Irish boundary commission’s deliberations presented Cosgrave with enormous political difficulties. The government had reposed considerable faith in the commission, believing that it would of necessity produce favourable findings which would lead to a significant accretion of territory and which might ultimately pave the way for negotiated unity with Northern Ireland. The result was a shattering blow to all nationalists, leading to a hasty agreement between Dublin, London, and Belfast to leave well enough alone. As a sop, Britain made significant financial concessions to the Irish Free State, but this was little more than an obscure technicality. Yet no great storm broke about Cosgrave’s head in the dáil, for the simple reason that his main opponent Eamon de Valera and his Sinn Féin TDs were still committed to their policy of abstention from the Oireachtas.

The most dramatic single event of Cosgrave’s decade in power was the murder (July 1927) of the vice-president, Kevin O’Higgins, who was Cosgrave’s heir apparent and widely recognised, not least by himself, as the ablest member of the government. This proved to be an opportunistic crime, but might well have presaged a campaign of assassination. Cosgrave met the challenge by forcing de Valera to choose once and for all between opposing the state and accepting it: the law was changed to invalidate the election of any TD who did not then take his seat. This forced de Valera’s hand, and in August he took the plunge by accepting the oath of allegiance and bringing his new party Fianna Fáil into the Oireachtas.

Four days after Fianna Fáil deputies took their seats in August 1927, Cosgrave put his government’s position very plainly in dealing with a motion of no confidence tabled by the Labour party: ‘We stand for a balanced budget, for easing the burden of taxation on all the citizens, for developing the country’s resources in every possible way, for improving and increasing the efficiency of every service we have got, for one army, one armed force in this country, under this parliament, no other, no matter what sacrifices may be entailed by nailing that on our mast’ (*Dáil debates*, 16 Aug. 1927).

Parliamentary life was harder and far more rancorous with Fianna Fáil in opposition. Nevertheless, Cosgrave remained in office and his government continued to function effectively for another four years, despite acute economic difficulties as the impact of world economic depression spread to Ireland. In 1931 his government, genuinely alarmed at the growth of communist influence on the IRA and also anxious to boost their electoral prospects, promoted a

'red scare' with the support of the catholic hierarchy. The accusation that de Valera was the Irish Kerensky was frequently levelled during the general election campaign of February 1932, but it did not have the desired result. To Cosgrave's great disappointment, Fianna Fáil gained sufficient seats to form a minority government with Labour support. Despite attempts by the egregious Garda commissioner Eoin O'Duffy to organise a military coup, a plan which Cosgrave knocked on the head, the handover of power was peaceful and smooth. This is all the more remarkable because Cosgrave genuinely believed that the democratic state and polity which his government had created was in mortal peril.

Leader of the opposition 1932–44

Courteous as ever, in the aftermath of the traumatic election defeat he wrote to the celebrated rugby player Eugene Davy, who had been persuaded to run as a Cumann na nGaedheal candidate in Dublin: 'I much regret that my anticipations were not realised – but I would like to assure you that I was firmly convinced you would win. Even now it appears that with a little more time better results would have been obtained' (Cosgrave to Eugene Davy, 24 Feb. 1932, letter in possession of the Davy family).

Cumann na nGaedheal found itself in very difficult circumstances in 1932. For a time the British government clung to the illusion that if they took a resolute line against de Valera's demands for changes in the Anglo–Irish settlement, he would soon lose office and Cumann na nGaedheal would be restored to power. It is scarcely to the credit either of Cosgrave or of his party colleagues that they encouraged the British in this shortsighted approach, although it reflected the despair that had set in after their defeat left all that they had achieved, domestically and internationally, in the hands of the enemy. The snap election of January 1933, so far from producing the Cosgrave victory which the British had fondly anticipated, saw de Valera consolidate his position. Cosgrave's party was left demoralised and virtually bankrupt; one of its leading supporters privately appealed to the British for financial support lest it collapse altogether. It was in these circumstances that Cumann na nGaedheal amalgamated with Gen. Eoin O'Duffy's United Ireland party – previously styled the Army Comrades Association, and colloquially termed the 'Blueshirts' – to form the Fine Gael party in September 1933. Cosgrave became chairman while O'Duffy, as president, took the lead in confronting both the Fianna Fáil government and the republican movement. While a handful of Cosgrave's colleagues were intellectually attracted by elements of fascist ideology, Cosgrave and most of his associates saw O'Duffy and his organisation principally as a counterweight both to de Valera and to the republican movement, which had supported Fianna Fáil's election campaign in 1932 and which had constantly disrupted Cumann na nGaedheal meetings. There was also an element of excitement surrounding O'Duffy, who was as, Cosgrave well knew from O'Duffy's time as Garda commissioner, a charismatic but impetuous, bombastic, and unstable man who had little faith in parliamentary democracy and revanchist views on partition. Paying homage to the growth of fascism in Europe, and without a dáil seat, O'Duffy was an incongruous leader of a naturally cautious and conservative party, and he was eventually eased out in 1935. Fine Gael under Cosgrave then assumed an entirely democratic character. In the face of further electoral setbacks, its leaders found consolation in the role of guardians of public standards, referring to themselves in public and in private as speakers of uncomfortable truths to a people all too often beguiled by the charlatans and opportunists of Fianna Fáil.

During the second world war Cosgrave and other senior opposition figures supported the policy of neutrality. When a German invasion seemed a real possibility in June 1940, he and de Valera spoke from the same platform in Dublin to urge Irishmen to join the defence forces.

Cosgrave repeatedly made it clear to both British and American diplomats that there was no alternative to neutrality, although he was affronted by de Valera's unwillingness to confide in the opposition leadership about any aspect of the crisis. He and party colleagues privately urged the British government to offer a generous settlement of the partition question. His patriotic defence of neutrality, despite his antagonism towards de Valera, was a significant element in British assessment of Irish affairs. It contrasted with the behaviour of his one-time party leader Gen. O'Duffy, who represented himself to the Axis as a Quisling in waiting.

After politics

Cosgrave was leader of the opposition for twelve years after losing office. In retirement after 1944, he appeared a somewhat solitary figure. One former party colleague wrote of Cosgrave's unwillingness to discuss any aspect of the old days. He did contribute substantial entries on Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins to the *DNB*, and helped at least one of Collins's biographers. But in general he chose to say very little about the history of the Irish revolution and the founding decade of independence. In his statement to the Bureau of Military History, Cosgrave concentrated on providing an overview of the fighting and its aftermath in the western part of the city, and on the work of the underground dáil department of local government in 1919 and 1920. His stated reasons were that he 'had not kept a diary and had no papers of any sort', and 'was somewhat reluctant to rely on his memory . . . there were many things which would be better left unsaid in case any injustice might be done to the persons concerned'. The dearth of Cosgrave papers probably explains the absence of a full-scale biographical study.

Cosgrave blamed de Valera personally for the treaty split, and avoided direct contact with him for decades. There is evidence that while de Valera came to regret the depth of that estrangement, Cosgrave did not. It was therefore ironic that almost the last significant public duty which fell to the aged President de Valera was to appoint Cosgrave's son Liam as taoiseach following the surprise defeat of Fianna Fáil in the February 1973 general election. Cosgrave's relations with de Valera's successor as taoiseach, Seán Lemass, were rather warmer. When Lemass became taoiseach he sought Cosgrave's advice on aspects of cabinet government.

Cosgrave's personal life was a conventional and happy one. He married (1919) Louise Flanagan, the daughter of Alderman Flanagan of Portmahon House; she predeceased him in June 1959. They had two sons, of whom the elder, Liam (b. 1920), became both leader of Fine Gael (1965–77) and taoiseach (1973–7). In the 1920s the family moved to Beechpark in Templeogue, then well outside the city. Always devout, whenever possible he attended daily mass on his way into Dublin. Cosgrave, a keen horseman, was chairman of the Racing Board from 1946 to his resignation in 1956; he was reappointed as a member of the board by the minister for finance, James Ryan, in June 1957. Cosgrave received honorary degrees from Cambridge University, TCD, NUI, Columbia University, New York, and from the Catholic University, Washington.

Reputation

As a pro-treaty political figure Cosgrave has sometimes been unfavourably compared with others, particularly the stellar Michael Collins and the ambitious and acerbic Kevin O'Higgins and his UCD-educated acolytes, as a man whose administrative skills could not obscure his lack of political talent and the poverty of his political imagination. He has also been criticised for his economic conservatism (as though obvious alternatives to sound money and cautious protectionism were freely to hand), for his deference to the catholic church, and generally for a want of modernity

in his outlook. In such interpretations, Cosgrave held on to the leadership of pro-treaty opinion for over two decades largely by luck. There were greater talents, more ardent spirits, sharper minds. Yet Cosgrave's career both as a revolutionary and as the leader of pro-treaty Ireland is a safer guide to his capacities and achievements. His most resonant epitaph was provided not by his Irish friends or his foreign admirers – London was always inclined to think rather better of him than was strictly merited by his record of resolute pursuit of Irish interests at the expense of British imperial suzerainty up to 1932 – but by an erstwhile opponent. After his sudden death on 16 November 1965, the taoiseach Seán Lemass, like Cosgrave a Dubliner of modest background and limited formal education, paid him a measured tribute in the dáil which acknowledged alike his military record, his achievements in creating a stable democratic and solvent state after 1922, and 'the grace with which he relinquished power when the people so willed'. We should all wish for such an epitaph from our foes.

Written by Eunan O'Halpin

Sources: Military Archives of Ireland, Bureau of Military History, WS216 (W. T. Cosgrave); *Ir. Times, Times*, 17 Nov. 1965; *WWW*; Walker; Mary E. Daly, *The buffer state: the historical roots of the Department of the Environment* (1997); R. Fanning and others (ed.), *Documents on Irish foreign policy*, ii (2000), iii (2002); Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland: the Irish state and its enemies since 1922* (2000); *ODNB*

James J. McElligott

McElligott, James John ('Jimmy') (1893–1974), financial administrator, was born 26 July 1893 in Tralee, Co. Kerry, son of Edmund McElligott, a local shopkeeper, and Catherine McElligott (née Slattery), also of Co. Kerry. After schooling in Tralee, he went to UCD, where he graduated with an honours BA degree in classics (1913). After appointment as a first-division clerk in the civil service, he was assigned to the Local Government Board in Dublin. He joined the Irish Volunteers on their formation in 1913, and on Easter Monday 1916 reported to the GPO and took part in the rising. He was dismissed from the civil service and deported to England, where he was interned in various jails, ending up in Stafford jail in the next cell to Michael Collins.

On release in 1917, he returned to Dublin, where he completed an honours MA in economics at UCD and became a freelance financial journalist. In 1921 he was appointed managing editor of the *Statist*, a London financial weekly. In 1923 he was invited back to Ireland to help to set up the new Department of Finance, with the rank of assistant secretary. He succeeded his friend Joseph Brennan as secretary in 1927 and held this post for twenty-six years until his appointment as governor of the Central Bank in 1953. He retired from the governorship in 1960 but continued to serve as a director until his sudden death on 24 January 1974, within hours of returning from a board meeting. He had in fact been continuously on the board of the Central Bank and its predecessor, the Currency Commission, for forty-seven years. He married (1927) Ann Gertrude, daughter of James Fay of Edenderry, Co. Offaly. They had one child, a daughter, Ann, who married (1961) James Devlin.

McElligott was honoured with a doctorate of laws by the NUI in 1946, was president of the Institute of Bankers in 1956, and became the first president of the Economic Research Institute (later the Economic and Social Research Institute) in 1961. He played a key role in the formation of the economic policies of the new state. He was a member of all the important economic and financial commissions of his time, including the tariff commission of 1926–30 (of which he was a chairman) and the commissions on banking of 1926 and 1934–8. He represented Ireland at many international conferences, notably the Ottawa conference of 1932.

He was involved in the launching of the Free State's first national loan, a remarkable achievement. As secretary of the Department of Finance and, in effect, head of the civil service, he had the task of guiding both politicians and civil servants through the first change of government in 1932. He advocated the establishment of a central bank from the late 1920s on, and framed much of the legislation under which it was eventually established. He masterminded the special financial agreements during the early years of the second world war and advised the government on the devaluation crisis of 1949. His writing was characterised by clarity and vigour, a reflection of his education in the classics.

Conservative in outlook, he was more in sympathy with the theories of Adam Smith and Gladstone than with those of Keynes and his followers, and strictly adhered to the principle of curbing public expenditure and taxation (Whitaker (1974)). His strong emphasis on austerity was a useful corrective to the unreasonable expectations of the young and inexperienced politicians who took over from the British administration in 1922 and the equally inexperienced politicians who took office after the first change of government in 1932. He has been strongly, indeed harshly, criticised by J. J. Lee for his conservatism. Such criticism does not take into account the contribution he made in the 1920s to the continuity of public administration and the establishment of the financial standing of the new state. It also fails to recognise the role of devil's advocate which a department of finance must play in criticising proposals for increasing expenditure, and which is part of the system of checks and balances that must operate in a parliamentary democracy.

A younger colleague pictures him 'sitting in a cold and narrow room, wearing a black linen coat, a model of the austerity he preached'. In time, however, that colleague discovered behind the mask of severity 'a warm, even emotional man, who could be reasoned with' (Whitaker (1983), 162). He was persuaded in the end that some state expenditure, even of borrowed moneys, could be justifiable to promote competitive export industries and raise living standards. Despite his conservatism, McElligott recognised the national significance of the major pioneering Electricity Supply Board scheme to harness the Shannon (Whitaker, personal correspondence). During the war he supported the establishment of Irish Shipping, and his assistance was vital in the success of the initiative to send Irish supplies of food to distressed countries at the end of the war.

In later years his negative attitudes were probably counterproductive in that they emphasised the stereotype of the Department of Finance as being against every worthwhile development. He perhaps stayed too long as head of the department. By remaining in the position for twenty-six years he could fairly be accused of bringing to bear on the problems of the 1950s attitudes framed by the problems of the '20s and '30s. For example, his reaction to post-war changes in international finance, including the establishment of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, was overinfluenced by his long involvement with sterling-area policies. He had become used to looking at the world 'through what we might describe as sterling-coloured spectacles' (Fanning, 391).

Three years after McElligott retired from the Department of Finance, T. K. Whitaker became secretary and initiated a dramatic change in the direction of the department by emphasising its role as one concerned not solely with cheese-paring but with economic development. In fairness to McElligott, it has to be said that the room for manoeuvre Whitaker enjoyed, in recommending the use of the exchequer as a vehicle to encourage economic development, would not have been as great if McElligott had not left the public finances in such good order. On his departure from the Department of Finance to go to the Central Bank, a commentator, referring to his life-long efforts to curb public expenditure, remarked that 'if there were those who tired of defending the pass and withdrew, J. J. McElligott was not one of them. It must have been a weary business for Thermopylae did not last over a quarter of a century; yet, this defender remained active to the end' (quoted in Fanning, 492).

Written by Seán Cromien

Sources: *WWWWWI* (1973); T. K. Whitaker, 'Obituary of J. J. McElligott', *Ir. Times*, 26 Jan. 1974; Maurice Moynihan, *Currency and central banking in Ireland, 1922–60* (1975); Boylan (1978); Ronan Fanning, *The Irish Department of Finance 1922–58* (1978); *WWW*; T. K. Whitaker, *Interests* (1983); J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: politics and society* (1989); McRedmond; information from Dr T. K. Whitaker and Mrs Ann Devlin

James Craig

Craig, James (1871–1940), 1st Viscount Craigavon, first prime minister of Northern Ireland, was born 8 January 1871 at Sydenham, Co. Down, seventh among the eight children of James Craig of Tyrella and Craigavon, Co. Down, and Eleanor Gilmore Craig (née Browne). He was educated locally and at Merchiston School, Edinburgh (1882–7).

Early career

In April 1892 he established a stockbroking company, Craigs & Co., and was later one of the founding members of the Belfast stock exchange. Here he learned the meticulous business habits that distinguished, if not his later political career, than at least his work against the third home rule bill in 1912–14. Craig was a careful but unenthusiastic broker who happily forsook his business in March 1900, when the opportunity arose to fight in South Africa: he applied for, and was awarded, a commission in the 3rd Royal Irish Rifles. He was captured by the Boers at Lindley, where he was also injured; he was later able to rejoin the British forces and obtained the appointment of deputy assistant director of the imperial military railways. He was finally invalided home in June 1901. His time in South Africa had been relatively brief, but none the less decisive. He had acquired a military and logistical training that would later stand him in good stead. He had acquired injuries that would plague him throughout his life. He had, as St John Ervine affirmed in a suggestive anecdote, willingly flexed the law in his pursuit of suspected Boer spies. And, as Ervine further emphasised, Craig acquired in South Africa an understanding and appreciation of the empire: a theoretical political concept had been converted into a thrilling reality.

Ulster Unionist, 1903–14

If South Africa supplied Craig with a basic political education, then his finishing school was to be found in the muddy byways of rural Ulster, during the electoral struggle in 1903 between the Ulster unionists and T. W. Russell. Russell, a junior minister in the third Salisbury administration, had broken with the unionists in 1900 over the issue of compulsory purchase; an advocate of compulsion, Russell was intellectually and politically aggressive, and he carried his fight with conservative unionism into a series of angry by-election struggles. Here Craig tested the strategic skills and political insights that he had honed in South Africa: he assisted his brother, Charles

Curtis Craig, in the contest for Antrim South (February 1903); and he conducted his own fight against Russellism in Fermanagh North (March 1903), where he lost to Edward Mitchell. At the general election of 1906 he was able to unseat the Russellite member for Down East, James Wood; and he held the constituency until the boundary changes of 1918, when he moved to Down Mid. He remained here until July 1921. The campaign against Russell revealed Craig's essential political style: unflappability, a ponderous but accessible wit, and a genial cussedness. The campaign, and indeed the wider circumstances of Ulster unionism in the early and mid-Edwardian period, left Craig with a pronounced fear of internal unionist schism. In this sense, Russellism helped to form the highly defensive unionism – the embattled and carefully patrolled movement – which dominated the Northern Ireland state under Craig's leadership.

Craig's apparent stolidity concealed a considerable level of political ambition, and some degree of dexterity both as a networker and as a tactician. Craig had inherited a fortune of some £100,000 on the death of his father (1900): his marriage (March 1905) to Cecil Mary Nowell Dering Tupper, daughter of the assistant comptroller of the royal household, gave him an *entrée* into fashionable circles. He had thus both social access and the means to make something of his connections. He had strong links within the Ulster protestant professional and commercial elite as well as within the Orange order. He had thus both high-political and local networks. He was never a dazzling public performer; and his personal style was emphatically uncharismatic. He was never likely (at least in the short term) to clamber up the parliamentary greasy pole; but on the other hand, he was well equipped for the political long haul. His shrewdness – still less his obstinacy – ought not to be underestimated.

When Walter Long, the leader of the Irish unionists, formally retired (1910), Craig, though popular and well connected in the house of commons and in Ireland, had not yet established a commanding position over his contemporaries. The evidence is somewhat uncertain, but it is probable that Craig engineered the nomination of Edward Carson as Irish unionist leader. It is possible that, given the number of young turks contending for prominence within late Edwardian Ulster unionism, the selection of Carson as leader was a compromise solution, which averted any damaging rivalry. Whatever the politics of Carson's election, a bond between him and Craig was speedily formed; and it was through this that Craig achieved the wider prominence that had as yet eluded him.

Carson and Craig together dominated the unionist campaign against the third home rule bill. It is sometimes remarked that Craig acted as impresario to Carson's star turn; it might equally be suggested that Craig acted as high priest to Carson's deity. Either way, it was Craig who stage-managed his leader's public appearances in Ulster, beginning with an impressive rally at Craigavon (September 1911) and peaking (arguably) with the demonstrations preceding and accompanying Ulster day (28 September 1912). Craig's home at Strandtown, on the south-eastern outskirts of Belfast, served as a kind of protective shrine for Carson: here Craig might interpret his leader's oracular views, or induct devotees into the great man's presence. Here some of the most solemn ceremonial rites of unionism were performed (such as the introduction of Carson to his Ulster following, or the launch of the Solemn League and Covenant). Craig supplied Carson with the local knowledge and insights that he lacked; he seems to have been a more committed hardliner than his leader in so far as he had military experience (which Carson had not), was actively involved in the Larne gun-running of April 1914 (he helped to land weapons in Donaghadee), and does not appear among the ranks of those who (like Carson and Lord Londonderry) periodically counselled restraint. Indeed, from an early stage in the development of the constitutional crisis (at least as early as April 1911, when he was writing to Fred Crawford, the chief gun-runner) Craig was directly involved with the importation of weapons. Carson had charisma; but Craig had a populist flair. Craig helped to create the context within which Carson enjoyed a form

of apotheosis: Craig's fertile imagination brought forth the Covenant as well as the Boyne banner, a tattered silk flag that had once fluttered beside King William III, and which was now carried before King Carson. Craig helped to create the means by which Ulster unionism, that most fissile of movements, sustained a unity and discipline in the face of grinding pressures. Craig, rooted in eastern Ulster, helped to popularise the advocacy of six-county exclusion among northern unionists. Craig, much more than Carson, may thus be seen as an architect of the partition settlement that evolved between 1912 and 1920.

War and partition, 1914–20

With the outbreak of European war in August 1914, Craig threw himself into the creation and development of the 36th (Ulster) Division: he held the office of assistant adjutant and quartermaster-general in the new unit. But the division went to the front without Craig: in the spring of 1915 he fell seriously ill, and by April 1916 he felt compelled to resign his commission. Craig returned to the safer battlefields of Belfast and Westminster, fighting for the acceptance of permanent six-county exclusion during the Lloyd George diplomatic offensive of the early summer of 1916. With the creation of the second wartime coalition in December 1916, he was given junior office as treasurer of the household; he acted thereby as one of the government whips, a task for which, with his combination of affability, tenacity, and menace, he was particularly well equipped. With Carson, he resigned from the government in January 1918, although it seems that he was more reluctant than his leader to forgo the fruits of office. He had, however, been awarded a baronetcy in the new year's honours of 1918.

Craig returned to office in January 1919 as parliamentary secretary to the ministry of pensions (an appointment that owed much to his popularity with Edward Goulding, a close associate of Bonar Law and of Beaverbrook, and one of the Svengalis of conservative politics in this era). He was translated in April 1920 to the admiralty, where he was financial secretary, still a relatively junior appointment but one made more significant by the prolonged illness at this time of the first lord of the admiralty, Walter Long. There were three particularly important features of this, Craig's swansong within British ministerial politics. First, Carson returned to the lawcourts in 1919, and thereby freed Craig from both his support and his protection; this period marks the beginning of a noticeable drift in their relationship. Second, Craig, unlike his leader and patron, was a success in his executive roles; and in this era of relatively large and often uncharismatic governments – an era when, given the divisions within conservatism, a number of 'second eleven' figures attained prominence – it might have been expected that Craig would have flourished further. Third, Craig was well placed to direct the evolving strategies of the coalition with regard to Ireland – and all the more emphatically, given that his ministerial chief, Long, headed the cabinet committee responsible for devising a government of Ireland bill. Craig was a significant influence behind the committee's decision to draft a measure based on a six-county partition scheme. As in June 1916, so in March 1920 Craig was a prominent advocate of the six-county formula before the Ulster unionist council.

Premier of Northern Ireland, 1921–25

The invitation was offered at first to Carson; but it was Craig who in January 1921 accepted nomination for the premiership of the new Northern Ireland. Craig defined the emergent state: he had persuaded the elders of Ulster unionism to accept the government of Ireland bill (a by no means foregone conclusion); he fought for the creation of a new police reserve (the Ulster Special Constabulary, drawn largely from a reactivated Ulster Volunteer Force) to protect its

frontiers; and with the civil servant Ernest Clark he oversaw the creation of the seven ministries that together formed the government of the territory. The first Northern Ireland parliament was elected in May 1921, and was opened by George V in June; it was therefore launched on the eve of the somewhat uneasy truce between the IRA and the forces of the British crown. But Northern Ireland was born into trouble; and it fell to Craig to fend off the political challenges arising from the Anglo–Irish treaty negotiations and the military challenge supplied by the IRA through 1921 and into 1922.

He showed considerable physical courage as well as a measure of political adventurousness at this time: he met de Valera on 5 May 1921 in a tense but unproductive session orchestrated by the British government's intermediary, Alfred ('Andy') Cope. He fought off the siren charms of Lloyd George in November 1921, when the British prime minister was seeking to include Northern Ireland within the framework of an all-Ireland polity: Craig, however, judged the treaty exclusively from the northern perspective; and, while angry over the boundary commission proposal, was much less concerned than Carson by its wider terms (indeed, Carson's speech in the lords during the treaty debate 'greatly embarrassed' his former lieutenant). In early 1922 he sought to defuse the IRA campaign within Northern Ireland by negotiating with Michael Collins. The first of their meetings, which took place in London on 24 January 1922, brought hopes for a lasting reconciliation: Craig was unexpectedly 'impressed' with Collins, and later joked that the proposed new parliament building for Northern Ireland might, if not needed, be used as a 'lunatic asylum'. A tentative deal was struck on the issue of the boundary commission and the southern boycott of Belfast business; Collins proposed the joint meeting of the two Irish parliaments, while Craig countered with the much less ambitious (but still startling) suggestion that the two governments might occasionally meet in joint session. But the auguries were misleading, and at a later meeting (2 February) Collins came to the table with hefty demands for the acquisition of northern territory. The breakdown of this session was followed by an intensification of IRA and loyalist violence, which after weeks of struggle gave no side a clear political or military advantage, and thus brought Craig and Collins back into negotiations. The result of this diplomacy was the Craig–Collins pact of 29 March 1922, which in ten clauses outlined a strategy for peace and reconciliation, and speedily collapsed in a welter of political recrimination and civil and military violence. A form of peace eventually came to Northern Ireland, but only because of the severe policing strategies of the unionist government, and because Collins and the provisional government in Dublin were now distracted by the challenge of republican dissent within their own borders.

The most important remaining statutory challenge to Craig's Northern Ireland arose from the provision made within the Anglo–Irish treaty for a boundary commission. Craig's handling of the commission negotiations in 1924–5 illustrates his tactical finesse as well as his relationship with the broader unionist movement. His stand was tough-minded but not without scope for movement: in February 1924, when the prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, suggested (as part of the wider Labour initiative over the commission) that the British government's powers in Northern Ireland be temporarily ceded to the joint administration of the Belfast and Dublin authorities, Craig was sympathetic. When the Labour government moved to form the commission, Craig refused to cooperate; but he was prepared to support the notion that Carson might be appointed by MacDonald as the northern representative. Craig's hesitant agreement was, however, countermanded by his ministerial partners in Belfast; as Lord Balcarres observed (September 1924), 'Craig would like to be more forthcoming than his colleagues will permit'. In the event, the commission operated within a very tightly defined brief, and collapsed in late 1925; Craig's ingenuity was therefore not seriously tested. It had doubtless been useful for him to be seen in London as a moderating force within Ulster unionism; but there are some grounds for viewing his actions in 1924–5 as being more than tactical pirouetting.

Consolidating the state, 1925–1940

The collapse of the IRA challenge in 1922, and fixing of the boundaries of the northern state in 1925, might well have given Craig and the Ulster unionists an opportunity to seek reconciliation with northern nationalists; the survival until 1932 of the relatively friendly Cumann na nGaedheal administration would have eased any overtures of this kind. These did not occur. The security apparatus laid down during the military crisis of the period 1920–22 survived into the 1930s and beyond with only some amendments: the Ulster Special Constabulary was scaled down in 1925, but was sustained; while the special powers act of 1922, ostensibly a temporary measure, not only survived but was given permanence. Both the USC and the special powers act weighed heavily on the northern minority. The abolition of proportional representation in local government elections (1922) and later in parliamentary contests (1929) affected minority representation and morale; the implementation of the Leech commission's proposed boundary changes overturned nationalist control in several local government authorities, and gave rise to accusations of gerrymandering. Employment opportunities in the state sector (and not only the state sector) shrank; Craig asked critics to 'remember that in the south they boasted of a catholic state. All I boast of is that we are a protestant parliament and a protestant state'.

Had Craig shown a greater magnanimity towards his nationalist compatriots, he might well have consolidated his regime and his state more effectively than by more militant strategies; on the other hand, there are no grounds for believing that an Ulster unionist campaign of 'killing home rule by kindness' might have been any more successful than the earlier British unionist ventures. Had Craig shown a greater magnanimity, he might well have alleviated the economic and political sufferings of his catholic compatriots; but, given the parlous condition of the northern economy in the interwar period, it is hard to imagine how real economic suffering might have been eliminated from any section of the community. A magnanimous Craig could have created a Northern Ireland characterised by a greater egalitarianism and greater social justice; but these were not, and never had been, central to his political vision. A magnanimous Craig would, by definition, have risen above the bloody tensions of the home rule and revolutionary era: but an ascent such as this, difficult to imagine in any circumstances, could scarcely have been undertaken by a populist tory rooted in Orangeism and in military and political turmoil. Craig's political achievement was not, and was not intended to be, aerodynamically sound.

Community reconciliation in Northern Ireland in the Craig era was scuppered by the attitudes of the governing elite, by divisions and demoralisation among nationalists, and by the economic condition of the state. Northern Ireland in the inter-war period was, beyond a small and overwhelmingly unionist economic elite, characterised by widespread inter-communal poverty; the economic condition of the state threatened its survival more dangerously than the IRA campaigns of the early 1920s. Here Craig was hampered both by the field on which he had to play (namely the Government of Ireland act), and by his own feeble grasp of the rules of the macroeconomic game. Craig was keen to improve the economic relationship between Belfast and London laid down in the act of 1920; and he pressed for, and won – through the Colwyn committee reports – a better deal for his administration. Equally, he supported the different loans guarantee acts (1922–36) by which the Northern Ireland government sought to bolster the shipbuilding industry; and he supported, too, initiatives to diversify the northern economy, and in particular the New Industries (Development) Acts of 1932 and 1937. He was susceptible, not just to local clamourings, but also to imperial needs: in 1927, despite intensive lobbying from within Northern Ireland, he did not press the British to protect the linen trade, for fear of the political consequences. More notoriously, in 1938, during the negotiations that produced the Anglo–Irish agreement, Craig took personal charge of the Northern Ireland case, and glibly promised his support for the wider deal provided

that the Belfast government was adequately compensated (his particular desire that Stormont be bought off with armaments contracts for Belfast astonished those, like Wilfrid Spender, in the know). This was seen by Spender, and by subsequent commentators, as a defining moment in Craig's 'little Ulsterism'; and while it does reflect an intensely limited approach to politics, it also points to Craig's imperial susceptibilities – and also (as with the linen episode) to an irreducible sense of the vulnerability of the northern polity.

In 1938 Neville Chamberlain had successfully appealed to Craig by pointing to the role that a settlement with Dublin might play in the wider imperial diplomatic initiative. In April 1939, with the failure of this initiative and with war looming, Craig and the unionist government sought to make provision for the introduction of conscription into Northern Ireland. Chamberlain again appealed to Craig's broader loyalties in order to avert the possibility of a damaging controversy on the issue. But the limits of Craig's imperial vision were determined when Chamberlain sought, as Lloyd George had earlier done, to undermine the partition settlement in the wider British interest. An attempt in May–June 1940 to trade the unification of Ireland for Dublin's military engagement elicited a telegram from Craig which (even allowing for the constraints of the medium) conveyed a carefully calculated rage. Craig fought off this, and earlier, challenges to his state: he died peacefully, his pipe and a detective story by his side, on 24 November 1940.

Assessment

Craig's political outlook had been formed within the commercial and professional classes of eastern Ulster; he had been moulded by his experiences in South Africa and in the campaign against Russellism. His concern for the unity of unionism was, arguably, the underlying thrust of his strategies in 1912–14; it remained a central goal through the years of his premiership. South Africa provided an imperial outlook and helped to make warfare familiar, even perhaps normal; it was thus an important underpinning for his work in fighting home rule and, later, the IRA. But it did not make Craig a proactive imperialist. He had been born into a tightly knit society, where the ties supplied by church, by business, and by the Orange order created a supportive but ultimately exclusive and parochial community. Craig's career hovered between this 'little Ulster' and a wider imperial engagement: he fought for empire in South Africa, but fought for a conservative Ulster unionism in the byways of east Down. He defended his home turf in 1912–14 but served successfully in the government of the empire. He was both master of an Orange lodge and a viscount of the United Kingdom (a creation of 1927). In 1921–5 he fought his corner with tenacity, but he was capable of rising above a merely obstructionist unionism. After 1925 the implicit tension between the sectional leader and the imperial statesman was largely resolved in favour of the former role. Craig emerged as the paterfamilias of unionist Ulster, 'distributing bones' of patronage, and looking after his own.

Written by Alvin Jackson

Sources: PRONI, Craig papers (and papers of Lady Craigavon); Ronald McNeill, *Ulster's stand for union* (1922); Hugh Shearman, *Not an inch: a study of Northern Ireland and Lord Craigavon* (1942); St John Ervine, *Craigavon: Ulsterman* (1949); A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Ulster crisis: resistance to home rule, 1912–14* (1967); Patrick Buckland, *The factory of grievances: devolved government in Northern Ireland, 1921–1939* (1979); id., *James Craig, Lord Craigavon* (1980); Alvin Jackson, *The Ulster party: Irish unionists in the house of commons, 1884–1911* (1989); Bryan Pollis, *A state under siege: the establishment of Northern Ireland, 1920–1925* (1995)

Richard Dawson Bates

Bates, Sir (Richard) Dawson (1876–1949), solicitor and NI cabinet minister, was born 23 November 1876 at Strandtown, east Belfast, son of Richard Dawson Bates, solicitor and clerk of the crown and peace for Belfast, and his wife Mary, daughter of Professor R. F. Dill of QCB. His paternal grandfather was town clerk and town solicitor of Belfast 1842–55; one uncle was crown solicitor for Belfast, another a judge. Educated at Coleraine Academical Institution, Bates was admitted solicitor in 1900 and entered the family firm. As secretary of the Ulster Unionist Council (1906–21) and joint secretary of the Unionist Associations of Ireland from 1907, he helped to organise the Ulster covenant and Ulster Volunteer Force. He received an OBE (1919) for wartime work for the UVF hospitals and UVF Patriotic Fund. Sir James Craig thought Bates ‘knew the mind of Ulster better than almost anyone else’, and made him (June 1921) NI minister of home affairs, a post he held for nearly twenty-two years. Bates was made a knight (1921) and a baronet (1937), and sat in the NI parliament for Belfast East (1921–9) and Belfast (Victoria) (1929–45).

With his personal influence in government and central and local unionist organisations, and his ministry’s wide powers over security and local government, Bates became a leading architect of the northern state. In unionist eyes, his personal courage and firmness (notably in managing police and special constabulary, and introducing and working the special powers act, 1922) ensured the state’s survival. However, his conspicuous distrust of the nationalist minority frustrated initial attempts to secure its cooperation, helped to minimise its power in local government, and encouraged an overtly discriminatory administrative style. As one of the ‘step by step’ group in cabinet, he resisted cuts in government spending in the 1930s, not only on police but on housing subsidies; but he half-heartedly supported health benefits, rejected rent control, and was reluctant to suspend Belfast corporation for corruption. With the coming of war, he was criticised for general inefficiency and for the specific shortcomings in civil defence revealed by the Belfast blitz (1941). By 1943 Bates and most of his colleagues appeared within their own party as *ancien régime* figures, and were dropped by Basil Brooke from his new cabinet. After leaving office (which he did reluctantly), Bates did not speak in parliament, or stand for reelection. In 1947 he retired to Glastonbury, England, where he died during the night of 9/10 June 1949; he was buried near his former home, Magherabuoy House, Portrush, Co. Londonderry.

He married (1920) Jessie Muriel, daughter of Sir Charles Cleland of Glasgow. Their one son, Sir John Dawson Bates (1921–98) was born 21 September 1921 at Holywood, Co. Down,

and educated at Winchester. He was commissioned into the Rifle Brigade in May 1941, won the MC in North Africa (1943), went on demobilisation to Balliol College, Oxford (1946), and graduated in history (1949). After qualifying as a land agent, he joined the National Trust (1957) and became responsible for managing its estates in the south midlands of England and the Isle of Wight. He resided on the Buscot estate, Oxfordshire, until retirement, when he and his wife moved to his mother's house in Somerset. He died 12 July 1998, having been a member of the Orange order since 1940. He married (1953) Mary Hoult, architect; both were devoted gardeners. They had a daughter and two sons, of whom Richard (b. 1956) succeeded as 3rd baronet.

Written by Richard Hawkins

Sources: Debrett, *Baronetage* (1940); *Belfast Telegraph*, 10, 14 June 1949 (photo); *Times*, 11 June 1949; *WWW*; John F. Harbinson, *The Ulster unionist party, 1882–1973* (1973); Patrick Buckland, *The factory of grievances . . . Northern Ireland 1921–39* (1979); Buckland, *James Craig* (1980); Brian Barton, *Brookeborough: the making of a prime minister* (1988); *Times*, 21 July 1998 (photo); *Daily Telegraph*, 3 Aug. 1998 (photo)

Evie Hone

Hone, Eva Sydney ('Evie') (1894–1955), painter and stained-glass artist, was born 22 April 1894 at Roebuck Grove, Clonskeagh, Co. Dublin, youngest among four daughters of Joseph Hone, prominent maltster and director of the Bank of Ireland, and Eva Hone (née Robinson), who died two days after Evie's birth. Evie came from a family with a long tradition of painting, being related to the eighteenth-century portrait-painter Nathaniel Hone. At the age of 12 she became a victim of poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis), and although she was eventually to regain a certain degree of mobility, she was left a semi-invalid for the rest of her life. Initially educated by a governess, she was sent to see a specialist in Ouchy, Switzerland, where she stayed for six months, and also visited Italy and Spain before moving to London in 1913 to study at the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts under Bernard Meninsky. Her early career became inextricably linked to that of her close friend Mainie Jellett. They both studied in London under Walter Sickert and then moved to France, persuading the cubist painter Albert Gleize to take them on as students, and becoming the effective pioneers of the modern movement in Irish painting. When examples of their abstract and cubist work were exhibited by the Dublin Painters Society in Dublin (1924) they were derided by certain art critics, one of whom (quoted in Snoddy) commented that the paintings were 'no better and no worse than the productions of the average uninspired art student in her teens'; although others maintained that while Jellett had the firmer vision, Hone was the purer artist.

While Jellett launched a vigorous campaign to educate Irish people on the subject of modernism, the deeply spiritual Hone found herself drawn towards a religious vocation, and in 1925 joined a community of anglican nuns at Truro, Cornwall. She stayed there for nearly a year, but eventually decided she had no vocation, writing to Jellett that 'I feel quite at peace now about it and as certain as one can be of anything' (Arnold, 127). She returned to Dublin to live with her sister at Lucan and continued to travel each year to the south of France with Jellett, resuming her contact with Gleize, who was instrumental in teaching her about the value of shape and colour in the stimulation of vision. Her cubist-derived abstraction was seen in gouaches such as 'Seated woman' (1928), and she exhibited in London and Paris as well as Dublin.

At the beginning of the 1930s her interest in abstract art began to wane. The work of the French painter Georges Rouault had a deep impact on her, as did her religious convictions, and she began to turn her attention to stained glass, working under A. E. Child of An Túr Gloine as

well as studying in London with Wilhelmina Geddes, and the Dutch stained-glass artist Roland Holst. She was a regular exhibitor at the RHA (1931–7) and was also a founder member of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art. Her close friend Michael Healy was also a huge influence on her, and in 1933 she joined An Túr Gloine, where she was to remain for ten years. One of her first pieces was ‘The annunciation’, in Taney church, Dundrum, Co. Dublin. In 1937 she converted to catholicism and was received into the church by John Charles McQuaid. Two years later Hone’s ‘My four green fields’, commissioned by the Irish government, was exhibited at the New York World Fair and won first prize for a work in stained glass; it was later moved to the CIÉ offices in O’Connell St., Dublin. ‘St Brigid’ in Loughrea cathedral, Co. Galway, followed (1942), and she also executed ‘The beatitude’ and ‘The nativity’ for the Jesuit college in Tullabeg, Co. Offaly.

In 1944 An Túr Gloine was dissolved as a co-operative and Hone opened her own studio at Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin. In 1947–8 she was engaged in work for St Mary’s church, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, and also found time to travel to Italy, where she absorbed many new influences. She then commenced work on perhaps her best-known piece, the east window in Eton College chapel, Windsor, completed in 1952, which brought her international fame. It covered an area of 900 square feet (83.6 sq. m) and comprised over 40,000 pieces of glass; there was no studio large enough in Ireland in which to view it, and she had insisted on executing a number of the sections several times. She also executed a five-light window at St Michael’s church in Highgate, London. Hone’s main influences were the schools of Paris; her glass work was heavily influenced by Rouault as she adopted his dominant black outline, brevity of expression, and religious subject-matter, and her religious conversion undoubtedly gave her added impetus in her church commissions. Her windows were regarded as having a heraldic glow and deep sincerity, and she was able to absorb the abstract influences of her earlier career.

A regular entertainer with a great sense of humour, strong social conscience, and organisational ability, Hone also displayed humility; while she did not see herself as a reformer, many believed she was the finest practitioner of her craft to appear since the seventeenth century. Her insistence on simplification marked all of the figures of her windows, and she disliked sentimentality or excessive embellishment. Unlike Harry Clarke and Michael Healy, who felt that sacred images needed to be imbued with a degree of nobility and aggrandisement, Hone eschewed all aspects of grandeur or sophistication. Nevertheless, the diversity of her influences ensured her work was complex: one contemporary noted that ‘if Evie Hone’s spirit of dedication was medieval, her formal approach to work was modern and constructive, while her use of rich and subtle colour was more that of the east than of the west’ (Frost, 8). Despite ill health, she continued to produce a huge number of small stained-glass panels as well as oils, watercolours, and gouache landscapes. In 1953 she was represented at the Contemporary Irish Art exhibition at Aberystwyth, Wales, and at the Tate gallery in London, as well as receiving an honorary LLD from TCD, and in 1954 was elected an honorary member of the RHA. Unmarried, she died 13 March 1955 while entering her parish church at Rathfarnham; she was survived by two of her sisters. Over 20,000 people visited a memorial exhibition of her work at UCD, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, in 1958.

Written by Diarmaid Ferriter

Sources: *Ir. Times*, 14 Mar. 1955; Stella Frost, *A tribute to Evie Hone and Mainie Jellett* (1958); WWW; James White and Michael Wynne, *Irish stained glass* (1963); *Ir. women artists*; Brian Fallon, *Irish art 1830–1990* (1990); Bruce Arnold, *Mainie Jellett and the modern movement in Ireland* (1991); Brian P. Kennedy, *Irish painting* (1993); Snoddy; Ó Céirín, *Women*

Part 4.
The Irish diaspora
1840-1966

John Devoy

Devoy, John (1842–1928), journalist and Fenian, was born 3 September 1842 at Kill, Co. Kildare, the third of eight children of William Devoy, smallholder and building contractor, and his wife Elizabeth (née Dunne). In 1848 the family moved to Dublin for economic reasons precipitated by William's involvement in nationalist politics; this experience later made the old man apprehensive about his children's political involvement. Devoy was educated at Kill national school, the Christian Brothers' O'Connell School in Richmond Street, Dublin, and the model schools in Marlborough Street and School Street, Dublin. His progress was retarded by his short-sightedness and the harshness of his teachers; after leaving school in 1859 to become a clerk he pursued self-education in the local Catholic Young Men's Society library, and made an abortive attempt to learn Irish.

Fenian and prisoner, 1861–71

In 1861 Devoy joined the IRB; this led to disputes with his father, which caused him to leave home and join the French Foreign Legion to obtain military training. He was on garrison duty in north Africa between May 1861 and March 1862, when he was discharged and returned to Ireland. He became local IRB organiser for the Naas area, and wrote letters to the *Irish People* anonymously and under the pseudonym 'A Bog of Allen Turf-Cutter'. In September 1865 he went on the run after the suppression of the *Irish People*, when he discovered that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. In October 1865 he was placed in charge of Fenian recruitment among soldiers in the British army. He also appears to have been linked to a shadowy assassination circle which attacked suspected spies and informers without the sanction of the IRB leadership. Devoy participated in the rescue of James Stephens from prison on 24 November 1865.

On 22 February 1866 he was arrested and was held on remand for a year until his trial on 19 February 1867; his decision to plead guilty was much criticised by his opponents within the separatist movement. He was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment with hard labour. In Milbank prison, London, between March 1867 and February 1868, he was transferred to Portland prison in Hampshire, but was returned to Milbank twelve weeks later after participating in a work stoppage in protest against prison conditions; he remained at Milbank until 15 March 1869, when he was transferred to Chatham prison. His prison experiences caused further damage to his eyesight.

Clan na Gael and the New Departure

Devoy was released on 6 January 1871 in connection with a partial amnesty of leading Fenian prisoners, who were exiled from British territory until the expiration of their original sentences. He sailed for New York on the steamer *Cuba* with four other IRB activists (including Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa). Soon after his arrival Devoy joined Clan na Gael, a secret society that practised rituals of a masonic kind, founded by the journalist and meteorologist Jerome Collins in 1867. As secretary of the revolutionary directory of Clan na Gael, Devoy took a leading role in organising the rescue of Fenian prisoners from Western Australia by the schooner *Catalpa* in April 1876. At the same time he worked as a journalist, at first on the *New York Herald* (where he rose to become editor), then as a freelance. For the rest of his life Devoy carried on an incessant correspondence with activists in Europe and America. Although he had been engaged to a young woman in Kildare called Eliza Kenny, he made no attempt to contact her after his release and appears to have seen himself as married to the separatist cause.

In November–December 1877 Devoy published a series of articles signed 'Exile' which advocated an alliance between advanced nationalists and parliamentarians who were prepared to pledge themselves to a more radical (but undefined) form of nationalism than the brand of home rule advocated by Isaac Butt; in autumn 1878 he organised an American lecture tour given by Michael Davitt, who was newly released from prison. This led to the 'New Departure', a tacit alliance between Clan na Gael and the parliamentary grouping led by Charles Stewart Parnell. Devoy first proposed such an alliance in a telegram to Parnell, the publication of which, on 25 October 1878, produced a breach with the IRB led by Charles Kickham, who disagreed with the policy and objected to the launch of so public an initiative without prior consultation. Devoy visited Europe in 1879 and travelled clandestinely throughout England and Ireland, observing the political situation and attending the Claremorris land meeting of 13 July. He met Parnell and Davitt in Dublin and Boulogne, and later claimed that a definite understanding had been arrived at in support of the New Departure, though Parnell and Davitt both subsequently denied that any such specific agreement had taken place (the exact truth is unclear). A sanitised (and partly ghosted) account of this trip, written in the format of a tourist guide, was published in 1882 under Devoy's name as *The land of Erin*.

Squabbles and journalism

On returning to America, Devoy helped to organise the American Land League, a vital source of funds for the Irish organisation. By 1881–2 tensions appeared in the alliance: there was friction between Parnell and Devoy over the question of whether the American organisation should be controlled from America or from Ireland. Devoy, like other Fenians involved with the Land League, had assumed that the British government was too committed to upholding the aristocracy to make serious concessions on the land issue, and hence that land agitation would expose the bankruptcy of parliamentarianism and produce mass support for a rising. Instead, Gladstone made significant concessions in the Land Act of 1881, and after the Kilmainham treaty of the following year the radical Fenian element within the Parnellite organisation was marginalised and many Fenian activists were drawn off into parliamentarianism. Davitt and Devoy also fell out over Davitt's support for land nationalisation and the question of who had been responsible for the New Departure. Devoy's public threats of a renewed dynamite campaign in Britain were used against Parnell's party by his opponents. Between 1881 and 1885 Devoy ran his own weekly newspaper in New York, the *Irish Nation*; it collapsed after Devoy was successfully prosecuted for libel by a banker whom he had accused of embezzling Fenian funds.

Devoy resigned from the Clan na Gael executive on the establishment of the *Irish Nation*, and the organisation came under the dominance of Alexander Sullivan of Chicago and two associates (collectively known as ‘the Triangle’); in 1884 the Sullivan Clan na Gael formally broke with the IRB in Ireland. Devoy founded a rival Clan in 1887, which was reunited with the main organisation under a compromise leadership in 1888. Shortly afterwards Devoy accused Sullivan and his allies of embezzling Clan funds. The resulting dispute brought about the murder of Devoy’s Chicago ally Dr P. H. Cronin by Sullivanite sympathisers in May 1889, after the dissemination of rumours (lent credence by the unmasking of Henri Le Caron as a spy) that Cronin was a British spy within the Clan. Sullivan was tried for murder but acquitted; Devoy continued the struggle, and the ensuing revelations and squabbles proved highly damaging to the Clan.

The divisions within Clan na Gael persisted until the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1900 Devoy was elected secretary of the reunited organisation and from this time his closest ally was the New York judge Daniel Cohalan. In September 1903 Devoy became editor of the weekly *Gaelic American*, holding the post for the remainder of his life. The paper combined commentary on news at home and abroad with historical material. It campaigned against ‘stage-Irish’ drama (in which category Devoy included J. M. Synge’s *The playboy of the western world*) and supported German–American groups in opposing a proposed Anglo–American arbitration treaty (regarded as a first step towards an Anglo–American alliance). In American politics Devoy tended to support the Republican Party – he saw its protectionist policies as beneficial to America and damaging to Britain. In 1884 Devoy played a leading role in an attempt to deliver the usually Democratic Irish–American vote to the Republican presidential candidate, James G. Blaine, and he campaigned for the Republican candidate Benjamin Harrison in 1888.

By the early twentieth century Devoy was experiencing increasing personal isolation through short sight and deafness (the latter contributing to the lifelong persistence of his Kildare accent). While he displayed charm and devotion to close friends and to his siblings (who regarded him as head of the family after his father’s death in 1884), to those less familiar with him he appeared a quarrelsome, implacable old man; the *Gaelic American* became renowned for its bitter feuds – for example, with the Redmondite *Irish World* and John O’Callaghan of the United Irish League of America.

Support for Irish separatism

Through Clan na Gael, Devoy played a major role in financing the resurgent separatist movement and the IRB in the years leading up to the first world war. On the outbreak of war his fierce opposition to American support for the allies and his work with the German government (both in publishing German propaganda and in cooperation, to an unknown extent, with German clandestine agents in America) led to his being denounced as a leading specimen of what Woodrow Wilson called ‘hyphenated Americans’ of questionable loyalty. Devoy’s response was that, as an American citizen, he acted in what he believed to be America’s best interests as well as Ireland’s. Devoy was the main conduit for contact between Germany and the group planning the 1916 rising. He oversaw the visit to America of Roger Casement in 1914, helped him to get to Germany, and lent him a large sum of money to carry on his activities; in this he appears to have been partly motivated by a belief that Casement was a potential national leader whose protestantism made him well suited to convert his co-religionists to nationalism. He was soon disillusioned by Casement’s erratic behaviour, and after Casement’s death fell out with the dead hero’s supporters because of his publicly expressed view that Casement had bungled his mission and his private belief (apparently based on interrogating Casement’s associate Adler Christensen) that Casement had in fact been homosexual. The Clan na Gael treasury was virtually drained by preparations for the rising, and Devoy also spent a significant proportion of a legacy which he

had received from a brother; he even made an abortive attempt to obtain false papers in order to return to Ireland and participate himself.

After America entered the war in April 1917 Devoy was forced onto the defensive; several of his associates were victimised under security legislation, and the *Gaelic American* was banned from the US mails (which confined its circulation to New York). Nevertheless, at the end of the war Devoy and Cohalan emerged as the leading figures in the growing American support organisation for Sinn Féin, the Friends of Irish Freedom.

Conflict with de Valera

When Éamon de Valera arrived in America in July 1919 he rapidly came into conflict with the Devoy–Cohalan group. De Valera believed that as president of the Irish republic he should direct the nationalist campaign worldwide and accused Cohalan and Devoy of subordinating the Irish cause to American politics. (He disagreed with them for opposing the League of Nations in principle – his own opposition was merely tactical.) Devoy and Cohalan retorted that they were better acquainted with the American situation than de Valera, and that an American campaign should be directed by American citizens. Matters were not helped when in February 1920 de Valera gave an interview suggesting that Ireland should make guarantees to Britain similar to those made by Cuba to the United States (generally known to have reduced Cuban sovereignty to a nullity).

Devoy mounted an aggressive press campaign against de Valera, who responded by leading a large majority of the Friends of Irish Freedom into a new organisation (endorsed by the dáil in Ireland), the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic. For the rest of his life Devoy persistently referred to de Valera as ‘the first man to haul down the Irish flag’ and repeated rumours that de Valera was ‘a half-breed Jew’. After initially opposing the Anglo–Irish treaty (December 1921) in the belief that de Valera supported it, Devoy and his allies afterwards supported it, largely because de Valera opposed it.

Devoy paid a final visit to Ireland in July–September 1924, and was greeted as an elder statesman by the Cumann na nGaedheal government (though he later expressed suspicion of their ‘imperialist’ policies). He died 29 September 1928 at Atlantic City, New Jersey; his body was returned to Ireland for burial at Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin.

Publications and reputation

His posthumously published *Recollections of an Irish rebel* (New York, 1929), compiled from material published in the *Gaelic American*, is primarily a history of Fenianism containing some of Devoy’s own reminiscences. His voluminous papers were returned to Ireland in 1938 and deposited at the NLI; a selection was edited by William O’Brien and Desmond Ryan as *Devoy’s postbag* (2 vols, 1948–53) and is recognised as one of the major sources for the history of Irish nationalism in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Devoy is recognised as a major figure in the Irish politics of his day, though the vast bulk of source material, the transatlantic nature of his activities, and his somewhat rebarbative personality have so far prevented any definitive assessment of his career; from sheer political longevity the assessment of some commentators that he was ‘the greatest of the Fenians’ is plausible though debatable.

Written by Patrick Maume

Sources: John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish rebel* (1929); William O’Brien and Desmond Ryan (eds), *Devoy’s postbag* (2 vols, 1948–53); Terry Golway, *Irish rebel: John Devoy and America’s fight for Ireland’s freedom* (1998); Terence Dooley, *The greatest of the Fenians: John Devoy and Ireland* (2003)

Richard Welsted (‘Boss’) Croker

Croker, Richard Welsted (‘Boss’) (1841–1922), politician, was born 23 November 1841 at Clonakilty, Co. Cork, third son among three sons and two daughters of Eyre Coote Croker (d. 1883), army officer and veterinary surgeon, and Florence Croker, daughter of John Welsted of Ballywalter, Co. Cork. The Crokers were a well-to-do Church of Ireland family who sometimes claimed to have arrived in Ireland with Oliver Cromwell, although their arrival was actually earlier. In 1846 Eyre Croker, having spent his inheritance, surrendered his commission in the army and sailed with his family to America.

After a brief period during which dire poverty loomed, Eyre Croker found work as a veterinary surgeon or, more accurately, a horse doctor. While not amounting to affluence, this allowed Richard to attend a junior school and Olney grammar school (1854–7). Not academically gifted, he left with a poor education to become an apprentice machinist in the workshops of the New York Central Railroad. He was also a competent boxer and probably fought in prize fights, although he always denied this subsequently. It was his boxing ability that first provided him (1865) with a role in the Tammany Hall organisation, which controlled the Democratic party in New York city, when he became a hired tough for Jimmy O’Brien, a ward boss. On joining Tammany he converted to catholicism and soon achieved promotion. He became an alderman of the city (1868) and a coroner (1873), an office through which he could accrue fees of up to \$25,000 a year. He had become aligned with the Young Democracy faction led by the misleadingly named ‘Honest’ John Kelly and opposed to the notoriously corrupt Tammany boss, William H. Tweed. Tweed was eventually convicted (1873) and Kelly succeeded as boss. In 1874 he came into conflict with his former mentor O’Brien, who was running for congress in opposition to a Kelly nominee. A polling-station confrontation resulted in the fatal shooting of an O’Brien associate. Croker was arrested and charged with the crime on the word of witnesses, but was acquitted when the jury divided 6–6. After this episode he resumed the post of coroner and served a second three-year term (1876–9); became fire commissioner (1883); and, on the retirement of Kelly (1886), succeeded to the position of boss.

He held only one more public office, that of city chamberlain (1889–90), but he controlled the city's Democratic party and effectively manipulated the city offices for most of the next seventeen years. In 1886 the Tammany-supported candidate Abram S. Hewitt was elected mayor, but in office he revealed himself as a Know-Nothing anti-Irish nativist, who refused to review the St Patrick's Day parade; he failed to receive Croker's support for a second term. Croker opposed Grover Cleveland's campaign to be reelected president in 1888. Enticed by a financial sweetener, however, he helped Cleveland to his second successful bid for the presidency (1892). Malleable Croker nominees held the mayoralty 1888–94, during which time he took the graft and spoils systems to new limits. Corruption was endemic: property and planning scams, protection rackets, prostitution, and saloons putatively fell under his control and he allegedly amassed a fortune of up to \$8 million. No illegality was ever proved despite the efforts of several legislative investigative committees. However, his career suffered a setback with the victory of a reform candidate in the mayoral contest of 1894.

At this juncture he nominally surrendered control of Tammany to John C. Sheahan and travelled to Europe. He visited various German spas and purchased an estate in England, where he reputedly liked to tend the pigs, each bearing the name of a New York politician. He returned (1897) to reassert authority and lend his weight to the victorious campaign of Robert Van Wyck for the new mayoralty of Greater New York. However, after Van Wyck's defeat by an anti-corruption campaign fronted by Seth Low (1901), Croker's standing went into terminal decline and he finally ceded command of Tammany in 1903 before returning to Wantage, England.

Horse-racing was among the expensive pastimes he had developed in America and now, in England and free of politics, it became a passion. After his insistence on racing imported American thoroughbreds proved less than successful and led to a split with his trainer, he determined to have his horses trained at Newmarket, a proposal that then required the imprimatur of the jockey club. Unenamoured with this brash individual of doubtful reputation, they refused. Livid, he immediately moved himself and his racing interests to Ireland, where he chose J. J. Parkinson to train his animals, and became leading owner in Ireland in 1905 and 1906. However, Croker's autocratic manner led to another parting, and he removed his horses to new stables on the Glencairn estate, Leopardstown, Co. Dublin (later the British ambassador's residence), and employed Col. F. F. MacCabe to train them. Success followed: in 1907 Orby became the first Irish-trained horse to win the Derby. Although this did not win him acceptance in England – Edward VII refused to greet him after the victory – he became a national hero in Ireland. His return to Dublin with Orby was greeted with bonfires, the 1907 Irish Derby became a lap of honour for horse and owner, and Croker was voted a freeman of Dublin (1908). In this year Orby's half-sister, Rhodora, captured the English 1,000 Guineas for Croker. He then insisted on incestuously mating his two champions; the result was a horribly deformed foal and the death of the mare. He won two Irish Oaks and was again leading owner in Ireland in 1911, but his interest in racing was tapering off. His life in Ireland was politically uneventful; however, he probably provided monetary support, if not arms, to republicans in the years leading up to independence. After his thrombosis-induced death at Glencairn (29 April 1922), his body was interred in the grounds. Among the honorary pall-bearers were Arthur Griffith, Alfie Byrne and Oliver St John Gogarty.

He left his fortune, an estimated \$5 million, including estates in Ireland and England and at Palm Beach, Florida, to his second wife, Bula Benton Edmunson, a woman fifty years his junior with a show-business background who claimed to be a Cherokee Indian princess. He had married her (1914) shortly after the death of his first wife (m. 1873), Elizabeth Frazier of New York, from whom he had been estranged for a number of years. They had had two daughters and

four sons, one of whom, Frank, was killed in a motor-racing accident (1905); another, Hubert, died of an opium overdose (1906). In 1920 three of his surviving children sought an injunction against their father, claiming that they were likely to be deprived of their due inheritance because he had fallen entirely under the influence of their stepmother. They lost the case.

Written by William Murphy

Sources: Alfred Henry Lewis, *Richard Croker* (1901); Ephraim McDonnell Cosgrave, *Dublin and County Dublin in the twentieth century* (1908); Burke, *LGI* (1912); *Ir. Times*, *Times*, 1 May 1922; *Ir. Field*, 6 May 1922; *DAB* (1929); Robert J. Goff & Co. Ltd, *Dispersal sale of mares and foals (with engagements) from the Glencairn Stud, Co. Dublin* (1929); *WWW*; Horace Samuel Merrill, *Bourbon leader: Grover Cleveland and the Democratic party* (1957), 132, 159, 166; Harold U. Faulkner, *Politics, reform and expansion* (1959), 26, 123; William V. Shannon, *The American Irish* (1963), 72–82; Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: a study in courage* (1964), 96, 425, 497–8, 568; Burke, *IFR* (1976); Thomas M. Henderson, *Tammany Hall and the new Irish emigrants* (1976), 4; Morton Keller, *Affairs of state* (1977), 538, 596; Guy St John Williams and Francis P. M. Hyland, *The Irish Derby 1866–1979* (1980), 111, 115–23; John Welcome, *Irish horse racing* (1982), 94, 118–23, 127–8, 137; Patrick Cronin, *Boss Croker of New York city and Glencairn Stud* (1983); Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, *The New York Irish* (1996), 222, 313, 626

Daniel Mannix

Mannix, Daniel (1864–1963), catholic archbishop, was born 4 March 1864 at Charleville, Co. Cork, one of five children of Timothy Mannix, substantial tenant farmer, and Ellen Mannix (née Cagney). Educated at St Colman's, Fermoy, and Maynooth, he qualified for a DD in 1890 at the Dunboyne Establishment and was ordained priest on 8 June that year. He competitively won the prestigious chair of dogmatic and moral theology at Maynooth in 1895 and was unanimously elected president of the college by the Irish bishops in 1903.

As president, Mannix ignored the Gaelic revival, concentrating on the education of his students in the English that many of them would need to serve the Irish diaspora. He required them to take degrees and, to that end, achieved the recognition of Maynooth as a college of the National University in 1908. In 1901 he wrote a substantial article on the land question, but for the rest of his life he was a reader and thinker rather than a writer. A stern disciplinarian and teetotaler, though no killjoy, he lifted the standards of Maynooth and encouraged interest in social issues while disdaining any involvement in politics. Blocked from nomination to an Irish see for reasons that remain obscure, he was consecrated as coadjutor-archbishop to Archbishop Thomas Carr of Melbourne on 6 October 1912 and succeeded to that see on Carr's death in 1917.

From the 1870s the catholic church in Australia had gradually erected its own system of education rather than entrust its flock to a 'godless' state education. The financial burden was enormous, and no aid from the state was forthcoming. Mannix, expected by all to conform to the image of a remote and disinterested theologian, had become instead a prickly and forthright controversialist since his arrival in Melbourne in 1913. His long labours for state aid were rewarded a few weeks before his death when the federal government began to see the political wisdom of such aid, whatever it thought about its innate justice.

Conscription of Australian males for service overseas in World War I met Mannix's determined opposition. Many contemporaries saw his intervention as crucial to its eventual rejection, but some historians – uneasy at the thought that a catholic archbishop could wield such influence – have contested that matter, as they have also rejected the claim that he became a hero of the working masses.

The events of 1916 in Dublin heightened his Irish nationalism, which won him international acclaim. Fearing his influence in Ireland, the British government had him arrested at sea to prevent his landing at Cork in 1920. Mannix derisively said it was Britain's greatest naval victory since the battle of Jutland, and won without the need to fire a single shot. Having become a close friend and admirer of de Valera, he returned to Ireland in 1925 where, welcomed by rallies and processions, though not by his fellow bishops, he spoke against the Free State and partition. Once back in Melbourne he was by then the most reviled and most loved figure in Australian history.

He gave the rest of his life to Melbourne, the city he loved and of which he was intensely proud, and to its catholic people. Education, from primary to tertiary levels, was his foremost concern. Newman College at the University of Melbourne, a Catholic Central Library, a 'Catholic hour' on the radio, numerous primary and secondary schools throughout the archdiocese, twenty-four newly introduced male and female religious orders, a seminary for diocesan clergy staffed by Jesuits, and the Campion Society (which formed intellectual lay catholics in papal social teaching), were all fostered and guided by him. The church in Melbourne rapidly became the intellectual force, central focus, and exemplar of Australian catholicism.

Mannix was wholehearted in trusting those to whom he delegated authority when he appointed them to influential positions. More than any other Australian prelate, he extended that trust to the laity. He was convinced that the church of the future would draw its greatest strength from a united and well prepared laity, and to that end he fostered the growth of Catholic Action movements. B. A. Santamaria, whom Mannix never ceased to support, worked within the flourishing Catholic Action bodies to set up a parallel organisation commonly known as 'the Movement'. Its principal aim was to defeat communism in the political and industrial arenas. Theologically unsound in its conception, sometimes objectionable in its methods, but partially successful in its operation, Santamaria's organisation was a major cause of a catastrophic split in the Australian Labor Party in the 1950s. Mannix's support of the Movement was his least praiseworthy initiative.

A curious blending of conservative and liberal elements in his character resulted (on the level of dogma) in his never deviating from tridentine teachings. He upheld papal authority, although he scrupulously guarded his own as ordinary of his archdiocese. He condemned the atomic bomb, opposed capital punishment, unflinchingly rejected communism, but voted against outlawing the communist party, while flaying the excesses of capitalism and supporting bank nationalisation. Without hesitation he stepped onto the political scene whenever he thought faith or morals were at stake and used his rights as a citizen to comment on social issues.

Mannix was a man with a simple faith, whose life of prayer was priestly and constant. He loved the poor irrespective of their religion and respected the faith of others, but held aloof from any personal association with protestant clergy. With scarcely a trace of a brogue or blarney, his oratory was incomparable in its elegant simplicity, which he put down to a constant reading of editorials in *The Times*. Reserved in his demeanour, tall and dignified in stature, Mannix never owned a motor car and avoided the telephone. Mordant wit marked his conversation; he ate with utmost frugality at his well laden table, and lived like a hermit in the stately residence, 'Raheen', bought for him by the archdiocese.

In the fifty years of Mannix's episcopate Melbourne's catholics grew in number from 150,000 to over 600,000 and their churches from 160 to 300. During those years catholics were transformed under his leadership and example from the rank of second-rate citizens, derided by many as ignorant, superstitious Irish, to confident, self-assertive Australians. They looked up to him as an incomparable pastor and leader and thanked Ireland that, in him, Australian catholicism had received its greatest gift.

On 6 November 1963 Mannix died peacefully in his 99th year at 'Raheen', leaving material assets worth AU\$3155. He was buried in St Patrick's cathedral, where his statue now stands. The presence of dignitaries of both church and state marked his passing. In their many thousands, his people mourned him.

Written by John Molony

Sources: Mannix file, ADB, ANU, Canberra; Frank Murphy, *Daniel Mannix, archbishop of Melbourne, 1917–1963* (1972); B. A. Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix: the quality of leadership* (1984); James Griffin, 'Mannix, Daniel (1864–1963)', *ADB*, x (1986), 398–404

Dónall Mac Amhlaigh

Mac Amhlaigh, Dónall Peadar (1926–89), author, journalist, and labourer, was born 10 December 1926 in Co. Galway, the eldest of three sons and one daughter of James McCauley and his wife, Mary McCauley (née Condon). James McCauley was born in Limerick and served with the Munster fusiliers in the first world war, subsequently joining the East Clare brigade of the IRA, and then serving in the new Irish army (1922–57), in which he attained the non-commissioned rank of battalion quartermaster sergeant. Dónall’s mother was a member of an Irish-speaking family from Cnoc na Cathrach (Knocknacarra) on the edge of Galway city. The writer Pádraic Ó Conaire was a frequent visitor to her parents’ home.

Dónall began his formal education at the St Vincent de Paul School, Henry Street, Limerick, and it was to one of his teachers at this school, Miss Hanrahan, that he attributed his enduring love of the Irish language. His later education was received at Scoil Fhursa, Galway, and with the Christian Brothers in Galway and Kilkenny. From 1939, the family home was in Kilkenny; though for much of Dónall’s adolescence his father was generally stationed elsewhere. Although he continued his education after the school-leaving age of fourteen, Dónall left at sixteen, without taking the intermediate certificate examination, in order to contribute to the family income.

His first employment, in Kilkenny, was as a wool sorter in a woollen mill. In 1947 he joined the Irish-speaking 1st infantry battalion stationed at Renmore Barracks, Galway. He left the army in 1950 and, having failed to find a suitable opportunity in Ireland, he ‘took the boat’ to England in 1951, to be followed by all his siblings. His first employment in England was as a hospital orderly in Northampton. From 1952 he was engaged in labouring work, which remained his employment for the rest of his life. He worked on civil engineering projects, such as the motorways that were then beginning to transform Britain’s infrastructure, and for public employers including the electricity board and the engineering division of British Rail.

In 1958 Dónall married Bridget Noone, most of whose family (including her parents) had migrated from Strokestown, Co. Roscommon, to Northampton. They had two children, a boy and a girl. Marriage and the consequent move from crowded lodgings assisted Mac Amhlaigh’s emergence as a writer.

Dónall made his first attempt to write fiction, a ‘wild west’ romance in English, in his teens. From 1957 onwards he published essays, commentaries, and short stories in Irish-language periodicals, including *Amárach*, *Feasta*, and *Comhar*. When a reader of *Amárach* praised Mac Amhlaigh’s writing, suggesting that Dónall should undertake a novel based on the lives of Irish migrants, the latter replied (*Amárach*, 9 Apr. 1959) that he had such a project in hand. The

outcome was *Dialann Deoirí* (published by An Clóchomhar in 1960, with a glowing introduction by Niall Ó Dónaill, and translated as *An Irish navy: the diary of an exile* (1964), by Valentin Iremonger), which drew on diaries that Mac Amhlaigh had been writing since 1948. This was followed in 1962 by *Saol saighdiúra*, an autobiographical work based on his army life. His first novel, *Diarmuid Ó Dónaill* (1965), was both a *Bildungsroman* and a study of life chances in an economy characterised by under-employment. There followed two collections of short stories, *Sweeney* (1970) and *Beoir Bhaile* (1981), a literary satire *Schnitzer Ó Sé* (1974) – an extended and modified English translation of which he published in 1985 as *Schnitzer O’Shea* – and *Deoraithe* (1986). The last is a novel, which extended his project of ‘documenting the fifties’ and represents his highest achievement in that vein of social realism which (with the exception of *Schnitzer Ó Sé*) characterised his fiction. The experiences of its three protagonists are narrated in the contrasting contexts of a stagnant Kilkenny and labour-hungry London and Norwood (Northampton), with their varying challenges for the individual. Mac Amhlaigh also published two adventure stories for children, *An tÓrchiste Mallaithe* and *An Dia-phéist*. An unpublished television play, ‘Saighdiúirí’, was produced on RTÉ in 1965.

On the jacket of *Dialann Deoirí* is written: ‘Tá rún daingean aige filleadh ar an bhfearann dúchais, an dá luaithe agus a bheas obair oiriúnach le fáil ann’ (he is determined to return to his native place, as soon as suitable work may be found there). However, the acquisition of a family and his wife’s lack of interest in going back to Ireland made return less likely, intensifying his sense of being an exile. By the 1970s Mac Amhlaigh’s journalistic efforts had increased, and he was making regular contributions to the Connolly Association’s *Irish Democrat*, *Ireland’s Own*, the newer Irish-language periodicals such as *Inniu* and *Anois*, and occasionally to the *Irish Times* and other organs. His response to the crisis in Northern Ireland and to international political, economic, and social developments from the later 1960s onwards (including ‘Thatcherism’ in Britain) led to his emergence as an acute, humane socialist commentator on public affairs through his journalism and lecturing. A founder of the Northampton Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, he later became a member of the Northampton Connolly Association. There was a price to be paid for this commitment by Mac Amhlaigh (and his family) in terms of state surveillance and raids upon his home.

He was the recipient of five Oireachtas literary awards; he also received the Hennessy Literary Award and an *Irish Post* Community Award for Literature.

Dónall Mac Amhlaigh died of a heart attack on 27 January 1989. He had been cycling to Northampton station to catch the train to London, where he was to lecture that evening. Feeling unwell, he walked to his doctor’s surgery where he collapsed and died. He was buried in Northampton. His diaries and notebooks are in the NLI (MS 32,596/1–53).

Written by Seán Hutton

Sources: Military archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin (military record of BQMS James McCauley); Dónall Mac Amhlaigh, ‘Scenes from a Limerick childhood’, *Old Limerick Journal* (Dec. 1980), 30–32; Seán Ó Cearnaigh, ‘Údar ar imirce’, *Comhar* (Nollaig 1987), 34–9; Seán Hutton, ‘Dónall Mac Amhlaigh: an appreciation of the man and his writings’, *Irish Studies in Britain*, xiv (1989), 5–6; Dónall Mac Amhlaigh, ‘Documenting the fifties’, *Irish Studies in Britain*, xiv (1989), 7–13; Nollaig Ó Gadhra, Diarmuid Ó Gráinne, and Alan Titley, ‘Dónall Mac Amhlaigh 1926–89’, *Anois*, 5 Feabhra 1989, 12–13; Peadar Ó Maólagain, ‘Dónall Peadar Mac Amhlaigh’, *Comhar* (Márta 1989), 34; ‘I mBéal an Phobail: Slán go fóilleach’, *Kilkenny People*, 6 Apr. 1990; Máirín Nic Eoin, ‘An scríbhneoir agus an imirce éigeantach: scrúdú ar shaothar cruthaitheach Dhónaill Mhic Amhlaigh’, *Oghma*, ii (1990), 92–104; ead. ‘Polaitíocht na noibrithe agus na nimirceoirí: saothar iriseoireachta Dhónaill Mhic Amhlaigh’, *Scáthán* (1991), 20–25; Peter Mulligan (ed.), *Selected short stories of Dónall Mac Amhlaigh* (2001), 7–9, 11–14, 19–22, 27–32, 63–81; information from Peter Mulligan, Northampton (6 June 2005) and Noel McCauley, London (1 August 2005)

Paul O'Dwyer

O'Dwyer, Paul (1907–98), lawyer, activist, and politician in the USA, was born 29 June 1907 in Lismirrane (Lismiraun), Bohola, Swinford, Co. Mayo, youngest of eleven children (of whom six sons and four daughters survived infancy) of Patrick O'Dwyer, native of Tullylease, Co. Cork, national school teacher, and Bridget O'Dwyer (née McNicholas) of Lismirrane, assistant teacher. From his father, an organiser for the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, he derived pro-trade-union and anti-clerical attitudes. His witnessing of Black-and-Tan activities during the war of independence and his family's anti-treaty position in the civil war were also formative influences. Educated at Bohola national school and St Nathy's college, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, he attended UCD for one year before following four elder brothers by emigrating to the USA, settling in New York city (1925).

He worked successively as stock clerk in an automobile garage, elevator operator, and shipping clerk in a textile factory, and studied in the Fordham University evening pre-law course (1925–6). While attending evening classes in St John's College law school, Brooklyn (1926–9), he worked as a checker on the Brooklyn docks and as a seaman on summer runs to Latin America; he held a longshoreman's union card for the remainder of his life. After successfully sitting the New York state bar examination on special petition (owing to his status as an alien), he worked as a legal clerk (1929–31). Naturalised a US citizen and admitted to the bar (1931), he entered a Brooklyn law firm, becoming a partner in 1934. While participating in all aspects of the firm's general practice, he was deeply involved in cases concerning trade-union organising rights, defending strikers and pickets against court injunctions, and opposing deportation orders against foreign-born activists.

Becoming in time senior partner of the firm (O'Dwyer and Bernstein), which moved in 1939 to offices on Wall Street, Manhattan, over the next half-century he was one of America's leading civil-liberties and civil-rights attorneys. Asserting as fundamental the democratic principles of freedom of conscience and of political association, he was prominent in efforts of the National Lawyers' Guild to withstand the witch-hunting red-scare hysteria of the later 1940s. Chairman of the guild's civil rights committee, president of its New York chapter (1947), and member of its national board of directors (1948–51), he defended teachers and other public employees dismissed from employment for alleged 'disloyalty', and represented writers, entertainers, and fellow attorneys under investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee. He endured persistent charges of unpatriotic and communist sympathies, especially by catholic

and Irish-American publications and personalities. A strenuous advocate of a Jewish state in Palestine, he arranged illegal arms shipments to the Irgun resistance movement for its armed struggle against the British mandate (which he equated with the British presence in Ireland), coordinated with Irish TD Robert Briscoe to facilitate smuggling of arms and volunteers through Irish ports, and lobbied for recognition of the state of Israel by the USA and UN. Despite criticism by several Jewish-American trade unionists opposed to the Irgun's reactionary, anti-labour policies, he welcomed Irgun leader Menachem Begin to New York (December 1948). Thereafter he distanced himself from internal Israeli politics, while remaining a conspicuous supporter of Israeli foreign policy.

Perceived as the 'radical younger brother' of leading New York politico William O'Dwyer, he played no official role in his brother's administration as mayor of the city (1946–50). A leftist activist within the Democratic party, and prominent in the party's internal reform movement, he was co-founder with Eleanor Roosevelt and others of the Committee for Democratic Voters (1959), and was NY co-chairman of John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign (1960). He chaired local committees implementing medicare and conducting voter registration drives in low-income areas. A persistent candidate for public office, he was twice elected to the NY city council, but lost many bids for election to the US senate, US house of representatives, and the NY mayoralty. During a two-year term on the city council as Manhattan councilman-at-large (1964–5), he succeeded in raising the city's minimum wage.

O'Dwyer's litigation on behalf of tenants of the Metropolitan Life Insurance company (1951) stimulated municipal and federal legislation against racial discrimination in housing. He litigated widely in racial integration cases, represented civil-rights activists in court proceedings in hostile southern states, and successfully argued before the US supreme court for the right of citizens educated in public schools in Puerto Rico to sit the NY voter literacy test in Spanish. He worked closely with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to challenge the institutionalised exclusion of blacks from the voting register and the political process; at the 1964 Democratic national convention he was prominent in the effort to seat the MFDP on the grounds that the official all-white Mississippi delegate slate was unrepresentative and undemocratically selected. An early opponent of the Vietnam war, he helped launch the Coalition for a Democratic Alternative, through which he supported the anti-war candidacy of Senator Eugene McCarthy for the 1968 Democratic presidential nomination. A delegate to the turbulent national convention in Chicago, he marched with anti-war demonstrators on the streets, and denounced the Johnson administration's Vietnam policy on the convention floor. He served on the legal defence team of the 'Harrisburg seven', an anti-war group that included Fr Philip Berrigan and other catholic religious, on trial on bizarre charges of plotting to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger and to blow up government buildings (1971–2).

O'Dwyer's tenure as president of NY city council (1974–7), elected on the ticket headed by mayoral candidate Abraham Beame, was dominated by a severe fiscal crisis threatening municipal bankruptcy. While conceding the necessity for sweeping cutbacks in expenditure to restore the city's solvency, he opposed local and state initiatives that effectively transferred dictation of social policy to non-elected officials and private institutions. He secured establishment of a records and information service to manage the city archives, and alteration of the date on the city seal from 1664 (when the Dutch colony was surrendered to British arms) to 1625 (when New Amsterdam was founded by Dutch settlers). He was appointed Manhattan borough historian (1986), and helped engineer the election of David Dinkins as New York's first African-American mayor (1989). Named city commissioner to the United Nations (1990), he boycotted the UN cafeteria for anti-union policies, and soon resigned so as not to impede his freedom to criticise human-rights abuses in member states.

Throughout his career O'Dwyer promoted numerous Irish cultural and charitable activities, and stoutly advocated the Irish nationalist interest in America. As national coordinator in the 1950s of the American League for an Undivided Ireland, he lobbied unsuccessfully for a congressional resolution urging a thirty-two-county plebiscite to determine the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. He was active in founding and served as first president (1956) of the Irish Cultural Institute. A supporter of the Northern Ireland civil-rights campaign (1968–9), thereafter he consistently refused to condemn the political violence of the IRA, citing the 'causative violence' of sectarian discrimination, poverty, and official repression. He represented Irish defendants in political and immigration cases in American courts, including leaders of the Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAI) jailed for contempt after refusing to testify before a federal grand jury investigating alleged gun-running (1972). After opposing the 1985 Anglo–Irish agreement, he was instrumental in initiating and facilitating the involvement of American president Bill Clinton in the Northern Ireland issue. He lobbied to secure the granting of a USA entry visa to Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams, whom he welcomed on his arrival in New York (1994), and he endorsed the 1998 Good Friday agreement. A frequent visitor to Ireland, he established and funded the O'Dwyer Cheshire home for physically handicapped adults on the old family home-stead in Bohola, Co. Mayo, and established the O'Dwyer Forestry Foundation.

O'Dwyer was fiercely browed and florid of face, with a dark-eyed glare under a shock of prematurely white hair. His sharp-tongued public persona was mellowed by his private warmth and tolerance of individual diversity. Described as 'the conscience of New York politics' (*Newsday*, 25 June 1998), he was courageous in his consistent commitments to freedom of conscience, and to social and racial inclusion, and in opposition to various episodes of American overseas military intervention. While situating his activism on behalf of such causes in the USA within the legal and political systems, he nonetheless refused to censure physical-force Irish republicanism or militarist aspects of the Zionist movement. Named Mayoman of the year in 1974, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by St Thomas university, Minnesota. He published an autobiography, *Counsel for the defense* (1979), and edited the memoirs of his brother William, *Beyond the golden door* (1986). He married first (1935) Kathleen Rohan (d. 1980), an Irish-American of Galway ancestry; they had three sons and one daughter. He married secondly (1984) Patricia Hanrahan, chief of the NY state women's division, who survived him; they had no children. After living at several addresses in Brooklyn before and after his first marriage, in 1939 he moved his family to 350 Central Park West, Manhattan, his residence for many years. A country retreat in Goshen, NY, overlooking the Hudson river valley forty miles from the city, became his final permanent residence. After suffering a series of strokes from 1993, he was confined to a wheelchair in his last years. He died 24 June 1998 in Goshen; his ashes were scattered at his birthplace in Bohola. His papers are deposited in St John's University, Long Island, NY.

Written by Lawrence William White

Sources: *Connacht Tribune*, 8 Mar. 1974; *Ir. Times*, 21 June 1978; Paul O'Dwyer, *Counsel for the defense* (1979); William O'Dwyer, *Beyond the golden door* (1986); Chris McNickle, *To be mayor of New York: ethnic politics in the city* (1993); *Ir. Times*, 16 June 1994 (interview), 25 June 1998 (obit.); *NY Times*, 25, 28 June 1998; *Newsday*, 25, 28–9 June 1998; *Ireland on Sunday*, 28 June 1998; *Ir. Times*, 13 July 1998

Edward Galvin

Galvin, Edward (1882–1956), bishop and co-founder of the Columban fathers, was born 23 November 1882 at Clodagh, Newcestown, Co. Cork, the eldest of seven sons and two daughters of John Galvin, a farmer, and his wife, Mary Lorden. He was educated at Newcestown national school and aged 11 enrolled in the classical school of Professor Fitzsimmons in Bandon. He entered St Finbarr's seminary in Farranferris, Cork, in 1899 and in 1901 began his studies for the priesthood at St Patrick's College, Maynooth where he was ordained for his home diocese of Cork in 1909. For the next two years he ministered in the Holy Rosary parish in Brooklyn, awaiting appointment to a curacy at home. When he learned of the vast missionary opportunities in China, he volunteered his services there.

Landing in Shanghai in April 1912, he worked in the Chekiang province with the French Vincentians and was shocked at the poverty and wretchedness he found. He was even more appalled by the spiritual poverty, and saw the need for more missionary priests and an organised missionary effort. When French priests were ordered home in 1914 to be drafted into the army at the outbreak of the first world war, he wrote to Ireland for volunteers. Two priests, Joseph O'Leary from Cork and Patrick O'Reilly from Meath, joined him in 1915. The following year he returned to Ireland seeking further recruits and a young Maynooth professor, Fr John Blowick, helped him to establish a mission to China. By October, the new society numbered eight priests. The result was the foundation of St Columban's Foreign Mission Society in 1916, with the approval of the Irish hierarchy and the blessing of Pope Benedict XV. The first house was opened in Dalgan Park, Galway, in January 1918. Recruits from the USA soon joined and the first American house was started in Omaha, Nebraska in 1918. When the Holy See assigned the Columbans missionary territory in Hanyang, Hupeh province, China in 1920, Galvin went there with two colleagues and worked under an Italian Franciscan bishop. Fr Blowick devoted his energies to expanding the new society in Ireland. In 1924 a portion of the vicariate of Hanyang was entrusted to the exclusive care of the Maynooth Mission. Between 1920 and 1925 fifteen more priests volunteered to help the mission in China. Some Loreto sisters from the US also arrived to help.

In Hanyang Galvin became prefect apostolic in 1924, vicar apostolic in 1927, and first head of the see when it became a diocese in 1946. Between 1930 and 1940 the catholic population of his diocese grew from 18,000 to 55,000. During the early 1930s, when Hanyang was hit by plague and famine after the Yangtse valley was flooded, he organised the Wuhan refugee

committee, comprising Columban priests and sisters, giving medical attention to more than 100,000 patients.

When the Japanese invaded China in 1938, the Columbans fed and sheltered more than 85,000 people. During the second world war Galvin was severely restricted, although the Japanese respected his rank and gave him some latitude. He could visit priests in their parishes, but only under narrow defined conditions. Most of his contact was by letter sent in care of the catholic river men. A papal decree of 6 April 1946 established the hierarchy of China and the apostolic internuncio, Archbishop Antony Ribera, formally raised the vicariate of Hanyang to the status of a diocese and installed Galvin as its first residential bishop. By 1949, the communists had gained control of the area and he was left with six priests to minister to more than 50,000 catholics in his diocese. Feeling that the communist authorities were closing in on him more tightly day by day, in 1951 he summoned all the nuns he could reach and requested them to seek dispensation from their vows as a precautionary measure, granting such dispensation on 8 February 1951. The communists accused him of opposing the establishment of an independent church in China and of bringing into being a reactionary organisation known as the Legion of Mary. From October 1951 he was placed under house arrest and subjected to frequent interrogations. He was tried and expelled from China on 15 September 1952; armed soldiers escorted him to the border at Hong Kong.

Galvin celebrated the silver jubilee of his consecration on 6 November 1952 in Hong Kong with mass in the Ruttonjee chapel of the Columban sisters. He left Hong Kong and arrived in San Francisco on 15 December 1952. A few days later he was diagnosed with leukaemia. After spending some time under medical treatment in the US he returned to Ireland in May 1954.

Galvin died at St. Columban's, Navan, Co. Meath, 23 February 1956.

Written by **Maurice Cronin**

Sources: William E. Barrett, *The red lacquered gate* (1967); *Ir. Times*, 24 Feb. 1956; information from Mrs McCullagh, niece

Mother Mary Martin

Martin, Máire (Marie, Mary) Helena ('Mother Mary') (1892–1975), founder of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, was born 25 April 1892 at Glencar, Marlborough Road, Glenageary, Co. Dublin, eldest among twelve children of Thomas Patrick Martin, partner in T. & C. Martin, a successful firm of builders' providers, and Mary Lewis Martin (née Moore), originally of Ashton House, Phoenix Park, whose family was also well connected and successful in business. The family moved to Greenbank, Monkstown, Co. Dublin, where Mary, then known as 'Marie', with her eleven siblings, spent the greater part of her youth. The emotional security of her early years was shattered on 17 March 1907, when her father shot himself through the eye; the inquest returned a verdict of accidental death. After a brief attendance at the Sacred Heart convent, Leeson St., Dublin, she continued her education at St Mary's convent, Edinburgh, and the Holy Child convent in Harrogate, before being sent to a finishing school in Bonn, Germany. While at school, she had a bout of rheumatic fever, which caused long-term health problems, but she was sociable and outgoing, and enjoyed the round of society events in Dublin. From an early age, however, she also showed an interest in charity work among the sick in the Monkstown area.

The outbreak of the first world war proved to be a watershed for both Mary and her family. She immediately decided to train as a nurse with the Voluntary Aid Detachment, and three of her brothers joined the British army; two were killed on active service, one during the Gallipoli campaign, and the third was drowned. Having served in military hospitals in Malta, Leeds, and France, at the end of hostilities Martin returned to Dublin, convinced that her vocation lay in work with the sick. With this in mind she returned to England to receive further training (1919), but it was not till her meeting the following year with Fr Joseph Shanahan, vicar apostolic of Calabar, in eastern Nigeria, that her plans began to take shape. Shanahan was anxious to recruit volunteers to work in his diocese, particularly in the fields of maternity nursing and childcare. With this in mind Martin began a course in midwifery in July 1920, receiving the certificate of the Central Midwives' Board in February 1921. However, after her arrival in Nigeria (1921), accompanied by Agnes Ryan, a young medical student, she found herself largely restricted to work in a catholic boarding school in Calabar. Her visits to the rural areas confirmed her intention to provide health care for the local communities, especially for women and children, and she decided to found a religious congregation that could meet their needs. However, the Vatican

banned all religious from involvement with any kind of obstetrics or surgical work, a ban in place since the middle ages, and it was not at all clear how her plans could succeed.

She returned to Ireland in 1923 and, on Bishop Shanahan's orders, reluctantly started on a noviciate with the community later known as the Holy Rosary Sisters, in Killeshandra, Co. Cavan. She left the convent after two years, without taking vows. This marked the start of a twelve-year period of disappointments, poor health, and frustrations, including a lack of practical support for her plans. She remained busy throughout, working as a volunteer in a Jesuit-run hostel in Glasgow (1928–9), and from her sickbed founded the first Dublin centre of the Apostolic Work Society. She also continued to canvass her plans with influential missionaries, notably Shanahan's successor, the Rev. James Moynagh, whom she first met in 1932. In March 1934 she went as matron to the boys in the recently opened Benedictine boarding school at Glenstal Priory, Co. Limerick; she brought with her as assistants a small number of young women who were to form the nucleus of the future Medical Missionaries of Mary. They all benefited greatly from the spiritual direction and support of the Benedictines. An accident while she was there led to gangrene in a foot and the threat of leg amputation; in the event she lost three toes and was greatly weakened.

In February 1936 the Vatican announced that the centuries-old ban on surgical work by religious was to end; this was the breakthrough for Mary Martin. She received formal endorsement of her proposals from Rome in May 1936, and set sail for Nigeria in November 1936. Soon after her arrival in Anua, Martin fell ill with malaria, and subsequently suffered a near-fatal heart attack. Mgr Moynagh received permission from Rome to set up the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) as a religious congregation, and on 4 April 1937 Mary Martin was professed in Port Harcourt hospital (taking the name in religion 'Mother Mary of the Incarnation'). While she returned to Ireland to recuperate from her illness and develop her order, the work in Nigeria was carried on by its two remaining Irish novices.

Lacking in financial support, in poor health, and with a fledgling congregation to develop, Martin had to begin the process of recruiting novices and raising funds from her hospital bed. Much-needed assistance came from Cardinal Joseph MacRory, archbishop of Armagh, who invited her to open a noviciate in his diocese. After a period based in Collon, Co. Louth, it moved to a larger house in Drogheda, where a maternity hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, was also founded. Through Martin's persistent optimism and hard work, this eventually developed as a state-recognised training college for midwives and, from 1957, was an International Missionary Training Hospital. MMM houses were also opened in Clonmel (1949) and Waterford (1952). The motherhouse in Drogheda was destroyed in a fire in February 1952, but was rebuilt and enlarged.

The rapid expansion of the order in Ireland was mirrored by similar developments in Nigeria throughout the 1940s and 1950s, with the establishment of treatment clinics, a leprosy centre, and hospital clinics in Anua, Ogoja, Afikpo, Obudu, and Ikom. Martin returned to Nigeria to review her sisters' progress in 1946, bringing with her a British film crew, whose promotional documentary on the order's work, *Visitation* (1948), proved highly successful. Expansion continued throughout the post-war period with the establishment of foundations in Tanzania (1947), Naples (1952), Angola (1953), Uganda (1955), Ethiopia (1959), Kenya (1961), Brazil (1961), Formosa (Taiwan) (1961), Malawi (1962), and Spain (1962). With warm support from Cardinal Cushing in the US she opened a second noviciate in Boston in 1950, which moved to a larger house in Winchester, Massachusetts, in 1952. Martin maintained a close interest in each centre of the scattered order, and in 1959 made a tour of all its houses.

In later years her contribution to health care received official recognition from the International Red Cross (which awarded her (1963) the Florence Nightingale medal), the newly independent Nigerian state, and the RCSI, which granted her an honorary fellowship in 1966. She was the

first woman to receive the freedom of the borough of Drogheda, on 6 June 1966. Having long been slow to delegate, she retired from her work altogether in October 1967 owing to increasingly poor health. She died 27 January 1975 at the order's mother house at Drogheda, and was buried in the convent plot in the nearby St Peter's cemetery. Her portrait (1953), painted by Seán O'Sullivan, hangs in the order's house in Beechgrove, Drogheda.

Written by Frances Clarke

Sources: *Ir. Independent*, 18, 19 Mar. 1907; *The first decade: ten years' work of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, 1937–1947* (1948) (photo); Ruth Carey, untitled obit., appearing as '1915–1937. Prelude: the seed of an idea', on Medical Missionaries of Mary website, www.mmmworldwide.org; Maria Keaney, *They brought the good news* (1986); *Medical Missionaries of Mary: the seed of an idea* (1986) (photos); Mary Purcell, *To Africa with love: the life of Mother Mary Martin, foundress of the Medical Missionaries of Mary* (1987); Anastasia Taggart, 'It had to be medical', *Medical Missionaries of Mary*, xlix (1987), 4–7 (photos); Edmund M. Hogan, *The Irish missionary movement: a historical survey, 1830–1980* (1990); Anastasia Taggart and Isabella Smyth, *The Medical Missionaries of Mary in Drogheda, 1939–1999* (1999) (photos); Mary Dempsey, 'The birth of a mission', *History Ireland*, xiv, no. 4 (2006), 25–9 (photos); Martin Browne and Colmán Ó Clabaigh, *The Irish Benedictines: a history* (2005), 194; Medical Missionaries of Mary website, www.mmmworldwide.org

Part 5.
Politics in
Northern Ireland
1949–1993

Terence O'Neill

O'Neill, Terence Marne (1914–90), Baron O'Neill of the Maine, politician, prime minister of Northern Ireland, was born 10 September 1914 at 29 Ennismore Gardens, Hyde Park, London, the third son and youngest of the five children of Captain Arthur Edward Bruce O'Neill (1876–1914), of Shane's Castle, Randalstown, Co. Antrim, unionist MP for Mid-Antrim, and his wife, née Lady Annabel Hungerford Crewe-Milnes (1881–1948), the eldest daughter of Robert Offley Ashburton Crewe-Milnes, marquess of Crewe, politician.

Background and upbringing

O'Neill seems to have identified himself primarily as Anglo-Irish, by which he meant descent socially from landed Church of Ireland stock and culturally from a self-consciously all-Ireland tradition of loyalty to the crown. Any specific Ulster loyalty was limited and rested mostly on the prominence of the O'Neill name in Gaelic tradition rather than any very strong 'settler' consciousness. He was proudly conscious that the O'Neills were the longest extant European aristocratic lineage. He was indirectly descended from a protestant branch of O'Neills founded by a nominee of the English after the flight of the earls in 1607. However, O'Neill personally acknowledged the catholic comte de Tyrone, resident in Portugal, as head of the 'clan'.

Politically O'Neill's background was also atypical. His maternal grandfather had been a pro-home rule liberal, appointed viceroy of Ireland in 1892 by Gladstone's administration. His paternal grandfather, Edward Chichester (later O'Neill), second Baron O'Neill (1839–1928), was the conservative MP for Co. Antrim between 1863 and 1880. The union of his parents across sharply demarcated political lines provoked much contemporary comment. O'Neill was not yet two months old when, on 6 November 1914, his father was killed in the first world war, the first MP to die in action in the conflict. On 9 February 1922 his mother married, as her second husband, Major James Hugh Hamilton Dodds, later Crewe (d. 1956), a consular official.

O'Neill spent the first seven years of his life in the London town house of Lord Crewe, his grandfather. Most summer holidays were spent in Shane's Castle, the O'Neill family home in Ulster. In 1922, when his mother married Major Dodds, then the British consul in Addis Ababa, he spent an exotic year in Abyssinia. O'Neill went to school at West Downs in Winchester,

then Eton, where he was by his own admission an indifferent student. On leaving school he spent a year abroad in France and Germany, a politicising experience which led him to support Churchill's crusade against appeasement, setting himself against members of his own family and social circle.

Early career

After a stint working in the City, in 1939 his aunt secured O'Neill a job as ADC to the governor of South Australia. This was cut short when, within a few weeks, war broke out. In May 1940 O'Neill received his commission at Sandhurst, joining the 2nd battalion of the Irish guards. On 4 February 1944 he married (Katharine) Jean (b. 1914/15), the daughter of (William) Ingham Whitaker, of Pylewell Park, Lymington, Hampshire. They had a son, Patrick (b. 1945), and a daughter, Penelope (b. 1947). In Europe with the Irish guards, he served as the intelligence officer of the 2nd battalion. A number of people dear to O'Neill died in the war. He lost his close friend David Peel, best man at his marriage, and both his brothers, Lord O'Neill with the North Irish Horse in Italy and the Hon. Brian O'Neill with the 1st battalion of the Irish guards in Norway.

O'Neill was himself injured, on 10 September 1944, on the Dutch frontier, hit on the sciatic nerve by shrapnel during shelling. His unit temporarily cut off behind enemy lines, O'Neill was tended in a local house by the Ten Horn family, near Nijmegen in the Netherlands. He was evacuated back to England and the war ended before he could return to active service.

At the end of 1945 O'Neill, aged thirty-one, and his family finally settled in Northern Ireland. They took as their home Glebe House, a former Regency rectory near Ahoghill, Co. Antrim. O'Neill attempted to secure the Ulster Unionist Party nomination for a Westminster seat, but made do instead with the Stormont constituency of Bannside, to which, in October 1946, he was elected without opposition. He briefly caused controversy in 1947 when he spoke in favour of home rule for Scotland. This was an early indication of his genuine enthusiasm for devolution, on the grounds of administrative efficiency, popular involvement, and its potential to soften the social divisions evident at the level of sovereign state politics.

In February 1948 the prime minister, Sir Basil Brooke (later Lord Brookeborough), appointed him parliamentary secretary to the minister of health, first William Grant (d. 1949) and then Dame Dehra Parker, his aunt. In 1953 he was appointed to the post of chairman of ways and means (leader of the house), and then in 1955 he became a joint parliamentary secretary to the minister of home affairs, in which post he dealt with a controversial rent de-restriction bill. He showed his facility in negotiating the timetable of the bill with his opposite number at Westminster, Enoch Powell. Edmund Warnock, minister of home affairs, resigned in protest at the reform in 1956, and in the subsequent ministerial reshuffle O'Neill took over Warnock's portfolio, so finally reaching cabinet level. He was sworn of the privy council (Northern Ireland). Six months after this, he became minister of finance, and shortly afterwards he gave up responsibility for home affairs.

Early ministerial career

O'Neill's time at the Ministry of Finance coincided with a major economic crisis. Employment in the Belfast shipyards shrank by two fifths between 1961 and 1964. These difficulties were reflected in a swing towards the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP), particularly in Belfast where in the 1962 Stormont general election the NILP won 60,170 votes to the Unionist Party's 67,450. As minister of finance, O'Neill was much criticised for his unadventurous economic

policy, both by the NILP and by dissident unionist backbenchers. Behind the scenes, however, he was certainly imaginative if not always practical: in 1958 he suggested to cabinet colleagues that Lough Neagh be drained to form a new county. More important in defining his public image was his defence of his stewardship, with a rhetoric of 'self-help', civic responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative. He notably held aloof from the grubbier side of sectarian politics.

The Northern Ireland government's long-standing economic policy was largely conservative, seeking support from Britain to bolster established employment. The British government, however, was concerned that this simply feather-bedded the traditional and declining industries of textiles, heavy engineering and agriculture. It was felt that investment should be opening up new dynamic possibilities. The crunch came in October 1962 when a joint exchequer working party, chaired by Robert Hall, published a report that seemed decisively to reject throwing good money after bad. Brookeborough's government was widely felt to have lost the initiative.

At first O'Neill had little idea how to approach the crisis. However, the Northern Ireland civil service autonomously developed a scheme of infrastructural development, centred on greater Belfast, but also including the creation of a 'new city' between Lurgan and Portadown and the designation of a series of growth points: Bangor, Newtownards, Downpatrick, Antrim, Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus. Northern Ireland transport was also to be revolutionised, with the planning of a motorway and road network much in advance of the British equivalent. The Matthew plan, published in February 1963, thus made a more positive case for British subvention, and O'Neill quickly realised the significance of this new approach. It coincided with his belief, at first born of treasury cheese-paring, that Northern Ireland should rely upon self-help. Now he argued, notably in a speech to the Pottinger Unionist Association, Belfast, in February 1963, for generous pump-priming with British funds. He argued that for the United Kingdom as a whole to achieve its economic potential, each of its distinct regions should be positively developed to take the strain off overheating south-east England. This plea for British funds was wrapped in a stirring invocation of Ulster dynamism and historic potential.

Prime ministership and modernisation

Lord Brookeborough, whose economic policy was now seen as insufficiently flexible, took the opportunity of illness to retire in March 1963. O'Neill was well placed to succeed him, as the candidate of technocratic modernisation, and the governor of Northern Ireland, Lord Wakehurst, thought him the obvious choice. However, Brookeborough in 1953 had promised that his successor would be elected by unionist MPs. The failure to carry this through undermined O'Neill's legitimacy from the outset. Nevertheless, when William Craig, the party chief whip, unofficially polled unionist MPs, he found sixteen in favour of O'Neill as against nine each for J. L. O. Andrews, the unambitious minister of commerce, and Brian Faulkner, the more strident minister of home affairs.

O'Neill immediately began modernising the administration of devolution in Northern Ireland, drawing upon plans already set in motion by the Northern Ireland civil service, but contributing a considerable leadership drive. O'Neill much preferred working through civil servants and appointed experts rather than with the Unionist Party. He followed Britain in rationalising railways (Benson report, 1963). Large-scale investment in slum clearance and house building, concentrated in the greater Belfast area, followed from the 1962 Matthew plan. Industrial development zoning, proposed by Matthew, was extended and schemes for specific growth points were outlined in Professor Thomas Wilson's government sponsored 'Economic plan' of 1963. A second university was established (Lockwood report, 1965). A Northern Ireland Economic Council, to coordinate government, employers and trade unions, required an agreement with

the trade unions. Ministerial standards were professionalised, breaking with an ethos of part-time service. All this was calculated to wring funds from Britain, and in this it met with considerable success. Public investment per head of population doubled between 1958 and 1969, with particularly large increases in housing stock, roads, education, and training. Per capita public expenditure in Northern Ireland rose from 88 to 118 per cent of per capita public expenditure in England in the same period. Nevertheless, the economy continued to suffer from the pressures of chronic dependence on declining industries. Growth began to falter from 1967 and the economy resumed a pattern of crisis in the 1970s.

The creation of a new, modern infrastructure for economic development was what O'Neill primarily referred to when he spoke of 'changing the face of Ulster'. Rather than addressing community relations, he meant this slogan more literally as a drive to improve Northern Ireland's environmental attractiveness to foreign investment. He was, however, keen to present his administration as technocratic, and, in so doing, 'steal the thunder' of the NILP. O'Neill attempted to rebrand unionism as a classless movement based on a progressive consensus in favour of developing Northern Ireland as a region. Though this economic planning was largely cosmetic, it was enough to secure a swing to the Unionist Party in the 1965 Stormont general election, and the NILP lost two of its four seats in Belfast.

Nevertheless, modernisation in the context of a sectarian political economy could not be without consequence for community relations. It brought its own political problems, notably by making the economy seem amenable to government manipulation, and thereby convincing catholics that their relative socio-economic disadvantage was a consequence of deliberate government discrimination. Indeed, there was something to this. A cabal of unionist leaders in Londonderry, the second city of Northern Ireland, with a catholic majority but a unionist corporation, lobbied against the new university coming to the city for fear of upsetting delicately gerrymandered constituencies. The cabal became notorious in 1965, even in unionist circles, as the 'faceless men'. Nevertheless, their lobbying was not without effect, and the university was located in the safely protestant town of Coleraine. Similarly, the 'new city' was designed with the need to maintain the integrity of unionist electorates in mind. In 1965, against O'Neill's better instincts and political judgement, it was announced that the 'new city' would be called Craigavon, after the first prime minister of Northern Ireland, an unequivocally unionist hero. O'Neill was justly concerned that such persistent slights to the nationalist minority would produce blow-back. The Labour administration in Britain, now led by Harold Wilson, was probably the British government least sympathetic to Ulster unionism since the 1930s. Wilson was more and more conscious that the increasing economic subsidy to Northern Ireland gave London greater authority and responsibility to press for transparently fair government in the province.

O'Neill believed that direct legislative reform would fail to redress fundamentally communal division and inequality, which he thought primarily rooted in culture and intractable socio-economic structures. Plans for economic growth explained in political rhetoric which avoided contentious sectarian issues and obsession with the constitutional question, he argued, were best calculated to allow outdated divisions to fade away. O'Neill was convinced that Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland was an atavism inexorably on the decline. In due course unionism would respond by becoming less morbidly suspicious of catholics. Premature reform would serve only to provoke the ultra-loyalists, who had an able potential leader in Ian Paisley. Recent events made it clear to O'Neill that the potential for disorder persisted. During the Westminster general election of October 1964, a spiral of provocation and coat-trailing, involving Paisley, unionist MP hardliners and disaffected nationalist youth, culminated in three days' rioting on the Falls Road in Belfast, the most serious such violence since 1935.

Bridge-building

Rather than stirring more directly in troubled waters, O'Neill preferred to engage in what he called 'bridge-building'. At first, this mostly took the form of high-level initiatives of a diplomatic nature. On 24 April 1964, for example, he visited the Roman catholic Our Lady of Lourdes intermediate school, where he watched a hurling match in the company of nuns. No Northern Ireland premier had ever so consciously included the minority in a state itinerary. More dramatic still was O'Neill's meeting with the taoiseach, Seán Lemass, at Stormont on 14 January 1965. O'Neill offended most of his cabinet colleagues by keeping them in the dark until Lemass had crossed the border, though he had good reason to believe that protestors such as Paisley would have been forewarned otherwise. Little of substance was agreed at the summit, though there was a discernible expansion of cross-border cooperation in the years following, particularly in tourism promotion and electricity supply. Rumbling unionist discontent delayed a visit by Lemass's successor, Jack Lynch, until December 1967.

By such gestures, O'Neill hoped to encourage catholics in the belief that their prime minister was no longer beholden to old-fashioned prejudices. He was also concerned to outflank ambitious rivals within the Unionist Party. Brian Faulkner, the able minister of commerce, was chief of these. Though long in gestation, the timing of O'Neill's meeting with Lemass may have been dictated by a desire to pre-empt a meeting by Faulkner with his southern Irish counterpart.

O'Neill's was a presidential style of politics, with an eye to press and television coverage and the good opinion of liberal elites. In many ways, he was compensating for poor party management skills and his all too evident distaste not only for the unionist rank and file but also for his parliamentary colleagues. In practice, this meant that any move by O'Neill tended to provoke opposition within the Parliamentary Unionist Party.

1966 proved to be a tempestuous year that significantly narrowed O'Neill's room for manoeuvre. The year began with a controversy over the naming of a new bridge in Belfast over the River Lagan. Belfast corporation unionists wanted it to be called Carson Bridge. The province's governor, Lord Erskine, anxious to avoid controversy for the monarch when she visited for the opening ceremony, intervened to lobby successfully for the name Queen Elizabeth II Bridge. Paisley campaigned against this 'sell-out', and succeeded in attracting the support of Edward Carson, formerly a conservative MP at Westminster and son of the unionist hero. It took united Unionist Party pressure to dissuade Paisley from standing a number of candidates, including Carson and himself, in the March 1966 Westminster general election. Unhelpfully for O'Neill, this election saw Gerry Fitt (1926–2005), a nationalist firebrand with considerable tactical acumen, take the seat for West Belfast. The queen did visit on 4 July, but to O'Neill's disappointment failed to make any statement approving his 'bridge-building' policy.

Political divisions

In June 1966 Ian Paisley led his supporters to the presbyterian general assembly, to protest against its ecumenical tendencies. Catholic youth, aggressively opposing his procession through the nationalist Cromac Street area of Belfast, clashed with police and rioting developed. Paisley's pickets, upon arrival, severely harassed the presbyterian delegates. O'Neill authorised a fulsome apology on behalf of the government for this impertinence, though Faulkner caught the unionist mood better by condemning extremism on all sides while criticising the assembly for presuming to court controversy without consequence. Many unionists were unhappy when Paisley was later imprisoned for breach of the peace, particularly as O'Neill permitted nationalist celebrations of the 1916 Dublin rising in April to proceed unimpeded despite their formal illegality (the republican organisers refused to seek permission from police authorities they did not recognise).

The same month it emerged that a small loyalist terror group, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), had killed a catholic civilian, Peter Ward, on Malvern Street, Belfast, on 26 June 1966. Their aim had been to destabilise the government in the hope that a right-wing reaction would end O'Neill's bridge-building. O'Neill rushed back from a ceremony commemorating the battle of the Somme in France and banned the UVF under the Special Powers Act. He may have then overplayed his hand, by attempting to link Paisley, whose movement he saw as eerily reminiscent of the fascism he had encountered in the 1930s, with this paramilitary milieu.

An increasingly large protestant constituency was concerned that O'Neill was indulgent toward nationalists and divisively harsh on the unionist right-wing fringe. Moreover, the very flow of government largesse unleashed by his drive to 'change the face of Ulster' caused tensions among those who felt short-changed. Many unionists outside the greater Belfast area felt that they were bearing the pain of rationalisation without compensating new investment. These pressures culminated in an attempt at a palace coup. In September 1966 it emerged that at least twelve out of thirty-six unionist MPs at Stormont (over half of the twenty-two unionist backbench MPs) had signed a petition demanding the removal of O'Neill as prime minister, William Craig as minister of development and Brian McConnell as minister of home affairs. The obvious candidate to replace O'Neill was Brian Faulkner, minister of commerce. Faulkner detested O'Neill as a product of the old-tie network and he consistently distanced himself from O'Neill's rhetoric. O'Neill, however, showed his steel. He appealed to the country at large, arguing that the plotters were capitulating to Paisley's 'O'Neill must go' campaign. Faulkner refused to strike the fatal blow, and the plot dissolved. There was considerable bitterness in the aftermath. The plotters felt they had been misrepresented as reactionaries by O'Neill. In an attempt to appease opponents, he reshuffled his cabinet in early 1967 and demoted William Craig from the portfolio of development to home affairs. Always tactless and politically unstable, Craig shifted sharply to the right, and became a bitter enemy. 1966 had tested O'Neill to the limit. He had displayed a considerable political ability in surviving, but it was at a great cost to his reserves of goodwill.

1967 was a quieter year. It was significant, however, in the flowering of O'Neill's particular approach to bridge-building. In October 1966 O'Neill had announced plans for civic weeks to be held in towns across the province. These voluntary initiatives were, in January 1967, coordinated under the umbrella organisation Programme to Enlist the People (PEP). PEP and civic weeks were intended to involve communities in the local application of Stormont's plans to develop Northern Ireland's economic capacity. Because such celebrations of civic pride would not focus on divisive national or regional identities, O'Neill hoped that they would serve in overcoming sectarian divisions. Thus 'changing the face of Ulster' and 'bridge-building' were knitted into a conceptual whole. O'Neill was deeply committed to this integrated project. By September 1968 he was even proposing the PEP approach as a remedy to that disconnection between government and people which seemed to be driving student and youth protest internationally.

More discreetly, O'Neill attempted to address minority grievances concretely. Against stout resistance within the cabinet, he manoeuvred through more generous state support for the independent catholic school sector. There was a highly secret but abortive attempt to address the rank injustice of unionist mismanagement in Londonderry. Though party management was never one of O'Neill's strengths, he encouraged moves to rally support for his brand of unionism within Unionist party structures: there began to emerge a more self-consciously O'Neillite faction, particularly in the suburbs of Belfast.

Civil rights

To the fore in public debate, however, was the issue of civil rights. This new emphasis on abstract 'civil rights' rhetorically extricated minority grievances over discrimination from their traditional context of anti-partitionism. The theme of citizens' rights was taken up by Gerry Fitt (1926–2005) at Westminster, a group of sympathetic British Labour MPs organized in the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster, the Dungannon based Campaign for Social Justice (established in 1964), and the Belfast-based Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (established in 1966). This was a new and serious threat to unionism, including O'Neill's self-consciously technocratic and ameliorative brand, and one he only partially addressed. By mid 1968 he appeared increasingly weary of office.

William Craig was asserting himself as a robust minister of home affairs, appealing to the right. In 1967, for example, he banned republican clubs as covers for illegal Sinn Féin. Fatefully, in October 1968 Craig ordered the re-routing of a civil rights march in Londonderry so as to ghettoise the protest physically and politically within the nationalist community. This proved to be a grave error. On 5 October 1968 the march was attacked by the RUC and television pictures flashed around the world. Craig attempted to limit the subsequently erupting mass movement for civil rights, primarily mobilising Catholics, by using police measures. The RUC, however, were under-strength for such a task, and O'Neill pressed instead for immediate reform. In this he was resisted by Craig and, as ever, Brian Faulkner. However, Wilson's Labour government in London piled on the pressure, and O'Neill slowly won his cabinet round to making concessions even in advance of stilling mobilisation on the streets. He failed, however, to convince colleagues that the property-based local government franchise – which underpinned the entire edifice of gerrymandering – was now politically indefensible. This left him acutely aware that the demonstrators' single most emotive demand – 'one man, one vote' – retained its potency.

On 22 November O'Neill unveiled a programme of reforms, notably the closing down of the gerrymandered Londonderry corporation. In a television broadcast of 9 December 1968 he warned that Northern Ireland stood at the crossroads. O'Neill condemned those unionists who would defy the pro-reform British government and he demanded an end to street demonstrations. Subsequently he sacked William Craig for his repeated public suggestions that Stormont should defy pressure from the sovereign British government. O'Neill was now the rallying figure-head for moderate Protestant opinion and was seen by Catholics as virtually the only unionist of good faith. He benefited from an immediate and massive surge of public support.

This proved to be only a breathing space. Though civil rights demonstrations were suspended by mainstream organisations, the fragile peace was broken by a civil rights march from Belfast to Londonderry organised by the fringe radicals of People's Democracy. This 'long march' was attacked by loyalists, including off-duty B-specials (auxiliary police), at Burntollet Bridge on 4 January 1969. O'Neill's subsequent verbal attack on student radicals alienated a good deal of Catholic sympathy. Nevertheless, a tenuous equilibrium seemed to re-establish itself when, the following week, civil rights protestors in Newry for the first time initiated violence. Though the mood had soured, a new truce between government and protestors seemed possible.

Unionist dissension

At this point, however, serious dissension erupted within unionism. Much of the party, while grudgingly accepting the need for reform, was disturbed that the government seemed unable to seize the initiative. O'Neill, they thought, was too anxious to conciliate street agitators with a hidden nationalist agenda and hostile British opinion. Desperate to force reform of the local

government franchise onto his party, O'Neill turned again to the expedient of an 'impartial' commission which, he knew, would propose universal suffrage. In January 1969 he appointed Lord Cameron to lead an inquiry into recent disorders. This decision provoked at long last the resignation of Brian Faulkner, on 24 January 1969. Faulkner insisted that unionists must not abdicate open governmental responsibility, as this would only suggest weakness to their enemies. William Morgan, a right-winger, resigned from government the following day. William Craig now moved to organise opposition to O'Neill. On 1 February he convened an oppositional meeting of nine unionist MPs from the right, known as the 'Portadown parliament' after the town in which it met. Two days later, O'Neill called a Stormont general election for 24 February in a bid finally to confront traditional unionism with O'Neillism.

O'Neill's strategy in the 'cross-roads election' was unprecedented. He was the first Unionist leader deliberately to seek to split the movement. His hope was that a crushing blow against the right would decisively rebrand unionism and allow moderate middle-class catholics, whom he believed were already moving from traditional nationalism, to come out openly in favour of the union. He was attempting to end unionist reliance on protestant solidarity. However, his lack of roots within the party was a grave hindrance. O'Neill was unable to control local Unionist Association nominations. Three sitting MPs, considered anti-O'Neill, were de-selected. In working-class urban and rural areas, however, many anti-O'Neill Unionists were nominated. O'Neill refused to lend them support and, late in the campaign, he defied his own party's discipline by supporting pro-O'Neill independents against official Unionist candidates openly opposed to his leadership. Even the central party apparatus was not under O'Neill's complete control. He was unable to include an open appeal for catholic votes in his party manifesto, for fear of alienating waverers in the ranks. The possibility of nominating a catholic, Louis Boyle, as an official unionist pro-O'Neill candidate in South Down was blocked by machinations within the local party and at the Belfast headquarters. Both within and outside the party, moderates committed to O'Neill rushed into politics. Often veterans of civic weeks and PEP, these newly politicised activists were markedly middle-class and even of gentry background.

The result of the election was confused. By most normal indicators, O'Neill's achievement was impressive. During the campaign many anti-O'Neill unionists had trimmed their sails in the face of an apparent wind in favour of the prime minister. A total of twenty-four pro-O'Neill official unionists were returned with 32 per cent of the vote. Official unionists who were anti-O'Neill returned twelve with 16.2 per cent. Three pro-O'Neill independents were elected; pro-O'Neill independents in total won 12.9 per cent of the vote. In his own constituency of Bannside, he had been run close by Ian Paisley. His narrow personal majority from his own electorate was deeply demoralising for him. In all thirty-nine unionist members had been returned, the largest number since 1921. However, at the first post-election Parliamentary Unionist Party meeting, ten anti-O'Neill (including two newly elected) MPs walked out. Despite this, when a vote of confidence in O'Neill was put, only twenty-three out of the thirty-five remaining were in favour. O'Neill, indeed, was on the back foot for supporting non-party candidates.

Most significantly, there was no evidence of catholics voting in number for pro-O'Neill unionists. Though opinion polls had suggested a reservoir of catholic support for O'Neill, this failed to materialise. Instead, it was civil rights activists who benefited from catholic disillusionment with the sterilities of the established Nationalist Party. O'Neill's strategic vision was fatally compromised. Economic progress and ameliorative rhetoric had failed to win catholics to a refurbished, non-sectarian unionism. The status quo of pan-protestant unionism seemed vindicated. Confronted by the apparent victory of traditional and ungenerous unionism, civil rights agitators took again to the streets.

Resignation and later years

O'Neill soldiered on, all the while haemorrhaging support in party ranks. On 24 March the Young Unionist Council passed a vote of no confidence in him. On 17 April Bernadette Devlin, a civil rights radical with republican support, won the Mid-Ulster seat in a Westminster by-election. This sparked an outburst of disorder across the province, including a campaign of bombing by loyalist *agents provocateurs* hoping to provoke the conditions for a right-wing coup within unionism. O'Neill used the prospect of an immediate take-over of the province's government by London to force upon his party the concession of 'one man, one vote'. O'Neill's political capital finally exhausted, the resignation from his government on 23 April of James Chichester-Clark, minister of agriculture, was the final straw. On 28 April 1969, hearing that he was about to lose the support of two MPs and thus, effectively, his majority, Terence O'Neill announced his resignation as leader of the Unionist Party. Brian Faulkner was the popular favourite to replace him, but O'Neill, still smarting from years of disloyalty, believed Faulkner to be incorrigibly right-wing. He rather unwillingly supported Chichester-Clark and, in the event, O'Neill's vote proved to be decisive at the parliamentary unionist party meeting in which Chichester-Clark defeated Faulkner by seventeen votes to sixteen. O'Neill was held responsible, therefore, for barring the most capable man available to lead the government through crisis. While the wounds were so fresh, however, it was perhaps too much to expect otherwise. After Faulkner proved his reforming credentials with the Sunningdale agreement of December 1973, O'Neill did effect a reconciliation of sorts.

Terence O'Neill did not stay long on the backbenches. He resigned his Stormont seat in January 1970, whereupon he was elevated to a life peerage, as Baron O'Neill of the Maine. In the house of lords he sat on the crossbenches and in the 1970s he frequently spoke on Northern Ireland affairs. Allowed to express himself more freely, he made clear his belief that Ireland would some day be reunited. From 1970 to 1972, indeed, he encouraged speculation that he was willing to let his name go forward for nomination as president of the Republic of Ireland. In general, however, O'Neill's relevance to the politics of the unfolding troubles was marginal to disappearing. He served as trustee of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. Terence O'Neill died at his home, Lisle Court, Lymington, of cancer on 12 June 1990, survived by his wife, son, and daughter.

O'Neill was not without political skills and vision, characteristics unfairly discounted by subsequent commentators. Though perhaps eccentric, his championing of PEP indicated a coherent approach to the problems of a divided society. O'Neill preferred working with civil servants, notably James Malley and Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, rather than with politicians and party structures. For most of his career, he strove to overcome the sharp divisions within Northern Irish society through administrative reform and quasi-presidential rhetoric rather than party political or legislative spade-work. When, faced with a make-or-break crisis from late 1968, and finally confronted by the accumulated vices of years of unionist complacency (as he saw it), his challenge was breathtaking in its ambition. His goal of breaking unionism's connection with the sectarian divide was unachievable because traditional unionism was, by the end of the decade, not an atrophying atavism, but in the process of vital if fissiparous renewal. O'Neill himself confessed that his patrician roots, outside the mainstream of popular Ulster culture, ill equipped him to engage with the fierce identity politics of both catholic and protestant communities. He was inclined to disparage protestant anxieties as shading into semi-fascist extremism, while his attitude to catholics was patronising and myopic regarding the tenacity of their Irish nationalism. O'Neill assumed that modernisation could only strengthen a moderate middle class. Ironically,

he found his last redoubts of solid support among the *haute bourgeoisie* and gentry just as they faded from Northern Ireland's political life. His final, disillusioned, conclusion was that the 'good men' of politics preferred 'playing golf' to confronting the 'wild men'. A decent man, O'Neill had a vision that was sincere and positive, but its purchase could not survive the storm of the breaking troubles.

Written by **Marc Mulholland**

Sources: General Registry Office of Northern Ireland; Burke, *Peerage*; T. O'Neill, *The autobiography of Terence O'Neill* (1972); P. Bew and H. Patterson, *The British state and the Ulster crisis* (1985); *The Independent* (14 June 1990); *Times* (14 June 1990); *WWW*; P. Bew, P. Gibbon, and H. Patterson, *Northern Ireland, 1921–1996: political forces and social classes* (1996); M. Mulholland, 'Assimilation versus segregation: unionist strategy in the 1960s', *Twentieth Century British History*, ii, 3 (2000), 284–300; M. Mulholland, *Northern Ireland at the crossroads: Ulster unionism in the O'Neill years, 1960–69* (2000); *ODNB*

Brian Faulkner

Faulkner, (Arthur) Brian Deane (1921–77), Baron Faulkner of Downpatrick, prime minister of Northern Ireland, was born 18 February 1921 at Helen's Bay, Co. Down, elder son of a self-made businessman of Belfast, James Alexander Faulkner, and his wife, Nora Lillian Deane.

Family background and upbringing

The Faulkner family, long established in Ireland, was by the nineteenth century deeply involved in Ulster's industrialisation. Faulkner's grandparents established a flax mill in Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, but financial difficulties led to the migration of his widowed grandmother to east Belfast, where she found employment as a teacher, while inculcating in her children the Victorian values of hard work and thrift.

James Faulkner took advantage of the opportunities offered by his post as a sales representative in the linen trade to reestablish his family as entrepreneurs in their own right. In Belfast he founded a profitable shirt-making operation that grew to become a substantial company. But his ambitions for his son extended far beyond the world of the Belfast bourgeoisie, and he seems to have been zealous in promoting Brian Faulkner's later political career. Faulkner developed an early and abiding love for horse riding and hunting. Although he was presbyterian, he attended the prestigious anglican college of St Columba, Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin (1935–9). Something of a fish out of water, he flourished nevertheless and acquired a poise and self-confidence that were marked in later years. At school he befriended Michael Yeats (1921–2007), son of W. B. Yeats, though the two lost touch in later years. Faulkner maintained a cross-border social life, and through regular attendance at the Dublin horse show and various holidays he made social acquaintance even with Charles Haughey (1925–2006) and Seán Lemass.

Faulkner read law for a term at QUB, but the outbreak of war in 1939 drew him back into his father's factory. There was a great military demand for uniform manufacture, and a shortage of men of management calibre, as staff joined the forces. Faulkner acquired valuable managerial skills, but he also attracted some distaste from a unionist establishment in which evading military service was anathema: well into the 1960s unionist politicians characteristically retained their title of military rank in public life.

Early political career

Faulkner's early political career found him on the modernising, relatively liberal wing of unionism. In 1942 he wrote with Jim Bailie *The strength and the sinews*, a document significant in the campaign to rejuvenate party structures that had atrophied in the 1930s. He was closely involved with the Unionist Society, a pressure group anxious to acclimatise to the post-war world, and in 1948 he acted as its secretary. One outcome of this modernising ferment was the establishment of the Young Unionists, of which Faulkner was the first chairman. Though something of an activist against the 'old guard', Faulkner was from the outset determined to work firmly within the parameters of party unity.

Faulkner joined the Orange Order in 1946, against the family tradition. Though he entered the elite Eldon Lodge, sponsored by Lord Glentoran, the Unionist chief whip, he always praised the order for its social inclusiveness. Invited by Terence O'Neill to stand for election to the Stormont parliament, he was elected for the constituency of East Down in the notoriously polarised 'chapel-gates' election of 1949. In 1951 Faulkner married Lucy Barbara Ethel Forsythe, of a well-known Bangor family. His wife had been the secretary of Sir Basil Brooke and, though she possessed a formidable political intelligence, the marriage attracted Lady Brooke's ire. They had two sons and a daughter.

Once on the parliamentary ladder, Faulkner proceeded to belie his earlier liberal reputation by vigorously appealing to Orange populism. In 1955 he led an Orange procession through the catholic Longstone Road, despite government disquiet and local outrage. In the year of his appointment as minister of home affairs, 1959, he authorised a similar march through catholic Dungiven, though it had been banned the previous year by his predecessor, W. W. B. Topping. When a 1958 conference of lay Roman catholics in Garron Tower indicated a willingness on the part of some middle-class catholics to work with the state, he reacted with intense suspicion and counselled against unionist conciliation. In October 1959 Sir Clarence Graham, chairman of the standing committee of the Ulster Unionist Council, and Brian Maginess, the attorney general, suggested that catholics might be invited to join the unionist party. Faulkner opposed the innovation as indefinitely premature.

Faulkner appreciated that traditionalism facilitated a rise through unionist ranks, particularly for one without the resources of gentry deference or a record of military war service to draw upon. However, this was not simply opportunism: Faulkner was genuinely impressed by the cross-class nature of unionism and Orangeism. In many respects he remained a moderniser, as was evident in his allegiance to the far-sighted minister of education from 1957, Morris May. Had May not died prematurely in 1962, it is quite likely that Faulkner would have backed his candidature for the premiership.

Political advancement

Faulkner's evident ability, and reputation on the backbenches as a populist gadfly, earned him appointment as chief whip in 1956. In December 1959 he was promoted to be minister of home affairs, and in this capacity he oversaw the successful use of internment against an IRA campaign launched in 1956. Never vigorous, this republican offensive was already on the wane and Faulkner's security initiative complemented the republic's use of emergency detention. Neither condition would be in place in 1972. Faulkner also had the opportunity to present himself as a tireless hardliner, piloting in 1962 the complex electoral law bill (which amalgamated a raft of piecemeal legislation passed over the years, but which changed nothing substantially) against the most concerted nationalist parliamentary opposition for years.

When Lord Brookeborough resigned as prime minister in 1963 his successor was chosen by the governor of Northern Ireland, advised rather uncertainly by Lord Brookeborough, and helped by the diplomacy of the unionist chief whip, William Craig. An unofficial straw poll among unionist MPs, conducted by Craig, found that nine supported Faulkner for premiership, against nine for J. L. O. Andrews, the affable minister of commerce, and sixteen for Terence O'Neill, minister of finance. Faulkner was considered too close to the unionist hard-right. His lack of active service in the war was also held to be indicative of a certain insularity and lack of appeal to British ministerial interlocutors.

Faulkner felt that he had lost the prize to O'Neill because he lacked his rival's social standing. It is likely, however, that he also recognised that he had not the necessary profile with Britain's political elite. His insistence that O'Neill appoint him minister of commerce in 1963 reflected a desire not only to exercise his business know-how, but also to engage with powerful corporate figures in Britain and further afield. In this he was unanimously considered a great success, and his office at Dundonald House in Belfast became something of a rival power centre to O'Neill's at Stormont castle. Nevertheless, what Faulkner had most admired in Lord Brookeborough was his sure touch with both British ministers and the Ulster Unionist Party rank and file. O'Neill's attitude to local unionist opinion, he was convinced, was dangerously aloof. Faulkner prioritised party and unionist unity above attempts at cross-community reconciliation. He believed that attempts to cajole Catholics away from a gut nationalism were very unlikely to succeed and certainly divisive of unionist opinion.

Relationship with Terence O'Neill

Terence O'Neill had good cause to believe that regular protestations of loyalty to the government – never to O'Neill personally – masked Faulkner's unrelenting siege on his hold on office. Very few of the O'Neill initiatives escaped obstruction from Faulkner, inside cabinet and sometimes outside it. Faulkner opposed anti-corruption measures in the 1963 local government bill and poured cold water on the Northern Ireland Economic Council, Ulster Weeks in Britain, and the Wilson plan, all key features in O'Neill's style and substance of government.

Nor did he support measures designed to ameliorate the cruder trappings of unionist dominance. Against general cabinet opinion, he doggedly opposed any salary rise for members of parliament, though the salaries were set so low that they penalised the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) and working-class representation generally. An opportunity to show generosity on the funding of the Roman Catholic Mater Infirmorum hospital was delayed beyond O'Neill's premiership by Faulkner's recalcitrance. He was almost as obstructive in reaching a settlement with the Northern Ireland committee of the ICTU, despite his generally good relations with trade unions. In June 1966 the minister of home affairs, Brian McConnell, apologised on behalf of the government to the Presbyterian general assembly for failing to prevent the harassment of their delegates by anti-ecumenical protesters led by Ian Paisley. But Faulkner openly spoke up for the freedom to picket, and criticised the assembly for its posture of patrician liberalism. This chimed with unionist opinion in the country. Faulkner clearly appealed to those unhappy with O'Neill's rhetoric of change from above.

A substantial body of disgruntled unionist backbenchers attempted to have O'Neill removed as party leader in September 1966. Faulkner was the obvious candidate to replace him. However, he refused to commit himself, preferring to wait on events. O'Neill rallied and depicted his opponents as unreconstructed diehards, tainted by association with Paisley's 'O'Neill must go' campaign, and therefore anathema to Britain. The gambit succeeded. Faulkner took cognisance

of this, and from 1967 increasingly displayed his more liberal credentials. While continuing to warn against unionist division, he moved towards quasi-O'Neillite language of cross-community bridge-building, and cautious optimism that Catholics might eventually be won to unionism. In response to the rising propaganda war on civil rights, Faulkner guardedly proposed pragmatic evaluation on a case-by-case basis, rather than outright rejection of Catholic claims.

The civil rights movement

When the storm of civil rights agitation broke in October 1968, Faulkner positioned himself as flexible on reform, but insistent on strong unionist government. Within cabinet, he argued that order should be restored in advance of reform and that pressure from the Labour government in London should be resisted. O'Neill believed that no such luxuries were available, and he had to hammer through a reform programme against the stalling of Faulkner and William Craig. The November 1968 reform package was holed below the water by the absence of a universal local government franchise. The civil rights movement's most evocative demand, 'one man, one vote', remained unaddressed.

Faulkner emerged as the champion of firm party government in opposition to O'Neill's attempts to bypass Ulster Unionist Party structures. Thus, for example, Faulkner opposed O'Neill's television broadcast on 9 December 1968 as an unwarranted appeal over the head of the party. It was on this principle that Faulkner finally resigned from the government on 24 January 1969. He opposed O'Neill's ploy of appointing an independent commission to report on the disorders, in the expectation that it would recommend the introduction of universal local government franchise. Faulkner rejected this as an abdication of leadership, arguing that the reform should be introduced immediately, and approval won within the party. Unsurprisingly, this position befuddled the unionist right wing, who looked increasingly to William Craig. Faulkner, however, wished to build consensus around solid party government, determining its own policy independent of outside pressure.

O'Neill attempted in February 1969 to stamp his authority, even at the cost of unionist schism, by calling an election. Faulkner, however, cannily outbid O'Neill by expressly calling on Catholics in his constituency to vote for him. Disquiet at this innovation among North Down unionists, however, suggested the internal strains of Faulkner's fine balancing act. Nor was it sufficient to convince sceptical liberal unionists. When O'Neill finally resigned in April 1969, Faulkner had the support of the unionist rank and file, and probably the majority of the province, to succeed him. Nevertheless, O'Neillite unionist MPs rallied to James Chichester-Clark, who defeated Faulkner by seventeen votes to sixteen. O'Neill, who voted, had frustrated his old rival.

Prime ministership and parliamentary reform

Faulkner returned to the government and was appointed minister of development. As such he was closely associated with the implementation of reforms by the Stormont government, including root-and-branch restructuring of local government, and the establishment of a non-political housing executive to allocate public housing. Faulkner, therefore, attracted the ire of the unionist right. The manifesto issued in 1970 by the diehard West Ulster Unionist Council, led by Harry West (1917–2004), was entitled *Faulkner's fiddle-men out of tune*. However, he retained his reputation as a proponent of decisive unionist leadership and firm security measures. Chichester-Clark was unable to compete. His attempt to reconcile unionist demands to British priorities failed in exhaustion, and he resigned on 20 March 1971 to 'bring home to all concerned the realities of the situation'.

Brian Faulkner had long been heir apparent. On 23 March 1971 he was elected head of the parliamentary unionist party, and thus prime minister, by twenty-six votes to four over William Craig. His initial moves reflected his desire to rebuild party unity. Harry West was brought back into the cabinet and the moderate Basil McIvor (1928–2004) was made minister of community relations. Faulkner's innovatory boldness was also evident in his bringing into government David Bleakley, a stalwart of the NILP, and Gerard B. Newe, a catholic who was neither a unionist nor an MP. Nevertheless, centrifugal tendencies persisted. West's appointment led to the resignation from the party of Anne Dickson, the moderate MP for Carrick. On the right of the party, William Craig presided over a meeting in the town of Portadown, involving Unionist representatives from forty-three of the fifty-two constituency parties. From this emerged a faction known as Vanguard, bent on the restoration of full internal security responsibility to the Northern Ireland government.

Faulkner pressed on with considerable energy, attempting to construct a new political dispensation. In a major speech in Stormont on 22 June 1971, he outlined new proposals for participation by members of the parliamentary opposition in the chairmanship of committees, to be set up before the end of 1971. These parliamentary committees would oversee legislation and have privileged access to civil service information. It was inching the opposition into the ante-chamber of the executive. On 7 July the first ever inter-party meeting was held at Stormont, with representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party, the newly formed Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Nationalist Party and the NILP in attendance.

Violence, opposition and direct rule

The continued escalation of violence sabotaged this bold stroke. In July 1971 the constitutional nationalist SDLP boycotted Stormont in protest at British army brutality. Nationalists were further alienated by the introduction of internment – detention without trial – on 9 August 1971. Faulkner had urged this upon the British government, who were responsible for the army, in response to a rapidly building IRA bombing campaign. Loyalist perpetrators, whose violence, though widespread, was inchoate and generally not yet deadly, were thus not targeted in the initial months of internment. The IRA was relatively little inconvenienced and the popular sympathy their struggle attracted from nationalists increased substantially. At least initially, internment only poured fuel on the flames.

Despite the spiral of violence, Faulkner remained proactive, continuing to tack and veer. He was prepared to confront powerful unionist interests when, in January 1972, he renewed for a year a ban on parades, including the traditional summer parades. Ironically, the immediate result was not a make-or-break test of Faulkner's authority within unionism, as expected, but confrontation between a banned nationalist march in Derry and the British army on 30 January, in which fourteen catholic protestors were killed by troops. Catholic nationalists reacted with outrage to 'bloody Sunday'.

Vanguard, meanwhile, grew in strength and bellicosity, threatening to rebel against British attempts to sideline Ulster unionists. Faulkner was forced to respond by warning dire consequences if unionism's power base – the government and parliament of Stormont – was abolished. Nevertheless, on 22 March 1972, the British government demanded that Faulkner hand over complete security control to London, and stated firmly that substantial political reform was unavoidable. Faulkner's reputation rested upon his championing of real unionist responsibility for government and thus he had little choice but to reject this emasculation. On 24 March, Edward Heath, the British prime minister, announced that London would immediately pro-rogue Stormont and assume direct responsibility for the administration of Northern Ireland.

Faulkner's bluff was now called, as he had predicted a 'terrible battle' if direct rule was introduced. However, he carefully condemned the move not as a *casus belli* in itself, but because it seemed to presage a further fundamental undermining of the union between Britain and Northern Ireland. In practice, he proposed vigilance and in the meantime limited himself to calling for non-cooperation with an advisory commission to be appointed by the new secretary of state for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw.

William Craig, as Vanguard leader, called a two-day general strike in protest at direct rule. On the second day of the strike, 20 March, no fewer than 100,000 people demonstrated at Stormont itself. Fearing a *de facto* seizure of leadership by Craig, Faulkner assumed the role of master of ceremonies by ushering Craig out to a balcony to address the crowd. Craig lost his nerve and, bowing to Faulkner's authority, he called for three cheers for the prime minister. Vanguard subsequently fumed in vain at Faulkner's *coup de théâtre*.

Power-sharing

In the following months Faulkner wavered between reining in the fears he had himself encouraged by his linking of direct rule with British sell-out of the union, and stoking them as Britain moved towards talking to the Provisional IRA directly in July 1972. After the collapse of the short-lived British-IRA truce, he could afford to act more positively, and crafted a new unionist position, made public in September 1972, proposing the restoration of the Northern Ireland parliament as a single-chamber assembly with a committee system to ensure greater participation by all parties. While the devolved government would be responsible for internal security, there would be a bill of rights to safeguard minority rights. This was not enough to convince London, however. In March 1973 the British government's white paper proposed an assembly for Northern Ireland that would consist of eighty members elected by proportional representation, and a devolved cross-community (power-sharing) government in Northern Ireland. It further proposed that control of security matters would remain with Westminster, and that provision be made for the setting up of a Council of Ireland for north-south discussion on relevant matters. Faulkner cautiously welcomed the paper as a basis for discussion, but William Craig dismissed it. The following month Craig's new Vanguard Progressive Unionist Party formally constituted itself as a rival to the Ulster Unionist Party. Under the champion of unionist unity, the party had split.

Vanguard's secession did little to secure Faulkner's position, with many leading Ulster Unionists coming out against the white paper. Elections to an assembly, held on 28 June 1973, saw Vanguard unite with Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and sundry dissident unionists in a 'loyalist coalition', which won eighteen seats. Candidates of the Ulster Unionist Party, pledged to Faulkner, won twenty-two seats, but another ten successful candidates for the party rejected his leadership. Unionists opposed to power-sharing outnumbered Faulkner unionists. Faulkner's core electoral support now seemed to lie with the protestant middle class.

Anti-power-sharing unionists challenged Faulkner's pretensions to speak for the pro-union majority in Northern Ireland. Including nationalist and centre-ground representation, however, the majority in the assembly was in favour of the white paper. Faulkner considered himself to be the *de facto* representative of the unionist people within this plurality. Moreover, he was anxious to work with Whitelaw: while direct rule had brought violence to the province, he told his party conference in October 1973, it had also brought something else: 'an able mind, an outstanding personality and a real hard worker in Willie Whitelaw'. This faith was substantially justified by Whitelaw's stewarding of the inter-party discussions, leading to the establishment of a devolved power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. The most fraught issue had been the allocation of seats on the proposed governing executive, with the SDLP determined to prevent

Faulkner's unionist faction having a majority. Faulkner had his way, however, with six out of eleven unionist executive members, and Faulkner himself as chief minister. Perhaps even more importantly, virtually nothing was done to address the nationalist agenda of fair employment or security reform. Internment, in particular, remained.

There remained the Council of Ireland to be agreed, on a tripartite basis among the governments of Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. At this delicate point, William Whitelaw was replaced by Francis Pym (1922–2008) as secretary of state for Northern Ireland. During the talks, held in Sunningdale, Berkshire (6–9 December 1973), Faulkner was generally out-manoeuvred. Nationalist opinion, held to have made more concessions in the first round of negotiations, was slightly favoured. Nevertheless, Faulkner felt he had done enough in limiting the competence of the Council of Ireland to peripheral policy matters, securing a pledge from the government of the republic accepting that 'there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority' desired it, and setting in train cross-border security initiatives.

Faulkner's party did not share his strategic estimation, however. On 4 January 1974, four days after the power-sharing executive took office, a meeting of the Ulster Unionist Party's ruling council held in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, supported a motion rejecting 'the proposed all-Ireland-council settlement' by a majority of eighty votes. Three days later Faulkner resigned as party leader, though he remained head of the unionists in the assembly who were in favour of power-sharing. From this point, the Ulster Unionists opposed to Faulkner's leadership were known as the 'official unionists'. In May 1974, the pro-Faulkner unionists formally constituted themselves as the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (UPNI).

In the February 1974 Westminster election, seen as a referendum in Northern Ireland on power-sharing, unionists who opposed power-sharing – united under the banner of the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) – put forward a simple negative message: 'Sunningdale . . . weakens the British link and leads to an all-Ireland republic.' Faulkner emphasised that the Council of Ireland was contingent on the republic's recognition of Northern Ireland's right to a secure existence and self-determination. The result, nevertheless, was a resounding success for the UUUC. Eleven out of the twelve Northern Ireland seats at Westminster were won by UUUC candidates supporting anti-Sunningdale policies. Faulkner's unionists failed to secure a single seat (the SDLP picking up West Belfast). It was a body blow to Faulkner, but still the executive could continue until the next scheduled assembly election, and Faulkner believed that by then the innocuous reality of power-sharing and the Council of Ireland would have dispelled unionist fears. He thus held on as chief minister.

Resignation and death

Faulkner was denied his period of grace. On 15 May 1974, a previously obscure group, the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC), called a political general strike in protest at the executive, now clearly bereft of majority support. Faulkner reacted to the growing crisis by insisting that implementation of the most contentious elements of the Sunningdale agreement be postponed until after the next assembly elections due in 1978, and that the council then be limited to its inter-governmental tier. Though the SDLP unhappily agreed, the UWC were not placated and the strike remained solid. Facing the prospect of defections from his ministerial ranks, on 28 May Faulkner demanded that the Labour government's secretary of state, Merlyn Rees (1920–2006), open talks with the UWC. Rees refused, echoing Faulkner's old mantra of sole governmental responsibility for political and constitutional authority, and consequently, along with the other unionist members of the executive, Faulkner resigned as chief minister. Rees closed the executive and prorogued the assembly.

Faulkner's political career was effectively at an end. In August 1974 his UPNI formally abandoned the very idea of institutional north–south links. The October 1974 Westminster elections delivered the *coup de grâce* to the unionism of Faulkner, and, indeed, Chichester-Clark and Terence O'Neill. The UUUC increased their majorities in seven of the seats and gained an even bigger overall percentage of the votes than in February. Faulkner's unionists polled fewer votes than the Republican Clubs.

Faulkner retired from active politics in August 1976. He was created a life peer as Baron Faulkner of Downpatrick in the new year honours of the following year. On 3 March 1977 he was killed in a hunting accident, aged fifty-six, near Saintfield, Co. Down. His funeral service was held on 5 March at Magherahamlet presbyterian church, Co. Down. He was survived by his wife and three children.

Faulkner's guiding principle was the positive exercise of power, both as the due appropriate to his political and administrative personal ability, which in combination far exceeded any of his contemporaries in Northern Ireland, and as the essential focus for the unity and strength of the Ulster unionist community. This orientation allowed him a flexibility in policy unusual in Ulster's political culture, but it also inhibited his ability to appreciate the necessity for political pragmatism, requiring deference to less able but powerfully representative rivals. His feud with Terence O'Neill served only to taint the prize of leadership when finally it was in his hands. Ironically for the politician most committed to the mission of a unified unionist political movement, he presided over its unprecedented disintegration and relapse into purely negative power.

Written by Marc Mulholland

Sources: J. F. Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party 1882–1973: its development and organisation* (1973); D. Bleakley, *Faulkner: conflict and consent in Irish politics* (1974); B. Faulkner, *Memoirs of a statesman*, ed. J. Huston (1978); M. Mulholland, *Northern Ireland at the crossroads: Ulster unionism in the O'Neill years* (2000); H. Patterson, 'Faulkner, (Arthur) Brian Deane, Baron Faulkner of Downpatrick (1921–1977)', *ODNB*

Seamus Heaney

Heaney, Seamus Justin (1939–2013), poet, critic and translator, was born on 13 April 1939 on a farm called Mossbawn in the townland of Tamniarn near Castledawson, Co. Derry, the eldest of nine children (seven sons and two daughters) of Patrick Heaney, farmer and cattle-dealer, and his wife Margaret Kathleen (née McCann).

Early life, family and education

The family moved from Mossbawn to a farm called ‘The Wood’ near Bellaghy in 1953 when it was left to Patrick Heaney by his uncle with whom he had lived after the death of his parents. Patrick Heaney was a major figure in his son’s writing throughout his life, more markedly after his death in October 1986; he remained a prominently mourned presence. Heaney’s mother’s family worked in local linen mills, rather than the farming family she married into. She died in 1984 and was mourned in the sonnet-sequence ‘Clearances’, one of Heaney’s greatest sequences. Another important presence in the household of his childhood was his father’s sister, Mary Heaney, the subject and dedicatee of the celebrated poem ‘Sunlight’ at the head of the volume *North* in 1975. The nine children were Seamus, Sheena, Ann, Hugh, Patrick, Charles, Colum, Christopher and Dan. Christopher, aged four, was killed in a road accident in 1953 – the subject of Heaney’s famous early poem ‘Mid-term break’, and one he returned to in the late poem ‘The blackbird of Glanmore’. Two moving poems were devoted to his brother Hugh who remained as a farmer, ‘Keeping going’ and ‘Quitting time’.

Seamus attended Anahorish primary school (1944–51) which was not divided along religious lines. After passing the eleven-plus examination, he won a scholarship to St Columb’s College, Derry, where he was a boarder for six years (1951–7). A contemporary of his at St Columb’s was the writer Seamus Deane; the politician John Hume (who, like Heaney, was to win a Nobel prize) was two years his senior. He won a state exhibition to Queen’s University Belfast (1957–61) where he got a first in English language and literature. While at Queen’s he published his first poems in the student magazines *Q* and *Gorgon*, using the nom-de-plume *Incertus*: ‘the uncertain one’. Despite being encouraged by the English department at Queen’s to apply for postgraduate work at Oxford, he did a teaching diploma at St Joseph’s College of Education, Andersonstown, Belfast (1961–2). He was appointed to the teaching staff of St Thomas’s Secondary Intermediate School

in the Ballymurphy area of Belfast where he had done teaching practice during the diploma. The headmaster was the fiction writer Michael McLaverty whose encouragement Heaney always acknowledged. After one year there he returned to St Joseph's to take up a lectureship he held until 1966 when he was appointed to a lectureship back at Queen's which he held until 1972.

That lectureship had become vacant on the departure of Philip Hobsbaum to Glasgow. Hobsbaum had come to Queen's from Sheffield in 1962, and had founded a poetry workshop in Belfast, modelled on one he had run in London called 'The Group': the title he also gave to the Belfast gathering. In 1964 Hobsbaum sent some poems from the Belfast Group to the poet Edward Lucie-Smith whom he knew from the London Group. Lucie-Smith sent the poems to various London editors, including Karl Miller at the *New Statesman*. Miller published three poems by Heaney – 'Digging', 'Scaffolding' and 'Storm on the island' – in the same issue of the *New Statesman* in December 1964.

In 1965 Heaney married the teacher Marie Devlin whom he had met at St Joseph's in 1962. As Marie Heaney, she is also an important Irish writer, author amongst other things of *Over nine waves: a book of Irish legends* (1994), a lively retelling of stories from medieval Irish legends. She came from Ardboe, Co. Tyrone; her mother was a primary school teacher, Eileen O'Hare from Warrenpoint, Co. Down, whose family history was partly protestant huguenot, and her father, Tommy Devlin, was a merchant and farmer whose family background was partly presbyterian. He had a public house and a fish-exporting business; his eelworks feature in a number of Heaney's poems throughout his life. Marie Heaney's mixed religious inheritance was a factor in the reluctance of the Heaneys to take doctrinaire public positions. They had two sons while they lived in Belfast: Michael (born 1966) and Christopher (born 1968), and lived there until 1972, apart from a sabbatical year spent at the University of California at Berkeley in 1970–71. On their return from Berkeley, Heaney resigned his lectureship at Queen's and the family moved to Co. Wicklow, twenty miles south of Dublin where their daughter Catherine Ann was born in 1973. Although the purpose of the move was partly so that Heaney could devote himself full-time to writing, in 1976 he became head of English in Carysfort Teacher Training College in Dublin, and the family moved to nearby Sandymount. In 1981 he began a long association with Harvard University when he became a visiting professor there and where he was elected to a tenured post in 1985 as the Boylston professor of rhetoric and oratory (1985–97), and the Ralph Waldo Emerson poet in residence (1998–2006).

Contexts of early writing

This account of his personal and professional life has to be seen against two backgrounds: his literary development, especially his poetry, and the increasingly troubled politics of Northern Ireland. His first book of poetry, *Eleven poems*, was published in 1965 by Queen's University Festival Publications, followed the next year by *Death of a naturalist*, commissioned by Charles Monteith at Faber, which was widely acclaimed and won several prizes. His second book with Faber, *Door into the dark*, was published in 1969, in which year he visited the USA for the first time, as well as France and Spain with his family to fulfil the terms of the Somerset Maugham Award which stipulated foreign travel.

Heaney's early poetry was praised for its tactile evocativeness in representing the rural world of his upbringing; he often said that Mossbawn remained the centre of his imaginative world and he used the Greek term *omphalos* to represent its centrality. But from the first there are darker notes in his pastoral: in the second line of the poem which begins *Death of a naturalist*, 'Digging', which comes first as well in all subsequent selections from his work, the pen is described as 'snug as a

gun'. That first Faber volume derived from a manuscript which Heaney had sent to Dolmen Press late in 1964 under the title 'Advancements of learning'. The shift from the positive overtones of that title to foreground the psychic 'death' of the young naturalist is representative of something less optimistic in his poems about the process of learning (the poem which provides the book's title was originally published as 'End of a naturalist'). *Door into the dark* drew on observation of nature and locality in the same way, but the dark notes were now more prominent: a poem like 'Whinlands' observes the full bloom of the whin (also called furze or gorse) but notes:

Yet incineration like that
Only takes the thorn.
The tough sticks don't burn,
Remain like bone, charred horn.

The darkening of the poetry can be linked to the increasingly troubled political world in which Heaney grew up. The tensions in Northern Ireland became inescapable in the late 1960s, at the point when Heaney's literary reputation was being established with remarkable speed. The IRA campaign of the late 1950s and early 1960s had ended in 1962; but the development of protest politics worldwide, especially in the United States where the politics of the western world is incubated, prompted an emphasis on civil rights and forms of civil protest in Northern Ireland too. In August 1967 the first civil rights march took place at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. Heaney, like many of his poetic contemporaries from both the catholic and protestant communities, took part, and the context became less ignorable as political activity became more intense. The relatively reluctant part he played – what he called in the voice of a major poem in *Station Island* (1984) his 'timid, circumspect involvement' – was hardened by his encounter with more politically outspoken poets in America, like Robert Bly and Gary Snyder in 1971.

The attempt to find a theme and imagery which would be 'adequate to our predicament', as he put it in his 1974 lecture 'Feeling into words', took a dramatic turn in Heaney's third book, *Wintering out*, in 1972. The title implies that the objective in that period was survival through hard times. Some of Heaney's most successfully grounded poems in the volume are woven from local place names, like Broagh and Anahorish, to express the linguistic (and therefore socio-historical) complexity of Northern Ireland. The deconstructing of place names was linked to the medieval Irish form *dinnseanchas*, 'lore of place'. But a more extended use of place names comes in the poem 'Tollund man'. In 1969 Heaney had read *The bog people* by P. V. Glob, a book graphically illustrated with beautiful black-and-white photographs which describes the excavation in Jutland of bodies preserved in bog, apparently after ritual killing. Heaney said that when he read it 'my roots were crossed with my reading'. His use of the barbarity of those killings as an image for conditions in contemporary Northern Ireland was controversial, accused by some commentators of suggesting that violence came with the terrain in northern climes.

The conceit of the bog poem in 'Tollund man' was developed extensively in the volume *North* (1975), Heaney's most prominent book up to that point. There is no doubting the power and expressiveness of the imagery, in its response to the violence captured in the terrible phrase 'neighbourly murder' ('Funeral rites'). Like his contemporaries in Northern Ireland, Heaney was faced with a dilemma: whether to draw on the events of the Troubles and be accused of exploiting suffering for artistic ends; or to ignore them and be accused of retreat to an ivory tower. Discussion of the bog poems centred most controversially on the poem 'Punishment' which compares the ritual killing of a young woman, 'the Windeby girl' pictured in Glob's book (in fact the figure is probably a young man), to the local punishment by tar-and-feathering of young

women in Ulster who consorted with British soldiers. *North* was a celebrated and prize-winning collection, much admired outside Ireland for its facing up to the horrors of violence there. But its connection with age-old issues in Irish politics, and the conclusion of ‘Punishment’ – conniving ‘in civilised outrage’ but still understanding the ‘tribal, intimate revenge’ – were strongly criticised by some reviewers, including some of Heaney’s previously most ardent admirers, such as Conor Cruise O’Brien, for coming too close to a doctrinaire nationalist position.

When Dennis O’Driscoll in the important book of interviews with Heaney, *Stepping stones* (2008), asked how ‘legitimate it would have been ... for a poet living in Belfast not to have made any reference to the Troubles, and to have insisted on the autonomy of art by ignoring the social and anthropological reality outside the walls’ (*Stepping stones*, 384), Heaney said “‘Legitimate’ is an unnerving word there’. The impossibility of ignoring public conditions was particularly acute for Heaney who increasingly had something of a public voice. In addition to writing for a number of journals in Belfast and London, notably the *Listener* in London, he had also begun to contribute regularly to arts and education programmes on BBC radio in 1967 and continued to do so for over ten years. From 1972 to 1977 he fronted a regular books programme, *Imprint*, on Radio Éireann. These activities inevitably led to attempts to enlist him for various causes: something which he discussed with some anxiety throughout his writing life. This dilemma was particularly marked for an emerging figure from the catholic and nationalist tradition which was the sector in Northern Ireland that was disempowered politically.

A major theme of his writing throughout his life was this maintaining of balance between the considerations of art and public duty for the artist: conflicting imperatives most extensively addressed in his 1987 book, *The government of the tongue*, and encapsulated in the title of his 1996 volume, *The spirit level*. In an interview with Melvyn Bragg in 1991 he said his ‘temper’ was not ‘Brechtian’ – that his natural inclination was not to voice political opinions; but several factors made it impossible for him to ignore public circumstances. On 24 October 1968 he wrote ‘Old Derry’s walls’, an angry article in the *Listener*, accusing the Stormont minister of home affairs, William Craig, of deploying the police in ‘brutal control of the crowd’ of demonstrators which included in their number Gerry Fitt of the Republican Labour Party and three British Labour MPs.

The move to the south of Ireland

On their return from America, the Heaneys explored the possibility of moving their young family from Belfast to a rural part of Northern Ireland. But early in 1972 they rented Glanmore cottage, the gate-lodge to Glanmore castle in Co. Wicklow, from the Canadian Synge scholar Ann Saddlemyer (ultimately they bought it from her in 1988). In the time free of teaching, he wrote some of his most noted poems in the four years living there full-time, including most of *North* (1975) and many of the poems in *Field work* (1979). Between 1973 and 1978 he was a member of the Arts Council of Ireland, and he edited *Soundings*, a new anthology of Irish poetry. He represented his return to teaching at Carysfort in 1975 as something of an admission of defeat for his career, though it coincided with the happy move to the house in Sandymount which was the highly successful Heaney family-house to the end of his life.

Meanwhile, his circle of literary acquaintance was widening rapidly through the 1970s, home and abroad, and his poetry-related engagements were multiplying. He had met Patrick Kavanagh and Ted Hughes in the late 1960s, both of whom he acknowledged as important influences on his poetry. In Berkeley in 1971, as well as the leading Californian poets, he met Cruise O’Brien and Thomas Flanagan, author of *The year of the French* (1979), who became a close

friend. At international poetry gatherings, he got to know Robert Lowell and Joseph Brodsky, and the leading Scottish poets Norman MacCaig and Iain Crichton Smith. These encounters reinforced Heaney's attraction to the art side of his art-public duty dichotomy.

By the late 1970s, when the family was happily settled in Dublin and had access to the rural pleasures of Wicklow, Heaney wanted to lessen his answerability as commentator on the northern conflict and said he wanted the next book, by contrast to *North*, to be 'a door into the light'. But his fourth book *Field work* (1979) still contained some of his most powerful poems on the events in northern politics, such as 'Casualty' about Louis O'Neill, a fisherman and habitué of Heaney's father-in-law's pub, who was blown up by a pub bomb after Bloody Sunday, and 'The strand at Lough Beg', about the sectarian murder of Heaney's cousin Colum McCartney. The book also contained a poem 'After a killing' about the assassination of Christopher Ewart-Biggs, the British ambassador in Dublin. He was also busy with all the entailments of his lecturing work at Carysfort which he found increasingly hard to combine with the growing demands on him as an international literary figure. In 1976 he was granted leave by Carysfort to return to Berkeley as Beckman professor, and in 1979 he and the family spent the spring semester at Harvard. In 1981 he resigned from Carysfort and the next year started an arrangement by which he would teach in Harvard for the spring semester for the next three years. In 1984 this was formalised as a tenured post, as Boylston professor of rhetoric and oratory, and in 1987–8 he spent the full academic year there. He resigned from this distinguished position in 1996, to be appointed instead as Emerson poet in residence at Harvard, a non-teaching role which required a six-week visit in alternate years which he held until 2007.

At the time of *Field work*, another significant development in Heaney's literary publications was the appearance in 1980 of his first volume of prose writings, *Preoccupations*. As well as major critical writings, the book contains enlightening discussions of his personal life, his writing and the circumstances of Northern Ireland in the essays 'Mossbawn' and 'Belfast'. From that point onward Heaney is a poet-critic in an English tradition that extends from Philip Sidney to T. S. Eliot, and he was increasingly in demand as guest-lecturer or professor of poetry. Indeed he was increasingly active on all fronts. In 1981 he became a director of the Field Day theatre company, founded by Brian Friel (1929–2015) and Stephen Rea; in 1983 he published a Field Day verse pamphlet entitled *An open letter*, rejecting in genial terms his inclusion under the heading 'British' in *The Penguin book of contemporary British poetry*, edited by Andrew Motion and Blake Morrison. Later he edited the W. B. Yeats section of *The Field Day anthology of Irish writing* (1991), and his first play, 'The cure at Troy' (a translation of *Philoctetes* by Sophocles) was staged by Field Day in 1990.

Heaney's declared wish in writing *Field work* was to put the early poems behind him with the much-quoted observation 'Up to *North* that was one book', and escape towards a more indulgent writing stance free of public responsibility, expressed in the volume's first poem 'Oysters'. But escape from Northern politics was not an option. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a series of protests by nationalist prisoners culminated in the deaths on hunger strike of ten of them, including Francis Hughes, a neighbour of Heaney's from Co. Derry, in May 1981. Although in the early 1980s at the time of the hunger strikes Heaney was no longer living in Belfast, the wider social reality there was impossible to ignore. So his next book, *Station Island* in 1984, was to some extent a retreat into the dark again, centring on a fictional pilgrimage to Lough Derg in the course of which the narrator encounters in a Dantesque purgatory dead figures from his personal past and the Irish past. The sequence ends with a meeting with a fictional James Joyce who tells the narrator-poet 'to write / for the joy of it' and not to 'be so earnest, / so ready for the sackcloth and the ashes' because he will 'lose more of yourself than you redeem / doing the

decent thing.’ It is a strikingly clear statement of the conflict between public answerability and artistic freedom.

Widening of the writing life

The year before the publication of *Station Island*, another Irish literary project came to fruition with the publication by Field Day of *Sweeney astray*, a translation of the medieval Irish text *Buile Suibhne* which Heaney had first embarked on in 1972. He translated a good proportion of it then, but returned to it seriously in 1979 and completed it in 1983. The story of the original has obvious bearing on his own circumstances, as he explained to Dennis O’Driscoll in an interview, ‘Heaney’s Sweeney’ in *Hibernia* in 1979, saying ‘there is something here for me’. The medieval narrative (also drawn on by Flann O’Brien in *At Swim-Two-Birds*) tells of the Ulster poet Sweeney who is banished by the cleric Ronan and travels throughout Ireland, itemised with detailed geographical references. The literary significance of the appearance of *Sweeney astray* was that it marked the start of Heaney’s activities as a major translator, in an Irish heritage extending from the early nineteenth century and most famously in Heaney’s time in the celebrated translation of *Táin Bó Cuailnge* by Thomas Kinsella in 1969 (glowingly reviewed by Heaney in the *Listener*). Heaney’s translating activity from the first though was not confined to Irish sources; he was asked by Norton to make a verse-translation of the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, and in 1984–5 did about a hundred lines of it. He was unsatisfied by what he had done and gave up. In the event he resumed it in 1995 (after Norton, assuming he was not going to do it, asked him to propose someone else) and completed it in 1999 when it was named the Whitbread book of the year.

From 1983 onwards, as well as poet, critic and cultural commentator, Heaney was a prolific and admired translator from several sources, including two versions of plays by Sophocles, ‘The cure at Troy’ from *Philoctetes* (premiered by Field Day in 1990), and ‘The burial at Thebes’ from *Antigone* (2004). In common with other Northern Irish writers such as Tom Paulin, he seemed to find the received Greek text a non-ideological way of addressing political issues. And, as always in Heaney with his search for balance and what he called ‘redress’, the volume *Station Island* was by no means unremittingly dark. Outside the translation of *Sweeney astray*, the figure of Sweeney was carried over into the third section of *Station Island* called ‘Sweeney redivivus’, a series of much admired lyrics drawn in part from abandoned, more lyrical pieces of the earlier version of *Sweeney astray*. These served as a kind of counter-balance to the parts of the central sequence ‘Station Island’ that dealt with contemporary events and the Troubles (notably two poems dealing with sectarian killings: number vii, the encounter with William Strathearn; and viii in which Heaney’s cousin Colum McCartney protests at the aestheticising of his murder in ‘The strand at Lough Beg’).

In 1984, the year of the publication of *Station Island* (and of *Sweeney astray* by Faber in London), Heaney’s mother died; two years later his father died. His next book *The haw lantern* (1987) has been most admired for its sequence, ‘Clearances’, in memory of his mother (one of its poems, ‘When all the others were away at Mass’ was voted the nation’s favourite poem in an RTÉ poll in 2015). Duty towards family and friends had always been important for him; it became increasingly explicit in his work from this point onwards, culminating in his late poems for grandchildren and devotion to his parents in the early poems in *Human chain* in 2010 and in the Virgilian search for the father in his posthumously published translation of *Aeneid book vi*. This centrality of family, from Mossbawn to burial in Bellaghy graveyard, gives an apt poignancy to the volume *100 poems*, a selection made by his family in 2018.

This elegiac and personal vein was shared with his previously established themes in the volumes after his parents' deaths. *The haw lantern*, as well as the 'Clearances' sonnets, contains a series of political allegories, suggested at least in part by his encounters with poetry from the more closed world of Eastern Europe in the 1980s. As early as 1975 in 'Exposure' at the end of *North*, he had borrowed the terminology of the *émigrés de l'intérieur* of that world, saying he was 'neither internee nor informer', an 'inner émigré' 'escaped from the massacre' whose escape might mean he has missed the 'once-in-a-lifetime portent'. *The haw lantern* was published in the same year as *The government of the tongue* with its prose discussions of poetic freedom and responsibility. One of the allegories, 'From the republic of conscience', was written in response to a commission from Amnesty International in 1985 to mark United Nations Day and was reprinted in 2009 in an anthology of writings 'Inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights', edited by Sean Love, founding director of Art for Amnesty and Amnesty Education. Love's anthology used the title of Heaney's poem as its title, and Heaney wrote the introduction, 'The poetic redress'.

The idea of redress, which Heaney says he took from the French writer Simone Weil, becomes even more crucial for him from this point onwards, to represent the balance that is required between various dualities: for example public duty versus artistic freedom, personal experience versus cultural tradition, the place of English language and literature in Ireland versus the displaced Gaelic tradition. These conflicts and choices became more marked for him the more internationally active he became. When in 1989 he was elected professor of poetry at Oxford, following such heroes of his as A. C. Bradley, Matthew Arnold, W. H. Auden, C. Day-Lewis and Robert Graves, his first lecture was entitled 'The redress of poetry', which was also the title of the book drawing on the lectures, published in 1995. The subjects of the lectures reflected his familiar interests and dilemmas, from Ovid to Brian Merriman and from Christopher Marlowe to Elizabeth Bishop. One of the lectures – the one he put last in the book – was called 'Frontiers of writing', drawing on one of the most successful of the political allegories in *The haw lantern*, 'From the frontier of writing' which linked the hostile interrogation of a military road-block to the interrogation at the critical frontier of writing 'where it happens again. The guns on tripods; / the sergeant with his on-off mike repeating // data about you, waiting for the squawk / of clearance.' It is a very successful bringing together of the two anxieties – the political and the literary. In the lecture that ends *The redress of poetry*, he returns to the night in 1981 when the funeral of the hunger-striker Francis Hughes was taking place in Bellaghy and Heaney was spending the night in Sir Keith Joseph's room in All Souls, Oxford, at the heart of the British establishment. He invokes again the notion of redress, to consider how poetry might 'help' (the word used by the Greek poet Seferis) to restore the balance to the weaker side. The essay was an important summary of Heaney's considered view of the art-responsibility dilemma; Ted Hughes admired it as a statement of Irish-British relations which would make Ireland's problems clearer in Britain.

Bid for freedom

When Heaney took up his role at Oxford in 1989, he held it in tandem with his Harvard duties. It was an extraordinarily productive period in his writing too; in 1990 'The cure at Troy' was staged, first in Derry and in various places immediately afterwards. He was also rapidly putting together his next book *Seeing things* (1991) which marked a bold departure from the preceding volumes with their various obligations. It was a bid, as he had hoped for *Field work*, for a more personal field of writing where the imagination would have freer rein. Again, the book had some powerful personal poems, notably the title poem with its description of the near-death experience of his 'undrowned father'. It starts with the great imaginative claim for inspiration

by translating the Golden Bough passage from *Aeneid book vi*, a work which had always been important for Heaney and was to become increasingly so to the end of his life. His translation of the whole of *Book vi* was published posthumously by his daughter Catherine and Matthew Hollis of Faber in 2016.

In a series of forty-eight poems headed ‘Squarings’, Heaney used the most distinctive form since the augur-like ‘skinny quatrains’ of the bog poems. He tells how the form – four three-line stanzas – just took shape when he had been working on his selection of Yeats in the reading room of the National Library of Ireland. In fact it was the stanza-form he had already devised for the allegorical poems in *The haw lantern*, and it was to return as the dominant form of his last completed book, *Human chain* in 2010. In the poem ‘Fosterling’ which came before ‘Squarings’, he remarks how improbable it was that he had to wait ‘until I was nearly fifty / to credit marvels.’ Now it was ‘Time to be dazzled and the heart to lighten.’

A further lightening, this time public, came with the IRA ceasefire in 1994; the other warring factions gradually followed suit. In keeping with his established alternating pattern from volume to volume, his next book *The spirit level* mixed the public with the personal again, its title a reminder of the need for equilibrium and redress towards the weaker side. The book ends with two decidedly positive poems, the much loved ‘Postscript’ at the end, after ‘Tollund’ has rejoiced in the possibility of ‘a new beginning ... Ourselves again, free-willed again, not bad’. But earlier in the book had come one of Heaney’s least optimistic sequences, ‘Mycenae lookout’, which revisits the terrain of ‘Punishment’, deploring violence against women. Another poem, ‘The flight path’, recalls a meeting on a train with the Sinn Féin activist Danny Morrison in 1979 when he asked Heaney when he is going to write ‘something for us’. Heaney tells Dennis O’Driscoll in *Stepping stones* that he had pondered dedicating the poem ‘Ugolino’ to the prisoners but felt he could not after this direct appeal. (Later he said to O’Driscoll ‘I translated “Ugolino” in order for it to be read in the context of the “dirty protests” in the Maze prison.’ (*Stepping stones*, 425).) So the ‘crediting marvels’ of *Seeing things* was not an untroubled change towards imaginative freedom, in keeping with Heaney’s general practice of avoiding single postures, however appealing.

Before the publication of *The spirit level* a life-changing event had occurred in 1995 when Heaney was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. The Heaneys were in Greece on holiday with friends when the announcement was made; the award ceremony was in Stockholm in December 1995. For all the celebration it occasioned, national as well as personal, in some ways it put a brake on the bids for freedom: he described the effect of the prize to O’Driscoll as ‘Joy to start with, certainly, then a gradual burdening’ (*Stepping stones*, 369). He had already been much in demand in all areas; the Nobel prize greatly increased those demands.

In the speech ‘Crediting poetry’ at the Stockholm award ceremony, Heaney returned to the theme of artistic freedom and poetry’s power to help. His title goes back to his ‘crediting marvels’ in ‘Fosterling’, declaring the attraction of ‘walking on air’ (linked to the last line of a poem of that time ‘The gravel walks’, which appears on Heaney’s gravestone: ‘So walk on air against your better judgement’). But the Nobel talk is a powerful jeremiad against the violence of history, particularly in the twentieth century; he says, ‘history is about as instructive as an abattoir’. The concluding endeavour is to ‘make space in my reckoning and imagining for the marvellous as well as for the murderous.’

Post-Nobel: The millennium

In 1998 Heaney’s most substantial and canon-forming selection *Opened ground: poems 1966–1996* was published, taking its optimistic title from the second of the ‘Glanmore sonnets’ in *Field*

work and appending the Nobel lecture. It included poems up to *The spirit level*, published only two years before. In 1999 his translation of *Beowulf* had been published; like *The spirit level* it was selected as the Whitbread book of the year, a relatively uncommon recognition for a poetry book. In 2002 he published *Finders keepers* as a kind of prose companion to *Opened ground*. Heaney drew on his three prose collections for it and added some essays not previously published in book form. It ended with a short essay on the Polish/Lithuanian poet Czeslaw Milosz, entitled 'Secular and millennial Milosz', written in 1999 at the end of the millennium and paying tribute to the Eastern European writer he most revered. The book also follows the structure of his first prose collection, *Preoccupations*, with the essays of personal memory at the start. The essay 'Mossbawn' has the same dominance in the prose collections as 'Digging' has in the poems, deriving from the same locus.

Electric light, his first volume of poems written after the Nobel prize and the Northern Ireland ceasefires, was published in 2001. The volume's second section is a series of elegies of friends and poets. The more substantial first section celebrates Heaney's visit to Greece, but also contains three Virgilian eclogues, one of them a tribute to Ann Saddlemyer as the patron who has favoured the poet at Glanmore as Augusta, Lady Gregory served Yeats. In *Electric light*, friends and family from Heaney's past are celebrated and mourned by their 'Real names', the term used as the title to one of these commemorative poems (which he had considered as a title for the book). Politics are at the edges of these poems: there is a shadow presence of violence in the poem 'Known world' which describes the hilarity of the events at a poetry gathering at Struga in Macedonia in 1978. The drunken high spirits in the poem are not its deeper spirit, and it says 'That old sense of a tragedy going on / Uncomprehended, at the very edge / Of the usual, it never left me once ...'. We remember 'the old man-killing parishes' in 'Tollund man' where the narrator 'will feel lost, / Unhappy and at home.' And the one reference to Northern Irish troubles is a particularly desolating one: among the idyllic 'Sonnets from Hellas', 'King Augeus's reeking yard and stables' is the mythological setting for 'Sean Brown's murder in the grounds / Of Bellaghy GAA Club'.

After the Nobel prize, the requests for contributions to different series and different causes was unending (*Stepping stones*, 423). And, as his international engagements and travels expanded, so did the range of what he called 'civic service' extend beyond Ireland and Britain. His translation of Sophocles in 'The cure at Troy' in 1990 contained lines that became very familiar with application to Ireland, quoted by Mary Robinson, Gerry Adams, Nadine Gordimer and Bill Clinton: 'once in a lifetime / The longed-for tidal wave / Of justice can rise up / And hope and history rhyme'. In 2001, the year of the appearance of *Electric light*, once again Heaney rose to the challenge of an unignorable event, this time in a global context. The most effective response in poetry to the 9/11 attacks in New York was his free translation of poem thirty-four in Book One of Horace's *Odes*, 'Anything can happen', which was translated into twenty-four languages and published 'in support of Art for Amnesty' (2004). The volume in which the millennium, with its implication of major change, is prominent (including 'Anything can happen') is *District and Circle* in 2006. The implication of the volume's title is very suggestive: as always in Heaney, but more markedly in the later books, the to-and-fro movement between the originary district and the wider world it leads to is his primary material.

By the time of 'The burial at Thebes' (2004), the application of its story of Antigone and Creon had a wider relevance in the era of George W. Bush's 'war on terror'. Heaney calls Creon's phrase 'I'll flush 'em out' a 'Bushism' and says that in the play 'here and there the word "patriot" is employed with a definite neo-conservative righteousness' (*Stepping stones*, 423). Also in 2004, he read the poem 'Beacons at Bealtaine' at Áras an Uachtaráin to the twenty-five heads of government of the European Union to mark Ireland's presidency. Even if Mossbawn remained the stable

centre of his writing, by now he is established at the foreground of world poetry. He was active on the home front too in the decade following the Nobel prize. In 1996 he opened the Bellaghy Bawn Visitors Centre which included books, readings and memorabilia by him. He gave the memorial address in Westminster Abbey for Ted Hughes in 1999 and for R. S. Thomas in 2001. He had many important recognitions in his own name, notably the opening of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's Belfast in 2004, and of the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy in 2016.

Later life and writing

Heaney's activities were curtailed in August 2006 when he suffered a stroke, after which his engagements were cancelled for twelve months. In the aftermath of the stroke his locus within his family became even more marked than usual, and his last book *Human chain* (2010) reflects this. It was a book, at last, which is wholly free of 'civic service', but it was seen as one of his great successes in its sustained elegiac spirit. The human chain of the title links the poet after his stroke to his wife's hand, but its linkage extends too from his own grandfather and parents to his granddaughters, linking family past to future. One of the book's major successes was 'Route 110' (for his granddaughter Anna Rose), starting with the young poet buying a 'used copy of *Aeneid vi*' in a Belfast bookshop before taking the bus home, 'For Route 110, Cookstown via Toome and Magherafelt'. Once again, the home journey is linked to the mythological journeys in Virgil and Dante. The details of *Human chain* gained great poignancy when Heaney died suddenly on 30 August 2013 in the Blackrock Clinic, Dublin, leading to an extraordinary outpouring of national grieving. At his funeral his son Michael told the congregation that his last verbal communication was a text to his wife as he was being taken into the operating theatre, which said '*Noli timere*', 'Do not be afraid' – expressed as Michael said in 'his beloved Latin'.

'Route 110' and Michael's observation were brought to fruition by the posthumous publication of his translation of *Aeneid book vi* in 2016. His lifelong agonising between the demands of public duty and poetic jurisdiction is summarised in his own 'Note on the text' appended to the *Aeneid* translation by its editors, his daughter Catherine and Matthew Hollis of Faber: 'For the contemporary reader, it is the best of books and the worst of books. Best because of its mythopoeic visions, the twilit fetch of its language, the pathos of the many encounters it allows the living Aeneas with his familiar dead. Worst because of its imperial certitude, its celebration of Rome's manifest destiny and the catalogue of Roman heroes.' It makes a very apt coda to the various imperatives that Heaney's writing has operated with.

Literary and public standing

From the first, Heaney's work was received with admiration and won leading literary awards. Most of his works were awarded major prizes: *Sweeney astray* won the PEN translation award in 1985, and 'The cure at Troy' won the Lannan Literary Award in 1990. He was elected *commandeur de l'ordre des arts et lettres* in 1996, the year after he won the Nobel prize. In 1998 he was elected as a *saoi* of Aosdána, the highest artistic accolade given in Ireland, and in 2005 was given the *PEN* award, presented by his friend and Field Day colleague, the poet Tom Paulin. In 2009 he was given the David Cohen prize for literature, awarded by the English Arts Council for the lifetime achievement of a whole literary corpus. All the volumes of poetry won one or more prizes, in Europe, the USA and beyond.

Archive

In 1988 he gave his lecture notes to the University of Emory in Atlanta, to which he also donated a substantial volume of his letters (1964–2003) in 2003, in honour of the retiring President of Emory, William M. Chace. His media archive is held in the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's. In December 2011 he donated (and delivered by family car, with his son Michael) the most important parts of his literary archive to the National Library in Dublin. In July 2018 a three-year exhibition curated by Geraldine Higgins based on his papers in the NLI, was opened at the Bank of Ireland Cultural Centre at College Green, Dublin, called 'Listen now again'.

Written by Bernard O'Donoghue

Sources: Michael Parker, *Seamus Heaney: the making of the poet* (1993); Karl Miller, *Seamus Heaney: in conversation with Karl Miller* (2000); Seamus Heaney, *Finders keepers: selected prose 1971–2001* (2002); Dennis O'Driscoll, *Stepping stones: interviews with Seamus Heaney* (2008); Bernard O'Donoghue (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Seamus Heaney* (2009); Richard Russell Rankin, *Seamus Heaney's regions* (2014); Chris Agee (ed.), *Heaney: Irish Pages*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2015)