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**Home Rule from a Transnational Perspective: The Irish Parliamentary Party  
and the United Irish League of America, 1901-1918**

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**A Dissertation for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## Abstract

When John Redmond was elected chairman of the reunited Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) in 1900, he quickly identified a pressing need to re-engage Irish America. Ireland's largest diaspora had grown weary of constitutional nationalism after the debacle of the Parnell split in 1890 and this apathy would need to be addressed if the IPP was to successfully prosecute the drive for home rule. This consideration led Redmond to establish the United Irish League of America (UILA) in December 1901.

Tasked with providing financial and ideological support to the IPP, the UILA performed admirably, growing exponentially with every legislative victory the Irish Party achieved at Westminster. Indeed, with some form of home rule seeming a political inevitability in 1914, the American League could be forgiven for thinking it had fulfilled its mandate. The onset of the Great War, however, and Redmond's decision to lend Irish Volunteer support to Britain, initiated the death of constitutional nationalism before a flagging revolutionary movement was inspired to strike a blow for Ireland.

This thesis examines the relationship between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League of America between 1901 and 1918. An analysis of IPP parental responsibilities, together with an appraisal of the UILA's wilful subordination, facilitate a measured commentary on the steady decline of a once promising relationship. Personal correspondence between individuals at the heart of these organisations, together with extensive press reports and the published proceedings of multiple conventions, complement a rapidly expanding historiography surrounding Ireland's struggle for national independence. What follows is a nuanced exploration of John Redmond's leadership, and questions as to whether arrogance, naivety, or a laissez-faire attitude had any role to play in fomenting the transatlantic discord ultimately so injurious to the constitutional movement begin to emerge.

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To all the staff in the Discipline of History at NUI Galway I owe a similar debt of gratitude. A special mention must go to Professor Enrico Dal Lago, Dr Róisín Healy, and Dr Kevin O’Sullivan, for the positive feedback they gave me as an undergraduate and an M.A. student. My thanks also to the members of my Graduate Research Committee, Dr Gearóid Barry, Dr Laurence Marley, and Dr John Cunningham, and to Dr Michael Doorley and Dr Caitríona Clear for their insightful observations during my Viva.

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I would like to thank my colleagues Liam Farrell, Gary Hussey and Hasret Çetinkaya for lightening each day over lengthy (perhaps too lengthy) coffee breaks, and for allowing a middle-aged socially conservative dinosaur share their liberally progressive and intellectually gifted company.

To the staff at the NLI, TCD, UCD, and Mary Immaculate College, UL, I extend my gratitude. And in America, Megan Mulder at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, Kaitlynn Pettengill at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Cara Delatte at the New York Public Library, and Kathleen Williams at the Burns Library in Boston College, deserve a special thank you.

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my brother Eddie, my daughters Francine and Roxanne, and my brother-in-law Mike O'Flaherty. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Mary. For without her love and support none of this would have been possible.

## Abbreviations

<b>AOH</b>	Ancient Order of Hibernians (the American Order)
<b>BOE</b>	Board of Erin, (sometimes the AOHBOE, the Irish branch of the AOH)
<b><i>DIB</i></b>	Dictionary of Irish Biography
<b><i>FJ</i></b>	Freeman's Journal
<b>FOIF</b>	Friends of Irish Freedom
<b><i>GA</i></b>	<i>Gaelic American</i>
<b>INL</b>	Irish National League
<b>INF</b>	Irish National Federation
<b>IPP</b>	Irish Parliamentary Party
<b>IRB</b>	Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood (or Irish Republican Brotherhood)
<b>IV</b>	Irish Volunteers
<b><i>IW</i></b>	<i>Irish World</i>
<b>JQMC</b>	John Quinn Memorial Collection
<b>NLI</b>	National Library of Ireland
<b>NYPL</b>	New York Public Library
<b>RP</b>	Redmond Papers
<b>SF</b>	Sinn Féin
<b>TCD</b>	Trinity College Dublin
<b>UILA</b>	United Irish League of America
<b>WBCP</b>	William Bourke Cockran Papers
<b>UILGB</b>	United Irish League of Great Britain
<b>YIB</b>	Young Ireland Branch

## Introduction

This dissertation is a study of the Irish Parliamentary Party's (IPP) relationship with the United Irish League of America (UILA) between 1901 and 1918. This was a critical period for Ireland; encompassing as it did party reunification, a cultural reawakening, an emerging separatism, unparalleled political progress at Westminster, labour activism, a home rule crisis, a world war, a republican insurrection, and the very real prospect of partition. Under John Redmond's *de-facto* leadership, the UILA was tasked with supporting the IPP in its efforts to secure Irish legislative independence from Britain. That the Irish Party failed to achieve this, and that the UILA subsequently lost all faith in its parent organisation's ability to ever do so, is, for advocates of constitutional nationalism, a sad fact of history. The aim of 'Home Rule from a Transnational Perspective: The Irish Parliamentary and the United Irish League of America, 1901-1918', then, is to explore the fragility of an affiliation unable to weather the momentous developments which conspired to undermine it.

While falling safely within the parameters of transnational this study is specifically transatlantic in that it deals with events which occurred in Ireland and the United States only. This is essential for several reasons. Not only was America home to the largest Irish diaspora; as a republic which had fought for and won its own independence from Britain the United States was the very embodiment of Irish-American nationalist aspirations. And unlike other areas of Irish settlement (e.g. the British Dominions of Australia or Canada), the Irish in America were free to exercise their justifiably innate Anglophobia. This Anglophobia became ever-more pronounced in the generation of impoverished and destitute immigrants compelled to leave Ireland during the Great Famine of 1845-49. And that tragedy was suitably exploited by an emerging Irish-American press eager to lay the blame for all of Ireland's ills at England's door. John Mitchel, a journalist and exiled Young Irelander, established *The Citizen* newspaper in New York in 1853 to give expression to such radical opinion before his *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (1861) equated the English government's criminal mismanagement of the devastating potato blight to a deliberate act of genocide.<sup>1</sup> Prevailing tensions between advocates of alternative solutions to the Irish national question have long

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<sup>1</sup> John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, (Dublin: Irishman Office, 1861)



dominated the general historiography of this period. And while my work can be bracketed in much the same genre, I chose instead to concentrate on the Irish Party's working relationship with an auxiliary organisation it both purported to lead yet depended upon for survival.

For students of Irish-American nationalism, difficulties arise when one tries to identify the dominant agent of influence. Essentially, trying to figure out whether the dog (Ireland) wagged its tail (Irish America), or vice versa, can divide the most respected of opinions. However, rather than dwelling on events which occurred outside the IPP's or UILA's own control (e.g. the First World War or the Easter 1916 Rising), this dissertation investigates the constitutional movement's record at addressing shortfalls within its own remit. These include (but are not confined to) the denial of Irish-American input into Irish Party policy formulation, dubious leadership from an often-blasé parent organisation, an abject failure on the part of the IPP to maximise the true potential of nationalist Ireland's Fifth Column, and a debilitating procrastination when attempting to arrest a subsequent decline in transatlantic relations. This investigation is necessary if only to provide balance and perspective to Ireland's historic struggle for independence. And in this period of national reflection, popularised by the Decade of Centenary Commemorations (2013-23), some of the relationships which defined this struggle require closer inspection.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Irish-American nationalism has not been looked at enough by historians. Those who have looked at it have done so from differing, albeit complementary, angles. Charles Callan Tansill's *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom: An Old Story based upon New Data* (1957) championed its contribution to the revolutionary struggle while Thomas N. Brown's *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890* (1966) juxtaposed its fatalism with nativist and WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) prejudice.<sup>2</sup> However, recognition and credit must go to Alan J. Ward and Francis M. Carroll for breaking relatively new ground. In

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Callan Tansill, *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom: An Old Story based upon New Data* (New York: Devon-Adair, 1957); Thomas N. Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890* (Philadelphia; New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1966). See also Lawrence John McCaffrey, *Irish Nationalism and the American Contribution* (New York: Arno Press, 1976); Thomas E. Hachey, Lawrence John McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 1989)

highlighting the influence John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party wielded through the United Irish League of America, Ward's *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921* (1969) and Carroll's *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-1923: A Study in Opinion and Policy* (1978) were among the first to truly acknowledge transatlantic constitutional nationalism. Ward was particularly adept at covering the diplomatic war Irish Americans waged in their efforts to subvert Anglo-American rapprochement while Carroll was precise in his account of the decline of the United Irish League of America during the Home Rule crisis and the Great War.<sup>3</sup> Following Ward and Carroll, Alan O'Day contributed several telling articles on Irish diaspora politics, including a comparative study of the UIL's affiliates in Great Britain and America.<sup>4</sup> Crucially, O'Day has noted how Irish political organisations in the US were mistrusted by an Irish Party unable to exercise direct control over them. And given this mistrust, they were largely confined to raising funds for the party at home, promoting constitutional nationalism in America, and advancing Ireland's cause at Washington. Thereafter, Michael Doorley's *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism: The Friends of Irish Freedom, 1916-1935* (2005) broadened our understanding of events.<sup>5</sup> In this, the seminal study of the organisation that proved to be an existential threat to the UILA, Doorley's work is pivotal to appreciating the drift from moderate to radical nationalism that occurred in Irish America around this time. And more recently, Miriam Nyhan Grey (ed.), *Ireland's Allies: America and the 1916 Easter Rising* (2016), is a far more expansive account of transatlantic links than the limits of the title suggest. Encompassing the Fenian contribution to the rising, League dissension at the prospect of the partition of Ireland, the Irish-American Catholic press's interpretation of events in the old country, and the wider American perception of the Irish labour struggle, *Ireland's*

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<sup>3</sup> Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science; Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969); Francis M. Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-1923: A Study in Opinion and Policy* (Dublin; New York: Gill and MacMillan; St Martin's Press, 1978)

<sup>4</sup> Alan O'Day, 'Irish Diaspora Politics in Perspective: The United Irish Leagues of Great Britain and America, 1900-1914', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration, and Diaspora* Vol. 18, No's 2-3 (1999), pp. 214-239; Alan O'Day, 'Imagined Irish Communities: Networks of Social Communication of the Irish Diaspora in the United States and Britain in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration, and Diaspora* Vol. 23, No's 2-3 (Jul-Nov. 2005), pp. 399-424; Alan O'Day, 'A Conundrum of Irish Diasporic Identity', *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration, and Diaspora* Vol. 27, No's 2-3 (2009), pp. 317-339

<sup>5</sup> Michael Doorley, *Irish American Diaspora Nationalism: The Friends of Irish Freedom, 1916-1935* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005)

*Allies* part-justifies the claim that the Easter rebels were, indeed, supported by Ireland's exiled children in America.<sup>6</sup> While all of these are accomplished works in their own right, none are dedicated to the routine interaction between the IPP and the UILA outside the periods of recognised crises. My study fills this void and identifies the true nature of what was an ostensibly fragile relationship. It is only by examining internal League dynamics, transatlantic expectation, personal and regional rivalries, and competing allegiances, that we can truly understand the efficacy, or otherwise, of Irish constitutional nationalism in the US.

The central character in this study is, undoubtedly, John E. Redmond, chairman of the reunited Irish Parliamentary from 1900. Given the longevity of Redmond's political career, and his impact on Irish Nationalism, surprisingly few biographies of the Irish leader have emerged. In the immediate aftermath of his death in 1918 contemporaries in the form of Stephen Gwynn and Warre Bradley Welles rushed to produce testimonials sympathetic to Redmond's service to Ireland.<sup>7</sup> However, it was fourteen years before Stephen Gwynn's son, Denis, used his father's personal papers to produce the biography a man of Redmond's stature truly warranted. Denis Gwynn's *The Life of John Redmond* (1932) portrays an arch-conciliator given over to political accommodation.<sup>8</sup> A leader, who, conscious of the ruination brought about by the Parnell split, strove to maintain party unity while seeking to distance himself from the separatist ideology of his republican rivals. Apart from a short study by Paul Bew, Denis Gwynn's work stood as the go-to book for students of John Redmond for more than sixty years.<sup>9</sup> Joseph Finnan's *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918* (2004) enriched our understanding of the Irish leader's most challenging period at the head of the constitutional movement before the renewed interest in Ireland's national story, coupled with a life-long interest in the fortunes of the Irish Party leader, served as a catalyst for Dermot Meleady's two-volume biography in

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<sup>6</sup> Miriam Nyhan Grey (ed.), *Ireland's Allies: America and the 1916 Easter Rising* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2016); Richard Aldous, Niamh Puirseil, *We Declare: Landmark Documents in Ireland's History* (London: Quercus Publishing, 2008) 'Proclamation of the Irish Republic', p. 114

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Lucius Gwynn, *John Redmond's Last Years* (London: E. Arnold, 1919); Warre Bradley Welles, *John Redmond: A Biography* (London: Nesbit & Co., 1919)

<sup>8</sup> Denis Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond* (London; Bombay; Sydney: G.G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1932)

<sup>9</sup> Paul Bew, *John Redmond* (Dundalk: Published for the Historical Association of Ireland by Dundalgan Press, 1996)

2008 and 2014.<sup>10</sup> In dividing Redmond's career into two distinct periods, Meleady was acknowledging the largely forgotten man of Irish history. In *Redmond: The Parnellite* (2008) the story of a principled politician prepared to swim against the populist tide is revealed. And in *John Redmond: The National Leader* (2014) the new chairman's struggle to return a reunited IPP to a position of influence at Westminster, and to make Home Rule for Ireland a viable proposition for a new generation of English statesmen, is covered in admirable detail. As commendable as Meleady's work is, Irish America, or more precisely the UILA, only ever appear as a supporting actor. Little attention, if any, is given over to the transatlantic link save acknowledgement of party attendance at the biennial League convention or the occasional tour by a visiting envoy. Irish-American nationalism is not a stand-alone subject, however, and any attempt to address it with due diligence requires a nuanced understanding of the myriad of experiences which defined the lives of those attracted to it. Those experiences included emigration, assimilation, confessional allegiance, social interaction, cultural identification, and nationalist obligation.

Gauging the precise number of Irish immigrants in America at the turn of the twentieth century is a challenging task at the best of times. Patrick J. Blessing's approximation of 5 million Irish emigrating to America in the years between the Act of Union and Irish independence is augmented by records that show third and fourth generation Irish Americans combined to total 20 million, or 19% of the entire US population by 1920.<sup>11</sup> Among the reasons advanced for such phenomenal migration stand religious persecution, political exile, famine escapism, economic opportunism, and the magnetic attraction of the New World experience. Whatever the dominant factor, Kerby A. Miller's *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (1988) suggests many who did leave Ireland did so with a heavy heart.<sup>12</sup> And Miller's work is supported by Matthew Frye Jacobson's *Special*

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<sup>10</sup> Dermot Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2008); Dermot Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader* (Kildare, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2014)

<sup>11</sup> Patrick J. Blessing, 'Irish Emigration to the United States, 1800-1920: An Overview' in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *The Irish in America: Emigration, Assimilation, and Impact, 1800-1920* Irish Studies 4 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 11-38; Francis M. Carroll, 'America and Irish Political Independence, 1910-33' in Drudy (ed.), *The Irish in America*: pp. 271-294. Carroll's figures are derived from the 1920 US Census Report.

<sup>12</sup> Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). See also Kerby A. Miller, Paul Wagner, and Catherine Howell (eds.), *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America* (Niwot, Colo.: Roberts Rinehart Pub., 1997) and Kerby A. Miller, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class and Transatlantic Migration*

*Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (2002) which notes striking similarities in the shared experiences of other immigrants in the US.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike those in previous centuries, nineteenth-century Irish emigrants to America were predominantly Catholic, rural, of limited education, and largely unskilled.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, assimilation in what was fast becoming the world's leading industrial power was difficult. Kevin Kenny's *The American Irish: A History* (2000) explored much of this assimilation in detail, highlighting the immigrants' rise from social pariahs to respectable middle-class lace-curtain Irish.<sup>15</sup> That Irish Americans were not totally consumed by Irish nationalism is further evidenced in the work of David Brundage and Úna Ní Bhroiméil. Brundage has highlighted immigrants' involvement in socialism, labour radicalism, and suffrage, particularly among the New York Irish.<sup>16</sup> And Ní Bhroiméil prioritises the cultural attachment, through the affectation held for the Irish language, prose, poetry, and song, which became central to Irish immigrant identity.<sup>17</sup> Hasia Diner's *Erin's Daughters: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1983), Joseph Lee and Marion Casey (eds.) *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (2006) and Timothy J. Meagher's *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*

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(Dublin: Field Day in Association with the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame, 2008)

<sup>13</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley, Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2002)

<sup>14</sup> Early migration to the US better reflected the diversity of traditions resident in Ireland as a whole. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century migration was as notable for the significant number of Presbyterians and Ulster Scots who left for America as it was for Catholics from the rest of the country. See Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Richard K. McMaster, *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2009); David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2010)

<sup>15</sup> Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2000); John J. Appel, 'From Shanties to Lace Curtains: The Irish Image in *Puck*, 1876-1910', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 13, No. 4 (Oct. 1971), pp. 365-375

<sup>16</sup> David Brundage, 'In Time of Peace, Prepare for War: Key Themes in the Social Thought of New York's Irish Nationalists, 1890-1916' in Ronald H. Bayor, Timothy J. Meagher (eds.), *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), pp. 321-336

<sup>17</sup> Úna Ní Bhroiméil, *Building Irish identity in America, 1870-1915: The Gaelic Revival* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003)

(2005) have all provided interesting additional insight into the Irish immigrant experience in America.<sup>18</sup>

A vital bridge to assimilation was the Catholic Church in America, which was both a comforting link to the familiarity of the Old World and a staunch defender of immigrant rights in the New World. Fraternal societies with strong religious affiliations dominated Irish America, none more so than the Ancient Order of Hibernians (est. 1836). Lawrence J. McCaffrey *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (1997) has highlighted the critical role religion played in the lives of Irish immigrants in the US and McCaffrey's work has been augmented by Thomas J. Rowland, Chester Gillis, Jay P. Dolan, Sheridan Gilley, and Damien Murray.<sup>19</sup> One cannot tell the story of Irish constitutional nationalism in the US, however, without recognising its ideological adversary, transatlantic Fenianism. Leon Ó Broin's *Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma* (1971) covered the early years of the Fenian movement, its republican ideal, and its clandestine nature.<sup>20</sup> This ideal later became the subject of M.J. Kelly's *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916* (2006), which provided a comprehensive study of separatist ideology as it was conceived and developed by advanced nationalists.<sup>21</sup> Fenianism, as it pertains to this study, was the preserve of Clan na Gael and its leader John Devoy. Devoy was the scourge of the UILA, opposing the Irish Party's US affiliate at every turn and matching the American League's propensity for propaganda through the pages of the Clan's own publication, the *Gaelic American*. As the leader of the Fenian movement

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<sup>18</sup> Hasia Diner, *Erin's Daughters: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); Joseph Lee and Marion R. Casey (eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Timothy J. Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005)

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997). See also Thomas J. Rowland, 'Irish American Catholics and the Quest for Respectability in the Coming of the Great War, 1900-1917', *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 15, No. 2 (Winter 1996), pp. 293-304; Chester Gillis, *Roman Catholicism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of American Catholicism. A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (Oxford; New York: New York University Press, 2002); Sheridan Gilley, 'The Roman Catholic Church and the Nineteenth-Century Diaspora' in N.C. Fleming and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations since 1800: Critical Essays, Volume II. From Parnell and his Legacy to the Treaty* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 377-396; Damien Murray, 'Go Forth as a Missionary to Fight It: Catholic Antisocialism and Irish American Nationalism in Post-World War 1 Boston', *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 28, No. 4 (Summer 2009), pp. 43-65

<sup>20</sup> Leon Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971)

<sup>21</sup> M.J. Kelly, *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006)

in America, Devoy helped furnish the Irish Republican Brotherhood with the funds it needed to carry out the Easter Rising in 1916. And in Terry Golway's *Irish Rebel: John Devoy and America's Fight for Irish Freedom* (1998) one gets a true sense of the man Padraig Pearse believed would be remembered as 'the greatest of all Fenians.'<sup>22</sup>

A chronological, as opposed to thematic, template was preferred, with the growing sense of crisis exacerbated by every obstacle placed in the path of home rule. Individuals at the heart of this crisis have been the subjects of some very accomplished works. John Dillon, Joe Devlin, and T.P. O'Connor, have been acknowledged by F.S.L. Lyons, A.C. Hepburn, Seán McMahon, and L.W. Brady respectively.<sup>23</sup> Combined, these works clearly illustrate the IPP's decision-making process, where the quadrumvirate of Redmond, Dillon, Devlin, and O'Connor, dictated party policy. No such recognition of the individuals at the centre of the constitutional nationalist movement in America has emerged, however, with only Denis J. Clark's 'Intrepid Men: Three Philadelphia Irish Leaders, 1880-1920' acknowledging the role of UILA President Michael J. Ryan.<sup>24</sup> Influential Irish Americans affiliated to the UILA in a lesser capacity, or those residing on the periphery of the American League, were occasional subjects of dedicated studies. I include here James McGurrin's *Bourke Cockran: A Freelance in American Politics* (1948), B.L. Reid's *The Man from New York: John Quinn and his Friends* (1968), and James Paul Rodechko's *Patrick Ford and his Search for America: A Case-study of Irish American Journalism, 1870-1913* (1976).<sup>25</sup> McGurrin's work primarily covers Cockran's long career as a US Congressman, yet, in the section devoted to Ireland, we see the Sligo-born lawyer's work on behalf of the nationalist cause at Washington. While Reid predominantly tells the story of a high-society, arts-loving

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<sup>22</sup> Terry Golway, *Irish Rebel: John Devoy and America's Fight for Irish Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998)

<sup>23</sup> F.S.L. Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968); A.C. Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland in the Era of Joe Devlin* (Oxford, UK; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Seán McMahon, 'Wee Joe': *The Life of Joseph Devlin* (Belfast: Brehon Press Ltd., 2011); L.W. Brady, *T.P. O'Connor and the Liverpool Irish* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1983)

<sup>24</sup> Denis J. Clark, 'Intrepid Men: Three Philadelphia Irish Leaders, 1880-1920' in Timothy J. Meagher (ed.), *From Paddy to Studs: Irish American Communities in the Turn of the Century Era, 1880-1920* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 93-115

<sup>25</sup> James McGurrin, *Bourke Cockran: A Freelance in American Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948); B.L. Reid, *The Man from New York: John Quinn and his Friends* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); James Paul Rodechko, *Patrick Ford and his Search for America: A Case-study in Irish American Journalism, 1870-1913* (New York: Arno Press, 1976)

intellectual, the esteem Quinn held for Roger Casement showcases a man with surprisingly strong nationalist convictions. And Rodechko on Ford highlights the *Irish World* editor's personal journey from socialist, to radical, to constitutional nationalist. Apart from Alan J. Ward and Francis M. Carroll, students wishing to learn anything about the lives of UILA Secretary John O'Callaghan or National Executive member Patrick Egan would have to rely on James McGuire and James Quinn (eds.) *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (2009).<sup>26</sup> To my relief, however, the holders of such offices were often prodigious writers and a significant volume of correspondence between the leadership of the UILA and the leadership of the Irish Party survives.

Newspapers from the period provided a rich tapestry of information. For an understanding of the ethos behind the domestic and British press Marie-Louise Legg's *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press, 1850-1892* (1999) highlighted the influence of political nationalism on local opinion, while the contributors to Simon J. Potter (ed.) *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire, 1857-1921* (2004) questioned whether Irishmen saw themselves as collaborators in, or victims of, the imperial project.<sup>27</sup> Kevin Rafter *Irish Journalism before Independence: More a Disease than a Profession* (2011) detailed the careers of Irish-born editors and journalists in Ireland, Britain and the United States, before he teamed up with Mark O'Brien to chart the rise of the popular press as we know it today.<sup>28</sup> With regard to Irish-American newspaper history, Cian McMahon's 'Ireland and the Birth of the Irish-American Press, 1842-1861' (2009) covered the role that the exiled Young Irelanders played in integrating a transatlantic conversation on the Irish national question, while Gillian O'Brien's 'Patriotism, Professionalism and the Press: The Chicago Press and Irish Journalists,

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<sup>26</sup> James McGuire and James Quinn (eds.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

<sup>27</sup> Marie-Louise Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Irish Provincial Press, 1850-1892* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999); Simon J. Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire, 1857-1921* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004)

<sup>28</sup> Kevin Rafter, *Irish Journalism before Independence: More a Disease than a Profession* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2011); Mark O'Brien and Kevin Rafter (eds.), *Independent Newspapers: A History* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012))



1875-1900' (2011) provided interesting perspectives on the lives of colourful individuals such as Alexander Sullivan and John Frederick Finerty.<sup>29</sup>

Studiously avoiding dwelling on the seminal events of the period it was nevertheless necessary to acknowledge the historiography surrounding each. In this endeavour many of the more recent studies of the period, together with biographies of revolutionary leaders and competing movements, were mined. Ronan Fanning's *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-1922* (2013) encapsulates Herbert Asquith's and Lloyd George's repeated failure to deliver on their promise of Home Rule for Ireland.<sup>30</sup> For World War 1 Keith Jeffery *Ireland and the Great War* (2000) and John Horne (ed.) *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (2008) illustrate how the conflict in Europe impacted Irish life, politically, socially, and economically.<sup>31</sup> And for an indication of how the Irish Home Rule campaign was of international concern one need only consider Jérôme aan de Wiel's study of 'The Irish Factor' in British and German decision-making in August 1914.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the Easter Rising, Fearghal McGarry's *The Rising: Ireland - Easter 1916* (2010) adds to, and complements, Charles Townshend's *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (2006) and Jonathan Githens-Mazer's *Myths and Memories of the Easter Rising: Cultural and Political Nationalism in Ireland* (2006).<sup>33</sup> The Easter Rising could never have occurred without the contributions of the Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan, and Anne Matthews, Leo Keohane, and Cal McCarthy, provide fresh and interesting perspectives on the Irish Volunteer's comrades-in-arms.<sup>34</sup> And for the stories of the men and women behind the revolutionary struggle recent work by Roy

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<sup>29</sup> Cian McMahon, 'Ireland and the Birth of the Irish American Press, 1842-1861', *American Periodicals* Vol. 19, No. 1 (2009) Special Issue: Immigrant Periodicals, pp.5-20; Gillian O'Brien, 'Patriotism, Professionalism, and the Press: The Chicago Press and Irish Journalists, 1875-1900' in Rafter (ed.), *Irish Journalism before Independence*: pp. 120-134

<sup>30</sup> Ronan Fanning, *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-1922* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013)

<sup>31</sup> Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); John Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008)

<sup>32</sup> Jérôme aan de Wiel, *The Irish Factor, 1899-1919: Ireland's Strategic and Diplomatic Importance for Foreign Powers* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2008)

<sup>33</sup> Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising: Ireland – Easter 1916* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Penguin, 2006); Jonathan Githens-Mazer, *Myths and Memories of the Easter Rising: Cultural and Political Nationalism in Ireland* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2006)

<sup>34</sup> Anne Matthews, *The Irish Citizen Army* (Cork, Ireland: Mercier Press, 2014); Leo Keohane, *Captain Jack White: Imperialism, Anarchism, and the Irish Citizen Army* (Sallins, Co. Kildare: Merrion, 2014); Anne Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women, 1900-1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010); Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2014)

Foster *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (2014) and Diarmuid Ferriter *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (2015) will be difficult to surpass.<sup>35</sup> Competing movements and organisations are too plentiful to mention but Michael Laffan on Sinn Féin, Emmet O'Connor on Labour, Pádraig Yeates and Conor McNamara on the Dublin Lockout, Cliona Murphy, Margaret Ward, Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy on suffrage and female activism, and Timothy G. McMahon on the Gaelic Revival constituted essentials in this researcher's staple diet.<sup>36</sup>

'Home Rule from a Transnational Perspective: The Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League of America, 1901-1918' asks several unique central research questions. Aware of the danger of alienating the diaspora, why was the UILA denied an opinion on Irish Party policy? Given its financial dependence on the generosity of the American League, why, over the course of its long relationship, did the Irish Party treat its transnational affiliate with such obvious disdain? Why, when situations demanded more immediate and decisive intervention, was John Redmond so reluctant to act? And why, after actively encouraging Irish Americans to 'Twist the Lion's Tail' in the decades preceding the Great War, did the Irish Party think the diaspora in the US would be comfortable supporting Britain in its imperial conflict with Germany? Answers to these questions will provide a greater understanding of the fear that domestic political organisations in Ireland held of wealthier, often more radical, organisations in America. An explanation for how the once dominant UILA came to be usurped by the seemingly terminally-ill Clan na Gael will begin to emerge. And a rationalisation as to why the diaspora in the US abandoned the constitutional project before the more politically-invested electorate at home saw fit to do so will complement future historical enquiry.

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<sup>35</sup> Roy Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (Dublin: Allen Lane, 2014); Diarmuid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution, 1910-1923* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2015)

<sup>36</sup> Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916-1923* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Emmet O'Connor, *Big Jim Larkin: Hero and Wrecker* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2015); Conor McNamara & Pádraig Yeates (eds.), *The Dublin Lockout 1913* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2017); Cliona Murphy, *Women's Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1995); Margaret Ward, 'Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, 1877-1946' in Mary Cullen, Maria Luddy (eds.), *Female Activists: Irish Women and Change, 1900-1960* (Dublin: The Woodfield Press, 2001), pp. 89-112; Timothy G. McMahon, *Grand Opportunity: The Gaelic Revival and Irish Society, 1893-1910* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008)

Chapter 1 (1879-1900) contextualises attitudes governing future transatlantic relations by examining transatlantic relations either side of the Parnell split. Chapter 2 (1901-1903) explores factors motivating the establishment of the UILA and assesses subsequent efforts to build League momentum across the US. Chapter 3 (1904-1907) examines the array of political, cultural and separatist forces challenging constitutional nationalist hegemony in both Ireland and America. Chapter 4 (1908-1911) relates UILA approval of IPP legislative success at Westminster. Chapter 5 (1912-1914) explores Irish Party efforts to allay League fears regarding unionist opposition to Home Rule and the prospect of partition. And Chapter 6 (1914-1918) examines the impact of the Great War, the Easter Rising, and advanced nationalism, on the constitutional movement. Finally, the Conclusion summarises a transatlantic affiliation which, through a combination of neglect, disregard, and an abdication of parental responsibility, failed to deliver on its initial promise.

The National Library of Ireland (NLI) holds approximately 300 letters from John O’Callaghan to John Redmond together with letters from other individuals central to the transatlantic alliance, while Trinity College Dublin (TCD) holds similar (though less comprehensive) correspondence with John Dillon.<sup>37</sup> It is impossible to over-estimate the role O’Callaghan played in fostering transatlantic harmony and as Secretary of the UILA since its establishment in 1901 he was Redmond’s most trusted confidante in America. O’Callaghan’s death in 1913 robbed the Irish leader of wise and considered counsel, counsel that was sorely lacking during the crises which followed. In America, the personal papers of selected Irish Americans proved beneficial to varying degrees. William Bourke Cockran’s and John Quinn’s papers were well worth the visit to New York Public Library, confirming Cockran’s virulent reaction to the British reprisals in the wake of the Easter Rising and providing texture to Quinn’s friendship with Roger Casement.<sup>38</sup> Michael Jordan, O’Callaghan’s successor, left a small batch of personal papers which are held at the Burns Library at Boston College. Unfortunately, these were as notable for their

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<sup>37</sup> Redmond Papers, National Library of Ireland; Dillon Papers, Trinity College Dublin

<sup>38</sup> William Bourke Cockran Papers, 1881-1924, MssCol 582, New York Public Library; John Quinn Memorial Collection, 1900-1924, New York Public Library

absence of substantive material relating to his time as Secretary of the League as they were for any correspondence relating to it.<sup>39</sup>

The UILA itself produced several publications from its offices in Boston. “*Help the Men in the Cap*” (1906), *The Rejected Irish Council Bill* (1907), *Ireland’s Unpurchaseable Representatives* (1909), and *Some of the Results Achieved by Parliamentary Agitation, 1879-1909* (1909) provided valuable information on how the UILA actively promoted constitutional nationalism through the dissemination of party propaganda. In addition, the *Proceedings of National Conventions* provided insights into League and Party collaboration at highly-publicized biennial gatherings in the major centres of Irish settlement in the US. Between December 1907 and June 1912, the UILA published its own journal, the *United Irish League Bulletin of America*, which demonstrated the American organisation’s determination to support the constitutional movement at a critical period in Anglo-Irish relations. All the UILA publications took their cue, however, and very often their material, from publications on this side of the water. And in doing so they sprinkled every legislative victory the party achieved at Westminster with a liberal dose of exaggeration. The American League was also behind the establishment of *Ireland* (1915-16), a newspaper designed to make up for the loss of the *Irish World*. The *Irish World* had, before Patrick Ford’s death, acted as the official voice of the Irish Party in America before turning against it under his son Robert when John Redmond pledged Irish Volunteer support for Britain at the onset of the Great War. Other papers such as the *Chicago Citizen* and the *Boston Daily Globe* were supportive of the Irish Party in general and carried regular reports on the campaign for Home Rule. However, not all Irish American newspapers were enamoured with the Irish Party, and, as stated earlier, the John Devoy-edited *Gaelic American* remained particularly hostile to the constitutional nationalist movement. At home in Ireland, publications such as the *Freeman’s Journal* and the *Irish Daily Independent* were largely IPP-friendly while the *Irish Times* was predominantly Protestant and Unionist in sympathy.

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Jordan Papers, Burns Library, Boston College

‘Home Rule from a Transnational Perspective: The Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League of America, 1901-1918’ begins with an earlier collaboration between Irish nationalists on either side of the Atlantic.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Constitutional Nationalism and Irish America, 1879-1900**

After Daniel O’Connell, Irish constitutional nationalism began in earnest with the formation of the Home Rule League in 1873. It was then that a pressure group united under Isaac Butt to demand greater legislative independence for Ireland. Evolving into the Home Rule Party, the political baton passed to Charles Stewart Parnell, a Wicklow-born Protestant landlord, in 1879.<sup>1</sup> For constitutional nationalism to succeed, Parnell needed the support of Ireland’s largest and wealthiest ‘constituency’, Irish America.<sup>2</sup> However, to convert a recently-radicalised diaspora into paragons of moderation required an ideological conversion of Pauline proportions. How the Home Rule Party, and its successor the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), fared in this endeavour is where we begin.

This chapter deals with the impact of constitutional nationalism on Irish America in the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning with the New Departure (1879) it examines the circumstances which led Parnell’s party to join forces with Clan na Gael in the period before Home Rule became a viable proposition. The Clan (est. 1867) had succeeded the Fenian Brotherhood, which was itself a transatlantic affiliate of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) established by James Stephens in Ireland in 1858.<sup>3</sup> And with Parnell perceived to have sold out the Fenian tradition under the terms of the Kilmainham Treaty (1882), the concentration on a wholly political solution to the Irish question is measured against the abandonment of agrarian agitation. Thereafter, a conspiracy to undermine Parnell’s reputation precedes the Irish leader’s personal downfall and premature death (1891). The debilitating effect of the Parnell split, and its impact on Irish America, follows, before an exploration of the collaborative efforts to promote constitutional

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<sup>1</sup> For more on how the Home Rule League morphed into the Home Rule Party see Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003). For Parnell see Frank Callanan, ‘Parnell, Charles Stewart’, in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds.), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, hereafter *DIB*. (Cambridge, UK: 2009).

<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7199>

<sup>2</sup> The term constituency is loosely applied to acknowledge the influence Irish America could bring to bear on the national question. The diaspora in the US were, of course, without any real political voice.

<sup>3</sup> Marta Ramón, ‘Stephens, James’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a8277>

nationalism in the affectations of the diaspora paving the way for Irish Party reunification (1900). Experience would play a big role in dictating future policy direction, and re-acquainting ourselves with the difficulties associated with maintaining a transatlantic alliance in the era of Parnell is an obligatory start point for a study of the difficulties associated with maintaining one in the era of John Redmond.

### The 'New Departure'

Irish constitutional nationalism's relationship with Irish America during the late 1870s and early 1880s can best be described as tenuous. A political marriage of convenience saw Charles Stewart Parnell, the charismatic leader of the Home Rule movement, enter into an alliance with John Devoy, the exiled Fenian and leader of Clan na Gael.<sup>4</sup> Fuelled by reciprocity, Parnell had recognised the necessity of securing Irish American support just as the diaspora had awoken to the futility of attempting to win Ireland's independence through force of arms. What ensued was a collaboration over the issue of land reform, regarded then as the most advantageous means through which both sides could enhance their respective nationalist agendas.

Parnell had assumed the leadership of the Irish National Land League (INLL) in 1879, a powerful agrarian movement which originated when the threat of another famine had accentuated the urgent need to address small tenant-farmers' rights in Ireland. The brainchild of Michael Davitt, the Land League defiantly declared that the land of Ireland belonged to the people of Ireland.<sup>5</sup> While Parnell saw in this new movement the tools with which he believed he could shape the future direction of Irish nationalism, Davitt recognised in Parnell the Irish parliamentarian best suited to advance the agrarian grievance at Westminster. Davitt succeeded in getting Parnell to accept the leadership of the new League at a time when nationalists in the US were searching for a way to exercise some influence over Irish affairs. To better effect this influence, John Devoy offered Parnell the conditional support of Fenian militants affiliated to Clan na Gael. For the Fenians, land was a means of 'dramatizing English oppression' and Irish American Fenians 'regularly attacked'

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<sup>4</sup> Patrick Maume, 'Devoy, John', *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do#>

<sup>5</sup> See Laurence Marley, *Michael Davitt: Freelance, Radical, and Frondeur* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 2007) and Fintan Lane, Andrew G. Newby, *Michael Davitt: New Perspectives* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009)

the land system in operation in Ireland.<sup>6</sup> Described by Patrick Maume as ‘a tacit alliance’ between the Clan and the parliamentary grouping led by Parnell, the New Departure led to a transatlantic collaboration between the advocates of revolutionary and constitutional nationalism.<sup>7</sup> Proposals put forward by Devoy included ‘the abandonment of the federal demand in favour of self-government, vigorous agitation of the land question based on peasant proprietary, the exclusion of sectarian issues from the party platform, party unity on all imperial and home questions, and advocacy of all struggling nationalities in the British Empire or elsewhere’.<sup>8</sup> Exercising initial caution, Parnell accepted Devoy’s terms, and a relationship fraught with mutual suspicion was set in motion.

The consummation of this marriage of convenience required a publicity and fundraising campaign on behalf of the Land League and in pursuit of this objective Parnell, in the company of John Dillon, left Ireland for the US in December 1879. Constituting their Irish American political debut, it was critically important their audience understood that land agitation ‘was not a deviation from the national struggle, but a vital and integral part of it.’<sup>9</sup> Parnell proved a popular draw wherever he went, growing into his role as the public face of Irish nationalism while endearing himself to radicals and moderates alike. And despite possessing greater nationalist credentials, Dillon had to content himself with playing ‘second fiddle’ to the man who would soon be christened the ‘Uncrowned King of Ireland’.<sup>10</sup> This rather flattering moniker was given to Parnell by Timothy Healy, the Parliamentary Correspondent for the *Nation* newspaper who had been summoned to America to bring order to what was a decidedly chaotic itinerary.<sup>11</sup> As circumstance would dictate, however, Parnell and Healy were forced into a premature return to Ireland and Michael Davitt was dispatched to join Dillon in America. As a former Fenian released early from a fifteen-year prison sentence imposed for conspiring to buy arms in England, Davitt was the link that bound Devoy and Parnell together in the

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<sup>6</sup> Mitchell Snay, *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), pp. 85-87

<sup>7</sup> Maume, ‘Devoy, John’, *DIB*.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Bew, *Enigma: A New Life of Charles Stewart Parnell* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2011), p. 40

<sup>9</sup> F.S.L. Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 34

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Dillon’s greater nationalist credentials resided in him being the son of the revered Young Irishman, John Blake Dillon.

<sup>11</sup> Frank Callanan, *T.M. Healy* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1996), pp. 32-33



New Departure. Shortly after his arrival in America, Davitt helped draft the Constitution for the Irish National Land League of the United States (INLLUS) before taking up the role of Secretary of the new organization for the duration of his stay.<sup>12</sup> After establishing the INLLUS headquarters in New York, Davitt proceeded on a lengthy three-month lecture tour between August and October 1880 during which time he used his Fenian connections to rally additional support behind the cause of the Irish peasantry.<sup>13</sup>

On his return to Ireland it was apparent to Davitt that agrarian agitation was proving so effective that the British government was considering the use of coercion to combat its success. And in preparation for such an eventuality, Davitt proposed founding a Ladies' branch to carry on the fight should the male leadership be imprisoned. Opposed by many of the same men who ran the very risk of arrest, the Ladies' Land League was established in January 1881 under the stewardship of Parnell's sister, Anna.<sup>14</sup> However, as innovative as this might have appeared at the time, the Ladies' Land League was never more than a pale substitute for the men's League once the government acted on its threat to suppress the chief agitators. In her edited manuscript, *The Tale of a Great Sham*, Anna Parnell is highly critical of the men, who, by the absence of any concrete programme for the women to implement, ensured 'there would be nothing [left] to carry on after their own sequestration.'<sup>15</sup> Anna Parnell is credited, however, with contributing numerous letters to Irish American newspapers throughout 1881-82 which appeared regularly in the *Boston Pilot* and the *Irish World*. Margaret Ward has noted the efficacy of such work and has highlighted how Anna, together with her sister Fanny, became 'quite adept at delivering propagandistic hyperbole to a markedly partisan audience.'<sup>16</sup>

The first test for the New Departure arose when Parnell, under the terms of the Kilmainham Treaty of May 1882, agreed with the British Prime Minister William

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<sup>12</sup> Marley, *Michael Davitt*: p. 42

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43

<sup>14</sup> Anna was following the initiative shown by her sister, Fanny, who had established a branch of the Ladies' Land League in New York in October 1880. See Margaret Ward, 'Parnell, Fanny Isabel', *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7200>

<sup>15</sup> Anna Parnell, *The Tale of a Great Sham* (Dublin: Arlen House, edited 1986), p. 88

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Ward, 'Anna Parnell: Challenges to Male Authority and the Telling of National Myth' in Pauric Travers & Donal McCartney (eds.), *Parnell Reconsidered* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), p. 52

Gladstone to forego land agitation in response to amendments made to the Liberal government's 1881 Land Act. After following up the Kilmainham Treaty with a speedy denunciation of the Phoenix Park murders of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Cavendish, and his Under-Secretary T.H. Burke, the leader of the now newly named Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) was purported to have subordinated agrarian agitation to the pursuit of a contentious form of Home Rule.<sup>17</sup> When Parnell then disbanded the Irish National Land League in all its forms and replaced it with the Irish National League (INL) under strict party control, the retention of Irish American support owed much to the rejection of the only alternative on offer. Suggested by Michael Davitt, this alternative proposed state rather than individual ownership of land. Considered too socialist for republican-minded nationalists, Davitt's proposal inadvertently drove many Irish American extremists closer to Parnell than they might otherwise have gone.<sup>18</sup> And by the mid-1880s most of the Irish at home and abroad had committed themselves to supporting constitutional nationalism as articulated by Parnell's new Irish Parliamentary Party.<sup>19</sup>

Most, however, does not imply unanimity. In America, a faction of Clan na Gael had so little faith in the constitutional process that it split from the main body and embarked on a dynamite campaign across English cities between 1881 and 1885. Led by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and supported by Patrick Ford, editor of the *Irish World (IW)* newspaper, the campaign provoked outrage when a succession of explosions in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and London caused multiple civilian casualties. While Joseph McKenna has highlighted how this campaign provided a useful link between different generations of militants, the forging of a strong political alliance between Parnell's Party and William Gladstone's Liberals during the period these attacks were occurring questions the effectiveness of O'Donovan Rossa's work.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> James S. Donnelly Jr., 'The Land Question in Nationalist Politics' in Thomas E. Hachey, Lawrence John McCaffrey (eds.), *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), p. 92

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence John McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997,) p. 162

<sup>20</sup> Joseph McKenna, *The Irish American Dynamite Campaign: A History, 1881-1896* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2012), p. 11

## The IPP/Liberal alliance

With Parnell forever testing the boundaries of constitutional protocol, and Gladstone regularly propelled into suppressing disorder in Ireland, D.G. Boyce's characterisation of the two party leaders as 'an odd couple' seems quite fitting.<sup>21</sup> Gladstone had already demonstrated his willingness for meaningful engagement by overseeing an Act for the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869) during his first term in office, and paving the way for an Irish Land Act (1881) during his second. An experienced politician, the Liberal statesman withheld his views on a permanent settlement of the 'Irish Question' until the results of the 1885 general election were known. The outcome, which saw the Liberals win 335 seats, the Conservatives 249 seats, and the Irish Parliamentary Party a decisive 86 seats, had the effect of 'placing Parnell in the hands of Gladstone, and Gladstone in the hands of Parnell.'<sup>22</sup> The political alliance which followed was entered into in IPP anticipation of Liberal support for a proposed Home Rule bill for Ireland consistent with Gladstone's vision for the creation of a 'union of hearts' between the two countries.<sup>23</sup> Despite being defeated in the House of Commons in 1886 the very introduction of the bill must be considered a success in its own right. This was farther down the political road to repealing the Act of Union than anything Daniel O'Connell had achieved in his lifetime, and Parnell was confident that a basis for continued progress existed. Irish America, however, remained unconvinced.

A convention scheduled by the American National League in the aftermath of the defeat of the Home Rule bill required Parnell to dispatch a delegation to Chicago to ensure the diaspora's continued commitment to the constitutional programme.<sup>24</sup> Led by William O'Brien, the delegation included two relatively lightweight party members, John and Willie Redmond. A journalist by trade, O'Brien had risen to prominence in 1881 when he was chosen by Parnell to become the editor of a new nationalist newspaper *United Ireland*. Although *The Nation* and the *Freeman's*

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<sup>21</sup> D.G. Boyce, 'The Odd Couple? Gladstone, Parnell and Home Rule' in Travers & McCartney (eds.), *Parnell Reconsidered*, p. 24

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>23</sup> Alvin Jackson, 'Gladstone, Ireland, Scotland and the Union of Heart and Spirit' in Mary E. Daly and Theodore K. Hoppen (eds.), *Gladstone: Ireland and Beyond* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2011), p. 32

<sup>24</sup> The American National League was the transatlantic affiliate of the Irish National League, itself established following the suppression of the Irish National Land League in 1882.

*Journal (FJ)* were supportive of Parnell, neither was construed as the official organ of the nationalist movement. O'Brien's selection as the party's 'propaganda chief' enabled him to become one of Parnell's most trusted lieutenants.<sup>25</sup> Both Redmond brothers had previous experience of America when they fundraised there on behalf of the INL in 1884 and the nature of their success in that endeavour was a factor in their inclusion on this trip. O'Brien's greatest challenge was to convince Alexander Sullivan (the head of the breakaway faction of Clan na Gael) to forego his futile dynamite campaign and lend his support to the IPP's political struggle. During the tense negotiations which followed, O'Brien described John Redmond as 'an ally of unflinching fidelity' for the role he played in convincing Sullivan to support Parnell.<sup>26</sup> The exposure the Redmond brothers got on this trip, and the contacts they made among the Fenian element in Irish America, would serve them well in the difficult years ahead.

As a dramatic backdrop to these events, there loomed yet another agrarian crisis in Ireland. Global competition, falling agricultural prices, and another sequence of bad harvests meant that the spectre of evicted Irish tenants was once again on the horizon. In the run up to the introduction of the Home Rule Bill in 1886, Parnell had been wary of jeopardising his alliance with Gladstone and accordingly 'played down any prospect of renewed land agitation.'<sup>27</sup> However, in the wake of Home Rule's defeat, a completely different atmosphere began to envelop Irish nationalist opinion. And when a Tenants' Relief Bill intended to address the growing crisis was rejected, Parnell turned to America in a fresh appeal for funds. Notably, on this occasion, the party leader hoped to avoid a return to the heady days of the first phase of the land war, concerned as he was with protecting the burgeoning IPP/Liberal relationship. Not all of Parnell's colleagues were quite so reticent however. John Dillon was particularly incensed, vowing in the House of Commons to 'tell the people of Ireland to continue in that course of persistent and determined agitation' which had served

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<sup>25</sup> Joseph V. O'Brien, *William O'Brien and the Course of Irish Politics, 1881-1918* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1976), p. 15

<sup>26</sup> Dermot Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2008), p. 119. For evidence of Sullivan's continued support for Parnell see Alexander Sullivan, 'Parnell as a Leader', *North American Review* Vol. 144, No. 367 (Jun. 1887), pp. 609-624

<sup>27</sup> F.S.L. Lyons, 'John Dillon and the Plan of Campaign, 1886-1890', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 56 (1965), p. 313

them so well in the past and would do so again in the future.<sup>28</sup> For F.S.L. Lyons, Dillon's position 'marked an important, if temporary, shift in the leadership of the nationalist movement' and must be viewed in retrospect as an early indicator of Parnell's fallibility.<sup>29</sup> With Parnell voluntarily melting into the shadows the agrarian baton was surreptitiously passed to the triumvirate of Dillon, William O'Brien and Timothy Harrington. While Dillon had earned his agrarian spurs with the Irish National Land League, O'Brien and Harrington had both proven central characters in the growth of its successor, the Irish National League. A journalist by profession Harrington was called to the Irish bar in 1887, thereafter combining a successful career in law with that of Irish Party parliamentarian.<sup>30</sup> Together the sitting MP's for East Mayo (Dillon), Mallow (O'Brien), and the Harbour Division of Dublin (Harrington) would dove-tail to great effect in tackling the scourge of nationalist Ireland, the seemingly insatiable appetite of the landlords.

While initial efforts to limit agrarian agitation saw Dillon encourage tenants to negotiate with landlords on an estate by estate basis, two things occurred which contributed to a widening of the conflict. The first was a rapid increase – in number and geographical extent - of tenant evictions; and the second was the publication, in William O'Brien's newspaper *United Ireland*, of a national response to the growing crisis.<sup>31</sup> Formulated as the Plan of Campaign (POC, or the Plan), a manifesto outlining a new strategy advised tenants unable to afford the rents demanded of them to pay what they considered to be a fair and equitable sum into a managed fund from which those who were ultimately evicted could apply for relief. In addition to this, a boycott to be imposed on vacated holdings meant any eviction made at the request of the landlord represented a permanent rather than temporary loss of revenue to the estate.

The POC proved quite successful, effective as a tool for combatting the threat of eviction and popular with the militant diaspora who saw in it a return to the resistance which had characterised the early days of the New Departure. Developing into an all-too-familiar battle of wills, the POC served only to encourage the British

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<sup>28</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon*: p. 81

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82

<sup>30</sup> Patrick Maume, 'Harrington, Timothy Charles', *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3816>

<sup>31</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon*: p. 83

government's return to coercion in its efforts to suppress nationalist demands. Even the Catholic Church found itself embroiled in the dispute. After a host of Irish priests had demonstrated early support for the tenants, a papal rescript issued by Pope Leo XIII denouncing the Plan led to reluctant condemnation of it by the majority of Irish bishops.<sup>32</sup> This rescript was issued on the basis of the Pope's markedly pro-English bias, where, impressed by the Liberal Party's more-relaxed attitude to Catholicism, Leo saw the spread of the faith throughout the English-speaking colonies as a positive development, even harbouring hopes of one day converting England itself.<sup>33</sup> However, dismissing any notion of blind confessional allegiance, Dillon declared that Irish Catholics 'would no more take their political guidance from the Pope of Rome than [they would] from the Sultan of Turkey.'<sup>34</sup>

Like the Land League before it, the Plan of Campaign required serious funding. To attain this Dillon undertook a gruelling thirteen-month tour of Australia and New Zealand, where between March 1889 and April 1890 he succeeded in raising the substantial sum of £33,000.<sup>35</sup> On his return to Ireland Dillon resumed agitating with O'Brien on behalf of the tenants and their inflammatory speeches so incensed Dublin Castle authorities that the Chief Secretary, Arthur Balfour, determined to have them arrested on sight.<sup>36</sup> Taken into custody in September, both men were subsequently released on bail from which they absconded to the US to join a delegation sent to raise funds for the Plan of Campaign. Together with party colleagues - T.D. Sullivan, T.P. O'Connor, T.P. Gill and Timothy Harrington - the mission to America is reported to have 'boomed with the delirious excitement of a wild morning on Wall Street'.<sup>37</sup> On their respective visits to Philadelphia, Boston, New York and Chicago, the delegates noted how each centre of Irish settlement was attempting to outdo its neighbouring city in donations and support. Gradually, however, in a development William O'Brien likened to a 'Greek tragedy', news of the leadership crisis

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<sup>32</sup> For a detailed account of the attitude of Irish bishops to the papal intervention in the Plan of Campaign see Edward O'Callaghan, O.F.M., 'Letters and Papers of Archbishop Ignazio Persico, Papal Commissary to Ireland 1887-8: Part 3 in *Collectanea Hibernica* No. 38 (1996), pp. 165-180

<sup>33</sup> Dermot Keogh, *The Vatican, the Bishops, and Irish Politics, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 14

<sup>34</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon*: p. 92

<sup>35</sup> Malcolm Campbell, *Ireland's New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), p. 147

<sup>36</sup> Joseph V. O'Brien, *William O'Brien and the Course of Irish Politics, 1881-1918*, p. 79

<sup>37</sup> William O'Brien, *An Olive Branch in Ireland, and its History* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1910), p. 2

unfolding in the ranks of the party at home came to dampen the diaspora's initial enthusiasm.<sup>38</sup>

### America and the Parnell Split

Parnell's reputation in Great Britain came under repeated attack in the mid-1880s. Political opponents were suspected of being behind a series of defamatory articles which appeared in *The Times* newspaper in 1887. The most damaging of these included an alleged facsimile of a letter, purported to be signed by Parnell himself, excusing an earlier public condemnation he had made of the 1882 Phoenix Park murders of the Chief Secretary for Ireland and his Under-Secretary.<sup>39</sup> Another article which appeared in the same source alleged that Parnell and his colleagues in the Irish Party

‘have been, and are, associated closely and continuously, with the worst of criminals, with the agents and instruments of murder-conspiracies, with the planners and paymasters of cowardly and inhuman outrage, with the preachers of the gospels of dynamite, who are at the same time the financiers that furnish the funds on which the Irish Parliamentary Party subsist.’<sup>40</sup>

By 1888, a ‘Special Commission on Parnellism and Crime’ alleged the Irish Party was ‘separatist at heart’, and that it provided financial, moral and legal support to Fenians and Dynamiters working to achieve separatism.<sup>41</sup> Unperturbed, the Irish leader fought to clear his name.

Vehemently denying supporting the agents of terrorism, Parnell's insistence that he never excused the assassination of the government officials in Ireland was vindicated when the alleged facsimile said to bear his signature was shown to have been a forgery. However, the charge that he, or the party, were separatist at heart, or that he and his colleagues associated with Fenians, is not so easily dismissed. Parnell's experience of having shared a prison cell (however briefly) with many of the more advanced nationalists before the Kilmainham Treaty took effect was but one such

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>39</sup> The defamatory articles published in *The Times* in 1887 were prominent in Anon., ‘The Genesis of the Parnell Commission’, *LSE Selected Pamphlets* No. 41 (1889)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>41</sup> Anon., ‘Mr Parnell and the Special Commission’, *LSE Selected Pamphlets* No. 43 (1889)

link.<sup>42</sup> And few can dispute that in the days of the New Departure, and during the fundraising campaign for the National Land League, the Home Rule Party came into regular contact with a host of American Fenians hostile to all things British. Furthermore, the delegation sent to the US to mediate with Alexander Sullivan in the wake of the 1886 Home Rule defeat made for poor optics, even if Parnell's intention was to get the Clan to forego its dynamite campaign and give the constitutional movement a second chance. Having avoided prosecution on an array of fabricated charges, Parnell would fall on his own sword when revelations of a more personal nature surfaced soon after. By indulging in an extra-marital affair, and in refusing to enter any plea for his defence, the leader of the Irish Party played a prominent role in destroying the very movement he had worked so hard to advance.

The subsequent split in the IPP was the result of a bitter dispute over whether Parnell's continuation as party chairman would advance or retard Home Rule. In short, Non-Conformists in the Liberal Party, scandalised by the Irish leader's role as a co-respondent in the divorce suit of a fellow Irish Party MP, Captain William O'Shea, intimated to Gladstone that they could no longer support the IPP/Liberal alliance whilst Parnell remained at the helm of the Irish Party. Whilst this obviously meant that plans for a proposed second Home Rule bill would be shelved in such an eventuality, the main body of the IPP remained blissfully unaware of the new reality when they unwittingly returned Parnell as chairman for another term. In arriving at this decision, the party were conscious that five of the six delegates in America (T.D. Sullivan excluded) had cabled their prior approval for such a move. When Gladstone was compelled to make his position public, and Parnell responded by betraying a political confidence, any possibility of the two men working together in the foreseeable future was destroyed. The *Freeman's Journal* reported in detail the developments as they occurred over the last week of November and the first week of December 1890, including regular reports and cablegrams from the disillusioned delegates stranded in America.

Hampered by their geographic dislocation, the six Irish Party MP's appeared impotent in the wake of the developing crisis. The five delegates who cabled their

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<sup>42</sup> The Irish leader is even alleged to have taken an Oath of Allegiance to the IRB at Trinity College in 1882. See Patrick Maume, 'Parnell and the IRB Oath', *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 29, No. 115 (May 1995), pp. 363-364



initial support did so ‘in profound conviction that Parnell’s statesmanship and matchless qualities as a leader are essential to the safety of our cause’.<sup>43</sup> After Gladstone’s revelatory diktat they adopted a wait and see approach, conscious that Parnell was preparing a response. When this appeared in the form of his infamous manifesto ‘To the People of Ireland’ the effect was to bring about an almost complete reversal of attitude from the delegates, with all bar Harrington now calling on the party leader to step down. The cable from America to support this new position explained how the delegates arrived at this decision after the manifesto convinced them that Parnell’s ‘continued leadership was impossible’.<sup>44</sup> As the party debated how best to proceed, conflicting reports arrived regarding the effect of the startling news on Irish American opinion. A cable from O’Brien alleging that ‘there is not a single paper in the US that does not agree with us [the delegates who believed Parnell should go]’ appeared in the same *Freeman’s Journal* edition as a cable from Harrington stating that ‘the [American] press is unanimous in declaring that Parnell should continue to lead the Irish Party.’<sup>45</sup>

The matter came to a head on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1890 when Justin McCarthy led forty-five disaffected MP’s out of Committee Room 15 after Parnell’s high-handed management of the crisis forced the majority into the invidious position of having to secede.<sup>46</sup> When the feared party split was realised, the effect on Irish America was immediate and profound. Within days the *Freeman’s Journal* was reporting how ‘Philadelphia supported McCarthy while Albany and the Indianapolis Ancient Order of Hibernians supported Parnell.’<sup>47</sup> The same edition highlighted the Chicago Irish community’s concern over what it should do with the money raised for the Plan of Campaign, send it to Parnell or send it to Dillon?<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the most disturbing opinion of all came from Mr Deasy, President of the New York Municipal Council of the American National League. Whilst refraining from endorsing any faction in the ongoing dispute, Deasy cabled a warning that ‘the party must unite under one

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<sup>43</sup> *FJ*, 21 Nov. 1890

<sup>44</sup> *FJ*, 1 Dec. 1890

<sup>45</sup> *FJ*, 6 Dec. 1890

<sup>46</sup> Denis Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, (London; Bombay; Sydney: G.G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1932), pp. 70-71

<sup>47</sup> *FJ*, 10 Dec. 1890

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*

head, or else, when it needs help from this side of the Atlantic it will not get it.’<sup>49</sup> Little did the Americans know that what appeared at first to be a temporary rupture in an otherwise disciplined organization was destined to become a serious fracture with lasting consequences.

The gravity of the split was confirmed when Parnell decided to contest the North Kilkenny by-election later that same month. Despite Harrington’s return from America before the voters went to the polls, the Parnellite candidate, Mr Vincent Scully, was comprehensively beaten by the anti-Parnellite representative, Sir John Pope-Hennessy, in a campaign characterized by bitter hostility and vitriolic press coverage. O’Brien, unable to return to Ireland without facing imprisonment for absconding while on bail, embarked for France with T.P. Gill, hoping to meet Parnell for consultations aimed at limiting the fall-out from the damaging proceedings of recent weeks. When these talks eventually began (Jan. 1891) Parnell was accompanied by a small number of loyal supporters, most notable among them Mr John Redmond, MP at that time for North Wexford. Yet despite Gill’s consideration of Redmond as ‘an indispensable moderating influence on Parnell’, amid generous proposals designed to pave the way for their deposed chairman’s honourable retirement, the talks proved unsuccessful.<sup>50</sup> Although Redmond had been part of the delegation sent to Chicago to appease Irish Americans in the wake of the 1886 Home Rule defeat, he had never been more than an effective mid-ranking member of the party prior to the split. However, by steadfastly refusing to abandon Parnell, he emerged from Committee Room 15 as the leader of the minority element supporting their party ‘Chief’. Considering himself a friend, Redmond would have preferred to see the ‘Chief’ stand down voluntarily in the act of preserving party unity. When Parnell was then ousted from his position in the manner he was, and the majority were seen to ransom their chairman in favour of maintaining the Liberal alliance, there was little his most ardent supporter could do. Rebelling against what he construed as the loss of the IPP’s political independence, Redmond opted to break with the secessionists in a commendable display of loyalty to Parnell.

After a month of fruitless endeavour, the discussions in France came to an end. Dillon, having joined the talks in Boulogne, accompanied O’Brien to Folkestone,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 171

where they were arrested by the British authorities and imprisoned in Galway jail. During their incarceration Timothy Healy became the most prominent anti-Parnellite in Ireland, launching the *National Press* in March 1891 to counter existing Parnellite publications. The same month saw the establishment of the Irish National Federation (INF), a rival to the inherently Parnellite Irish National League (INL). The attendance of four Archbishops at the INF's inauguration guaranteed widespread coverage in local and national newspapers. The *National Press* qualified the Archbishops' presence as 'a blessing of the infant in its cradle', the *Daily Express* equated it to 'an ecclesiastical convention', and *The Times* claimed it signalled 'the formal and definite entry of the priesthood upon a struggle for the national movement'.<sup>51</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* saw things rather differently, railing against Healy for having 'taken up the Gladstonian idolatry craze [before ridiculing] the Irish National Federation as Irish for The National Liberal Club'.<sup>52</sup> The following day it exposed the folly of placing too much credence on the support of the Church. Timothy Harrington revealed details of a letter sent to Parnell on 15 October 1890 by Dr Logue, the Archbishop of Armagh, requesting he 'invoke his influence and authority' in reigning in the men of action in the Plan of Campaign (a clear reference to Dillon and O'Brien, then in America).<sup>53</sup> Harrington asked the readers to consider this in light of the fact that just one month later the same prelates represented by Dr Logue's letter had the audacity to canvass both these men for their assistance in 'driving Mr Parnell out of public life'.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, Dr Logue requested of Parnell that he employ supervision over the 'vituperative attacks on individuals' emanating from the offices of *United Ireland* in its editor's (O'Brien's) absence.<sup>55</sup> This was a clear acknowledgement that Parnell exercised authority over the paper, something which he was roundly condemned for doing after the split. Moreover, the author of these attacks, Matthias Bodkin, was later 'received into grace and practically commissioned as the champion of the Bishops to attack the supporters of Parnell and the *Freeman's Journal*.'<sup>56</sup> Although conducted as a defensive response to relentless

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<sup>51</sup> *National Press*, 11 Mar. 1891; *Daily Express*, 11 Mar. 1891; *The Times*, 11 Mar. 1891: cited in Frank Callanan, *The Parnell Split, 1890-1891* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1992), pp. 111-112

<sup>52</sup> *FJ*, 11 Mar. 1891

<sup>53</sup> *FJ*, 12 Mar. 1891

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*

assaults by the *National Press*, Harrington's airing of the Church's dirty linen in public ensured that the clerical alliance with Healy and the INF was destined to be a crucial factor in the ensuing battle for political support.

Within a matter of weeks, a by-election in North Sligo provided evidence of the national shift away from Parnell. Although the defeat this time was by a narrower margin than that incurred in North Kilkenny it had been felt that the tide could have been stemmed somewhat, given the fact that it was considered a more Parnell-friendly constituency. Another damning indictment of the deposed leader's increasingly precarious position came with a by-election defeat in Carlow in July which confirmed the ascendancy of the Federationists. In the eyes of the Catholic Church Parnell had compounded his obstinacy by marrying his much-maligned mistress Katharine O'Shea in Brighton two weeks earlier, a move which led the clerical hierarchy to declare that 'by his public misconduct he had utterly disqualified himself to be their political leader'.<sup>57</sup> The clergy had come to view Parnell's fall from grace as an ideal opportunity to arrest their declining influence in political matters, a decline which had accelerated from the 1880s when the Irish Party first reduced the role of priests in the selection of local candidates for election.<sup>58</sup> In the wake of the North Sligo defeat *The Nation* carried a series of press reports from America purporting to demonstrate the tide of Irish opinion there. According to these reports the *New York World* was adamant that 'Mr Parnell had met his Waterloo' ... the *Philadelphia Ledger* agreed yet doubted whether 'Parnell will respect the verdict' ... while the *New York Tribune* felt 'a further prolonging of the Parnellite faction will cut off all aid and sympathy here'.<sup>59</sup>

After victory at Carlow the Federationists received another boost with the release of Dillon and O'Brien from Galway jail on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Distinctly unhappy with the conduct undertaken by both sides during their incarceration, the freed Plan of Campaign activists had entertained faint hopes of creating 'a moderate centre party from their own sympathisers with [political] refugees from Parnell's camp'.<sup>60</sup> When this failed to materialise - the split being even more pronounced than they had

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<sup>57</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 181

<sup>58</sup> J.H. Whyte, 'The Influence of the Catholic Clergy on Elections in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 295 (Apr. 1960), pp. 239-259

<sup>59</sup> *The Nation*, 2 May 1891

<sup>60</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon*: p. 142

imagined - both men decided to throw their lot in with the INF. In August Parnell had to endure the loss of the *Freeman's Journal* when its owner, Edmund Dwyer Grey, succumbed to clerical pressure and led the paper over to the anti-Parnellite camp. In the editorial explaining his position Grey stated that 'the man who stands between our people and union [Parnell] must be content to be regarded as a foe' before concluding with an 'expression of sincere regret for much that appeared under past management'.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the animosity aroused by the split in the Irish Party, Parnell's premature death from pneumonia on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1891 temporarily united nationalists in grief. The sense of loss felt in Ireland was best articulated by W.T. Stead, editor of the widely-read journal *Review of Reviews*. Stead wrote that 'the clamour of protestations of devotion to Mr Parnell which reach us from across the Irish Channel [Sea?] we recognize as another form of the wailing keen which the Irish are wont to raise over the bier of those whom they have loved and lost.'<sup>62</sup> Some observers at the time believed that his passing would clear the way for swift reunification, none more so than those watching anxiously from America. A series of cablegrams reflecting opinion there ranged from the New York-based *Irish World* hoping the way was now clear 'to bring harmony where discord reigned', to Alexander Sullivan representing Chicago's desire to see 'prompt, cordial, and complete rehabilitation of the National Party', and all the papers in Philadelphia agreeing that 'Mr Parnell's death removed the only remaining obstacle to the complete union of the Irish factions'.<sup>63</sup>

Redmond however, had other ideas. Embracing the attitude of Parnell when he decided that 'he would rather be the leader of a good minority than the leader of a rotten majority' he wasted little time in ridding them of their illusions.<sup>64</sup> Adhering to the principle that independent opposition and not party leadership was the real issue at stake, Redmond resigned his North Wexford seat and resolved to contest the now vacant Cork City seat created by the demise of Parnell. However, without a national organ since the *Freeman's Journal's* defection, and with Healy, Dillon and O'Brien ranged against him, he suffered a resounding defeat at the hands of the INF

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<sup>61</sup> *FJ*, 22 Sept. 1891

<sup>62</sup> W.T. Stead, 'The Discrowned King of Ireland: With Some Opinions of the Press on the O'Shea Divorce Case', *LSE Selected Pamphlets* (1891), p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> *FJ*, 9 Oct. 1891

<sup>64</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 191

candidate Martin Flavin. Temporarily without a seat Redmond entertained retirement, but this was soon forgotten when another vacancy arose in Waterford City just one month later. This time, with the added advantage of a new Parnellite paper, the *Irish Independent*, Redmond squeezed home against the veteran land campaigner Michael Davitt. Victory, narrow as it was, represented the first such success since the split, and ensured that heading into the coming general election the Parnellite's - or Redmondite's as they were increasingly referred to - would 'remain a thorn in the side of the IPP/Liberal alliance'.<sup>65</sup>

### The perils of factionalism

With the Catholic Church resolutely anti-Parnellite, the battle for public opinion in anticipation of the forthcoming general election began in earnest. Despite Justin McCarthy being the nominal leader of the INF, it was Healy, Dillon and O'Brien who carried the most weight with the electorate in Ireland. Over a decade earlier, McCarthy, at Gladstone's request, had spelt out for an English audience what was understood by Home Rule. His somewhat radical suggestion that its implementation 'would establish the principle of federal government for Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales along American lines' was markedly more palatable to Gladstone once his 'principled defence of the preservation of an imperial government to conduct the affairs of empire convinced him that McCarthy was not a separatist at heart.'<sup>66</sup> Little had changed in the interim and the Irish Party's interpretation of Home Rule was consistent with what it had been before the unfortunate split in their ranks.

Whenever accused of over-reliance on the Liberals in their effort to achieve it, Federationists united in crying foul, and Timothy Healy is credited as being 'the first Irish political leader to use the slogan Sinn Féin [ourselves alone] at a rally in Letterkenny in June 1892.'<sup>67</sup> The Redmondites for their part, 'sought broadly the same political outcome as their opponents, a measure of devolution,' but appealed to a variety of political constituencies.<sup>68</sup> And in a classic display of constructive ambiguity, Redmond courted advanced nationalists through active re-engagement

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<sup>65</sup> Patrick Maume, *The Long Gestation: Irish Nationalist Life, 1891-1918* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1999), p. 14

<sup>66</sup> Paul A. Townend, 'No Imperial Privilege: Justin McCarthy, Home Rule, and Empire', *Éire/Ireland* Vol. 42, No. 1 (2007), p. 226

<sup>67</sup> Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p. 351

<sup>68</sup> Matthew Kelly, 'Parnell's Old Brigade: The Redmondite-Fenian Nexus in the 1890s', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 130 (Nov. 2002), p. 209

with the amnesty movement for Fenian prisoners still languishing in British and Irish jails. This was the prelude to the establishment of a 'symbiotic relationship' with the 'hillside men' which became synonymous with Redmond's tenure as head of the Parnellite faction.<sup>69</sup>

Redmond also visited America shortly before the 1892 general election to gauge support among the diaspora there but received a distinctly cooler reception than he had in 1886. On that occasion he had been warmly welcomed as one of Parnell's men, but now such an accolade had lost much of its lustre. A report given by John Dillon to the *New York World*, reproduced in the *Freeman's Journal*, detailed how, prior to Redmond's departure, a call by Timothy Harrington for 'a pre-election armistice [as opposed to reunion] permitting the Redmondites to retain their 29 seats was rejected out of hand by the Federationists'.<sup>70</sup> They believed that the true level of support for the Redmondites was much lower than their leader professed it to be and that Harrington's offer was a callous attempt to give a false impression to those observing from afar. When subsequent reports emerged from America that Redmond had professed to have come as an advocate of peace and union, the Federationists considered this to be adequate proof of 'the falseness and fraudulent character of Factionist propaganda in Ireland'.<sup>71</sup> On his return Redmond tried to portray his visit a success but the reality of the situation saw Irish Americans determined to take no part in factional infighting. The *New York Press* summed it up best with a report that considered 'the contemplated contest for Irish Parliamentary seats between Home Rulers in the face of an implacable foe [England] worse than a blunder. It is a crime. It is treason to Ireland'.<sup>72</sup>

Dillon's perceptive call to dismiss Harrington's armistice offer soon bore fruit at the polls. Although the Redmondites held many of the major urban centres and had significant support in parts of the west of Ireland, they suffered a resounding defeat in the election, winning only nine seats compared to their nationalist opponents seventy-two. This was a full twenty seats less than Harrington sought to retain through the proposed armistice and clearly vindicated the Federationists decision to

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 212

<sup>70</sup> *FJ*, 14 Jun. 1892

<sup>71</sup> *FJ*, 24 Jun. 1892

<sup>72</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 210

reject the carefully-calculated offer. The anti-Parnellite campaign waged by the clergy during the election was so pronounced that two of the seats won by the INF in Meath were overturned after a Parnellite petition called for a Commission of Enquiry. Michael Davitt and Patrick Fulham were both unseated when the Commission heard evidence from witnesses that voters were ‘instructed from the altar ... interfered with at the polls ... prevented from attending mass ... threatened to have a Christian burial denied to them ... and refused the sacrament of absolution’ in an attempt to influence voter opinion.<sup>73</sup> And while Davitt and Fulham represent just two of nine MP’s who had their seats overturned because of pre-election clerical interference during the whole of the nineteenth-century, the role Bishop Nulty of Meath played in influencing the polls in 1892 was central to the decision to unseat both men on this occasion.<sup>74</sup>

Although the Liberals failed to win an overall majority in Britain, they had enough seats to rule with the support of the Irish Party. Redmond and his minority group gave their blessing to the renewal of the political alliance while remaining quietly confident that unionist opposition to nationalist demands would scupper any prospect of success. True to his word, Gladstone placed a second Home Rule bill before parliament in 1893 and although it passed the House of Commons, it was rejected by the House of Lords. When the Prime Minister then chose to pursue alternative domestic reforms rather than challenge the Lords over the Irish issue, Redmond accused him of having abandoned Ireland. The effect of this defeat, together with the public apathy attributed to the entire constitutional movement over the party split, initiated ‘a wholesale political demobilisation’.<sup>75</sup> And as interest waned, and donations from America dried up, Tom Garvin’s assertion that the INF and the INL had become ‘moribund’ by the mid-1890s stands up.<sup>76</sup>

### Conflicting allegiances

Far from home, Irish Americans with a keen interest in the national question sought direction from the pulpit, a host of fraternal societies, or the well-established

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<sup>73</sup> Anon., ‘Priests in Politics’, *LSE Selected Pamphlets* No. 153 [Home Rule for Ireland] (1893)

<sup>74</sup> Whyte, ‘The Influence of the Catholic Clergy on Elections in Nineteenth-Century Ireland’, p. 247

<sup>75</sup> Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics, 1891-1918* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2005), p. 97

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*



diaspora press. For many, Church attitudes constituted their default position. On arrival in the US an adherence to the *mores* of the ‘Devotional Revolution’, coupled with a firm commitment to the principle of ‘Faith and Fatherland’, bound Irish communities together.<sup>77</sup> The latter resonated with immigrants struggling to establish an identity in America, and it increasingly came to be understood that ‘to be Catholic was to be a nationalist, and to be an Irishman was to be Catholic.’<sup>78</sup> We have already seen how the Catholic Church in Ireland played such an influential role in the downfall of Parnell. As early as January 1891 Tobias Kirby, Rector of the Irish College in Rome, had succinctly expressed the view of the Holy See when he told then Archbishop Logue that ‘Catholic Ireland could never permit a convicted adulterer to be the leader of her representatives in a just political struggle.’<sup>79</sup> And though this was the message resoundingly delivered to congregations across Ireland a slightly less radical approach was adopted when attempting to influence Irish America.

While Irish prelates remained manifestly obedient to the Vatican, the predominantly Irish American Catholic Hierarchy in the US became embroiled in a conflict over the liberal Americanization of the Catholic Church. There, modernists like Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore and Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, and conservatives such as Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York and Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester, debated the pros and cons of the American preference for the separation of church and state. Fearing that ‘accommodation of democracy would lead to calls for its introduction into the Church’, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae* (Virtue, Nature and Grace, and Americanism) in 1899 to preserve Catholic tradition.<sup>80</sup> However, despite papal

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<sup>77</sup> Coined in 1972 by American historian Emmet Larkin, the Devotional Revolution was a dramatic transformation of popular religious practice in Ireland in the period 1850-75. Thomas O’Connor, ‘Devotional Revolution’ in S.J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 153-154. See also Emmet Larkin, ‘The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875’, *American Historical Review* Vol. 77, No. 3 (Jun. 1972), pp. 625-652 and Anthony McNicholas, ‘Faith and Fatherland’, *Cultural Studies* Vol. 24, No. 6 (Nov. 2010), pp. 821-835

<sup>78</sup> Sheridan Gilley, ‘The Roman Catholic Church and the Nineteenth-Century Irish Diaspora’ in N.C. Fleming and Alan O’Day (eds.), *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations Since 1800: Critical Essays, Volume II, From Parnell and his Legacy to the Treaty* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2008), p. 381

<sup>79</sup> James Privilege, *Michael Logue and the Catholic Church in Ireland, 1879-1925* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 83

<sup>80</sup> Chester Gillis, *Roman Catholicism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 66

intervention on this occasion, there had never been any major dispute between Church protagonists on theological issues. Avoiding schisms that had enveloped Judaism and Protestantism, and in line with Ultramontanist belief in papal infallibility, ‘Catholic administrators in the US adhered to the doctrinal principle *Roma locuta est, causa finita est* (Rome has spoken, the case is closed).’<sup>81</sup> And consistent with such adherence went universal Catholic clerical condemnation of Parnell’s proven impropriety. Although Irish American prelates never quite felt the need to engage in the nationalist debate to the extent of their compatriots in Ireland (for the obvious reason their parishioners did not go to the polls), the position they adopted when confronted on the issue reflected the position of their Irish contemporaries.

Irish immigrants who settled in the US also joined a whole host of fraternal societies, with the late nineteenth century a particularly thriving period for this popular expression of ethnicity. Among the most prominent of the national Irish American organizations to ‘come into their own’ during this period were the Irish Catholic Benevolent Union (ICBU, est. 1859), the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH, est. 1836), the Catholic Total Abstinence Union (CTAU, est. 1872), and the Knights of Columbus (KOC, est. 1881).<sup>82</sup> Other organizations with a ‘more social bent’ included the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick (est. 18<sup>th</sup>c.) and a number of Philo-Celtic Societies (est. c1873) dedicated to cultural and literary pursuits.<sup>83</sup> In New York a move was afoot to replace the popular sectional county societies with a central all-Ireland body. Established in 1883 the Irish Confederation was intended to be ‘a mirror image of Ireland in America, based directly on the American Constitution.’<sup>84</sup> Yet the lukewarm enthusiasm which greeted this new organization meant the Irish Confederation only survived until the late 1880s, the temporarily improved conditions in Ireland having ‘robbed it of the urgency of its mission.’<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 77

<sup>82</sup> Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2000), pp. 147-148

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>84</sup> John T. Ridge ‘Irish County Societies in New York, 1880-1914’ in Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (eds.), *The New York Irish* (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 281

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 283

Following its reorganization in 1871, the AOH was by far the largest and most popular of these fraternal societies. Despite its intensely sectarian Catholicity and the Church's alleged abhorrence of secret societies, the AOH soon became mired in controversy over its connections to the Molly Maguires. The Mollies, as they were more commonly known, 'were a rare transatlantic example of an Irish rural tradition [agrarian agitation] begun by the Whiteboys of the 1760s and taken up later by the Ribbonmen of the 1820s and 1830s.'<sup>86</sup> In the volatile world of US labour unrest the Mollies achieved notoriety in the Pennsylvania coal-mining industry when twenty of their members were hanged for murder and associated crimes in 1877-78. In the areas where Molly Maguire violence was rife, a significant number of immigrants are believed to have hailed from the same north-central and north-western parts of Ireland, areas with a long tradition of both Ribbonism and Hibernianism. Yet while it appears that the AOH lodges in Pennsylvania 'were adapted to classic Ribbonite purposes, and included some degree of collective violence,' historians still debate the role played by the ostensibly fraternal Catholic organization.<sup>87</sup>

While membership of these societies was almost obligatory, it did not inhibit immigrants from taking part in the nationalist struggle. Indeed, cross-pollination between the plethora of temperance, benevolent, and social groups and moderate nationalist organisations was common. However, with most of these groups affiliated to the Church, association with one organisation, Clan na Gael, was routinely frowned upon. And this, as much as any Oath of Secrecy, drove the Clan even further underground.

The Clan were the Irish-American embodiment of physical-force nationalism, championing Ireland's right to gain independence from Britain through armed revolution. Its practising ideology, Fenianism, had been condemned by the Catholic Church in Ireland almost from its inception because it was felt that 'those who disregarded political authority as represented in the state would, in time, come to disregard religious authority represented by the Church and its bishops.'<sup>88</sup> With the Catholic Church in Ireland adopting such a staunchly anti-Parnellite position it

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<sup>86</sup> Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 13

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80

<sup>88</sup> Oliver P. Rafferty SJ, 'Eternity is Not Long Enough nor Hell Hot Enough ...': The Catholic Church and Fenianism, *History Ireland* Vol. 16, Issue 6 (Nov/Dec 2008), pp. 30-34

would be natural to assume that Clan sympathies in America would reside with those less enthralled to the clergy. Yet the Clan themselves had their own travails and an internal dispute resulted in a split in their organization. A Chicago element led by Alexander Sullivan assumed control of the movement in the 1880s in part because a largely quiescent clergy in that city were not opposed to the use of violence to gain Irish independence.<sup>89</sup> In addition to its role in the subsequent dynamite campaign in Britain the Chicago Clan became embroiled in a local murder conspiracy, before the exposure of a spy in its ranks did further damage to its already suspect reputation. By the 1890s, then, advanced nationalists could almost rival their constitutional counterparts in their individual states of disarray.

More independently-minded immigrants, wary of the myriad of nationalist movements competing for their allegiance, formed their opinions from the wide range of newspapers providing extensive coverage of events in Ireland. An already established market grew in popularity in the wake of the mass migration attributed to the Famine (1845-49) and the influence of radical republicans exiled following the failed rebellion of 1848.<sup>90</sup> While the former provided the customer base, the latter set the tone for the narrative dominating public discourse. New publications emerging in America formed alliances with publications in Ireland, and a reciprocal arrangement initiated by the *Boston Pilot* and *The Nation* saw copies of both papers cross the Atlantic.<sup>91</sup> From an early stage editors realised that ‘Irish publications with connections to America had the ears [and pockets] of the immigrants, while American publications with strong links to Ireland possessed a greater air of cultural authenticity.’<sup>92</sup> Many of the journalists associated with the Irish American press ‘had the sound commercial sense to retain their Irish roots, and their coverage predominantly reflected the three main concerns of the Irish immigrant community, Ireland, America, and the Catholic Church.’<sup>93</sup> In later years the exiled radicals of ‘48 would be joined by a new wave of republicans following the failed rebellion in 1867.

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<sup>89</sup> Michelle Cowan, *The Murder of Dr Cronin: The Irish American and Nativist Response, Chicago, 1889*, M.A. in Irish Studies, National University of Ireland Galway (2004)

<sup>90</sup> Cian McMahon, ‘Ireland and the Birth of the Irish-American Press, 1842-1861’, *American Periodicals*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2009) Special Issue: Immigrant Periodicals, p. 5

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 8-9

<sup>93</sup> Gillian O’Brien, ‘Patriotism, Professionalism and the Press: The Chicago Press and Irish Journalists, 1875-1900’ in Kevin Rafter (ed.), *Irish Journalism before Independence: More a Disease than a Profession* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 120

As publications, and circulations, increased, Anglophobic editorials continued to reinforce the national lament.

Some editors went on to become celebrated figures in Irish American historiography and the positions they adopted on nationalist issues played a prominent role in influencing Irish American public opinion at the turn of the twentieth century. Among these were two Galway-born men, John F. Finerty, editor of the Chicago-based *Citizen*, and Patrick Ford, editor of the New York based *Irish World (IW)*. A ‘nominal member of Clan na Gael without ever becoming a figure of real authority in the movement’, Finerty was ‘a flamboyant speaker capable of whipping up Irish Anglophobia and giving the English hell.’<sup>94</sup> Indeed, in the pages of *The Citizen*, which he edited from its foundation in 1882 until his death in 1908, Finerty ‘advocated an extreme form of nationalism, taking delight every time the British suffered any humiliation, whether it be in Ireland, India, or Egypt.’<sup>95</sup> After a short career in Congress as an independent Democrat for Chicago, Finerty became a convert to Irish constitutional nationalism where ‘his expressed support for the Parnellite party after 1890 made him the subject of friendly satire by the famed creator of Mr Dooley, Finlay Peter Dunne.’<sup>96</sup> Ford, who immigrated to America with his parents as a nine-year-old boy in 1845, never lost his ethnic identity and campaigned throughout his adult life for the cause of Irish independence. A Civil War veteran of radical persuasion, he became ‘disillusioned with Parnell after the Kilmainham Treaty of 1882 and increasingly turned to physical-force nationalism.’<sup>97</sup> Yet Ford too was an ultimate convert to constitutional nationalism, and ‘after the IPP split he supported the Parnellite faction of John Redmond.’<sup>98</sup> However, despite mellowing with age, the editor of the *Irish World* remained convinced that ‘the destruction of British domination was not only essential to Ireland but was conducive to the honor of the Irish race in all lands.’<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Owen McGee, ‘Finerty, John Frederick’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=83D3A49FCE41F155038A868BE865BB8F#> Michael Funchion, *Chicago’s Irish Nationalists, 1881-1890* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), p. 32

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>96</sup> McGee, ‘Finerty, John Frederick’, *DIB*

<sup>97</sup> Maureen Murphy, ‘Ford, Patrick’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do#>

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>99</sup> James P. Rodechko, ‘An Irish American Journalist and Catholicism: Patrick Ford and the *Irish World*’, *Church History* Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec. 1970), p. 529

Irish constitutional nationalism stagnated in the 1890s. The INF, now under the control of John Dillon, lost two seats in the 1895 general election while the INL under Redmond gained three. However, with little change in their combined strength, Nationalists were more alarmed at the overwhelming defeat suffered by the Liberals in the same contest. With Arthur Balfour's Conservatives now in government there was little prospect of another Home Rule bill appearing on the floor of the House of Commons any time soon. And if the Irish Party entertained any notion of regaining the power and prestige it once held under Parnell, a realisation that both sides needed to unite for the common good began to dawn. What both sides craved was a distraction, something around which they could coalesce without controversy and engage in some much-needed public relations. Fortuitously, the centenary commemorations surrounding the 1798 United Irishmen rebellion were fast approaching.

#### IPP reunification

In celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 Unionists had thrown down the gauntlet in a wonderful display of pomp and ceremony championing the achievements of the British Empire. Now it would be up to Nationalists to respond. While the Young Ireland League had formed a committee in 1896 to oversee the '98 commemoration in Ireland, the idea entered nationalist consciousness in Irish America a decade earlier. Timothy J. O'Keefe has noted how 'as early as the 1880s Irish emigrants from Wexford had formed '98 Clubs in New York' [and] 'prominent Irish Americans had formed their own Centennial Association by 1895.'<sup>100</sup> Although the Committee formed in Ireland had resolved to exclude sitting MP's from participation - for fear they might hijack the whole event - John Dillon succeeded in overturning this decision by January 1898. This success, of course, facilitated Redmond's inclusion, and resulted in 'the unlikely spectacle' of the two factional leaders sharing a platform for the laying of the foundation stone for the proposed '98 Memorial.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Timothy J. O'Keefe, 'The 1898 Efforts to Celebrate the United Irishmen: The '98 Centennial' in Fleming and O'Day (eds.), *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations since 1800: Critical Essays, Volume II*, p. 47

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48

In comparison to Dillon, Redmond's nationalist star was in the ascendancy. Frustrated with the apparent stagnation of the INL, whose decline he attributed to 'desertion by the bulk of the farmers', the Parnell loyalist had created the Irish Independent League (IIL) in 1896 with a similar, though less land-oriented, programme to the INL.<sup>102</sup> The centenary also provided Redmond with another opportunity to visit America where he had been invited to lecture on the men of '98. John O'Callaghan, a Redmond confidant who worked as a journalist for the *Boston Globe*, assured him of a warm reception when he promised that 'the Federationists will not dare to offer the slightest opposition [as] they have not held a single meeting since we started the Independent League here.'<sup>103</sup> When Redmond subsequently spoke on Broadway and in Boston he enhanced his nationalist credentials no end by reminding his audience that 'he had met members of the Tone, Emmet and Mitchell families as well as survivors of the '67 movement', inferring (with more than a modicum of truth) that he came from the same republican stock.<sup>104</sup>

If the 1798 Centenary acted as a catalyst for dissenting Irish nationalists to engage in dialogue, the United Irish League (UIL, est. 1898) was the cornerstone to Irish Party bridge-building. Initially formed to address agrarian grievances in the West of Ireland, the UIL also had 'the specific long-term objective of political and national reunion.'<sup>105</sup> Founded by William O'Brien, the UIL sought to create a mass nationalist movement along the lines of its predecessors, the Land League, the National League and the Plan of Campaign. Aspiring to compel the parliamentary party to unite by exerting 'pressure from below' its most important principle was 'a total disregard for the 'ites and 'isms and rivalries of the old quarrel and to leave its door open to all comers.'<sup>106</sup> Coming at a time when the majority of Irish nationalists had lost faith in their parliamentary representatives, the UIL utilised the provisions of the new Local Government [Ireland] Act 1898 to undermine the political status quo by putting their own candidates forward to contest by-elections in South Mayo and North Sligo. While actions such as this alarmed Nationalist MPs, the UIL's rapid

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<sup>102</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 278

<sup>103</sup> John O'Callaghan to John Redmond, 5 Dec. 1897, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/1

<sup>104</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 286

<sup>105</sup> Philip Bull, 'The United Irish League and the Reunion of the Irish Parliamentary Party, 1898-1900', *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 26, No. 101 (May 1988), p. 51

<sup>106</sup> Philip Bull, 'The Formation of the United Irish League, 1898-1900: The Dynamics of Irish Agrarian Agitation', *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 33, No. 132 (Nov. 2003), p. 406

rise from a regional agrarian movement to a nation-wide body compelled recognition that ‘the aspirations of the Irish people [for political change] were being best embodied and articulated by the UIL.’<sup>107</sup> Faced with such a reality, IPP reunion became almost obligatory, ‘for not to do so would risk the party being eclipsed altogether by the League.’<sup>108</sup>

Although IPP reunification was welcomed by the UIL, the party’s premature acceptance of this inevitability robbed the League of the opportunity to advocate for much-needed reform. What transpired instead was that the UIL was subsumed by the Irish Party, much to the chagrin of its founder William O’Brien. One of the critical issues concerning the future of the reunited party was the selection of a new chairman and to this end the parliamentarians set about their task in January 1900. The chairmanship became vacant when Dillon took the decision not to seek re-election in February 1899 and the party agreed to leave the post free until the prospect of reunification had been settled. Dillon enhanced the potential success of these discussions in April by outlining a five-point programme that was ‘barely distinguishable’ from the Parnellite’s programme at the 1892 general election and suggesting that the party’s new chairman come from the minority faction.<sup>109</sup> What followed was a succession of talks about talks before a reunion conference convened on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1900 came to a successful conclusion two weeks later. On 6<sup>th</sup> February, John Redmond’s victory over the only other viable candidate (Timothy Harrington) owed much to William O’Brien and Michael Davitt instructing their supporters to throw their weight behind the MP for Waterford. And exemplifying the spirit of conciliation sweeping through constitutional nationalist veins, Dillon stood aside. The man to whom so much blame had been attached for maintaining the party split a decade earlier was now the man entrusted to lead it in the years to follow.

### Conclusion

The closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century should have provided invaluable lessons for the reunited Irish Party. Not only did every cause or campaign started in Ireland require Irish American support to succeed, the necessity to court and flatter the diaspora into lending such support became crucial. To this end, visiting envoys from

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p. 422

<sup>108</sup> Bull, ‘The United Irish League and the Reunion of the Irish Parliamentary Party, 1898-1900’, p. 52

<sup>109</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 310



Ireland in the guise of the populist Charles Stewart Parnell became every bit as important as those with stronger familial links to more robust periods in the national struggle like John Dillon.

The briefest of historical reflection would also have taught nationalist leaders that militants in Irish America were not prepared to throw their considerable weight behind the constitutional movement without retaining a recourse to agitation. And, conscious of the impossibility of appeasing dyed-in-the-wool extremists, a decision to ostracize the Fenian element should it continue to prove unaccommodating would have to be considered. Simultaneously, recognition that a failure to demonstrate significant political progress, and/or a return to factional infighting, ran the risk of reviving widespread diasporic apathy. An end of term assessment of Parnellism would have stressed how policies adopted in the pursuit of Home Rule, the retention of political independence at Westminster, and the primacy afforded to the maintenance of party unity, were critical factors in recovering Irish American support. And enabling the diaspora to make a telling contribution to the national struggle, while ridding itself of ingrained Anglophobic suspicion, also appeared to be a key to future success. A new challenge required a new leader, however, and in the election of John Redmond the Irish Parliamentary Party appeared to have steadied the constitutional ship.

Redmond's accession to party chairman closed one chapter of Irish America's troubled relationship with constitutional nationalism while tantalisingly opening another. Now that the dissension which had so recently blighted the party had been laid to rest, the prospect of renewing or even surpassing the success it had periodically achieved under Parnell had been revived. Redmond, on his prior visits to the US, had cultivated the persona of a man of steadfast principles, prepared to run the risk of political isolation rather than appease English parties opposing legitimate Irish demands for Home Rule. His work on behalf of Fenian prisoners with the Amnesty campaign had endeared him to many advanced nationalists wary of giving the constitutional party a second chance. And his burgeoning reputation in the House of Commons had elevated the Irish party leader's political status among peers and critics alike. Having consolidated his position domestically, Redmond engaged in regular correspondence with Irish American sympathisers preparing the ground for his attempt to consolidate it in the US. And it was under these conditions that he

embarked for New York in December 1901 to establish the United Irish League of America.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The United Irish League of America, 1901-03**

Few can dispute that the Irish Parliamentary Party's relative decline in the 1890s coincided with the period when its relationship with Irish America was at its lowest ebb. The Parnell split, the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill, and a Conservative Party government, combined to undermine constitutional nationalism during a decade defined by internal party dissension. Rescued from the abyss in 1900, the reunited IPP quickly identified the necessity to re-engage with a sceptical, if not exactly hostile, diaspora.

This chapter explores the Irish Party's early efforts to achieve transatlantic harmony under the leadership of John Redmond. It examines the motives behind the establishment of the United Irish League of America (UILA) in 1901 and the delegation of tasks assigned to the IPP's new US auxiliary. Efforts to raise funds, promote constitutional nationalism, influence American foreign policy, and unite existing Irish-American societies under the umbrella of moderation, are considered, as are efforts to counter advanced nationalist opposition through the medium of carefully-constructed ambiguity. As visiting envoys from Ireland toured America in their effort to build League momentum, the adoption of a formal constitution and bye-laws confirming the UILA's wholly subordinate role is juxtaposed with an inherent Irish-American desire to exercise greater influence over the struggle for national independence. In the search for a land settlement, comparisons with Gladstonian-era conciliation evoked bitter memories of Fenian betrayal before the terms surrounding the sale of Redmond's own encumbered estate cast aspersions on the party chairman's personal morality. And in sacrificing William O'Brien on the altar of party unity, the Irish leader demonstrated the obligatory strength of character required to resuscitate a terminally-ill Home Rule movement.

As baptisms of fire go, 1901-03 can hardly be described as volcanic. However, the period did contain the potential for constitutional nationalist digression should Redmond fail to live up to expectations. That the new chairman rose to the challenge, and that the IPP emerged stronger in the process, was no little

achievement. And bringing Irish America back into the party fold proved critical to this success. How all this came to pass is where we go now.

### Establishing the UILA

In anticipation of Redmond's return to America a great deal of preparatory work had been undertaken by his supporters in the US. One man who deserves enormous credit for this work is John O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan had worked as a journalist for the *Cork Examiner* and the *Cork Herald*, in addition to being the Cork correspondent for the *Freeman's Journal*, before emigrating to America in 1887.<sup>1</sup> Doubling up in the 1890s as a journalist with the *Boston Globe* and American correspondent for the *Irish Daily Independent (IDI)*, O'Callaghan played a leading role in organizing the then Parnellite leader's lecture tour in 1898.<sup>2</sup> Having proven his loyalty to Redmond over many years, it was little surprise to see the Boston-based Corkonian emerge as the prominent voice touting Irish-American reconciliation once party reunification had been realised in Ireland. Building on the momentum generated by the recent pro-Boer campaign, O'Callaghan dedicated himself to eradicating the bitter acrimony which had defined Irish-American constitutional nationalism since 1890. And his correspondence with Redmond during this period highlights the progress he made in pursuit of this goal.

As early as September 1900, O'Callaghan was able to report that he and like-minded associates had 'taken steps to have the other side seen.'<sup>3</sup> And this willingness to heal old divisions 'has enabled us to establish the [Boston branch of] United Irish League at a most representative meeting held in Parker House.'<sup>4</sup> O'Callaghan's determination to build on this success was evident in his closing remark that he was going to write to contacts in New York 'and shall try to wake them up there.'<sup>5</sup> The tone of O'Callaghan's correspondence with Redmond is notable, however, for the striking familiarity which seems to permeate every letter. The party chairman was directed on more than one occasion to forcefully exert his newly acquired authority, as O'Callaghan explained that only the demonstration of strong leadership, both

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Maume, 'O'Callaghan, John', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0138>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 28 Sep. 1900, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/2

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

inside and outside parliament, held any hope of restoring unity among Irish-American constitutional nationalists. By November, he was suggesting that ‘if the next session in the House of Commons were stormy, and a conflict with the government [were to ensue], those causes would immediately affect the people here and good results would follow.’<sup>6</sup> In a rare display of anxiety, however, O’Callaghan cited the importance of Redmond’s showing ‘some official recognition’ of the Boston UIL as he felt this was what was needed to ‘enthuse the rank and file.’<sup>7</sup> What is also noticeable at this early stage is that O’Callaghan’s letters show no indication of his having received correspondence from Redmond, either for the purpose of suggesting a desired course of action or for approval of actions taken to date. Unperturbed, party loyalists continued to meet, and the enthusiasm that inspired reunification in Ireland was being repeated in Irish America.

It was in a climate of positivity then that Redmond embarked for the US in November 1901. For a variety of reasons, certain members of the party had chosen not to travel with him and the new leader was concerned that his opponents in America would use this to infer that party unity was illusory. With Dillon and Davitt opting to stay at home, Redmond was accompanied on his journey by P.A. McHugh, the Member of Parliament for Leitrim and editor of the *Sligo Champion*, and Thomas O’Donnell, the young Irish-speaking Member for West Kerry.<sup>8</sup> And during the course of their five week stay, the delegates met with the pro-Home Rule US President Theodore Roosevelt, lobbied a group of Irish-American millionaires, and addressed a conference of Irish societies in New York City.<sup>9</sup> It is generally held in the brief historiography reflecting this tour that Redmond founded the United Irish League of America (UILA) on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1901, and to all intents and purposes this is factually true. Yet it must be acknowledged that its founding was the mere endorsement of a movement which constitutional nationalists in the US had begun on their own initiative, and whose embryonic success had infused Redmond with the requisite confidence to proceed in the manner he did. This is important, if only to demonstrate that Irish-American constitutional nationalists were every bit as

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<sup>6</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 1 Nov. 1900, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/2

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Dermot Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader* (Kildare, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2014), p. 24

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

proactive as their counterparts in Ireland when it came to facilitating party reunification. Their subsequent subordination was imposed by the party leader in an address he gave to the new organization in Boston during this visit. In stating that ‘no Irishman in America living 3,000 miles away from the homeland ought to think he has a right to dictate to Ireland’ Redmond categorically prohibited the new organisation from having any input into party policy formulation.<sup>10</sup> And determined to do everything in its power to assist the IPP, the UILA ratified its acceptance of this directive at its First National Convention at Faneuil Hall, in Boston, in October 1902.

In its role as an auxiliary organisation the UILA was allotted four primary functions:

- (i) Raising funds to sustain the Irish Party
- (ii) Promoting constitutional nationalism in Irish America
- (iii) Uniting the existing Irish American organisations under the umbrella of moderation
- (iv) Bringing pressure to bear on the US government to adopt measures consistent with Irish nationalist aspirations.<sup>11</sup>

The League got off to a slow start, however, and was hampered by several internal factors inhibiting its initial growth. Apart from the logistical problems associated with traversing the United States - time, distance, and expense - League officials faced competition from rival organisations, a general apathy towards all things political, and an intense rivalry between certain Irish-American cities, particularly Boston and New York.<sup>12</sup> To help overcome these it was imperative that the UILA appoint a president capable of bridging the ideological and geographical divide, and in their choice of John F. Finerty it appeared to have found just such a man. A nominal member of Clan na Gael in the 1880s, Finerty had abandoned his interest in the goal of armed insurrection by 1901.<sup>13</sup> As President of the Chicago United Irish Societies (UIS) the Galway-born editor of the *Chicago Citizen* seemed the perfect

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<sup>10</sup> Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921* (London: London School of Economics and Political Science; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), p. 15

<sup>11</sup> Alan O’Day, ‘Irish Diaspora Politics in Perspective: The United Irish Leagues of Great Britain and America, 1900-1914’, *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration, and Diaspora* Vol. 18, No’s 2-3 (1999), p. 228

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 231-232

<sup>13</sup> Owen McGee, ‘Finerty, John Frederick’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do#>

choice around which the rival cities could rally. And if the League had made an inspired selection in Finerty, then a man elected to serve as one of its two vice-presidents', Patrick Egan, seemed an equally astute choice. At various stages of a long life dedicated to the nationalist cause, Egan had been a member of the IRB, chief treasurer for the Irish National Land League, a former president of the Irish National League in America, and a member of Clan na Gael.<sup>14</sup> Having become a wealthy grain merchant and real estate developer in Nebraska, he joined the Republican Party in America and served as US Minister to Chile in 1889 before relocating to New York in 1893. Frequently at odds with John Devoy, Egan would undermine the Clan by encouraging Irish Americans to support the constitutional drive for home rule.<sup>15</sup> With two Bostonians as Secretary and Treasurer (John O'Callaghan and T.B. Fitzpatrick), a National Executive Committee dominated by successful Irish Americans from the major centres of Irish settlement was enhanced by the inclusion of Sligo-born lawyer and US Congressman William Bourke Cockran, and the editor of the *Irish World* Patrick Ford. In influencing Irish-American opinion through the medium of the press, few held more sway at the turn of the century than Ford. And in Cockran, 'a vigorous supporter of Home Rule for over thirty years', the League was assured of a strong nationalist voice at Washington.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to the constituent body of the UILA, Kevin Kenny believes 'they were composed mostly of Irish Americans of high social standing and often considerable wealth, outspokenly opposed to socialism and other radical movements.'<sup>17</sup> To a large extent David Brundage endorses this view, but laments the fact that without a detailed study of local branch memberships we do not know for sure.<sup>18</sup> In keeping with its objective to unite existing factions under the umbrella of moderation, however, the UILA was conscious of the need to recruit rank-and-file members of

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<sup>14</sup> Owen McGee, 'Egan, Patrick', *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2896>

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>16</sup> Paul Rouse, 'Cockran, William Bourke', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=387CFF5B037AE5962B49D0A2FBAA4C71#>

<sup>17</sup> Kevin Kenny, 'American Irish Nationalism' in Joseph Lee and Marion R. Casey (eds.) *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), p. 294

<sup>18</sup> David Brundage cited in Timothy J. Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 207-208

other Irish-American organizations. And undermining its ideological rival in Clan na Gael was the first necessary step on this path.

### Countering advanced nationalism

Early indicators suggest party loyalists seeking to disrupt advanced nationalism met with some success. While an official Clan circular prohibited members from associating with any new initiative, many disgruntled individuals had stated that ‘if they were prevented from taking part in the League they would withdraw [from the Clan] altogether.’<sup>19</sup> And as evidence of continuing dissension, O’Callaghan reported early in 1901 that the Clan executive had expelled Col. Scannell and Standish Reidy from the organization for not ‘toeing the line.’<sup>20</sup> Explaining the situation to Redmond, O’Callaghan reasoned that ‘while professing to be a secret organization they [the Clan] have the greatest itch for public attention and notoriety in the newspapers of any men you ever met ... and, as we [the League] have the great advantage of being a public body, those who like to be in the public eye will take sides with those best enabled to get them there.’<sup>21</sup> Clan opposition to constitutional nationalism was deep-rooted, however, and it would take more than a series of overtures from a fledgling Boston-based organisation to supplant it.

Established in 1867 as ‘the main heir to the Fenians’, Clan na Gael underwent a bitter split in 1883 when a discredited bombing campaign in Britain saw the organization’s leadership pass from the New York Irish to a Chicago element led by Alexander Sullivan.<sup>22</sup> Bookending the IPP split, the Clan were finally reconciled in 1900 at a convention in Atlantic City under the direction of John Devoy and Daniel F. Cohalan. Although Devoy had initiated the New Departure two decades earlier, and opposed the subsequent dynamite campaign, the maverick Fenian remained an enthusiastic advocate of revolutionary nationalism. And under Devoy the reunited Clan proclaimed its commitment to extremism by pledging the principle that ‘physical force is the only engine a revolutionary organization can consistently and successfully use to realise the hopes of lovers of freedom in lands subject to the

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<sup>19</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 3 Dec. 1900, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/2

<sup>20</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 3 Jan. 1901, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/3

<sup>21</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 8 Feb. 1901, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/3

<sup>22</sup> David Brundage, ‘In Time of Peace, Prepare for War:’ in Bayor and Meagher (eds.), *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 331



bonds of oppression.<sup>23</sup> Twenty-five years Devoy's junior, Cohalan was the American born son of Cork immigrants who had left Ireland for the US at the height of the Famine in 1847. Having forged a successful career in the legal profession, he coupled 'a deep hatred of the British Empire with an intense devotion to American principles of government and institution.'<sup>24</sup> Valued by Devoy 'for his political and social connections', Cohalan was a close associate of the new Clan leader without ever being required to join the organization's Executive.<sup>25</sup> Together, Devoy and Cohalan led the Clan for the next twenty years, and how they responded to the challenge posed by the IPP/UIIA alliance very much dictated the subsequent pace and path of the revolutionary movement.

Clan reservations about the new chairman of the IPP centred on political statements of Redmond's own making. In 1895 Redmond had delivered a speech at the Cambridge Union in which he had 'envisioned a future self-governing Ireland within a federated United Kingdom', and in 1900 he angered many nationalists when he declared to the House of Commons that the Irish people would treat Queen Victoria's impending visit 'with respect.'<sup>26</sup> On reflection, the Cambridge Union speech, along with similar speeches made by Redmond, should be seen as no more than 'kite-flying exercises', designed to ascertain whether nationalist expectations were in line with the political reality of the day.<sup>27</sup> And his pledge that the Irish people would treat the ageing Queen with respect was the least a leader of the Irish Party could be expected to say if he wanted to avoid alienating the entire British political establishment in one fell swoop. In July 1901 O'Callaghan had already reported that the Clan were weakening, and cited an alleged member of its Executive as having stated 'that even if men differ on some matters they should not say anything of each other which may prevent them from working together a year or two from now.'<sup>28</sup> On a rumour that Cohalan was going over to Ireland to 'see if terms

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<sup>23</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921*, p. 9

<sup>24</sup> Michael Doorley, 'The Judge Versus the Chief – Daniel Cohalan and the 1920 Split Within Irish America', *History Ireland* Vol. 23, No. 2 (March/April 2015), p. 46

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>26</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 178. For the full text of Redmond's declaration to the House of Commons on Queen Victoria's impending visit to Ireland see Hansard, HC Deb 08 March 1900 vol. 80 cc402-3

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182

<sup>28</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 19 Jul. 1901, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/3 The alleged member of the Clan Executive to whom O'Callaghan refers is a Judge Teevens from Massachusetts.

could be made with the parliamentarians' O'Callaghan included a suggestion from Breslin [a fellow League member?] that 'you should have no parlay with them [the Clan] ... as he says they are a bad lot.'<sup>29</sup>

To appease some of the more volatile elements in Irish America, Redmond employed a liberal dose of ambiguity surrounding the advancement of alternative policies in pursuit of the Irish cause. This included the declaration in Boston that 'our movement have no quarrel and want no quarrel with any man or anybody who wants to strike a blow at the English Government. In fact, we hope that any man or any such body, if they can strike such a blow, will strike quickly and strike hard.'<sup>30</sup> The use of such language, however, came at a price. While unionists would use it to portray Redmond as a separatist at heart, revolutionaries would come to use it to legitimise a more radical solution to the Irish problem. Whether such ambiguity succeeded in enticing advanced nationalists to defect to the UILA one can only speculate.

Following Redmond's visit to the US in December 1901, the flow of recruits into the UILA increased in 1902. O'Callaghan felt confident in claiming that the League was 'making serious inroads into the Clan strength' and that the extremists were 'on the defensive.'<sup>31</sup> Steps were taken to ensure that the proposed National Convention of the UILA scheduled for later in the year was not taken over by bogus branches of the League established by Clan intrigue. To guard against this, O'Callaghan felt it necessary to prohibit any branch less than three months old from sending delegates to the League convention, and for the League to hold its convention within three months of the Clan holding theirs.<sup>32</sup> In July the Clan responded by declaring its 'undying hostility to the League for the next two years', and pledged to oppose any attempt the Ancient Order of Hibernians might make at their convention to endorse the new organisation.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Redmond made this declaration at Boston in December 1901 when he played to the gallery of Irish Americans who failed to differentiate fine distinctions between constitutional and revolutionary activities. See Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921*, p. 15

<sup>31</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 13 Apr. 1902, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/4

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 5 Jul. 1902, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/4

The bitter acrimony directed against the UILA was reported on in detail in the *Chicago Citizen*.<sup>34</sup> Under the headline ‘Clan na Gael Wars on Irish League’ President-elect and *Chicago Citizen* editor John Finerty interpreted the Clan resolution condemning the UILA as the first intimation that the advanced nationalists had ‘captured the Hibernian Order.’<sup>35</sup> A couple of days later League Secretary John O’Callaghan was advising Redmond that the AOH convention’s most important work would be to decide ‘if they are being ridden by the Clan or if they are [still] a distinct organization’ before adding ‘while the Clan might prevail, it may split the AOH.’<sup>36</sup> As events transpired, O’Callaghan’s and Finerty’s fears were unfounded. By August it was apparent that ‘short of being a complete victory for the League’ the Hibernian convention could not have gone much better.<sup>37</sup> The gist of O’Callaghan’s letter on this occasion was that while the AOH did not endorse the League, neither did it elect the officers the Clan had suggested. Those who were elected were not overtly hostile to the UILA and they were determined at all costs to preserve the Ancient Order as a distinct organization outside the control of the Clan Executive. This prognosis, O’Callaghan added, coupled with Patrick Egan’s resignation from the Clan, suggested the UILA were gaining significant ground in the battle with their radical opponents. Despite this battle, however, moderate and radical nationalists had always agreed that England’s difficulties were Ireland’s opportunities. This populist belief had been carried to America by John Mitchel and the exiled Young Irelanders of 1848, and Redmond knew better than to oppose it in his effort to appease any remaining sceptics. Whether the leader of the Irish Party lost sight of how important this strategy remained to Irish American’s at the advent of the Great War is something we will explore later. For now, it is imperative that we examine how the seeds of transatlantic Anglophobia came to fruition.

### Transatlantic Anglophobia

Whenever an international dispute involving Britain arose Irish Americans demonstrated an uncanny knack for ‘Twisting the Lion’s Tail.’<sup>38</sup> Freed from the

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<sup>34</sup> The Chicago-based newspaper *The Citizen* changed its name to the *Chicago Citizen* in 1897.

<sup>35</sup> *Chicago Citizen* 12 Jul. 1902

<sup>36</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 14 Jul. 1902, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/4

<sup>37</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 12 Aug. 1902, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/4

<sup>38</sup> ‘Twisting the Lion’s Tail’ was a familiar expression used to refer to immigrant Anglophobia in the US at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>c. See Sydney Brooks, ‘America and the War’, *North American Review* Vol. 17 No. 520 (Mar. 1900), p. 343

political restraints imposed on their nationalist counterparts in Ireland, Irish Americans enjoyed greater latitude expressing their innate Anglophobia. However, as the Fenian invasions of Canada in 1866 and 1870, and the dynamite campaign in Britain in the 1880s had demonstrated, there was little success to be had in taking on the empire through force of arms. A more effective and intensely more rewarding approach involved obstructing and hindering British imperial intrigue at a diplomatic level. And from the 1890s ‘Twisting the Lion’s Tail’ represented Britain’s Achilles Heel as nationalist Ireland’s Fifth Column employed it to great effect.

The opportunity to do so first presented itself during an Anglo-American dispute over a contested boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana in 1895. This dispute threatened to escalate into open hostilities when the imperial parliament at Westminster rejected US offers of arbitration made at Venezuela’s request. On the premise that the very essence of the ‘Monroe Doctrine’ was at stake, President Cleveland informed the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, that following the findings of an independent commission established to investigate both sides claims, the US would be permitted to resist any violation of Venezuelan territory thereafter ‘with every means at its disposal.’<sup>39</sup> With the American ultimatum prompting a foreign policy reappraisal in London, Salisbury accepted the inevitability of US western hemispheric domination when he realised Britain’s imperial interests lay much farther east. And in assenting to arbitrate over the contested boundary, Britain succeeded in satisfying Monroe enthusiasts in the US Congress anxious to avert a disastrous and costly war. Alarm at how close both countries had come to conflict compelled US Secretary of State Richard Olney and the British Ambassador at Washington Sir Julian Pauncefote to draft a treaty calling for arbitration on all future disputes that may arise between them. And as the treaty’s impending ratification drew near, Irish Americans lobbied feverishly to defeat what they construed to be an alliance between their traditional nemesis and their chosen haven of refuge. In a campaign characterised by mass public meetings and intense lobbying of individual senators, Irish-American organizations contributed to twenty-three of the thirty-six

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<sup>39</sup> Grover Cleveland, ‘Message Regarding Venezuela-British Dispute’ (17 December 1895) <http://miller.center.org/cleveland/speeches/message-regarding-venezuela-british-dispute> The ‘Monroe Doctrine’, formulated in 1823, viewed efforts by European nations to wield greater influence in the America’s as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States

petitions submitted in opposition to the Olney-Pauncefote Treaty.<sup>40</sup> These organizations received a welcome boost when Michael Davitt travelled over from Ireland to lend his considerable weight to their arguments in person, a contribution subsequently acknowledged in Francis Sheehy-Skeffington's 1908 biography of the veteran Land League activist. Canvassing in the halls of Congress, Davitt's declaration that 'Irishmen in the United States were true to their motherland and would countenance no close relationships with any country which held her in bondage' typified the emerging separatism which united Irish nationalists everywhere.<sup>41</sup>

After a particularly bitter American presidential election campaign in the winter of 1896, which centred around the thorny issue of monometallism, a largely disgruntled Legislative used William McKinley's victory over William Jennings Bryan as an opportunity to exact political retribution on the new Executive. In the subsequent climate of anti-British sentiment, the Olney-Pauncefote Treaty failed to garner the required two-thirds majority needed for Senate ratification, and the rapprochement desired by Anglophiles on both sides of the Atlantic failed to materialise. Irish-American lobbying was effective when a quick review of the contribution made by senators from Irish centres of settlement is considered. Of the sixteen senators from the eight states with the largest concentration of Irish stock, 'four were irreconcilably opposed to the treaty, and nine more were said to have had clear reservations about it.'<sup>42</sup> And many of those who did vote for the treaty did so secure in the knowledge that it would never achieve the requisite number of votes it needed to make it through the Senate. To say that Irish Americans were solely responsible for the treaty's defeat would be a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Yet it must be recognised as the key moment when Irish Americans demonstrated to an obstinate imperial parliament in London, that outside of Westminster, there existed another nationalist voice England could scarcely afford to ignore.

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<sup>40</sup> Nelson M. Blake, 'The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty of 1897', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Jan. 1945), p. 237

<sup>41</sup> Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, *Michael Davitt: Revolutionary, Agitator, and Labour Leader* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1908), p. 200

<sup>42</sup> Blake, 'The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty of 1897', p. 240. The eight states in question were New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Connecticut, and California. *United States Census*, 1890

No sooner had the Olney-Pauncefote Treaty been defeated than a long-running Cuban insurrection against Spanish rule invited US intervention in April 1898. With Cuba and Spain both Catholic, Irish immigrants satisfied any religious misgivings they might have held by accepting America's portrayal of the Caribbean conflict as another example of Old World suppression of legitimate New World nationalist demands. And with their collective conscience clear, Irish Americans responded to nativist accusations of suspect loyalty by rallying to the flag and serving the US with distinction in the subsequent Spanish-American war. While a proposed nationalist pilgrimage to Ireland for the 1798 centenary commemorations was cancelled by the onset of hostilities, Irish-American disappointment was negated by the opportunity the new war provided to enhance their credentials as loyal US citizens. However, even as the *Irish Daily Independent* was telling Irish commemorationists that their Irish-American compatriots had marked the occasion appropriately by fighting to free Cuba, the 'Ireland of the West', the ideological dilemma being raised by the spread of the conflict was causing the diaspora more than a little concern.<sup>43</sup>

While John O'Callaghan advised John Redmond to 'congratulate Irish-American regiments who distinguished themselves in the field', there was growing anxiety over continuing attempts at Anglo-American rapprochement.<sup>44</sup> These attempts had at their roots the 'emerging geo-political reality' that British decline on the global stage compelled it to seek a new powerful ally to counter Russian, French and German threats to its waning hegemony.<sup>45</sup> With future US relations in mind, Britain refrained from any condemnation of America's Cuban intervention. And when Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, subsequently declared that 'as terrible as war may be, even war itself would be cheaply purchased if in a great noble cause the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack [were to] wave together over an Anglo-Saxon alliance' there was little doubt where London's sympathies lay.<sup>46</sup> It was, however, America's failure to grant the Philippines its independence which most

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<sup>43</sup> Patrick A. Maume, 'Cuba, the Ireland of the West': The *Irish Daily Independent* and Irish Nationalist Responses to the Spanish-American War, *History Ireland* Vol. 16, No. 4 Ireland and Latin America (Jul-Aug. 2008), p. 31

<sup>44</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 30 May 1898, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/1

<sup>45</sup> Ryan D. Dye, 'Irish American Ambivalence Towards the Spanish-American War', *New Hibernia Review/Irish Éireanneach Nua* Vol. 11, No. 3 (Autumn, 2007), p. 105

<sup>46</sup> Lewis Einstein, 'British Diplomacy in the Spanish-American War', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series, Vol. 76 (1964), p. 49

served to ring nationalist alarm bells.<sup>47</sup> This denial of Filipino nationalism, under the pretext of American humanitarianism, gave rise to a surge of anti-imperialism across the US. And while it would be natural to assume that Irish immigrants fronted this new surge, their hard-won status as loyal American patriots only served to inhibit their participation in it. Longing to express their abhorrence of all things imperial, however, the ‘historical watershed’ provided by the Second Boer War united Irish Americans behind a common cause.<sup>48</sup>

The Second Boer War (1899-1902) began when Britain attempted to exert greater political control over the mineral-rich Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The Boers were descendants of Dutch settlers in South Africa, and Bruce Nelson has asserted that Irish nationalists who saw in the Boers ‘a rural, agricultural, and deeply-religious people’ imagined a common identity with the ‘chaste, undefiled, spiritual Irish peasant.’<sup>49</sup> And in recognising the familiarity with their own struggle, nationalists of every persuasion were quick to rally in support of the beleaguered Boer. This interpretation aside, P.J. Mathews has noted that the conflict in South Africa also ‘precipitated the first significant moments of tension between the advocates of parliamentary Home Rule and an emerging separatism.’<sup>50</sup> And while the Irish Party found welcome consensus on a topic which avoided recourse to exhaustive internal squabbling, the establishment of a pro-Boer Irish Transvaal Committee by advanced nationalists represented a shift to a more overt form of public dissension.<sup>51</sup>

Nationalist opposition to the war came in many guises, ranging from mass pro-Boer rallies in Dublin organised by the Irish Transvaal Committee to career-defining parliamentary protest at Westminster. The South African conflict saw recruitment in Ireland for the British Army ‘wrenched from the margins to the centre of nationalist

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<sup>47</sup> The US paid \$20 million to liberate the Philippines from Spain under the terms of the 1898 Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish-American War

<sup>48</sup> Dye, ‘Irish American Ambivalence Towards the Spanish American War’, p. 112

<sup>49</sup> Bruce Nelson, ‘From the Cabins of Connemara to the Kraals of Kaffirland’: Irish Nationalists, the British Empire, and the Boer Fight for Freedom in David T. Gleeson (ed.) *The Irish in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), p. 164

<sup>50</sup> P.J. Mathews, ‘Stirring up Disloyalty: The Boer War, the Irish Literary Theatre, and the Emergence of a New Separatism’, *Irish University Review* Vol. 33, No. 1, Special issue: New Perspectives on the Irish Literary Revival (Spring-Summer, 2003), p. 100

<sup>51</sup> For the Irish Transvaal Committee and Irish Nationalist opposition to the Second Boer War in general see Donal P. McCracken, *Forgotten Protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2003)

concern' while the raising of Irish Brigades to fight alongside the Boers constituted acts of unqualified morale-boosting significance.<sup>52</sup> By October (1899), notable acts of political dissension were jockeying for nationalist approval. John Dillon moved an amendment in the House of Commons opposing the war, Willie Redmond was ejected for protesting against a grant of £10,000 required for the army, and Michael Davitt resigned from Parliament by taking the Chiltern Hundreds.<sup>53</sup> When it was suggested that IPP opposition to the war could scupper the prospect of Home Rule, Davitt qualified his position by declaring to a packed House: 'if Home Rule could be killed by sympathy with justice, with liberty and with right, then let it die.'<sup>54</sup>

Irish Americans were equally vociferous in their opposition to the war and led pro-Boer activism in America. While official US government policy was to remain indifferent (reciprocating Westminster's stand in the recent Spanish-American war), Irish nationalists struggled to comprehend how America, the father of republicanism, could turn a blind eye to the Boer Republics' valiant resistance to British imperialism. The *Irish World* brought a degree of clarity to proceedings by raising public consciousness as to what was transpiring in South Africa. Avoiding the inclination to embark on a worn-out anti-English tirade just for the sake of it, the paper 'linked the war with the cause of all nations struggling against the might of empire, and urged the United States to desist from joining the ranks of imperial powers.'<sup>55</sup> Between its pages its largely Irish-American readership could find details of mass meetings across the country where 'resolutions of sympathy with the Boers and of undying hatred for England' were passed.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Terence Denman, 'The Red Livery of Shame': The Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899-1914, *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 29, No. 114 (Nov. 1994), p. 212. There were two Irish Brigades in the field during the Second Boer War. One under the joint command of John MacBride and an American named John Blake and another under the command of an Irish Australian, Arthur Lynch. See Donal P. McCracken, 'MacBride's Brigade in the Anglo-Boer War', *History Ireland* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 26-29

<sup>53</sup> Meleady, *Redmond: The Parnellite*, p. 313. Taking the Chiltern Hundreds refers to a legal procedure to effect resignation from the British House of Commons. As an office of profit under the Crown any MP who takes the Chiltern Hundreds is automatically disqualified from holding onto his or her seat in parliament, in effect, facilitating their desire to resign.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 314

<sup>55</sup> Úna Ní Bhroiméil, 'The South African War, Empire, and the *Irish World*, 1899-1902' in Simon J. Potter (ed.) *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain, c. 1857-1921* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p. 195

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 196



Practical support for the Boers was headed up by Irish-American organizations such as the AOH and Clan na Gael. In January 1900 AOH officers agreed ‘to render any assistance compatible with our loyalty as American citizens which would not interfere with the neutrality laws of the United States.’<sup>57</sup> In conjunction with other organizations the AOH dispatched an Ambulance Corps to the Transvaal under the auspices of the Red Cross to provide medical assistance in the field, but this was later acknowledged to have dedicated itself to combat on behalf of the Boers shortly after its arrival. These volunteers were ‘lionized in the Irish and Catholic press upon their return home and those who died in battle were honoured as martyrs for a noble cause.’<sup>58</sup> The enthusiasm which characterized Irish-American defence of the Boers saw the AOH, the UIS (United Irish Societies), and in due course the UILA, use three years of pro-Boer activism to ‘reenergize their members and attract additional supporters.’<sup>59</sup> Further campaigns waged against continuing efforts at Anglo-American rapprochement came to typify the common ground which helped unite former nationalist adversaries. And in supporting such initiatives, the IPP was able to advance its own rehabilitation within the wider American diaspora.

#### Building League momentum

When Redmond returned to Ireland after establishing the UILA in December 1901 a decision was taken to build on the momentum created by his visit by returning two of the Irish Party’s most engaging personalities to America. The men chosen were Redmond’s brother Willie and John Dillon’s young protégé, Joe Devlin. Both had great appeal but for different reasons. Willie had toured America as one of Parnell’s men in the 1880s. His infectious good nature, his record as a committed agrarian agitator, and his staunch opposition to the recent Boer War, guaranteed the new chairman’s sibling an enthusiastic audience wherever he went. Devlin, meanwhile, was considered the rising star of the party. A formidable speaker and organiser, Belfast-born Devlin had recently been elected unopposed as the Member of Parliament for Kilkenny North.<sup>60</sup> With a brief to develop the American League

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<sup>57</sup> Charles T. Strauss, ‘God Save the Boer: Irish American Catholics and the South African War, 1899-1902’, *US Catholic Historian* Vol. 26, No. 4 Politics (Fall, 2008), p. 21

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid* p. 24

<sup>60</sup> James Loughlin, ‘Devlin, Joseph’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2557>

across as many states as possible the representatives from Ireland embarked on a hectic schedule following their arrival in the US in February 1902.

Disappointed at the ‘lack of leadership, capacity and energy they encountered in New York’, and ‘discouraged by the malignant and active opposition provided by the Clan in Washington D.C.’, the envoys found it difficult to make progress.<sup>61</sup> By April, however, Willie Redmond was able to inform John Dillon that ‘branches were springing up everywhere and the groundwork for future action is well laid.’<sup>62</sup> In the four short months they were in America the two men ‘addressed over 160 meetings and started 186 new branches of the League.’<sup>63</sup> Declining to condemn physical force nationalists for fear of alienating a still sceptical diaspora, Devlin chose instead to pose them a frank and direct challenge. By reminding them that they had not risen to their foremost position in America through insane methods or a lack of appreciation of events, he proceeded to ask that they apply the same common sense to the Irish question.<sup>64</sup> On their return to Ireland the men were treated to a heroes’ welcome and lauded at a special banquet in their honour to ‘thank them for their services in the United States.’<sup>65</sup> Before they left the US, plans had been put in place for the first National Convention of the UILA, which John Redmond himself had pledged to attend. In August, O’Callaghan, enthused by the resignation of Patrick Egan from the Clan over its avowed hostility to the League, informed his party chairman that ‘there is not the slightest need of being downcast at the outlook on this side of the water’.<sup>66</sup> It was imperative, however, that Dillon (and Davitt if possible) accompany Redmond to America to demonstrate party unity.<sup>67</sup> And when both men agreed to do so, the three-man delegation set sail on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1902.

The First National Convention of the UILA, held at Faneuil Hall in Boston on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1902, was a resounding success. The hall itself was bedecked with large banners of which Parnell’s famous declaration that ‘No man can

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<sup>61</sup> A.C. Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland in the Era of Joe Devlin, 1871-1934* (Oxford, UK; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 85-86

<sup>62</sup> Terence Denman, *A Lonely Grave: The Life and Death of William Redmond* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 1995), p. 61

<sup>63</sup> Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland in the Era of Joe Devlin*, pp. 85-86

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 86

<sup>65</sup> Denman, *A Lonely Grave*: p. 61

<sup>66</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 12 August 1902, NLI, RP, MS 15,213 /4

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*

set a boundary to the march of a nation’ and John Redmond’s emotive assertion that ‘Your hearts are wedded to Ireland’s cause by ties that neither distance nor time can destroy’ were just two.<sup>68</sup> The general committee that welcomed the arrival of the Irish delegates to Boston comprised ‘almost 300 members of that city’s leading citizens’ ... [lending] ‘a carnival-like atmosphere to the occasion.’<sup>69</sup> Over the course of the two-day convention those in attendance were treated to a number of rousing speeches from John Finerty, William Bourke Cockran and John O’Callaghan, as well as speeches from Dillon, Davitt, and Redmond himself. Finerty highlighted the ‘senseless opposition in some quarters and general apathy in others’ that the League had to endure in its efforts to grow, while remaining convinced that ‘from this day forward it would march with great strides to victory.’<sup>70</sup> Cockran followed Finerty by reiterating the very essence of the Irish Question, ‘the possession of the soil and the right to self-government.’<sup>71</sup> Only through the settlement of these two outstanding issues, Cockran added, could Ireland cease ‘to become a land industrious men wanted to abandon and become a land where industrious men sought to remain.’<sup>72</sup> After the formal establishment of the National Executive, the convention broke for lunch before ceding the floor to two of the visiting envoys from Ireland.

John Dillon’s appearance erased any lingering fears that Irish Party unity might be cosmetic. The former leader of the Federationists kept his address relatively short, much of it acknowledging the sterling work carried out by the American League since its inception before giving an assessment of the conditions currently afflicting Ireland. Dillon made an emotional appeal for a steady contribution to what he termed ‘the ongoing war’ with Britain before echoing Cockran’s plea for the ‘spreading of information [necessary to] the influencing of public opinion in the US.’<sup>73</sup> As the very embodiment of the land struggle, Michael Davitt was especially warmly received when he rose to speak. In ridiculing George Wyndham’s (the Chief Secretary for Ireland) assertion that the UIL was a negligible entity in Ireland, Davitt gave

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<sup>68</sup> *Proceedings of the First National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 7. For Parnell’s famous declaration see Pauric Travers, ‘The March of the Nation: Parnell’s *Ne Plus Ultra* Speech’ in Donal McCartney, Pauric Travers (eds.), *Parnell Reconsidered* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), pp. 179-196

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9

<sup>70</sup> *Proceedings of the First National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, P. 17

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50

testimony to the existence of over 1,300 branches with a combined membership approximating 100,000.<sup>74</sup> And after highlighting British misrule in India, and equating the IPP's staunch defence of the Protestant Boer Republics with the defence of the very cause of liberty itself, the veteran land activist warned his audience to be wary of the propaganda inherent in the 'News from London' cable dispatches.<sup>75</sup>

Before the close of the opening day's business the 'Platform of the UILA' was universally adopted at the convention. This 'Platform' is notable for the declaration that the UILA

'give complete adhesion to the principle that our organizations in America are entitled to be but auxiliaries and advisers and that the Irish people, on their own soil, and through their own chosen leaders, are best fitted to decide the means by which the battle for Irish freedom shall be fought.'<sup>76</sup>

In addition to acquiescing to act in a wholly subordinate role, the League pledged to contribute financially to the National Defence Fund established to combat the Irish Landowners' Trust (which was itself established to suppress the UIL in Ireland). They also determined to strive to enlist members of like-minded societies in America to unite under the UILA banner.

The formalities of the second day's session began with a report from John O'Callaghan, the National Secretary of the American League. O'Callaghan acknowledged the representatives of the 143 branches across 24 States of the Union and the Dominion of Canada present before thanking many of those who had made the phenomenal growth of the League possible. A special mention was reserved for the support the new organisation had received from the Irish-American press, with the *Irish World*, the *Chicago Citizen*, and the *Boston Pilot* singled out.<sup>77</sup> After the Hon. George S. Boutwell (former US Senator and Governor of Massachusetts) had spoken, and League Treasurer T.B. Fitzpatrick had delivered his report, came the adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws of the UILA. In essence, these reflected the Constitution and By-Laws of the UIL in Ireland with Article II calling for 'Full national self-government for Ireland' and the 'Abolition of landlordism by means of

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 53

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, pp. 54-55

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 58

<sup>77</sup> *Proceedings of the First National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, pp. 62-63

a universal and compulsory system of land purchase'.<sup>78</sup> While the UILA's remaining Articles governing the Membership and Organization (Articles III to X inclusive) and Branches and Councils (Articles XI to XVII inclusive) dealt primarily with local administrative issues, Article XIV called for biennial National Conventions to be held at the discretion of the National Executive. Unanimously adopted, the speeches continued with Thomas Gargan of Boston taking the stage before the Ways and Means Committee established to affect the work of the UILA pledged to match 'dollar for dollar' the monies raised by the Landowners' Trust.<sup>79</sup> Then came the moment those assembled in the hall had been waiting for, the address by the elected leader of the Irish people, John E. Redmond.

After completing the formalities, Redmond wasted little time in delivering his message. The United Irish League, he asserted, did not differ from previous movements which have attempted to free Ireland in the past. It was a lie, Redmond maintained, 'to portray it as simply an agrarian movement for it was, in every respect, a national movement demanding nothing less than national self-government'.<sup>80</sup> The party chairman told the assembled delegates exactly how he envisaged the transatlantic alliance proceeding with a declaration that warrants full citation;

'The support of Irish America can only be sought by us and can only be given by you upon two conditions. We who ask it must satisfy you that this is, in reality, and in soul, a national movement, and you who proffer your support to us, must concede to Ireland herself the rights of deciding for herself on her own soil and according to the circumstances of the moment, the policy, the means, and the methods by which best that movement can be advanced.'<sup>81</sup>

After lauding the Ways and Means Committee for their pledge of support to the UIL, Redmond assured his audience that their actions that evening 'would be read with dismay in Ireland and in England by all those hostile to our cause.'<sup>82</sup> The party chairman's speech was the high point of the proceedings for the majority of those

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 86

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 91-92

<sup>81</sup> *Proceedings of the First National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 92

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 93

present. That the whole event was such an outstanding success was reflected in several local press reports which appeared over the coming days. The *Boston Post* wrote that the delegation from Ireland ‘stood for the brains, the principles, and the far-seeing purpose of the Nationalist Party’ ... [and that] ‘they stood today for the same ideas that the men of Massachusetts stood for a century and a quarter ago against the same power.’<sup>83</sup> The *Boston Globe* described the UIL ‘as the greatest thorn today in England’s side’ and added that the convention and its delegates ‘would have the sympathy of all good people in these parts.’<sup>84</sup> Patrick Ford’s *Irish World* praised the convention for presenting Ireland’s cause to America ‘with such clearness and force that no one can fail to see that it is based on justice and truth.’<sup>85</sup> And the *Chicago Citizen* demanded that now the convention had identified the practical work needed to be done, branches of the UIL should be formed throughout America ‘that would help to paralyse the Landlords’ Trust in Ireland.’<sup>86</sup>

All the speeches from the Irish delegation, however, were notable for what they omitted to say as much as for what they said. Before they departed for America, John Redmond had given permission for Timothy Harrington and William O’Brien to enter into negotiations on behalf of the tenants of Ireland with a representation of landlords seeking a final settlement of the land question. Perhaps the uncertainty attached to how the negotiations in Ireland were proceeding dictated a uniform avoidance of the issue when the visiting envoys addressed their American supporters. Or perhaps certain members of the touring party (Dillon and Davitt) having grave reservations about such negotiations taking place at all fostered the collective silence. Wherever the fault lies, the land question would once again mire an Irish Party chairman in a controversial battle between the forces of agitation and conciliation.

### The Wyndham Land Act (1903)

It is ironic that ‘the most substantial [legislative] victory gained for centuries by the Irish race for the re-conquest of the soil of Ireland’, bears the name of a Chief

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<sup>83</sup> ‘Press Opinions’, appendix to the *Proceedings of the First National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 127 citing the *Boston Post* 20 Oct. 1902

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 127-128 citing the *Boston Globe* 21 Oct. 1902

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131 citing the *Irish World* 1 Nov. 1902

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 132 citing the *Chicago Citizen* 1 Nov. 1902

Secretary who, just twelve months earlier, had been the architect of a wholly inadequate proposal to settle the very same issue.<sup>87</sup> So inadequate in its provisions for land purchase was George Wyndham's original bill that Denis Gwynn, in his biography of Redmond, described it as 'a feeble forerunner' to its successor.<sup>88</sup> It is Capt. John Shawe-Taylor, the son of a Co. Galway landlord, who deserves the credit for rescuing the land question from its political impasse. In September 1902, shortly before the IPP delegation left Ireland for the UILA Convention in Boston, a letter written by Shawe-Taylor appeared in *The Times* inviting representatives of the tenant farmers and landlords to meet in conference. With the author of the letter a relatively unknown quantity, Wyndham's subsequent approval for the concept of a land conference gave Shawe-Taylor's proposal some much-needed credence. However, in awarding political kudos to Shawe-Taylor or the Chief Secretary, one is subscribing to a school of opinion which holds the subsequent Land Act (1903) to be the pinnacle of constructive unionism, with which successive Tory governments sought to kill Home Rule with kindness.<sup>89</sup> Fergus Campbell argues, along with Paul Bew and Philip Bull, that to do so underestimates the influence of the UIL.<sup>90</sup>

A campaign of agrarian agitation had been launched by William O'Brien in September 1901 as a direct response to a deterioration in conditions for tenants in the west of Ireland. Coupled with vigorous Irish Party activism at Westminster, the UIL hoped to broker the best possible conditions for the tenants in any upcoming land bill. O'Brien knew that agrarian disturbances in Ireland were always followed by coercion before conciliation was introduced to restore order. And when UIL meetings across the country were broken up by the authorities and many of the leading activists imprisoned, the veteran land campaigner's initial calculations were proven correct. As outrage grew in response to the government crackdown, the situation showed little likelihood of resolving itself until Shawe-Taylor made his timely intervention. For Clan na Gael, however, settlement of the land issue represented an ideal opportunity to assess the leadership of John Redmond, and to

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<sup>87</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 102

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98

<sup>89</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish Popular Politics and the Making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903', *Historical Journal* Vol. 45, No. 4 (Dec. 2002), p. 756. Credit for the subsequent land conference has also been attributed to a Kerry landlord, Lindsey Talbot Crosbie. See Bryan MacMahon, 'The Origins of Conciliation', *History Ireland* Vol. 15, No. 1 (Jan-Feb 2007), pp. 8-9

<sup>90</sup> Campbell, 'Irish Popular Politics', p. 757

say they were judging him against the standards of his only true predecessor (Charles Stewart Parnell) is no exaggeration.

In Parnell's era, a Land Act (1881) passed under the Prime Ministership of William Gladstone had delivered a fatal blow to the New Departure. And with the Kilmainham Treaty (1882) confirming the surrender of agrarian agitation, an advanced nationalists' perception of having been sold out by the constitutional movement took root.<sup>91</sup> While there was nothing to compare with the New Departure in 1902, hope that Clan na Gael might yet be won over to moderation existed. And as aspirational as this might have seemed, it did comprise one of the four initial tasks set for the UILA at its establishment twelve months earlier. However, while the American League achieved a modicum of success in enticing some of the rank-and-file Clan to its cause, the Fenian leadership itself was not for turning. John Devoy recognised that if the Clan wanted to justifiably distance itself from constitutional nationalism, a policy controversial enough to warrant rejection of the reunited Irish Party would have to be found. In the subsequent Land Act (1903) Devoy believed he had found it. And the fact that he was not the only nationalist to have reservations about the Act, or the policy of conciliation which accommodated its passage, posed Redmond his first real challenge as party leader.

By a strange twist of fate two of Ireland's most prominent agitators during the long land war, John Dillon and Michael Davitt, were absent from the country during the conference which brought that war to an end. Having accompanied John Redmond to America, Dillon was taken ill and forced to remain in situ for several weeks to recover his strength. Davitt, for his part, was detained on unfinished business for the UILA and only returned to Ireland after the Land Conference Report had been formulated. Both men's absence, however, does not obviate the fact that neither of them had appeared on the original list of nationalists invited to represent the tenants in Shawe-Taylor's letter to *The Times*. Despite this apparent snub, Davitt would have felt that those who did represent the tenants were aware of where he stood on the issue, given that his pamphlet *Some Suggestions for a Final Settlement of the Irish Land Question* was fresh off the press. Admitting that his preference for land nationalisation did not hold broad appeal, Davitt reiterated 'his commitment to the

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<sup>91</sup> See Chapter 1



principle of state ownership of the land ... while remaining adamant that the concept of occupying ownership would have to be qualified in any future settlement.<sup>92</sup>

Unsurprisingly, then, he was highly critical of the Conference Report for deviating from the compulsory purchase demand that had been at the forefront of the UIL's campaign, taking particular issue with 'the ambiguity surrounding its financial proposals.'<sup>93</sup> Dillon, before his departure, had greeted the whole idea for a land conference with little more than 'tempered enthusiasm' and by the time he returned from America he had begun to view the entire proceedings as 'a mortal blunder.'<sup>94</sup>

While Davitt's withdrawal from political life in 1899 had left him free to openly oppose the proposed land bill, Dillon had to curtail much of his scepticism out of a desire to remain loyal to the party. As particular aspects of the bill concerning what was to become of evicted tenants, what constituted a fair price for a holding, and the impact land transfer would have on the work of the Congested Districts Board, continued to trouble him, Dillon's barely-concealed restraint gave way. At Swinford in Co. Mayo on 26 August 1903 he threw his lot in with Davitt by declaring that he 'no longer any faith in the doctrine of conciliation.'<sup>95</sup> William O'Brien, the architect of the conciliation plus business approach governing the recent land conference, felt Dillon's remark could not go unchallenged.

Having had the proposed land bill ratified by the UIL in April, and viewing conciliation as potentially 'holding the key to resolving the remaining controversial problems of education and Home Rule', O'Brien felt he should not have to endure such criticism in public.<sup>96</sup> At a meeting of the National Directory of the UIL in September, the veteran MP for Cork proposed a resolution demanding that the nationalist press refrain from any future attacks on party policy, in effect an attempt to silence the *Freeman's Journal*. Redmond, viewing Dillon and Davitt's absence from the meeting as indicative of just how critical the whole business had become, refused to do so. To allay O'Brien's fears Redmond assured him that 'the tenants are taking our advice not theirs [Dillon's and Davitt's]' and that land sales 'would

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<sup>92</sup> Marley, *Michael Davitt*: pp. 268-269

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 271-272

<sup>94</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon*: pp. 228- 229

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p. 236

<sup>96</sup> Sally Warwick-Haller, *William O'Brien and the Irish Land War* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990), p. 229

proceed as rapidly as the machinery of the Act would allow' once moderately fair terms had been agreed with the landlords.<sup>97</sup> When the attacks on the policy of conciliation continued it was apparent something would have to give. O'Brien's subsequent resignation from the Party and the UIL on 6 November 1903 is attributed by Sally Warwick-Haller to a number of factors, among which 'his desire not to be held responsible for precipitating another party split' ... 'the increasing isolation he was feeling as a result of the mounting criticism he was receiving' ... [and] 'his profound disappointment in Redmond' were paramount.<sup>98</sup> For F.S.L. Lyons, Redmond's reluctance to rein in Dillon, Davitt and the press should be viewed in a broader context than a mere fear of reprisal against the party leader if he had. This context encompassed the political situation in England, where a campaign for tariff reforms and a potentially damning report into the conduct of the recent war in South Africa 'gave rise to an expectation that the Conservative government might not have too long left to live.'<sup>99</sup> If this were so, 'Redmond could not be seen to be coquetting to Irish unionists if he wished to bring pressure to bear on English Liberals to return to the Gladstonian policy of Home Rule for Ireland.'<sup>100</sup> Perhaps self-preservation and the wider political picture both played their part. What should also be taken into consideration is the sale, in October 1903, of an encumbered South Wexford estate Redmond had recently inherited on the death of his uncle, Lt. General John Patrick Redmond. By a strange twist of fate, the leader of both the IPP and the UIL became a landlord himself during the very period he was acting as a representative of the tenants at the recent Land Conference. Yet, denying any conflict of interest, Redmond continued to act in just such a capacity. As matters transpired the sale of his own estate soon after, on terms that his critics would label excessive, called this demonstration of abject naivety into serious question.

Legislative approval for the Wyndham Land Act had barely been granted before the debate over what constituted a fair purchase price for tenants began in earnest. Dillon, Davitt, and Sexton predicted that under the new Act 'landlords would receive extravagant terms to the detriment of their tenants.'<sup>101</sup> With estate sales for 1901 and

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<sup>97</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 54

<sup>98</sup> Warwick-Haller, *William O'Brien and the Irish Land War*, pp. 248-249

<sup>99</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon*: pp. 240-241

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p. 244

<sup>101</sup> Dillon believed the terms for the sale of land in 1903 should reflect the terms agreed during negotiations surrounding the Ashbourne Act of 1885. Any increase on those terms could only benefit

1902 realising 18.1 and 17.9 years purchase respectively, the sale of the Duke of Leinster's estate in September 1903 for 25 years purchase seemed to confound their worst fears. When Redmond followed suit with the sale of his own estate on what appeared to be similarly exorbitant terms (24.5 years purchase on second-term rents and 23 years purchase on first-term rents) critics rounded on him for establishing a precedent for all future sales. It mattered little that the tenants themselves had applied considerable pressure on Redmond to sell when he did, that he had forgiven the estate its £4,000 debt by paying the arrears on it from his own personal finances, or that the tenants had considered the terms agreed a good deal. All this was irrelevant when juxtaposed against the wider national picture. Although the estate was ultimately sold for a much lower price, the original terms offered and accepted 'lingered in the public consciousness and were repeatedly cited by his political opponents for many years after.'<sup>102</sup> The 'Redmond terms' as they came to be referred to were now the baseline for landlords intending to sell their own estates and any prospect of negotiating more favourable terms for tenants thereafter evaporated forthwith. Having underestimated the significance of his actions Redmond 'faced accusations that he had let his personal interests cloud his political judgement.'<sup>103</sup> Any subsequent attempt to rein in Dillon, Davitt or Sexton was futile, and O'Brien lamented 'an all too visible nervousness from that firmness [of decision] which was essential for the restoration of discipline in the national ranks.'<sup>104</sup> The domestic press in Ireland had a field day. Both the *Irish Daily Independent* and *The Nation* 'called for Redmond's resignation' while the *Freeman's Journal* attempts to excuse him (given the tenants proactive role in this sale) led Davitt to declare such efforts 'preposterous'.<sup>105</sup> If events were ringing nationalist alarm bells at home, their peal could be heard loud and clear in Irish America.

### Irish-American reaction

As could be expected, the *Irish World* gave unqualified support to Redmond and the Irish Party over the course of the land bill's legislative journey. An early editorial

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the landlords at the tenants' expense. See Patrick Cosgrove, 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The Final Solution to the Irish Land Question', Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, NUI Maynooth (2008), p. 175

<sup>102</sup> Patrick Cosgrove, 'The Controversy and Consequences of John Redmond's Estate Sale under the Wyndham Land Act, 1903', *Historical Journal* Vol. 55, No. 1 (Mar. 2012), p. 76

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 80-81

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82

from 1903 reflected this when the pronouncement that ‘buying the land is the only alternative to fighting for it’ sat comfortably alongside the declaration that ‘it is for Irishmen in Ireland and their chosen representatives to pronounce final judgement [on the bill]’.<sup>106</sup> Suitably legitimised, Patrick Ford lauded the UIL Convention called to ratify the proposed bill as being ‘truly representative of the Irish people [and] fully invested with the right and authority to voice sentiment and pronounce judgement for Ireland on the question submitted to it.’<sup>107</sup> Irish America’s most widely-read paper also gave front page coverage to a *National Hibernian* article urging support for the proposed Land Bill because ‘it was acceptable to the people of Ireland.’<sup>108</sup> All of this is not to say that individuals within the League did not hold reservations of their own. Concerned that ‘any side-tracking of Home Rule for any subsidiary measure ... would have a demoralising effect on the country’, John Finerty drafted a letter declaring as much and sent it to John O’Callaghan for approval and transmission.<sup>109</sup> Finerty’s letter sought clarification of the Land Bill and requested copies of it be sent to America so that ‘our friends may have an intelligent understanding of its provisions.’<sup>110</sup> Finerty also asked Redmond if we (the League Executive) could ‘hear more from you, as we are awfully in the dark as to your policy for the future and your wishes in our regard.’<sup>111</sup> Alarmed at the tone of its content, O’Callaghan, after consultation with one of the League’s vice-presidents, Michael Redding, and its treasurer, T.B. Fitzpatrick, advised Finerty to retract the letter. O’Callaghan’s assertion that printing the Land Bill would be a waste of money ‘as not one person in a thousand would take the trouble to study it’ was accompanied by Redding’s refusal to add his name to Finerty’s letter because ‘the Clan had wanted to dictate [party policy] and he did not want to follow their example.’<sup>112</sup> Finerty willingly acquiesced to O’Callaghan’s request even before Fitzpatrick wrote to remind him that ‘the role of the UILA was purely as an auxiliary force, and to attempt to be anything more

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<sup>106</sup> *IW*, 21 Feb. 1903

<sup>107</sup> *IW*, 25 Apr. 1903

<sup>108</sup> *IW*, 30 May 1903. The article was titled ‘Official Pronouncement’ and was reproduced from the *National Hibernian* of 15 May 1903

<sup>109</sup> John Finerty to John Redmond, 20 Aug. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>112</sup> O’Callaghan to Finerty, 25 Aug. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

would be to imply a want of confidence in the capacity of the Irish leaders and would be far from complimentary to their constituents [the people of Ireland].'<sup>113</sup>

The relevance of this seemingly innocuous episode lies in the fact that the man charged with leading the Irish Party's auxiliary organization in America, John Finerty, was denied the opportunity to voice a legitimate concern to the man he was ultimately responsible to answer to, John Redmond. This situation, a consequence of Redmond's delegation of a wholly subordinate role to the UILA, had the potential to undermine the future transatlantic relationship between the two nationalist entities. But had the Platform of the UILA, adopted at the First National Convention the previous October, not allotted the American League 'an advisory role', and was Finerty as President of the League, not acting in just such a capacity?<sup>114</sup> This is a point of conflict which occurred more frequently as the pursuit of Home Rule faced bigger and more challenging obstacles. For now, however, it was imperative that the League's collective energies be directed at defeating critics who sought to sow dissension through adversarial, if not downright hostile, representations of the bill. To this end, combatting the negativity emanating from the pages of Clan na Gael's new paper, the *Gaelic American*, assumed top priority. The *Gaelic American* was edited by an experienced journalist, the veteran Fenian John Devoy, and its establishment was a direct challenge to the IPP/UILA-friendly *Irish World*.<sup>115</sup> Adhering to John Mitchel's policy – complete independence for Ireland and the promotion of the revolutionary nationalist movement in Ireland and the US – Devoy's paper launched into an immediate and sustained attack on John Redmond and the constitutional movement.<sup>116</sup>

John O'Callaghan described the first edition of the *Gaelic American* to Redmond as 'anything but formidable' and thereafter took to referring to it as 'the rag.'<sup>117</sup> Yet, within a few short weeks of its establishment the paper was mounting a concerted campaign to reverse the success the UILA had achieved to date by offering an alternative, if often grossly misrepresented, version of events in Ireland. Throughout

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<sup>113</sup> T.B. Fitzpatrick to Finerty, 28 Aug. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

<sup>114</sup> *Proceedings of the First National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 51

<sup>115</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations*, p. 17

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>117</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 30 Sep. 1903 and 7 Dec. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5 The first edition of the *Gaelic American* appeared in Sep. 1903.

October and November 1903 condemnation of the Irish Party was encapsulated in a damning editorial titled the 'Fraud Land Bill' and a front page headline proclaiming 'Redmond's Enormous Profits' from the sale of his estate in Wexford.<sup>118</sup> Making maximum use of Dillon and Davitt's opposition to certain aspects of the bill, Devoy regarded 'their adverse view on the great measure of justice in Ireland' [his sarcastic take on the Land Bill] to reflect the very view the Clan itself had extolled in March.<sup>119</sup> When the Party and the League were thrown into disarray by the sudden resignation of William O'Brien, 'the rag' rejoiced at this unexpected development. Never, the paper reported, had there ever been 'a more ridiculously overrated man in Irish political life', a man the editorial declared 'had maintained his ascendancy simply by the power of the purse.'<sup>120</sup> Castigating O'Brien further for having the temerity to 'brook no criticism whatsoever', Devoy considered that 'matters could not possibly get any worse after O'Brien's resignation than they had been under his direction.'<sup>121</sup> While Devoy would use O'Brien's resignation to demonstrate what he considered to be the parlous state of Irish Party unity, Redmond would use it to demonstrate his avowed commitment to the maintenance of the very same.

Redmond's overarching priority was always to avoid a potential split in the party along the lines of that which had rendered it a political irrelevance in the wake of the Parnell/O'Shea scandal. Caught unawares by the suddenness of O'Brien's actions, the party chairman and leader of the UIL endeavoured, publicly at least, to bring his former colleague back into the political fold. Calling meetings of the Irish Party and the Directory of the UIL to affect this aspiration, resolutions were passed urging O'Brien to return. At no stage, however, were O'Brien's critics taken to task; for avoiding an open rupture was always preferable to losing the services of one increasingly cantankerous individual. That Redmond held this view of O'Brien is evident from correspondence the party chairman had with John O'Callaghan on the matter of the Cork MP's decision to resign.

The anxiety permeating the ranks of the UILA National Executive found further expression when Patrick Egan refused to co-sign a request from his fellow

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<sup>118</sup> GA, 3 Oct. 1903 and 7 Nov. 1903 respectively

<sup>119</sup> GA, 3 Oct. 1903

<sup>120</sup> GA, 14 Oct. 1903. This was a clear reference to O'Brien's marriage in 1890 to Sophie Raffalovich, the daughter of a wealthy Russian/Jewish banker.

<sup>121</sup> GA, 14 Nov. 1903

committee members to cable Redmond to get him to urge O'Brien to reconsider his position. He adopted this position on the grounds that he believed that 'the League here in America should keep its hands off and leave the people at home, who are conversant with all the inside conditions of the matter, to compose their own differences.'<sup>122</sup> Despite Egan's express reservations about getting involved in internal party politics, O'Callaghan sent a letter to Redmond seeking clarification of the whole affair 'not for publication, but just to help us understand it.'<sup>123</sup> After referencing a jubilant Clan who are 'doing everything possible to magnify and distort the entire difficulty' O'Callaghan asked Redmond 'how can we believe there is unity when O'Brien specifically declares that there is not.'<sup>124</sup> The Irish leader's reply indicated both his frustration with O'Brien and his concern that recent events might have on the American diaspora. Taking the precautionary step to remind O'Callaghan that his deliberations on the matter were private and not for public consumption, Redmond wrote that he did not think that O'Brien 'had the slightest justification for his resignation.'<sup>125</sup> Moreover, he added, 'the people of Ireland, the Irish party, and the UIL were all following O'Brien's ideas, and there really was no indiscipline or disunion in our ranks.'<sup>126</sup> O'Brien's resignation, he concluded, was attributable to his 'temperament and ill health, and an exasperated view of every expression of difference of opinion upon details.'<sup>127</sup> Redmond signed off 'in the sincere hope that what has happened will not materially affect the UIL in America.'<sup>128</sup>

Reports in the rival newspapers in December 1903 and January 1904 indicate conflicting Irish-American nationalist opinion. With Patrick Ford firmly hitched to the constitutional bandwagon, the *Irish World* printed a letter from Redmond to John Finerty outlining party policy, alleviating in the process Finerty's earlier concerns about Home Rule being side-tracked. In this letter, the chairman promised that 'no concession of any kind on land, education, taxation or anything else, that may be offered to us by any English party or English government, must be allowed to

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<sup>122</sup> Patrick Egan to O'Callaghan, 22 Nov. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

<sup>123</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 7 Dec. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

<sup>124</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 7 Dec. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

<sup>125</sup> Redmond to O'Callaghan, 22 Dec. 1903, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/5

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*

interfere with the vigorous and vehement prosecution of the movement for the fulfilment of Ireland's just aspirations for freedom.'<sup>129</sup> The *Irish World's* increasingly hostile adversary, John Devoy, took a markedly different view.

Announcing Home Rule to be dead, the *Gaelic American* declared the policy practiced under Parnell to be at complete odds with the policy advocated by the present leadership of the Irish party. The man affectionately known as the Chief, its editor mused, knew that 'Ireland never got anything from England by demonstrating the justice of her demand or by promising to be good, loyal or obedient.'<sup>130</sup> Only force, or the menace of force, Devoy contended, ever wrought anything from an English parliament, and 'those who overthrew Parnell [a strange charge to lay at the feet of Redmond], and drifted back into a policy of conciliation, never obtained any concession worth having from England.'<sup>131</sup> Combative rhetoric such as this confirmed that one of the UILA's preliminary objectives, to unite all Irish American nationalists under the umbrella of moderation, was already becoming a pie-in-the-sky aspiration a little over twelve months into its mandate.

### Conclusion

While the absence of official records make it impossible to put an exact figure on League membership a review of associated factors provides a relatively acceptable estimate. We know for instance that the *Irish World* had a circulation of approximately 100,000 copies and that other leading publications such as the *Chicago Citizen* and the *Boston Globe* were equally supportive of the UILA and the IPP in general. We know too that there were close to two hundred branches of the American League established within the first twelve months of its existence and that this figure grew exponentially with the success of the Home Rule movement. Biennial National Conventions regularly drew delegates from more than half the states in the union and the UILA enjoyed plenty of support within the AOH.<sup>132</sup> Given this knowledge, it is reasonable to expect the American League to have numbered somewhere in the tens of thousands, if not from the outset then certainly

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<sup>129</sup> *IW*, 19 Dec. 1903

<sup>130</sup> *GA*, 30 Jan. 1904

<sup>131</sup> *GA*, 30 Jan. 1904

<sup>132</sup> The American Branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The AOH are covered in greater detail in Chapter 3.



over the coming decade. Whether these were fair-weather members or whether they were truly committed to the constitutional movement is, however, another question altogether.

In establishing the UILA, the reunited IPP appeared to have made great strides in re-engaging Irish America. Visits by John Redmond (twice), John Dillon, Michael Davitt, Joe Devlin and the chairman's brother Willie, helped build League momentum and ensured slow but steady progress was being attained. The formation of a formidable League Executive incorporating Irish Americans of great social standing also augured well for the future, as did League expansion into multiple areas of Irish settlement. Overtures to advanced nationalists received an encouraging response before Clan na Gael issued a restrictive circular prohibiting dual membership. And the Ancient Order of Hibernians had retained its independence by refusing to follow the Clan lead in condemning the Irish Party's new US affiliate. UILA achievements, however, came at a price.

The failure to consult, or indeed inform, Irish Americans of the ongoing negotiations surrounding a proposed settlement of the land question highlighted the wholly subordinate role the party had set the League as diasporic concerns over the policy of conciliation were brushed aside. The Land Act itself, the terms of sale governing Redmond's own estate, and William O'Brien's subsequent resignation over the chairman's perceived failure to rein in party dissenters, caused Irish Americans no little apprehension. And advanced nationalists, unhindered by any pledge of allegiance, rallied behind the extremist sentiment pouring from the pages of John Devoy's *Gaelic American*. Amid personal attacks directed at the Irish leader and accusations of yet another agrarian sell-out, the UILA were compelled to seek solace in the preservation of party unity.

If the developments outlined above can be written off as mere teething troubles, then the years ahead would require further growth, greater legislative success at Westminster, and the strengthening of transatlantic bonds to ensure Irish American apathy with constitutional nationalism remained a painful memory. How much of this came to pass is what we are about to explore.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Transatlantic Realism, 1904-07**

Buoyed by the success of the Wyndham Land Act (1903) and encouraged by the restoration of transatlantic confidence, the Irish Party determined to develop constitutional nationalism across Irish America. Progress in this, however, was inextricably linked to progress at Westminster, and finding a solution to the seemingly intractable Irish question was proving as difficult in the twentieth century as it had in the nineteenth. When the last throw of the unionist dice - devolution - failed to capture the nationalist imagination, the IPP proceeded to put all their eggs in the Liberal basket. A landslide victory for Gladstone's old party in the ensuing general election (1906) almost rendered the Irish Party inconsequential, and prospects of an early return to Home Rule were greatly diminished. A subsequent Irish Councils Bill (1907) offered in its stead was deemed wholly inadequate and constitutional nationalism soon found itself struggling to retain political relevancy.

The debate surrounding devolution in Ireland took place against the backdrop of an emerging separatism which found expression in the establishment of Sinn Féin (1905). Tom Clarke's return from America in 1907 restored links between Clan na Gael and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, links which were grounded in mutual support for the Irish-Ireland movement and Sinn Féin's attempt to capture the middle ground in Irish public opinion.<sup>1</sup> Concurrently, Clan indignation over a perceived UILA dirty tricks campaign had ruined any prospect of diasporic harmony while a proxy war waged through the pages of the *Irish World* and the *Gaelic American* heightened existing tensions between moderate and advanced nationalists. Irish Party envoys touring the US in their effort to grow the American League faced increasing competition in the battle for immigrant allegiance. With Douglas Hyde on a fundraising mission, Gaelic League enthusiasts flocked to subscribe their hard-

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Clarke (b. 1858) was a revered Fenian who had served 15 years in prison in England for treason-felony. After emigrating to America in 1900, Clarke went to work for John Devoy before becoming Assistant-Editor of the *Gaelic American* in 1903. See James Quinn, 'Clarke, Thomas James ('Tom')', *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a1713> For the restoration of IRB/Clan na Gael links see Owen McGee, *The IRB: The Irish Republican Brotherhood from the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p. 306. For IRB support for Sinn Féin see McGee, *The IRB*, p. 320

earned dollars and cents to an ostensibly apolitical organisation celebrating Ireland's cultural heritage. And prospects of winning American Hibernian support faded when the Ancient Order in the US fell victim to a veritable Clan coup in 1906. The lethargy displayed by John Finerty in the face of such challenges prompted a change of presidency in the UILA before consternation over the direction of Irish Party policy began to test Irish-American resolve.

This chapter examines how Irish constitutional nationalists struggled to retain transatlantic hegemony between 1904 and 1907. It explores how the IPP, through the agency of the UILA, sought to overcome Clan na Gael hostility, Fenian indignation, and Hibernian obstructionism, during a critical period for the Home Rule movement in America. Through a detailed analysis of personal relationships, party politics, and traditional immigrant allegiances, a picture of a transatlantic affiliate under considerable strain begins to emerge. And it is only through understanding League dynamics in their infancy that we can appreciate the forces that would render it inconsequential in relative maturity.

### Devolution

If John Redmond had hoped that the conciliation crisis of 1903 had dissipated with the resignation of William O'Brien he was gravely mistaken. As the founder of the United Irish League, O'Brien resolved not to go quietly into the night and with Lord Dunraven's support the Cork MP established the Irish Reform Association in 1904. The object of the Reform Association quickly came to light with the publication of a devolved scheme of government for Ireland. Colloquially known as Dunravenism, devolution embraced four main proposals. It advocated the establishment of a financial council to take over control of purely Irish expenditure; that this council would be staffed by twelve elected and twelve nominated appointees presided over by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; that the council would submit yearly estimates for expenditure to parliament; and that a three quarters majority in the House of Commons would be required to approve said expenditure.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the scheme proposed that a second council comprising all of the Irish MPs, representative peers, and members of the aforementioned financial council, would be empowered to

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<sup>2</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader* p. 66

promote bills specifically drafted to deal with exclusively Irish affairs.<sup>3</sup> In New York for the Second National Convention of the United Irish League of America when news of the scheme broke, Redmond gave devolution a cautious seal of approval.

Describing parliament's attempts to legislate for Great Britain, Ireland, the Colonies and India as 'absolutely ludicrous', Redmond assured League delegates that the difficulties associated with such demands were slowly beginning to dawn on Englishmen everywhere.<sup>4</sup> After citing Lord Cecil - a son of the late Lord Salisbury - as one of those who had recognised the necessity of 'lightening the load on parliament', Redmond declared Lord Dunraven's scheme to be indicative of 'a most extraordinary change which is going on in public opinion among our enemies both in Great Britain and in Ireland itself'.<sup>5</sup> A post-convention editorial in the *Irish World* appeared to concur. Remarking that the promoters of the Reform Association hoped their proposals would form 'the nucleus of a new party', the paper agreed that such a development would meet with no impediment from Irishmen so long as its work 'was on the right Nationalist lines.'<sup>6</sup>

There was little doubt that the scheme was indeed preparing the ground for just such a radical eventuality. Andrew Gailey believes much of the attraction for the architects of devolution lay in the creation of a moderate centrist party that could act as a counter-balance to the extreme wings of both the nationalist and unionist parties.<sup>7</sup> And Paul Bew has likened it to an attempt to create a '*via media*' in Irish politics, an attempt ultimately rejected by nationalists and unionists alike.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps recognising it as such, the Irish leader was compelled to reconsider his earlier position. When John Dillon subsequently stated his belief that any vote of confidence in the Reform Association was likely to 'tear the Nationalist ranks apart' Redmond's mind was made up.<sup>9</sup> To justify this apparent *volte face*, the party chairman began to direct his objections to the specifics of the scheme rather than the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Speech of John E. Redmond, MP, *Proceedings of the Second National Convention of the UILA*, p. 58

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 58-59

<sup>6</sup> *IW*, 10 Sep. 1904

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Gailey, *Ireland and the Death of Kindness: The Experience of Constructive Unionism, 1890-1905* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1987), p. 239

<sup>8</sup> Paul Bew, *The Politics of Enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, UK; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 363

<sup>9</sup> Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule, 1867-1921* (Manchester, UK; New York: Manchester University Press; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, c1998), p. 199

principle of conciliation itself, castigating it as a blatant attempt to get rid of the Irish Party.<sup>10</sup> Simultaneous with the rejection of the *via media*, however, was the emergence of new nationalist voices, both militant and eloquent, outside the party.<sup>11</sup> And the biggest threat to the prevailing status quo came not from the Irish Reform Association but from a separatist revival instigated by a new organisation, Sinn Féin.

### Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin was the product of Arthur Griffith's ideological vision for the Ireland of the future. Born into a working-class family in Dublin in 1871, Griffith had followed his father into the printing business and worked as a compositor and copywriter for both *The Nation* and the *Irish Daily Independent* newspapers.<sup>12</sup> After spending two years in South Africa (1897-98) – partly for health reasons - he returned to Ireland a committed Anglophobe with a deeply-held sympathy for the Boer cause.<sup>13</sup> A member of the Irish Transvaal Committee opposed to the Boer War, Griffith was instrumental in the creation of Cumann na nGaedheal in September 1900, designed to unite a number of open nationalist societies already in existence.<sup>14</sup> With no clearly agreed policy at the outset, membership of the new organization was open to all who pledged themselves to aid, to the best of their ability, to restore Ireland to its former position as a sovereign independent nation.<sup>15</sup> Cumann na nGaedheal muddled along for a couple of years before the essence of Griffith's political thinking found clarity of expression. At its Third Annual Convention (1902) a resolution by Griffith called upon 'all our countrymen abroad [primarily directed at an Irish-American audience, one suspects] to withhold all assistance from the promoters of a useless, degrading and demoralising policy until such time as the members of the Irish Party refuse to attend the British parliament or recognize its right to legislate for Ireland'.<sup>16</sup> This resolution had at its core the principle of passive resistance that Hungarian nationalists had successfully employed when forcing the Austrian Emperor to reach

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Bew, *The Politics of Enmity*, p. 363

<sup>12</sup> Michael Laffan, 'Arthur Joseph Griffith' *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3644>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Robert Kee, *The Green Flag, Volume II: The Bold Fenian Men* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 150

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

a compromise (*Ausgleich*) to their demands in 1867. To promote this policy Griffith established an intellectual pressure group known as the National Council in 1903.<sup>17</sup> At the same time he composed a series of 27 articles (published weekly in his own newspaper the *United Irishman*) explaining the Hungarian policy to his readers before collating them in a single pamphlet titled *The Resurrection of Hungary* in 1904.

Whilst Griffith's understanding of Hungarian history has been described as both sketchy (Lyons) and authoritative (Kabdebo), it is the selectivity of material he employed to base a political parable for his own time that leads Patrick Murray to describe his methods as 'inseparable from myth-making'.<sup>18</sup> The author's argument, Murray contends, is considered to be most vulnerable in his proposition for a return to 'an idealised version' of the 1782 parliament Ireland enjoyed under Henry Grattan.<sup>19</sup> In perpetuating this idealised version, Griffith based his political stand in 1904 on the Renunciation Act of 1783, an Act by which the British parliament abandoned all future right to legislate for Ireland.<sup>20</sup> However, in conveniently forgetting that the Renunciation Act had been superseded by the Act of Union (1800), Griffith paid no attention to 'the most fundamental principle of the British political system: the right of every parliament to repeal any previous legislation.'<sup>21</sup> Unsurprisingly, in the face of such obvious selectivity, the IPP proved immutable to his demands, and Griffith decided to officially launch the policy of abstention himself at the First National Convention of the National Council on 28 November 1905.<sup>22</sup>

If Griffith had felt it necessary to establish the National Council to advance his political creed, like-minded nationalists in the northeast of the country were following a similar trajectory. In Belfast, Bulmer Hobson and Denis McCullough, members of both Cumann na nGaedheal and the IRB, established the Dungannon Club in March 1905. Named after the Volunteer Convention in Dungannon in 1782,

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<sup>17</sup> Brian Maye, *Arthur Griffith* (Dublin: Griffith College Publications Ltd., 1997), p. 97

<sup>18</sup> Patrick Murray, 'Introduction to Arthur Griffith', *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland*, Classics of Irish History (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916-1923* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 17

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Maye, *Arthur Griffith*, p. 101

the Dungannon Club published a manifesto which outlined an intention to build up Ireland intellectually, materially and physically.<sup>23</sup> With three relatively new movements (pollinated to varying degrees by the IRB) proclaiming pretty much the same message, it was critical for advanced nationalists that they crystallize under one banner. Prompted by the realisation that they would require the financial support of Clan na Gael to prosper, the Dungannon Club amalgamated with Cumann na nGaedheal to form the Sinn Féin League [April 1907] before the Sinn Féin League amalgamated with the National Council to form the Sinn Féin Party [Nov. 1907].<sup>24</sup> And just as the separatist revival in Ireland served to undermine the constitutional movement at home, so too did it serve to undermine it in Irish America.

Several issues impacted UILA development between 1904-07, restricting its ability to carry out its allotted mandate. Many of the League's difficulties during this period could be attributed to its own shortcomings while others were the result of outside agencies competing for Irish-American allegiance. Let us begin with the League's own shortcomings.

### The UILA

The Second National Convention of the United Irish League of America, held in New York on 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> August 1904, was heralded in the pro-League popular press as an unmitigated success. Reports attested to hundreds of delegates from all over the US in attendance, generous pledges of monies to be raised for the national cause, and widespread approval of Irish Party achievements to date.<sup>25</sup> While the impression gleaned from such coverage implies a wholly harmonious organization on a steady ascent, closer analysis of the facts tell a different story. On the second day of proceedings the Treasurer's Report was unanimously adopted. The Treasurer, T.B. Fitzpatrick of Boston, was one of the League's most widely respected officers and he would be re-elected to serve in the same capacity at this and all subsequent conventions. Fitzpatrick's report for the fiscal period October 1902 to August 1904 showed an opening balance of \$3,066.29 augmented by a sum of \$58,599.42 raised

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<sup>23</sup> Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Manchester, UK; New York: Manchester University Press and Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), pp. 47-48. The Volunteer Convention of 1782 led the thrust toward Irish legislative independence epitomised in Henry Grattan's parliament.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55

<sup>25</sup> *IW*, Sep. 3, 10, 17, 1904

from contributions produce a closing balance of \$61,665.71.<sup>26</sup> With League disbursements for the same period amounting to \$12,484.51 and with \$477.45 left in the League account at the time of the report, Fitzpatrick could attest to \$48,703.75 being forwarded to the parliamentary fund in Ireland to advance the national cause.<sup>27</sup> With the exchange rate fluctuating around 5:1, the monies forwarded to Ireland amounted to a little under £10,000 for the two years in question, or less than £5,000 per annum. Such seemingly modest sums are not to be dismissed. It would have been inordinately more difficult for the party to finance the campaign costs associated with contesting multiple elections, or to cover the costs of the number of MPs required to maintain a semi-permanent presence at Westminster, without the generosity of Irish Americans. However, the necessity to digress into such fine financial detail becomes obvious when one juxtaposes the sums raised against the perceived strength of the Irish-American diaspora and its alleged commitment to Irish independence.

Figures quoted for the number of Irish immigrants in America at the turn of the century are difficult to assess. Writing to Michael Davitt in 1899 Patrick Ford opined that ‘there are fully 25,000,000 of Irish blood in the United States.’<sup>28</sup> Such a phenomenal figure must have included the American-born Irish, sons and daughters born to immigrants after their arrival, as Patrick J. Blessing puts the total figure for those who left Ireland for America between 1800 and 1920 to number approximately 5,000,000.<sup>29</sup> Ford’s estimation takes a further hit when we take into account the religious, spatial and class segmentation of this multi-generational diaspora, as O’Day believes that the cohort of Irish-American Catholics attracted to Irish nationalism a decade earlier to have been as low as 3,500,000.<sup>30</sup> Even with this more

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<sup>26</sup> Treasurer’s Report, *Proceedings of the Second National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 35

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Alan O’Day, ‘Imagined Irish Communities: Networks of Social Communication of the Irish Diaspora in the United States and Britain in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’ in *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, Vol. 23, Nos 2-3, July-November 2005 p. 402

<sup>29</sup> Patrick J. Blessing, ‘Irish Emigration to the United States, 1800-1920: An Overview’ in P.J. Drudy (ed.), *The Irish in America: Emigration, Assimilation and Impact*, *Irish Studies* 4, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 11

<sup>30</sup> O’Day, ‘Imagined Irish Communities:’, p. 402. While many immigrants headed West, most of the Irish arriving in America in the latter half of the nineteenth century settled in the most industrialised region of the country, the Northeast. See Blessing, ‘Irish Emigration to the United States, 1800-1920: An Overview’, p. 21.



sobering assessment, there is little doubt that the strength of the diaspora to whom the UILA could appeal numbered somewhere in the millions. Armed with this information, contributions amounting to little more than \$60,000 over the two years referred to in the treasurer's report seems more indicative of a widespread apathy for the national cause rather than any unbridled enthusiasm for it. And these returns look even more abysmal when one considers eleven individual donors alone contributed the sum of \$1,550 between them.<sup>31</sup> The treasurer was not to blame for this. Fitzpatrick was merely the accountant responsible for collating expenditure and dispatching the balance. The job of soliciting money for the party primarily went to a steady stream of envoys sent from Ireland for that express purpose.

T.P. O'Connor, Willie Redmond, and Joe Devlin were fast becoming veterans of such tours and always proved popular wherever they went. O'Connor and Devlin yielded particularly fruitful returns in 1906 when trips to America and Australia respectively amassed somewhere in the region of £20,000 between them. While O'Connor was speaking at all the major centres of Irish settlement in the US, Devlin, in the company of a Mr J.T. Donovan, took on the more arduous task of touring Australia. Australia's Irish had maintained their support for Home Rule following the inauguration of the [British] Commonwealth in 1901, and an Australian wing of the United Irish League had been established as early as 1900.<sup>32</sup> Both Redmond brothers had toured Australia with success in the 1880s, as had John Dillon. Consistently well supported, Irish Party members returned on a regular basis with Devlin's 1906 visit sandwiched between visits by other envoys in 1901, 1904, 1910, and 1912.<sup>33</sup>

Devlin and Donovan went to America after Australia, where they found Tom Kettle and Richard Hazleton, two of the IPP's newest recruits, raising money for the movement at home. A co-founder of the Young Ireland Branch (YIB) of the United Irish League, Kettle was the son of Andrew Kettle, a nationalist with a strong

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<sup>31</sup> Treasurer's Report, *Proceedings of the Second National Convention of the UILA*, pp. 27-29 The individuals concerned were Gen. Chas. H. Taylor \$250, W.C. Loftus \$200, Michael Maynes \$100, J.P. Flatley \$100, W. Murray Crane \$100, Dr P.J. Timmins \$100, Rev Denis O'Callaghan \$100, T.B. Fitzpatrick \$200, M.J. Redding \$200, Rev Thos. F. Wallace \$100 and Rev J.J. Keane \$100

<sup>32</sup> Malcolm Campbell, *Ireland's New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics, and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), p. 156

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*

political pedigree in the era of Charles Stewart Parnell.<sup>34</sup> After Tom had won the East Tyrone by-election in July 1906, Redmond decided to put ‘one of the youngest and most talented men in an ageing party’ to good use by sending him to America on a propaganda and fundraising tour.<sup>35</sup> Hazleton, for his part, had a lot in common with Tom Kettle. The same age (both men were born in 1880), and another co-founder of the YIB, Hazleton had been elected unopposed for North Galway shortly before both men’s departure for the US.<sup>36</sup> Reports of Devlin’s, Donovan’s, Kettle’s and Hazleton’s progress abroad featured regularly in the domestic press in Ireland where tales of the receptions they were receiving across the wider Irish diaspora warmed nationalist hearts.

Details of a meeting in Chicago at which Kettle and Hazleton both spoke appeared in the *Freeman’s Journal* in December 1906. Lauded as ‘the greatest political demonstration seen in Chicago for years’ the report attested to ‘1,000 Irishmen in attendance.’<sup>37</sup> A donation of £2,000 forwarded to Ireland by UILA Treasurer T.B. Fitzpatrick the same month was credited to ‘the proceeds of meetings addressed by Mr T.P. O’Connor, MP, at New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Montreal and elsewhere, as well as meetings addressed by his colleagues Messrs Kettle and Hazleton in Lowell, Lawrence, Falls River, and Pittsfield.’<sup>38</sup> Devlin’s and Devaney’s work in Australia received recognition shortly after. Commending both men for ‘their labours on the island continent’ the *Freeman’s Journal* noted how they ‘had won hosts of new friends for the Irish cause’ [during] ‘which they have re-awakened all the old interest and eagerness of Irish Australia in the movement.’<sup>39</sup> And because of such efforts ‘the tribute offered to the Motherland amounts to a munificent contribution of £17,000.’<sup>40</sup> The same report also heralded Kettle and Hazleton for ‘breaking new ground [in America] and extending the Irish organisation [UIL] into hitherto unoccupied territories.’<sup>41</sup> Kettle, the paper noted, ‘is proceeding as far West

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<sup>34</sup> Donal Lowry, ‘Kettle, Thomas Michael (Tom)’, *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4530>

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>36</sup> Bridget Hourican, ‘Hazleton, Richard’, *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=5D08C80DBE7619534DA9AD96084F2D64#>

<sup>37</sup> *FJ*, 17 Dec. 1906

<sup>38</sup> *FJ*, 24 Dec. 1906

<sup>39</sup> *FJ*, 27 Dec. 1906

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*

as the great new Pacific Port of Seattle [while] Hazleton is at work in other directions.’<sup>42</sup>

The four envoys travelled back to Ireland together, arriving at Queenstown on 22 March 1907. Anticipating their return, the *Irish Independent* was grateful Devlin would be back in time to contest a by-election in the Northern Division of his native city [Belfast] caused by the recent death of Sir Daniel Dixon.<sup>43</sup> And upon their arrival all four were pressed for details concerning their ventures abroad. While Devlin was anxious to return to Belfast and get straight down to campaigning, Hazleton and Kettle were reported to have had ‘a good deal to say.’<sup>44</sup> Kettle likened the Irish diaspora to the British Empire in that the sun never set on either, and his intimation that ‘there was practically no spot on the face of the earth in which Irishmen were willing to forget the Cradleland from which they came’ was heartily endorsed.<sup>45</sup> Hazleton, for his part, paid tribute to ‘the generous and enthusiastic manner in which the Irish in America had helped their cause’, before giving special thanks to the ‘splendid abilities’ of men like John O’Callaghan and Michael J. Ryan for making their stay ‘pleasant and easy.’<sup>46</sup> While readers of the *Irish Independent* could be forgiven for thinking Kettle’s and Hazleton’s trip passed without incident the truth was something rather different. And correspondence between the UILA National Secretary John O’Callaghan and Tom Kettle, and between O’Callaghan and party chairman John Redmond, confirms as much.

Early in December O’Callaghan wrote to Kettle berating the young MP for not having heard from either him or Hazleton and for being completely unaware of their itinerary or their progress.<sup>47</sup> The League Secretary, however, made little mention of the fact that he himself had been incapacitated by illness for the preceding three weeks. Putting aside the question of how O’Callaghan could write to someone whose location he claimed not to know, Kettle replied with undue haste and informed the Boston-based journalist he was having none of it. He maintained that he had told the League Secretary before he took ill that it was his intention to ‘head out West’ and in

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> *Irish Independent*, 12 Mar. 1907

<sup>44</sup> *Irish Independent*, 22 Mar. 1907

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> John O’Callaghan to Tom Kettle, 13 Dec. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

the absence of any prepared plans (obviously a dig at O'Callaghan) he felt it prudent to go it alone.<sup>48</sup> Declaring he was not in the business of 'mutual recriminations' Kettle maintained it was not his fault 'he had to fend for himself' and advised O'Callaghan to 'look forward to what could be done in the future rather than dwell on what may have gone on in the past.'<sup>49</sup> Suitably chastised, O'Callaghan wrote to Redmond in a fit of pique.

In a scathing denunciation of Kettle and Hazleton, O'Callaghan castigated both men for having gone off-line. The League Secretary wrote that 'every other envoy sent from Ireland had adhered to the principle of maintaining contact with me every three or four days and following an agreed itinerary.'<sup>50</sup> In charging both men with believing themselves to be 'bigger than the party' O'Callaghan accused them of thinking that 'the ability to call themselves envoys from the moment they landed was a sufficient indication of the success of their work.'<sup>51</sup> After writing back to Kettle and refusing to take the blame for any misunderstanding, O'Callaghan reported to Redmond that a telegram he received indicating Kettle's whereabouts suggested 'the medicine has worked.'<sup>52</sup> Subsequent correspondence, however, throws doubt on this suggestion. Kettle and Hazleton were subsequently denounced yet again, this time for borrowing money from individuals associated with the League, often on the premise that the organisation would reimburse the creditors and always without prior consultation with League officers.<sup>53</sup> And to lend weight to the charge that both men behaved with financial abandon, O'Callaghan cited Hazleton's actions in leaving behind an unpaid dental bill for \$100.<sup>54</sup> These rather unsavoury charges of alleged fiscal impropriety are difficult to square with both envoys' reputations as upstanding party members. In the Kettle Papers held at University College Dublin (UCD) reference can be found to discrepancies surrounding the financing of the touring MP's speaking engagements across America. UILA president Michael J. Ryan wrote to Kettle in December 1906 with instructions that 'if Boston [read the League secretary or the League treasurer] had not yet sent either you, or Hazleton, any

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<sup>48</sup> Kettle to O'Callaghan, 17 Dec. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 18 Dec. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 21 Dec. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>53</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 21 Mar. 1907, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/11

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

money wire me at once and I will attend to your needs.’<sup>55</sup> And while O’Callaghan did indeed forward a cheque to Kettle for \$482.37 (approx. £100 before conversion) in January 1907 the secretary remarked that it had been ‘sent from London for transmission to you.’<sup>56</sup> The confusion over who exactly was funding the envoys’ trip indicates poor administration on the part of the American League and did little to inspire confidence in the Irish Party’s US affiliate. And it might be fair to state that before Kettle and Hazleton left the US their disappointment in the UILA was matched only by the League secretary’s disappointment in them.

Before the envoys even left America, O’Callaghan was compelled to state that Kettle and Hazleton were ‘the rankest failures who have ever come in a representative capacity to this country’, and that not even his interest in the cause itself could tolerate a repeat.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps we should not be surprised. Senia Pašeta has noted how Kettle was ‘unenthusiastic’ about his time in the USA, and that he ‘clearly missed the cut and thrust of Irish politics.’<sup>58</sup> And his letters to family and friends, infrequent though they were, reveal an insatiable thirst for news from Ireland.<sup>59</sup> Reports of Kettle’s and Hazleton’s alleged success, then, can only be attributed to propaganda, something nationalist organisations were becoming particularly adept at. With both men embarking on a virtual disappearing act for much of their trip, the money dispatched to Ireland from America during their stay was, in fact, far from exceptional. All told, the total raised by the American League between 1904-06 (\$63,164) represented nothing more than a moderate increase commensurate with the natural growth of the organization.<sup>60</sup> Such sobering returns indicate UILA fund-raising fell well short of what could realistically be expected had the constitutional movement fired the nationalist imagination anything like it professed to have done.

If the UILA were struggling to enthrone Irish America, its cause could hardly be advanced by antagonising many of those it sought to enlist. Yet, through its alleged association with a controversial publication titled *The Cloven Foot*, that is exactly

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<sup>55</sup> Michael J. Ryan to Tom Kettle, 3 Dec. 1906, Kettle Papers, UCD, LA 34/141 (11)

<sup>56</sup> O’Callaghan to Kettle, 10 Jan. 1907, Kettle Papers, UCD, LA 34/141 (24)

<sup>57</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 19 Feb. 1907, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/11

<sup>58</sup> Senia Pašeta, *Thomas Kettle* (Dublin: Historical Association of Ireland, University College Dublin Press, 2008), p. 45

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46

<sup>60</sup> Treasurer’s Report, *Proceedings of the Third National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 40

what transpired. The subsequent fallout contributed to a growing animosity between the American League and Clan na Gael at a time when the fledgling constitutional nationalist movement could ill-afford to offend existing nationalist organisations.

### *The Cloven Foot*

Subsequently attributed to a Daniel Dwyer, *The Cloven Foot* was an anonymously authored forty-three-page pamphlet published by The Sarsfield Publishing House, High Street, Boston.<sup>61</sup> The full title of the pamphlet, *The Cloven Foot; Showing the Manipulations of the Clan Na Gael by the English Secret Service*, gives a clear indication of the hostile reception such a publication was bound to elicit among certain members of the physical force party. The reason the pamphlet surfaced as an issue in 1904 is because John Devoy, through the pages of the *Gaelic American*, charged the UILA with actively disseminating *The Cloven Foot* in its effort to discredit the Clan in the eyes of their fellow nationalists.

Dwyer claimed that Clan na Gael were being used as ‘an engine of destruction to the Irish cause in every possible way; that all the necessary evidence was at hand to show that its policy, as outlined by its secret executives, had been always deadly opposed to the Irish national cause; that Fenianism was victimised by the betrayers; [and] that the Clan was and continued to be [victimised]’ to this day.<sup>62</sup> With repeated references to the testimony of the self-confessed British agent Henri Le Caron at the Special Commission on Parnellism and Crime, and to Le Caron’s own autobiography *Twenty-Five Years in the English Secret Service*, *The Cloven Foot* ridiculed the claim that ‘there was not a single spy in the entire body of the Clan na Gael.’<sup>63</sup> Dwyer used the admission of Le Caron’s relative seniority in the Clan over a quarter of a century to pour scorn on the notion that the British authorities did not have prior knowledge of the rescue of six Irish political prisoners from Western Australia in 1876 aboard the whaling ship *Catalpa*. In referencing the biography of a central character in the escape plan itself (John Boyle O’Reilly) the pamphlet alleged

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<sup>61</sup>Daniel Dwyer, *The Cloven Foot: Showing the Manipulations of the Clan Na Gael by the English Secret Service* (Boston, Ma.: Sarsfield Publishing House, 1900). The preface to *The Cloven Foot* is simply signed ‘The Author’. Daniel Dwyer, however, is widely held to be the man responsible for producing the pamphlet.

<sup>62</sup> Dwyer, *The Cloven Foot*: p. 4

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 14. Le Caron’s biography was published as Major Henri Le Caron, *Twenty-Five Years in the English Secret Service* (London: William Heinemann, 1892)

that Scotland Yard could not but have known about the audacious plot, and that the decision to allow the rescue to proceed was taken with the express intent of deluding the Clan into believing they were entirely free from infiltration.<sup>64</sup> *The Cloven Foot* also charged the Clan with bringing ruin upon the Land League in 1881; failing in its attempt to capture the American branch of the Irish National League in 1886; and passing a resolution at the subsequent Clan convention purposefully designed to give the false impression of an alliance on paper between the extreme wing of the nationalist movement and Parnell's new organization. This resolution, Dwyer alleged, was later used by the Crown Prosecution to entrap the then Irish Parliamentary Party leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, at the Special Commission on Parnellism and Crime in 1889. The pamphlet concluded with a note of caution to the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America to beware of Clan efforts to conduct a takeover of their organization in the not-too-distant future, a prescient observation which, it could be argued, came to fruition under Matthew Cummings' presidency of the American Order (1906-10).

Dwyer characterized his decision to publish *The Cloven Foot* as one born out of national duty. Accusing British publishing houses of rejecting his work for fear of retribution by the British Secret Service, the author alluded to the inflammatory nature of the pamphlet's content as the reason why the Irish American press followed suit. And challenging Patrick Ford of the *Irish World*, John Finerty of the *Chicago Citizen*, and James Jeffrey Roche of the *Boston Pilot* to refute his claims if possible, Dwyer promised that if any telling evidence could be supplied to contradict him he would have no hesitation in publishing a retraction.<sup>65</sup>

Whilst the editors in question studiously avoided any involvement in the controversy the editor of another publication had no such reservations. In a demonstration of righteous indignation, John Devoy used the *Gaelic American* to castigate John Redmond for denying any knowledge of *The Cloven Foot* when Devoy himself claimed to have sent a copy of it to the IPP chairman.<sup>66</sup> The Clan chief maintained that officers of the UILA were not only disseminating the offending pamphlet but

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 15. For O'Reilly's account of the *Catalpa* rescue Dwyer directs his readers to James Jeffrey Roche, *John Boyle O'Reilly: His Life, Poems and Speeches* (New York: The Mershon Co., 1891), p. 156

<sup>65</sup> Dwyer, *The Cloven Foot*: p. 46

<sup>66</sup> GA, 16 Jul. 1904

were ‘holding it up under the noses of Clan na Gael men and asking them what they thought of it, inviting them into their homes to look at it, and pouring forth the lies contained in it’ at meetings of UIL branches across the country.<sup>67</sup> And the paper’s editorial equated Redmond’s denial of any knowledge about the hostile publication to be as futile as an earlier denial made by John O’Callaghan.<sup>68</sup> The *Gaelic American* subsequently published the names of twenty-eight UILA officials it said were connected to the charge of dissemination before accusing the League of conducting ‘warfare of the dirtiest, filthiest kind’ in John Redmond’s name.<sup>69</sup>

In this instance it matters little whether the UILA were guilty of such a charge as the relevance of the matter is derived from Devoy’s inherent belief that it was. Nor does Dwyer’s over-reliance on the testimony of a British agent skilled in the art of deception dilute the impact of the pamphlet, as *The Cloven Foot* provides an all-too-convincing narrative for anyone prepared to read it with an open mind. Moreover, the absence of any official denunciation of the pamphlet from any League platform could readily be interpreted as tacit approval of its content. No refutation of association with the pamphlet was made in the speeches delivered at the Second National Convention of the UILA, and if indeed the League did play a hand in popularising the controversial text, the benefits it believed could accrue from such a policy are plain to see. From the simple inference that the Clan were the inadvertent dupes of Scotland Yard, the League could readily assume that an exodus of members from a largely discredited organization to one which could lay claim to be the natural successor to the legacy of Parnell would result. That such an exodus occurred is speculative at best. That the Clan suffered some degree of reputational damage because of *The Cloven Foot* requires a somewhat lesser leap of faith.

What remains interesting, however, was Devoy’s reluctance to engage in any forensic rebuttal of Le Caron’s specific claim that the British Secret Service had infiltrated the Fenian organisation in America. The Clan leader regularly serialised the *Catalpa* rescue in the pages of the *Gaelic American*, yet left the questions raised by *The Cloven Foot* and supposed prior British knowledge of the rescue unanswered.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> For the names of the twenty-eight League officials see the *GA*, 3 Sep. 1904 and for the charge of ‘warfare of the dirtiest, filthiest kind’ see the *GA*, 10 Sep. 1904



Even Devoy's memoirs are remarkable for their failure to address the matter. Le Caron barely featured in *Devoy's Post-Bag Volume II* while *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* tellingly avoided revisiting the controversy.<sup>70</sup> This propensity to attack the messenger rather than rebut the message could not have gone unnoticed in 1904. Perhaps, it was the element of truth contained in *The Cloven Foot* that caused the greatest offence.

To the growing list of challenges facing the UILA one can add competition from a resurgence in cultural nationalism. A Gaelic Revival, fuelled by the establishment of the Gaelic League, had taken root in Ireland, and its influence extended all the way to Irish America.

### The Gaelic League

The Gaelic Revival, which took place at the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, was first and foremost an effort to reclaim a lost national identity. The Gaelic League, the driving force behind the Gaelic Revival, was established in 1893 by Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill. Born in 1860, Hyde was the son of a Church of Ireland rector.<sup>71</sup> An antiquarian, poet, and Irish language enthusiast, Hyde wrote under the pen name 'An Craoibhín Aoibhinn' (the pleasant little branch) to minimise possible repercussions for the aggressive nationalist views he came to express.<sup>72</sup> Seven years younger than Hyde, MacNeill was the Antrim-born academic whose theory of Irish identity stressed cultural factors (especially the Irish language) over state power.<sup>73</sup> Influenced by Hyde's 1892 essay *The Necessity to De-Anglicize Ireland* MacNeill played a leading role in the subsequent founding of the Gaelic League.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> John Devoy, *Devoy's Post Bag, 1871-1928* (Dublin: C.J. Fallon, 1948-1953) and John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel: The Fenian Movement; its Origin and Progress; Methods of Work in Ireland and in the British Army; Why it Failed to Achieve its Main Object but Exercised Great Influence on Ireland's Future; the Clan-na-Gael and the Rising of Easter Week, 1916; a Personal Narrative* (New York: Chas. P. Young Printers, 1929)

<sup>71</sup> Patrick Maume, 'Hyde, Douglas (de Híde, Dubhghlas), *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/newReadPage.do?articleId=a4185>

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>73</sup> Patrick Maume, Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'MacNeill, Eoin (John)', *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.doarticleId=a5283>

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*

While the Gaelic League actively promoted Irish language proficiency throughout Ireland, other bodies with a similar mandate were already hard at work in America. There, several Philo-Celtic societies had been in existence across the major centres of Irish settlement since the 1870s.<sup>75</sup> Initially formed to preserve the language among those who lamented its demise, or to introduce it anew to a generation of American-born Irish, the societies found that the desire of their members to master the spoken word was at total variance with the pragmatic realisation that English was the language of assimilation. To this end the societies combined the more social aspects of an immigrant community's lost identity with the scholarly requirements needed to achieve its programme. Typically meeting twice weekly, the societies provided tuition in grammar and diction, followed by recitations of Irish poetry, the singing of Irish airs, and the dancing of traditional jigs and reels.<sup>76</sup> Though affiliated with the domestic movement, there remained a distinct difference in goals and expectations from Gaelic League branches on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Less academically-driven than its counterpart in Ireland, the Gaelic League in America, as Úna Ní Bhroiméil shows, used 'the lure of the social' in its effort to preserve Irish history, retain the diaspora's interest in Irish affairs, and provide much-needed financial assistance to the movement at home.<sup>77</sup>

For constitutional nationalists, the 'full flowering of the Irish cultural revival' coincided with the early years of John Redmond's ascendancy to the chairmanship of the reunited Irish Parliamentary Party.<sup>78</sup> Embarrassed by his own limitations in the Irish language, Redmond supported the movement from the outset and was in complete sympathy with it on the question of teaching Gaelic in Irish schools.<sup>79</sup> On a political level, however, the leader of the Irish Party was alert to the rise of the movement, and saw Hyde as a potential rival in direct competition for the allegiance of Irishmen at home and abroad. To this end, an attempt to persuade the Gaelic League president to stand for parliament may have been considered with the aim of turning the movement into an ancillary organization of the Irish Party.<sup>80</sup> While Hyde

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<sup>75</sup> Úna Ní Bhroiméil, 'The Creation of an Irish Culture in the United States: The Gaelic Movement, 1870-1915' in *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Autumn, 2001), p. 88

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90

<sup>77</sup> Ní Bhroiméil, 'The Creation of an Irish Culture in the United States:' pp. 94-95

<sup>78</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 76

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*

was never likely to fall for such a ruse - given his personal preference to remain apolitical - some of his movement's more Anglophobic members would have been aghast at the very suggestion. For them parliamentary participation was the very anti-thesis of the de-Anglicization Hyde himself had called for. Even to contemplate such a course of action would be a betrayal of everything the Gaelic League stood for, and in their opinion, attendance at Westminster was symptomatic of Ireland's travails rather than a solution to them. Redmond was aware of those 'trying to sow the seeds of ill-will' and derided their actions as conduct which could only do damage to the national cause.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the growing popularity of the Gaelic League in Ireland there remained a pressing need for serious financial assistance if the cultural revival was ever going to come to fruition. In recognition of this, a tour of the United States by the Gaelic League president was deemed an urgent priority in 1905. After considerable advanced planning, Hyde sailed from Queenstown on board the *SS Majestic* bound for New York in October of that year. And while his departure surpassed in expectation any such trip undertaken by the country's leading statesmen in the recent past, his arrival in the United States was greeted with equal, if not greater, reverence.

While Hyde sent an advance agent (Tomás Bán Ó Coincheanainn) ahead of him to prepare the ground for his arrival, the organization of the tour and its detailed itinerary was very much the work of John Quinn. A resident of New York, Quinn was a well-respected patron of the arts who had hosted W.B. Yeats when he deigned to visit America in 1903-04. For Hyde's visit Quinn organized a meeting between the Gaelic League President and the US President (Theodore Roosevelt) at the White House, put his esteemed visitor before a number of select Irish-American audiences, and arranged a supplementary series of college lectures for Hyde to deliver at some of America's leading institutions.<sup>82</sup> While the Gaelic League newspaper - *An Claidheamh Soluis (The Sword of Light)* - proclaimed Hyde's visit to be an opportunity to unite the Irish in Ireland with the Irish in America in an unbreakable bond, Quinn focussed his attention on attracting the class of successful immigrants

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 77

<sup>82</sup> Gareth W. Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde* (Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 1974), pp. 49-50

who could provide the money the League so urgently needed.<sup>83</sup> Wary of appearing inaccessible to the grassroots members of the Irish language movement in America, Hyde's willingness to cede so much control over his visit to his host can only be attributed to the priority the Gaelic League chief attached to raising the necessary funds to sustain the movement at home. And while many local branches would complain of being left off their president's itinerary, they grudgingly came to realise that under Quinn's direction only a sizeable monetary donation would guarantee them an audience with Hyde himself.

Hyde's visit to the US elicited a mixed response from the existing Irish-American nationalist organizations. Prior to his arrival both the *Gaelic American* and the *Irish World* published an appeal from the C6iste Gnotha (Executive Committee) of the Gaelic League in Ireland calling on Irish Americans of every creed and political persuasion to extend a warm reception to their esteemed leader.<sup>84</sup> The *Gaelic American* had started a subscription fund for the Gaelic League in March 1905, the proceeds of which Devoy intended to present to Hyde during his tour. While Clan na Gael saw the de-Anglicization of Ireland as complimentary to the separatist ideology at the core of their own nationalist thinking, the president of the Gaelic League would have been at pains to distance himself from association with the physical force ideal. For the UILA the appearance of Hyde in America was an occasion not to be mismanaged rather than one that was to be acclaimed. In a letter to Redmond dated 21<sup>st</sup> November O'Callaghan expressed his fear that 'not only did the Clan in New York appear to have captured Hyde but the same thing seems to have occurred in Chicago and St. Louis.'<sup>85</sup> As one of those who eventually hosted the Gaelic League leader during his stay in Boston, O'Callaghan wrote that 'he would not have it said on Hyde's return to Ireland that anyone connected to the UIL in America was hostile to him during his visit.'<sup>86</sup> However, the secretary's true feelings became evident when he added that he did not feel 'like killing himself' working towards Hyde's success as he thought the whole mission was 'a good deal chimerical.'<sup>87</sup> 'I have always believed [O'Callaghan wrote] that before an Irish baby could be taught

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<sup>83</sup> Úna Ní Bhroiméil, *Building Irish Identity in America, 1870-1915: The Gaelic Revival* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), p. 65

<sup>84</sup> *GA*, 14 Oct. 1905; *IW*, 14 Oct. 1905

<sup>85</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 21 Nov. 1905, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/7

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*

the Gaelic it needed to get milk, the language it asked for it in was a somewhat secondary consideration.’<sup>88</sup> By December O’Callaghan was lamenting the fact that the UIL in New York had allowed Hyde to come in and take away \$12-15,000 that they could have got had they displayed any sort of similar energy for their own organization.<sup>89</sup> And the following May O’Callaghan considered Hyde’s contribution of \$5,000 for the relief of sufferers of the recent earthquake in San Francisco to be an indulgence the trustees of other funds raised in America were not at liberty to match.<sup>90</sup>

Professional jealousy aside, there does not seem to have been any concerted effort on the part of the UILA Executive to undermine Hyde’s mission. However, this does not mean that certain individuals associated with the League were averse to venting their personal displeasure. Ní Bhroiméil references an attempt by a man named Luke Finn to sabotage a Hyde gathering at Carnegie Hall on 25 November by reserving as many as 150 tickets in advance before cancelling them at the last minute.<sup>91</sup> While the reasons behind Finn’s actions are unclear, his membership of the UILA is offered as a possible explanation for his resentment at the Gaelic League for taking money from potential constitutional coffers.<sup>92</sup> That Hyde raised \$64,000 over the seven months he toured the US can be interpreted in two ways. Critics can argue that it was a mere reflection of the mercenary approach adopted by Quinn, or supporters can argue that he raised as much in a little over a quarter of the time as it took the IPP/UILA to raise over two years. While the success of Hyde’s tour frustrated the UILA hierarchy, they were compelled, on an official level at least, to exhibit their support for the cultural revival. And in a politically expedient resolution to this effect, a recommendation that a special effort be made to promote the compulsory study of the Irish language at public and parochial schools, was passed at the subsequent UILA convention in Philadelphia.<sup>93</sup>

If funding apathy, Fenian indignation, and cultural competition were not enough to contend with, the UILA also had to face losing the American branch of the Ancient

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 15 Dec. 1905, NLI RP, MS 15,213/7

<sup>90</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 11 May 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/8

<sup>91</sup> Ní Bhroiméil, *Building Irish Identity*, p. 74

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> *Proceedings of the Third National Convention of the United Irish League of America*, p. 71

Order of Hibernians to a Clan na Gael takeover. How this near-fatal development came to pass is indicative of the on-going challenge constitutional nationalists faced in their struggle to retain Irish-American support.

### The Ancient Order of Hibernians

Established in 1836, the American Branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians was a Catholic fraternal organization dedicated to the spiritual and material welfare of Irish immigrants in the US. Adopting an apolitical stance, it sought to elevate itself above the partisanship which characterized the nationalist debate in Irish America.

Reunification in 1897, after an internal split in 1884, saw the American Order withhold affiliation with its counterpart in Ireland until issues pertinent to disunity there had reached an amicable conclusion.<sup>94</sup> The BOE (Board of Erin; the name the Irish Order used to distinguish itself from the American Order) were in the midst of a bitter dispute over whether they should register, as a whole, as a Benefit Society under the Friendly Societies Act.<sup>95</sup> Reflective of a wider urban/rural divide the BOE were in dire need of an inspirational new leader, and as luck would have it they found one in Joe Devlin.

Asked to give the key-note address at a Hibernian convention in his home town of Belfast in September 1904, Devlin proposed a ready-made solution to the Benefit Society conundrum. Dispelling any settlement which bordered on coercion, the young MP's simple but effective suggestion that local divisions be granted autonomy on the issue did much to facilitate domestic harmony.<sup>96</sup> Elected president in 1905, Devlin determined to re-establish relations with the American Order in his efforts to secure transatlantic affiliation with the BOE. Standing in his path, however, was Clan na Gael.

Despite the American Order's decision to give official sanction to the UIL by a vote of six to two in 1903, radical nationalists had not given up the battle for control of Irish America's largest and most influential organization.<sup>97</sup> As constituent bodies in the American Federation of Irish Societies, the American Order of the AOH and

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<sup>94</sup> Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland*, p. 91

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p. 92

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>97</sup> Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland*, p. 92

Clan na Gael were no strangers to each other. While membership of both was commonplace, the AOH was an unashamedly sectarian organization, with the Catholic hierarchy in the US holding prominent administrative positions in every major branch of the American Order. Any Clan attempt therefore to affect a takeover of the Hibernians would first require the removal of this clerical straitjacket. Detailing how such a development occurred, Frederick Oliver Trench cites an orchestrated decision not to re-elect then Archbishop of New York (John Murphy Farley) as National Grand Chaplain of the Order in the United States at the AOH National Convention at Saratoga Springs in 1906, as the first step in a secret Clan na Gael plot to capture the American Order.<sup>98</sup> Trench goes on to describe how Monsignor Charles McGreedy, a former Chaplain to Archbishop Farley, resigned from his position as New York County Chaplain to the AOH in protest. McGreedy's resignation letter, dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 1906, refers to 'the delegates from New York County being in favour of transferring the administration of the Ancient Order of Hibernians to a minority party, within the organization.'<sup>99</sup> Reporting on this letter, the *New York Sun* quoted McGreedy as stating that a political deal at the Convention "was made primarily in order that Matthew Cummings, of Boston, might be elected National President of the American Order", so that Clan na Gael, the minority party the Monsignor was referring to in the letter, "might gain control of the Ancient Order of Hibernians."<sup>100</sup>

The election of Matthew Cummings did seem to bear all the hallmarks of the plot McGreedy was referring to. The *Gaelic American's* coverage of the events at Saratoga Springs all but admitted as much. With Clan activists having successfully lobbied in 1904 for greater representation of delegates from the states on the eastern seaboard at all future AOH conventions, Devoy's newspaper teasingly referred to Cummings' victory in 1906 as 'evidence of a well-conceived idea to give new men opportunity at National offices of the AOH.'<sup>101</sup> In describing the recent events as representative of the 'Greatest of Hibernian Conventions', the *Gaelic American* reported that Cummings' home state of Massachusetts was only marking its

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<sup>98</sup> Frederick Oliver Trench, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Ashtown, *The Unknown Power Behind the Irish Nationalist Party* (London: Swan & Sonnenschein Co. Ltd., 1907), p. 155

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp. 155-156 citing McGreedy's resignation letter of 7 Aug. 1906

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 156 citing extracts of McGreedy's letter published in the *New York Sun* 22 Sep. 1906

<sup>101</sup> GA, 28 Jul. 1906

appreciation for his splendid record as a Hibernian ‘by sending its entire delegation [the largest at the Convention] instructed to vote for him.’<sup>102</sup> In an almost brazen affront to the UILA, the paper even had the temerity to proclaim that under the new administration ‘the practice which has prevailed during the past three years of allowing the AOH to be used by one outside organization as a weapon to injure another will have no place.’<sup>103</sup> In crediting Cummings’ victory as having turned on that single issue, the *Gaelic American* assured its readers that the policy of keeping the AOH attending strictly to Hibernian business would ‘place the grand old organization in a more commanding position than it ever occupied before.’<sup>104</sup>

Admirable as all this appeared, Joe Devlin was quick to recognize the potential calamity that had befallen his dream of affiliating the BOE with the American Order. Where James E. Dolan, Cummings’ predecessor, had been predisposed to restoring transatlantic relations, the new president was clearly not. And as if to compound the gravity of the situation, justification for Cummings’ intransigence was facilitated by fresh evidence of dissension in the ranks of the Irish Order.

When a Scottish Registered Section served an injunction against the AOHBEOE over their use of the term Ancient Order of Hibernians, Cummings used the dispute to continue to withhold transatlantic affiliation.<sup>105</sup> When the Scottish secessionists then sought an alliance with the American Order, Devlin recognized such blatant subversive activity as the work of the local IRB. A denunciation of the Scottish Registered Section as ‘extreme nationalists’ in the *Northern Star* was countered with charges that the BOE were ‘not sufficiently advanced nationalists’, and Joe Devlin was ‘a sworn loyalist of England.’<sup>106</sup> This was music to the Clan’s ears as Cummings had only to reference the slightest hint of disunity among the Irish Order to justify his position.

With a ‘Clan na Gael tool’ as President of the American Order, Hibernian obstructionism joined funding apathy, Fenian indignation, and Gaelic League

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland*, p. 97

<sup>106</sup> Ibid



competition in the list of challenges facing constitutional nationalists in America.<sup>107</sup> How much blame can be attached to the UILA for failing to adequately address these challenges is a valid argument, and the relative indifference the National Executive demonstrated in countering them is as good a place as any to start.

### The UILA National Executive

With League President John F. Finerty a resident of Chicago, and League Secretary John O'Callaghan a resident of Boston, maintaining a closely-knit working relationship between the UILA's foremost executive officers was always going to be difficult. Finerty's role as the editor of the *Chicago Citizen* and O'Callaghan's work as a journalist for the *Boston Globe* made additional demands on both men's time, and consequently meetings between the two were few and far between. The situation was compounded by O'Callaghan's long-standing friendship with John Redmond, a friendship which not only preceded the establishment of the UILA but one which seemed to confuse the Cork native's personal loyalties. Perhaps viewing himself as Redmond's secretary in America rather than Finerty's secretary within the structures of the League, O'Callaghan was only too willing to censure the League President in his correspondence with the Irish leader. And from 1905 O'Callaghan appears to have done so with increasing regularity.

In June of that year the League secretary complained that it was the unedited publication of the president's expenses in the League treasurer's report which led to Finerty getting 'on his high horse' and placing O'Callaghan in his 'black book' as a result.<sup>108</sup> By December the secretary was accusing his president of being 'a drag on the movement'.<sup>109</sup> By January 1906 concerns over Finerty's 'idleness' were mixed with relief that the president had intimated that he would not be seeking re-election at the next League convention.<sup>110</sup> And by the summer O'Callaghan was complaining to Redmond that 'Finerty's inactivity for the last two years has absolutely taken the heart out of most of our people.'<sup>111</sup> O'Callaghan supported this latest charge with the fact that Finerty had neither published an editorial, written a letter, made a

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<sup>107</sup> Reference to Cummings as a 'Clan na Gael tool' can be found in O'Callaghan to Redmond, 18 Sep. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/8

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 19 Jun. 1905, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/7

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 15 Dec. 1905, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/7

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 23 Jan. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/8

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 26 Jun. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/8

suggestion, or done anything else that would tend to encourage them, and as far as he [Finerty] was concerned, the League ‘might as well be dead.’<sup>112</sup> Indeed, so great had O’Callaghan’s concern become that he quietly determined to effect a change of presidency at the next scheduled UILA Convention. In his quest to replace the increasingly lethargic Finerty, O’Callaghan turned to the widely-respected figure of Michael J. Ryan.

A lawyer by profession, Philadelphia-born Ryan had a reputation for being a skilled orator and an accomplished debater.<sup>113</sup> First coming to nationalist attention during John Dillon’s and William O’Brien’s tour of America in 1890, Ryan followed the decade of disunity caused by the Parnell split by becoming a key figure in the fledgling UILA and urging Irish Americans to unite behind John Redmond’s chairmanship of the Irish Party.<sup>114</sup> O’Callaghan was confident that Ryan’s elevation to the presidency of the American League would arrest the decline that Finerty’s apparent lack of interest was in danger of promoting. With political exigencies necessitating Redmond remain in London, the Third National Convention of the UILA, held at Philadelphia in October 1906, saw T.P. O’Connor head the Irish Party delegation sent to America. However, whether Redmond’s enforced absence contributed to Ryan coming down with a case of cold feet is something we can only surmise; the fact that the prospective president sought to withdraw his nomination at the twelfth hour remains on the record. Aghast at the possibility that Finerty might be re-elected in such an instance, O’Callaghan resolved to hold Ryan true to his word by every means at his disposal.

In a lengthy six-page letter to Redmond, O’Callaghan recounted the back-room politics involved in ensuring the critical transfer of power went ahead. Describing Finerty’s removal from the presidency as ‘Machiavellian’ the league secretary recalled how the Galway-born Chicagoan was denied the opportunity to caucus the attending delegates for their opinions on the matter by having it dealt with as the first order of business.<sup>115</sup> Taking great care to toe the official line, O’Callaghan joined in the chorus of gratitude to Finerty for the services he had rendered to the national

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<sup>112</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 26 Jun. 1908, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/8

<sup>113</sup> Timothy J. Meagher (ed.), *From Paddy to Studs: Irish American Communities at the Turn of the Century Era, 1880-1920* (Westport; Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 99

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103

<sup>115</sup> O’Callaghan to Redmond, 13 Oct. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

cause to date, before helping to persuade him to accept a lesser position on the League Executive going forward. With the first hurdle cleared all that was needed now was for Ryan to step up to the plate. A problem arose, however, when the Philadelphia man cited family and business concerns as the reasons for a sudden change of heart, declaring in the process that under no circumstance would he now allow his name to be put forward as Finerty's successor. Bordering on apoplectic, O'Callaghan accused Ryan of 'treachery', and likened his refusal to serve as comparable to 'a man who lived in Ireland, witnessed an army land on Irish soil to try to win her freedom in battle, and refused to join the fight because he had to attend to his business.'<sup>116</sup> Redmond must have been alarmed to read that O'Callaghan considered Ryan's obstinacy to be 'the sole reason that the League would break up', and that the secretary would personally see to it that in the event of any such calamity 'full responsibility was going to be laid squarely on the shoulders of the Philadelphia man.'<sup>117</sup> After much recrimination, and with the mass of attending delegates blissfully unaware of what was transpiring behind the scenes, Ryan, reduced to tears, finally relented.<sup>118</sup>

Now that he had practically blackmailed Ryan into accepting the presidency, O'Callaghan felt compelled to put his own name forward for re-election when both he and T.B. Fitzpatrick had entertained hopes of stepping down themselves. In a further development Patrick Egan was also demoted, from vice-president to the executive committee, though in the absence of any supporting evidence to the contrary his removal should not be interpreted as any slight on his performance in that role. Amazingly, O'Callaghan felt qualified to colour his post-convention report to Redmond as evidence that 'a great revival was under way' and that his chairman's absence had been a fortuitous occurrence as he could never be accused of having had anything to do with Finerty's removal.<sup>119</sup> League critics might have had a different opinion had they been privy to what really went on.

The debacle that surrounded the change of presidency should have served to highlight the fragility of the League. Despite Ryan's capacity to lead, and his

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<sup>116</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 13 Oct. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*

personal record of commitment to the national cause over many years, his reluctance to put his name forward for whatever reason should have permitted his disqualification without the threat of disgrace. The absence of a plentiful supply of suitable candidates to launch a contested leadership challenge either speaks volumes for the scarcity of talent within the league, or, the reluctance of the talented individuals it did possess, to carry a heavier load. And the fact that O'Callaghan considered Ryan's potential change of heart to be a threat to the very existence of the League should have alerted Redmond to the challenges his auxiliary organization in the US continued to face. Yet little evidence to suggest this interpretation registered with the party chairman exists. If dispatching Tom Kettle and Richard Hazleton to America was meant to infuse the League with renewed energy, we have already seen how this sorrowful exercise played out. As events transpired, 1907 dawned with the UILA president, secretary, and treasurer, occupying positions they either did not want or wished they could have been relieved of at the recent convention.

That the League continued to function through this difficult period owed much to the strength the organization derived from their chairman's stoic leadership of the Irish Party. On both the British and Irish stages, repeated setbacks which would have broken the resolve of lesser men only served to infuse Redmond with a resolute determination to win Home Rule for Ireland. One of these setbacks was the nationalist reaction to the Irish Councils Bill (1907).

#### The Irish Councils Bill

It would be disingenuous to portray the IPP as either pro-Liberal or pro-Conservative. It was simply pro-Home Rule. It mattered little to Redmond who held the reins of power just so long as the government of the day was in favour of granting Ireland its long overdue legislative independence. In the political climate of 1905-06 the party which offered the greatest prospect of realising Irish nationalist aspirations were the Liberals, and everything their leader, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, intimated on the pre-election hustings indicated as much. At a private meeting between Redmond, T.P. O'Connor, and Campbell-Bannerman, at the latter's Belgravia Square house on 14<sup>th</sup> November, the Liberal leader privately assured his

guests that he was ‘stronger than ever’ in favour of Home Rule.<sup>120</sup> However, in warning that passing a full measure of Home Rule might not be possible in the lifetime of the next government, Britain’s potential Prime Minister served notice of his intention to pass some serious measures in the interim which would lead up to the greater goal over time. When pressed by Redmond to make a public declaration to this effect Campbell-Bannerman obliged when he stated as much at Stirling on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.<sup>121</sup> Acutely aware of long-standing Tory/Unionist aversion to Home Rule, evidenced in the preceding decade of Conservative Party governance, the Irish Party chairman had little option but to place his trust in the Liberal leader. And comforted by Campbell-Bannerman’s assurances on home rule, Redmond helped to swing the Irish vote in Britain to the Liberals in the ensuing election.<sup>122</sup>

Any notion Redmond entertained that the expected Liberal Party victory would be marginal evaporated when it won a 130-seat majority at the polls. And guilty of having played their part in effecting this landslide, the chairman and the Irish Party were open to the charge that they had undermined their own political position in the process. In Irish America, the election result prompted both hope and dismay in equal measure. Patrick Ford’s *Irish World* celebrated the return of 83 Nationalist MPs to parliament and, given Campbell-Bannerman’s pledge at the hustings, equated every vote cast for the Liberals to be a vote cast in favour of Home Rule.<sup>123</sup> Viewed through such a positive lens the paper considered the prospects for the Irish cause to be ‘bright and encouraging.’<sup>124</sup> In a more predictably depressing interpretation, the *Gaelic American* accused the IPP of being ‘criminally negligent’ in the misuse of the ample funds placed at their disposal, before berating them for not yielding better returns at the polls.<sup>125</sup> In particular, it cited Richard Hazleton’s defeat to Walter Long in the South Dublin constituency, and the general debacle surrounding candidate registration in other constituencies, as evidence of such negligence.<sup>126</sup> This rather more critical view gained credence when the Liberal leader

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<sup>120</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 115 Extract from John Redmond’s Memorandum of Proceedings

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116

<sup>122</sup> J.O. Baylen, ‘What Mr Redmond Thought’: An Unpublished Interview with John Redmond, December 1906, *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 19, No. 74 (Sep. 1974), p. 174

<sup>123</sup> *IW*, 17 Feb. 1906

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>125</sup> *GA*, 17 Feb. 1906

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*

sought to enact the instalment process he had hinted to at Stirling with the introduction of a highly anticipated interim measure. While James Bryce – Walter Long’s replacement as Chief Secretary for Ireland – remained tight-lipped about the new government’s plans, all the signs pointed to something resembling devolution.<sup>127</sup> What followed with the introduction of an Irish Councils Bill in 1907, soon turned out to be nothing more than a forlorn attempt to subdue legitimate nationalist demands.

The Liberal Party’s first year in government had been marked by the defeat of a proposed Education Bill (1906) which had been heavily rejected by the House of Lords. This rejection, an early indicator of Liberal Party frustration with the power of the Lords, inadvertently prompted a change of office at Dublin Castle. When James Bryce was dispatched to Washington to take up the role of British Ambassador, Campbell-Bannerman selected Augustine Birrell - the President of the Board of Education responsible for the recently rejected Education Bill - as Bryce’s replacement. Whilst the departing Chief Secretary had failed to inspire any confidence among Irish nationalists as to the Liberal Party’s long-term intentions, the new appointment was given the Irish portfolio in the hope that he would correct this mistake.<sup>128</sup> On his arrival in Dublin (Jan. 1907) Birrell found Bryce’s proposal for the Irish Councils Bill waiting on his desk. After consulting Redmond and Dillon as to its contents, and making a number of what he felt were necessary amendments, the new Chief Secretary prepared to submit the bill to parliament.<sup>129</sup> While the IPP leadership did not completely approve of every aspect of the proposed legislation they saw that, if accepted as the first instalment of Home Rule, it would be easier for the Liberals later on to face up to the establishment of a genuine Irish parliament.<sup>130</sup> Despite the bill calling for a revision of functions and controls of all Irish departments in a centralised scheme designed to offer a rational solution to Ireland’s administrative difficulties, nationalist critics were quick to label it a ‘watered down

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<sup>127</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 92

<sup>128</sup> Patricia Jalland, ‘A Liberal Chief Secretary and the Irish Question: Augustine Birrell, 1907-1914’, *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Jun. 1976), p. 427

<sup>129</sup> Leon Ó Broin, *The Chief Secretary: Augustine Birrell in Ireland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 13

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14

version of Home Rule'.<sup>131</sup> Whilst the *Freeman's Journal* broadly argued that 'a detailed examination of the bill will not remove the instinctive objections among Irish Nationalists who believe in the principle of National Self-Government' the *Irish Independent* carried a selection of reader's letters on the matter.<sup>132</sup> A sample of these letters has a Rev. W. Lillis, C.C. Macroom, deriding the bill for falling 'infinitely short of satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people' and a Mr F. Sheehan of Waterford calling the bill 'a mockery and a snare' before questioning whether Mr Redmond was 'guilty of a tactical error in not having rejected it with scorn'.<sup>133</sup>

Introduced into the House of Commons on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1907, The Irish Councils Bill was dealt with by John Redmond as a matter requiring a great deal of caution. Dillon agreed, counselling his chairman on 9<sup>th</sup> May that 'it will never do to submit any official resolution approving or accepting the Bill' and that the forthcoming National Convention of the UIL 'will have to be handled very carefully'.<sup>134</sup> Redmond correctly reasoned that to publicly declare himself in favour of the bill only to have it rejected by the League could have dire consequences for his political future. Plans to hold a pre-convention meeting to consider the IPP's position were deemed ill-advised before the sudden death of John Dillon's wife rendered his dependable deputy absent from the convention proceedings altogether. As events transpired, it was a gathering of opponents of the bill that met to consolidate their objections to it that helped persuade Redmond make up his mind. Heavily influenced by the Young Ireland Branch of the United Irish League, a group of intellectuals who supported the Irish Party in principle but were adamant about not settling for any subsidiary measure other than Home Rule, the convention opened with the result all but a foregone conclusion. As thousands of delegates poured into Dublin's Mansion House, Redmond took the only possible course of action left open to him. Demonstrating admirable survival instincts, the party chairman delivered a rousing speech to the convention advocating the grounds on which he believed the current bill should be rejected.

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<sup>131</sup> Eunan O'Halpin, *The Decline of the Union: British Government in Ireland, 1892-1920* (Dublin; New York: Gill and MacMillan; Published in the USA by Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 73-75

<sup>132</sup> *FJ*, 18 May 1907

<sup>133</sup> *Irish Independent*, 16 May 1907

<sup>134</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 143

Beginning on the defensive, Redmond addressed charges levelled against him that he should never have brought the matter before the convention in the first place. After refuting claims that he and Dillon were in favour of the bill, Redmond made the case that to prevent its introduction in parliament, or even to oppose it when first introduced, would have seen him break a solemn pledge he had made with the Irish people to have any such bill brought before a free assembly such as the one now gathered before him.<sup>135</sup> ‘I am here today to fulfil that pledge’, the chairman continued, for not to be would have facilitated the application of “would-be dictator [or] would-be despot” to my name, as well as legitimate accusations that I was “trying to smother Irish opinion”.<sup>136</sup> Before articulating the bill’s inadequacies in detail, Redmond declared that he had always expressed an opinion that ‘no half-way house’ on the question of Home Rule was practicable, and that the Liberal Party must drop their Roseberyite ideas and come back to the standard of Gladstone.<sup>137</sup> Only by compelling the convention to rule on the issue, he added, could the chosen leader of the Irish people acquire the legitimacy he needed to formally reject the bill in parliament.<sup>138</sup>

Redmond’s leadership at the UIL Convention has been the subject of much debate. While Denis Gwynn credits the party chairman with ‘astute and firm handling of a very difficult situation’, Dermot Meleady is inclined to agree with A.C. Hepburn’s assessment that Redmond’s ‘maladroit handling of events’ underlined his shortcomings as leader.<sup>139</sup> Nationalist dissatisfaction with the Councils Bill was not confined to Ireland however. In Irish America the fear that the IPP were selling out and that the promise of Home Rule had been reneged on yet again had the potential to derail the entire constitutional movement in that country. How Redmond managed to avoid such a calamity and retain the trust of his supporters makes for interesting reading.

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<sup>135</sup> *The Rejected Irish Council Bill: What It Offered and What It Took Away: Mr Redmond’s Reasons for Rejecting the Measure*, Issued by the United Irish League of America, Boston (1907)

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>139</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 149; Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 107



### Irish American concern

The Councils Bill proposal had caused consternation within the UILA National Executive as early as November 1906. Writing to Redmond on this very matter O'Callaghan included a newspaper cutting from the *New York World* which carried a report of the proposals and a note of caution from Patrick Ford to the party chairman. Ford's note (dated 9<sup>th</sup> Nov.) stated that 'the thought that the Irish Party may be induced to accept the propositions named in the report made him feel uneasy.'<sup>140</sup> Ford's warning that the proposals had the potential to put the United Irish League of America 'out of business' is echoed by O'Callaghan's advice that 'acceptance of any whittled down or paltry measure would be regarded with the greatest disappointment on this side, and would do much to paralyse any work in support of the movement here.'<sup>141</sup> Within days O'Callaghan had occasion to write to Redmond again, this time enclosing a new note from Ford. In this note the editor of the *Irish World* expressed his apologies if his previous correspondence had appeared 'dictatorial', before coupling a declaration of confidence in the Irish Party with a more respectful caution to be wary of accepting 'half a loaf'.<sup>142</sup>

Perhaps anticipating such anxiety, Redmond had elected to send the UILA secretary a memorandum outlining the proposed bill the very same week. Marked private and confidential, Redmond recommended the memorandum be destroyed after O'Callaghan read it for its falling into the wrong hands could be 'extremely disastrous' to the national cause.<sup>143</sup> However, on digesting its contents, O'Callaghan opted to secure it under lock and key, so that it could be used to rebuff any accusations which might be made against Redmond further down the line. With regards to the proposals themselves, O'Callaghan agreed wholeheartedly with Redmond's initial rejection of them and advised his colleague and friend to 'keep a stiff upper lip and keep your powder dry.'<sup>144</sup>

When the proposed bill eventually came before the convention at the Mansion House, some UILA members were permitted to attend, though in a representative

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<sup>140</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 10 Nov. 1906, NLI RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>141</sup> Ibid

<sup>142</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 12 Nov. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>143</sup> Redmond to O'Callaghan, 13 Nov. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

<sup>144</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 6 Dec. 1906, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/9

rather than participatory capacity. This had been the subject of discussion when O'Callaghan wrote to Redmond in April 1907 with the news that Edward M. Lahiff of Chicago and John P. Leahy of St. Louis had expressed an interest in travelling over to witness the discussion on the latest self-governing measure. The secretary's approval of Lahiff was accompanied by concern about Leahy and included the caveat that the representative from St. Louis ought to be coached as to what he could and could not say. Both men were eventually approved by the UILA Executive though O'Callaghan felt it necessary to warn Redmond that their attendance was to be regarded as nothing more than visiting delegates bearing congratulations from America and wishing the party every hope for its future success.<sup>145</sup> A series of cables sent to Redmond later that same month indicated that O'Callaghan himself, T.B. Fitzpatrick, and Michael J. Ryan were considering attending, though it appears from further correspondence that Ryan, at least, was unable to make the trip. Once back in America O'Callaghan assured Redmond that 'there was complete unanimity here regarding everything that was done, and no second opinion that under all the circumstances the wisest course had been pursued in throwing out the Councils Bill.'<sup>146</sup>

This unanimity of opinion was interpreted as having come from Americans as well as Irish Americans. Addressing a UILA Mass Meeting held at the Grand Opera House, Philadelphia, on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1907, the Honorary Charles Emory Smith (editor of the *Philadelphia Press*) was credited with giving a remarkable and able analysis of the situation caused by the presentation of the Irish Councils Bill and its rejection by the Irish National Convention.<sup>147</sup> Smith declared that speaking as an American with undivided allegiance to American principles, and to the spirit of American truth and justice ... the Irish party were right to object to the feeble and halting bill brought forward by the present Ministry.<sup>148</sup> Mr Hugh Sutherland, the editor of the another Philadelphia newspaper, the *North American*, followed Smith with a similar sentiment. Labelling the denial of full home rule to Ireland to be 'an international scandal' Sutherland warned that until this wrong was righted no enduring friendship

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<sup>145</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 2 Apr. 1907, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/10

<sup>146</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 30 July 1907, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/10

<sup>147</sup> *The Rejected Irish Council Bill*:

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*

between England and America would be permitted to develop.<sup>149</sup> Both men's speeches met with tumultuous applause and reinforced the widely-held view that the Irish party had acted in a most prudent and wise fashion in their rejection of the flawed bill.

### Conclusion

It is difficult to gauge whether transatlantic support for constitutional nationalism between 1904 and 1907 had progressed in line with IPP/UILA expectation. Having failed to build on the momentum created by the passing of the Land Act of 1903, the Irish Party had only a small number of additional reform measures to show for their efforts at Westminster. While it had contributed to the downfall of the Tory/Unionist alliance so resistant to Home Rule, the IPP's role in returning an overwhelming Liberal majority at the next general election only served to reduce the nationalist influence at parliament. In addition, opposition to parliamentary participation of any sort had grown exponentially with the emergence of Sinn Féin while the popularity of the Gaelic Revival highlighted a growing disdain for all things political. This frustration with the failure to advance Home Rule soon made its way across the Atlantic.

In America John O'Callaghan began to resemble 'The Little Dutch Boy' with his finger permanently plugging the hole in the proverbial UILA dyke.<sup>150</sup> Lurching from one crisis to another the propagandistic spin employed by the pro-League press seemed to mask a myriad of leadership and logistical difficulties associated with growing a movement constantly in danger of self-implosion. Without concrete evidence to demonstrate substantial political progress in the pursuit of home rule, the cherished goal of reuniting the diaspora under the umbrella of moderation failed to materialise. If anything, the establishment of a parallel transatlantic alliance between Clan na Gael and Sinn Féin/IRB, to rival that established by the IPP and the UILA, served to undermine the efforts of those who sought a less radical solution to the Irish question.

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<sup>149</sup> *The Rejected Irish Council Bill*

<sup>150</sup> The Little Dutch Boy was a character in Mary Mapes Dodge, *The Silver Skates: A Story of Life in Holland* (1865)

To arrest any possibility of the political party fading into complete oblivion, substantial legislative reform would be required if the Liberal pledge to bring in Home Rule by instalments was ever to materialise. For without it, constitutional nationalism, as propagated by the Irish Party and the United Irish League of America, would struggle to convince its respective followers to keep the faith.

## Chapter 4

### Redmond's Masterful Leadership, 1908-11

With the honeymoon well and truly over, Irish America began to grow increasingly anxious about the prospects for home rule. Despite the new British government's promise to deliver full legislative independence to Ireland over time, nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic considered its initial instalment - the Irish Councils Bill - to be a poor return on the Irish Party's electoral investment.<sup>1</sup> Disappointment with the status quo encouraged dissent, and challenges to the constitutional movement began to emerge.

At home, IPP hegemony was called into question when a Sinn Féin candidate contested a parliamentary by-election, while attempts to appease William O'Brien continued to prove as difficult as ever. Intending to arrest any serious decline in Redmond's political fortunes, the new Chief Secretary for Ireland, Augustine Birrell, introduced government bills on university education (1908) and land reform (1909). However, as welcome as these developments were, they failed to satisfy the party's chief critics in America.

In New York, UILA antagonist and leader of Clan na Gael, John Devoy, routinely accused John Redmond of having squandered Charles Stewart Parnell's legacy. Across the wider US, American Hibernians remained estranged from their Irish counterparts as Matthew Cummings, the American Order's new president, refused to countenance reunification with Joe Devlin's Board of Erin. And despite the Irish Party's best efforts, supporters struggled to understand the vagaries associated with playing the long parliamentary game. To counter adversarial press coverage in the *Gaelic American*, the UILA resolved to produce a monthly periodical of its own dedicated to highlighting the sterling work being done by the IPP. And, from

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<sup>1</sup> Officially titled the Irish Council Bill, opponents of the Liberal Party proposal took to calling it the Irish Councils Bill. This was a ploy to highlight the perceived danger of partition posed by Unionist-dominated Councils refusing to enter the nationalist spirit the bill sought to create. Because the opponents of the bill won the day I have deferred to Irish Councils Bill in this body of work. See William O'Brien, *The Irish revolution and how it came about* (Dublin: Maunsel and Roberts Ltd., 1923), pp. 35-36

December 1907, the *United Irish League Bulletin of America* helped to turn the nationalist tide in the Irish Party's favour.

This chapter explores how John Redmond appeased nationalist concerns in America by securing tangible legislative victories at home. Thereafter, a constitutional crisis in Britain which saw the Irish Party attain the balance of power at Westminster, and the role the party played in holding the government to ransom, are closely examined. Redmond's masterful leadership during this critical period not only assured Irish Americans that they were right to support the constitutional movement, but that the pursuit of national independence was best served by parliamentary agitation. How all this came about is where we go now.

### Countering Separatism

At the turn of the twentieth century separatism - the ideology that advocated a complete break from Britain - was stronger in the exiled immigrant psyche than it was in the largely-placated nationalist at home in Ireland. For many Irish Americans, memories of sectarian bias, political oppression, and social injustice were lived experiences while for others they constituted vivid tales passed down from generation to generation. A central core of separatist belief held that, as Britain was the root of all the evil afflicting the Irish people, only complete independence from Britain would enable Ireland to fulfil its true potential. As the Irish Parliamentary Party advocated Home Rule - limited legislative independence with a strong link to the imperial parliament - constitutional nationalists fell well outside the realm of separatism. And as the United Irish League of America was the Irish Party's US affiliate, it too came to be similarly regarded. It stands to reason, then, that the emergence of a fresh separatist challenge to constitutional nationalist hegemony in the early twentieth-century was problematic for the IPP and the UILA in equal measure. And before we understand how both organisations dealt with this challenge we need to understand where it came from and how it gained traction.

If evidence that John Redmond was in a precarious position in 1907 was required, it could be found in the first serious post-reunification breach of Irish Party discipline. A small group of Nationalist MP's led by Thomas O'Donnell proposed what the Irish Party chairman would call 'a silly resolution' by suggesting a temporary

withdrawal from parliament and reunion with William O'Brien and Timothy Healy.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the most radical of these suggestions (withdrawal from parliament) failed to elicit widespread support, it did represent 'the first permeation of Sinn Féin doctrine into Irish Party debate'.<sup>3</sup> And in more than just debating such doctrine, one MP decided to test the mood of the nation himself by putting the question to the people. C.J. Dolan's subsequent resignation from the IPP to contest a Leitrim North by-election on a Sinn Féin ticket in 1908 alarmed many party observers, despite his consummate defeat at the polls by 3,103 votes to 1,157.<sup>4</sup> Yet, while the margin of defeat offered a modicum of comfort to Irish Party strategists, the electoral contest itself was subjected to a great deal of spin in Irish America.

Announcing Dolan's candidacy, the *Gaelic American* ran a front-page article highlighting the rebel MP's intention to be 'the pioneer in the new policy of keeping the Irish Members at home to work and plan for Ireland's interests, instead of wasting their time making speeches to empty benches in Westminster'.<sup>5</sup> A message from Arthur Griffith to the men of Leitrim, asserting that 'self-government for Ireland would never be obtained by an appeal to righteousness or justice from a hostile assembly constituting 80 Irishmen and 570 foreigners', ran alongside the article on Dolan.<sup>6</sup> A week later 'The Sinews of War for North Leitrim' reported on Dolan's 'plucky fight against heavy odds' and gave a list of subscribers who had donated money to the Sinn Féin candidate's cause. Among those who parted with their hard-earned cash but were mysteriously reluctant to give their names were 'An Old Fenian, An Evicted Farmer, A Leitrim Boy, [and] A Fermanagh Neighbour'.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the run-up to the by-election the *Gaelic American* continued to promote Sinn Féin at the expense of the IPP. Subsequent editions heralded the start and growth of the Sinn Féin movement in New York while commenting on the existential threat the organization in Ireland was said to pose to the parliamentary party.<sup>8</sup> Still more reported on 'Sinn Féin Forces United in Convention' with 'every

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<sup>2</sup> Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography*, p. 299

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> N.C. Fleming and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relation since 1800, Critical Essays: Vol. II, From Parnell and his Legacy to the Treaty* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), p. xiii.

<sup>5</sup> *GA*, 20 Jul. 1907

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *GA*, 27 Jul. 1907

<sup>8</sup> *GA*, 10, 17, 31 Aug. 1907

county in Ireland represented at the party's gathering in Dublin.<sup>9</sup> Others lauded the 'Sure and Steady Progress of Sinn Féin' who were 'winning converts all over Ireland.'<sup>10</sup> And with 'West Britonism in Boston' openly castigating the IPP/UIILA alliance the Clan-friendly paper shone a critical light on one of the major fault lines in Irish-American nationalism, the New York/Boston divide.<sup>11</sup>

With the *Gaelic American* published at No. 12 Dutch Street, New York, John O'Callaghan took to referring to its editor, John Devoy, as 'The Dervish from Dutch Street'.<sup>12</sup> And in striving to combat its arch-nemesis the UILA determined to promote the constitutional movement through a new publication of its own, the *United Irish League Bulletin of America*. It was the recently-elected League president Michael J. Ryan who first suggested a periodical dedicated to 'placing before our members the salient points in the work of the League as it was progressing.'<sup>13</sup> Beginning in December 1907 as the eight-page monthly Ryan originally envisaged, the *Bulletin* doubled in size after just six months. Thereafter it regularly exceeded even that, when circumstance dictated giving extended coverage to significant events relating to the Irish Party and the campaign for Home Rule. Retailing at just 5 cents per copy (or a half-dollar for a yearly subscription) the *Bulletin* cost no more than the regular weekly immigrant newspapers. These papers however were heavily reliant on advertising for revenue and covered many topics totally unrelated to the national question. Published in Boston, the *Bulletin* was wholly dedicated to the Irish Party and its relative affordability was made possible by the refusal of those associated with its production, primarily the League Secretary John O' Callaghan, to take any stipend for something he described as a 'labor of love'.<sup>14</sup> O'Callaghan was able to report that in the first nine months after its establishment, editing and every other work connected with the new publication had not cost the League one single cent.<sup>15</sup> Whatever costs the *Bulletin* had incurred (less than \$650 to Sept. 1908), namely what it took to print and disseminate it among

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<sup>9</sup> *GA*, 14 Sept. 1907

<sup>10</sup> *GA*, 12 Oct. 1907

<sup>11</sup> *GA*, 9 Nov. 1907

<sup>12</sup> *United Irish League Bulletin of America* (hereafter the *Bulletin*), Vol. 1, No. 9 (Aug. 1908)

<sup>13</sup> John O'Callaghan, *Addresses of Irish Envoys and Reports of National Officers* (Boston, Ma.: United Irish League of America, 1908), p. 32

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*



League members, had been met from subscriptions.<sup>16</sup> In detailing the monies involved, O'Callaghan was answering charges made by the president of the American Order of Hibernians that the *Bulletin* was being produced from funds intended for the Irish Party, and that those who had donated their hard-earned dollars to support the national movement at home had little knowledge of how their generosity was being abused.<sup>17</sup>

The *Bulletin* relied heavily on cherry-picked reports which had appeared in the spectrum of UILA-friendly publications in Irish America over the preceding month, reports which were themselves reproduced from coverage extended to the Irish Party in the national and provincial press in Ireland and Britain. It also provided detailed coverage of speeches given by the quadrumvirate who headed the Irish Party (John Redmond, John Dillon, Joe Devlin and T.P. O'Connor), and carried debates on nationalist issues from the House of Commons as well as proceedings of National Conventions of the UIL in Ireland and America. The genesis for the *Bulletin* lay in the success achieved by earlier UILA publications, produced whenever a need to bolster support for the constitutional party in America had been identified.

*Ireland's Unpurchaseable Representatives* (1905) was a dedicated vote of confidence in the Irish Party from senior Catholic clerics in Ireland. Among those who offered messages of support were His Eminence Michael, Cardinal Logue, who deemed the party's work in the House of Commons to be 'vital to the country's highest interests', and the Most Rev. William J. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, who called on the country to 'discharge its duty' to sustain the party at Westminster.<sup>18</sup>

*Help the Men in the Cap* (1906) was primarily a grand fundraising appeal that included a thinly-veiled warning about 'a certain class of men in this country [America] claiming to be Irishmen, who proclaim hostility to the United Irish League, and who are more offensive and venomous than even Orangemen or English Tories in their denunciations of the leaders of the Irish race.'<sup>19</sup> This publication accused this class (whom everyone understood to be Clan na Gael) of 'helping

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 33. These charges appeared in 'The Black Hand's Campaign of Slander', *GA*, 13 Jun. 1908

<sup>18</sup> *Ireland's Unpurchaseable Representatives*, (Boston, Ma.: United Irish League of America, 1905). While the country referred to in both men's statements was Ireland, the reproduction of their appeals in the *Bulletin* was a call on Irish Americans to discharge this duty.

<sup>19</sup> *Help the Men in the Cap*, (Boston, Ma.: United Irish League of America, 1906), p. 8

England to crush the United Irish League' and in so doing to 'blast the hopes of the Irish people.'<sup>20</sup> Another offering, *The Rejected Irish Bill: What It Offered and What It Took Away* (1907), was a detailed explanation of why the UIL Convention had rejected the Liberal Party's pitiful attempt to appease Irish nationalists with a poor substitute for Home Rule.<sup>21</sup> Now, with the greater scope afforded by the *Bulletin*, the League could more thoroughly counter *Gaelic American* hostility while championing the party's every effort to win Ireland its long overdue independence. In dealing with the contempt it felt Dolan's challenge deserved, early editions of the *Bulletin* trumpeted the renegade MP's defeat at the polls as 'the end of the [Sinn Féin] fad or cult in Ireland.'<sup>22</sup> Embarrassingly premature, as later events would prove, this forecast was indicative of the hyperbole every party success was prone to produce in subsequent editions of the new publication.

To maintain electoral hegemony the IPP had to counter not only the threat posed by an emerging separatist movement but the challenge posed by William O'Brien. And having seen off the Irish Reform Association, Redmond considered it prudent to foster reconciliation with the man behind the initial concept of an alternative constitutional party. To do so required a display of magnanimity that could only serve Redmond well going forward, and to this end the Irish leader demonstrated his party's willingness to forgive and forget.

### Redmond the Magnanimous

If Redmond had learned anything from the Parnell split, it was the necessity to maintain party unity. This was essential to keeping Irish America firmly behind the constitutional movement and Redmond had done well to abide by this rule when he sacrificed William O'Brien for the greater good in 1903. With the irascible O'Brien eyeing a return to the party in 1907, the Irish leader was receptive to any developments which might strengthen his hand at Westminster. And for optics alone, a demonstration of magnanimity towards the Cork MP would go a long way to restoring transatlantic confidence in the chairman's leadership.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid p. 9

<sup>21</sup> *The Rejected Irish Council Bill: What It Offered and What It Took Away*, (Boston, Ma.: United Irish League of America, 1907)

<sup>22</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Mar. 1908)

While Thomas O'Donnell had been the one to suggest bringing O'Brien and Healy back into the fold, the idea was already under consideration. Several IPP stalwarts had recognized the necessity for Redmond to foster reunion with the recalcitrant MP's and among these were the former Lord Mayor of Dublin, Timothy Harrington, and Alderman Stephen O'Mara of Limerick. In a rare breach of UILA policy, pressure was even brought to bear on the party chairman when a member of the American League's National Executive, Edward Lahiff, revealed his contacts had shown O'Brien to be 'ardently anxious' for a meeting on this very topic.<sup>23</sup> O'Brien's initial terms for a return were not insurmountable, though some differences of opinion regarding interpretations of the party pledge, and the holding of a convention to publicly proclaim the projected reunion, delayed matters.<sup>24</sup> However, acutely aware of Healy's aversion to toeing the party line, and conscious of the necessity to deny O'Brien a public platform from which he might attempt to dictate party policy, Redmond played hard to get. After weeks of tense negotiations, the chairman's resolve was rewarded and January 1908 opened with O'Brien informing Redmond that he and his colleagues (Healy, A. Roche, D.D. Sheehan, and John O'Donnell) would answer the summons to the next party meeting.<sup>25</sup> Taking personal credit for the reunion, Lahiff had a letter published in the *Freeman's Journal* in which he openly attributed the settling of differences between Redmond and O'Brien directly to a proposition he made to both men three months earlier.<sup>26</sup> And while his role in facilitating the negotiations is not to be entirely dismissed, the inference that Redmond allowed IPP policy to be dictated by a League official in America is fanciful to say the least.

Reunion with the O'Brienites could not have come at a more critical time for the party, for there were significant political changes on the horizon. Having identified the need to bolster support for Redmond in the wake of the Councils Bill fiasco, the Chief Secretary had resolved to introduce whatever reforms he felt stood a reasonable chance of making it through both Houses of Parliament. Birrell remained true to his word, and within a few short months the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph V. O'Brien, *William O'Brien and the Course of Irish Politics, 1881-1918* (London; California: University of California Press, 1976), p. 181

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 183

<sup>26</sup> *FJ*, 20 Jan. 1908

1907 had extended to the Estates Commission the power to purchase land by compulsion for those tenants previously evicted from their holdings. Every reform won at Westminster was both a blow to the separatist movement and a shot-in-the-arm for constitutional nationalism. And in America, the UILA championed every such success in the pages of the *Bulletin*.

Home Rule aside, many other matters required immediate attention. And prominent among these were the questions surrounding a national university, the status of the Irish language, and female suffrage. Conscious of how he had addressed these very issues when in America, Redmond knew the debates surrounding each of them were being closely monitored across the Atlantic. And aware of such interest, the party chairman was inclined to tread lightly.

### The University Question

The absence of a Catholic university had long been a source of great contention in Ireland. It was a grievance that served to unite radical and moderate nationalists alike and its settlement must have been viewed by the Chief Secretary as an opportunity to appease both strands of nationalist opinion simultaneously. Epitomised by centuries of sectarian bias, real and perceived, university education in Ireland had represented an abject policy failure for successive British administrations.

Established in 1592 during the reign of Elizabeth 1, Trinity College Dublin developed into a bastion of the Ascendancy before various prohibitions denying Catholic enrolment were overturned in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>27</sup> These developments had little effect on attendance however, and the Catholic Church continued to frown upon any of its members who dared to enter the Protestant-administered institution. The government eventually established three non-denominational colleges in Belfast, Cork, and Galway (known collectively as the Queen's University) in 1845 but no sooner had they opened their doors in 1849 than they were denounced by the Catholic hierarchy as Godless institutions. An independent Catholic university of sorts did come to pass when a Synod, convened at Thurles in 1850 to consider such a venture, gained Papal approval four years

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<sup>27</sup> Senia Pašeta, 'Trinity College, Dublin, and the Education of Irish Catholics, 1873-1908', *Studia Hibernica* Vol. 30 (1998/1999), p. 10

later.<sup>28</sup> However, the drawback to this initiative became apparent when the new Catholic University of Ireland (CUI, est. 1854) was refused both a state endowment and the power to confer degrees.<sup>29</sup> Eventually, the Royal University of Ireland (RUI, est. 1879) replaced the Queen's University, with 'the power to grant degrees to anybody who passed its annual examinations; where or by whom students were educated made no difference', save those who were aspiring to the medical profession.<sup>30</sup> The Royal University had much to commend it, for it offered relatively inexpensive degrees, awarded prizes and scholarships based on merit, was open to all denominations, and did not discriminate between men and women.<sup>31</sup> What it lacked however was the collegiate experience unique to a university which offered a residency to its student body, an experience the recently elevated John Henry Cardinal Newman had championed as essential more than twenty years earlier.<sup>32</sup>

The RUI sufficed until the clamour for a new university resurfaced in the wake of both the cultural revival and Irish Parliamentary Party reunification. A Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland (the Robertson Commission, 1901-03) and a Royal Commission on Trinity College (the Fry Commission, 1906-07) failed to find an adequate solution to the problem, making it a live issue for the new administration at Dublin Castle. In the wake of these Commission's failures, Birrell vowed to make university reform a statement of intent for the Liberal Party's future policy towards Ireland.

The Chief Secretary's answer was to establish not one, but two new universities. Leaving Trinity as it stood, Birrell amalgamated Queen's College Galway, Queen's College Cork, and University College Dublin (the old CUI) into a new National University of Ireland (NUI) with affiliated status extended to Maynooth College. Concurrently, Queen's College Belfast became Queen's University Belfast (QUB), an independent stand-alone institution. Under such a scheme Protestants, Catholics,

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<sup>28</sup> Alfred O'Rahilly, 'The Irish University Question V. The Catholic University of Ireland', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* Vol. 50, No. 200 (Winter, 1961), p. 353

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 357

<sup>30</sup> Pašeta. 'Trinity College, Dublin, and the Education of Irish Catholics', p. 8. Aspirants to the medical profession were required to undertake their studies at a dedicated medical school such as the one provided by the CUI at Cecilia Street in Dublin.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>32</sup> For an in-depth study of what Newman envisaged a university should be see John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University: Defined and Illustrated* New Impression (London; New York; Bombay; Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907)

and Presbyterians, were all catered for equally. Worryingly for the future of the country, however, Birrell's solution to the conundrum of conflicting denominational interests which could not be resolved amicably was to separate them – a solution Leon Ó Broin succinctly likened to 'the forerunner of partition.'<sup>33</sup>

One result settlement of the university question did facilitate was to allow Redmond to recover some lost ground in America. In his address to the Fourth National Convention of the UILA, held at Faneuil Hall, Boston, in September 1908, the Irish Party chairman reminded his audience that on his last visit to the US (1904) the university question was considered 'the most thorny' of all the questions connected to Ireland, unlikely to be settled until the country had been granted Home Rule.<sup>34</sup> Having determined at that time not to 'abate our exertions for one hour, we persevered until the impossible had been achieved,' he said to loud acclaim.<sup>35</sup> Describing the NUI as an institution 'governed absolutely and completely and exclusively by Ireland herself' Redmond went on to label it 'the first real instalment of Home Rule'.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the chairman's speech was heavily-laden with multiple Irish Party achievements won as a result of parliamentary agitation. These included vast sums of money extracted from the treasury for the erection of thirty thousand labourers' cottages, new rights introduced for town tenants, increased pay for the salaries of teachers throughout the country, and the extension of the Old Age Pensions Act to Ireland. The standing ovation which followed must have warmed the leader's heart, even if the enthralled faces before him represented the core of his American support.

No sooner had the Irish envoys departed from America than the *Gaelic American* responded to the constitutional party's wild assertions. In a scathing editorial, all praise for the recent Irish Universities Act was deemed 'premature and unwarranted.'<sup>37</sup> Labelling the appropriation for new college buildings inadequate and lamenting the absence of any provision for student quarters, the new university was condemned for placing those who could not afford to pay for college education at a

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<sup>33</sup> Leon Ó Broin, *The Chief Secretary: Augustine Birrell in Ireland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 47

<sup>34</sup> John Redmond, *Addresses of Irish Envoys*, p. 10

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11

<sup>37</sup> *GA*, 24 Oct. 1908

distinct disadvantage.<sup>38</sup> As such, the paper cited the children of the rich, ‘the grabbers and the ranchers’, as those that that would benefit most from the new legislation.<sup>39</sup> The adverse commentary concluded with a denunciation of Redmond for his ‘attempt to make political capital’ out of the university settlement.<sup>40</sup>

Whilst the NUI was never formally established as a strictly Catholic university, the scope granted to it for the election of future governing bodies ensured a predominantly Catholic ethos would come to prevail. And this, no matter how it was dressed up, represented a nationalist success. However, no sooner had the Irish University Act been granted Royal Assent than another controversy - the question of Irish language proficiency as a pre-requisite for matriculation to the NUI - arose to take its place.

### The Language Question

Cultural nationalism had come to represent a challenge to constitutional nationalist hegemony and guarding against the former’s ability to dilute the latter became a concern for both the IPP and UILA. Douglas Hyde had begun to rival John Redmond for popularity and we have already seen how the National Executive reacted to the Gaelic League president’s visit to the US in 1905/06.<sup>41</sup> That is not to say that the Irish Party or its American affiliate were hostile to Hyde, or that either were opposed to any cultural reform that might strengthen the nationalist hand. It is merely to state that the IPP questioned whether political energy was to be wasted on issues that could be quite adequately dealt with post-independence.

Writing in the *Celtic Review* Douglas Hyde countered the IPP’s position, declaring the debate surrounding the status of the Irish language to have been ‘a national question of the first magnitude.’<sup>42</sup> It was a question, Hyde argued, that was ‘as fraught with weighty possibilities for the future of the Irish nation as the land question or even the question of Home Rule itself.’<sup>43</sup> Prominent among those who had campaigned for the inclusion of Irish was Padraig Pearse, the editor of the

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<sup>38</sup> GA, 24 Oct. 1908

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3

<sup>42</sup> An Craoibhín Aoibhinn/Douglas Hyde, ‘The New National University and the Irish Language Question’, *Celtic Review* Vol. 5, No. 20 (Apr. 1909), p. 319

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

Gaelic League's bi-lingual weekly newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis* (*The Sword of Light*) from 1903-09. While Pearse was barely known to Irish Americans at this juncture in time, the platform the language debate provided him with would soon identify him as a potential star in the ranks of those committed to a more advanced nationalism.

Born in Dublin in 1879, Padraig Pearse is historically acclaimed as a writer, an educationalist, and a revolutionary. However, at the time of the question surrounding Irish and the NUI, Pearse had not yet developed the militancy we associate him with today. Convinced of the centrality of the Irish language to a distinctive Irish identity, Pearse actively promoted the use of Gaelic in the boys' school (St. Enda's) he had founded in 1908.<sup>44</sup> This centrality, best revealed in his declaration that 'an Irish school, like an Irish nation, must be permeated through and through by Irish culture, of which the Irish language is the repository', provides a clear insight as to how he must have viewed the importance of the Irish language to the newly-established National University.<sup>45</sup>

The Irish Party was divided on the language question. John Redmond had declared himself to be in favour of the Gaelic League initiative 'in principle', and a pro-language rally in September 1908 attracted up to 100,000 people in the centre of Dublin.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, at a UIL Convention in 1909 best remembered for a raucous debate over a proposed new land bill, John Dillon opposed Douglas Hyde who had been invited to make the case for the cultural revivalists. Dillon's concerns were shared by other party members (most notably Stephen Gwynn) who claimed making Irish essential would discriminate against Catholics educated outside Ireland.<sup>47</sup> Dillon himself had always held 'a lifelong aversion to compulsion in education', and believed forcing Gaelic on Protestant schools or other institutions preparing students for the NUI would be 'a most outrageous and intolerant action.'<sup>48</sup> Despite the deputy leader's reasoned objections, the motion to make Irish compulsory passed by a

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<sup>44</sup> J.J. Lee, 'Pearse, Patrick Henry', *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7247>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>46</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 147

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 148

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*



majority of three-to-one and the cultural revivalists recorded a substantial moral victory.

The language question was not the only controversy surrounding the NUI as the status of women at the new university, whether as faculty or students, brought into perspective the whole question of equality for women in other social spheres. And just as cultural enthusiasts denounced the constitutional movement for its quasi-nationalism, so too did progressive nationalists denounce it for its Victorian conservatism. Irish women campaigned vigorously for the right to vote, and prominent among those who denied it to them were the Irish Parliamentary Party.

### The Suffrage Question

The IPP's refusal to support Irish (and British) women campaigning for the vote stemmed not from any inherent preference for gender bias, at least not one which was in any way distinct from the patriarchal society prevailing to the period in question. It resided more in its determination to avoid tackling issues which might serve to weaken its position at parliament and distract from the overarching pursuit of Home Rule. And with all the major political parties opposed to extending the electoral franchise the Irish Party were loath to rock the constitutional boat.

Suffragists (or suffragettes as the more militant individuals would come to be called) demanded that the vote be extended to women on an equal basis to that of men. Transcending national boundaries, suffrage organizations could be found wherever gender discrimination within an electoral system existed, and this included Great Britain and the United States. Irish suffragists, however, had to contend with certain realities which marked them out as distinct from their counterparts in other countries. Not only were the women of Ireland seeking enfranchisement from an alien parliament, they also 'had to negotiate a tricky path between demanding women's rights and risking the antagonism of groups demanding the nation's right to self-determination.'<sup>49</sup>

The Irish suffrage movement embodied the new generation of Irish women seeking a more modern role in society. Headed by several female graduates of the RUI and

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<sup>49</sup> Louise Ryan, 'Traditions and Double Moral Standards: The Irish Suffragists' Critique of Nationalism', *Women's History Review* Vol. 4 (1995), p. 487

accommodated by a wider acceptance of women's activism in general, the movement attempted to marry the demand for individual rights with those of the nascent nation-state in-waiting. Much to these women's chagrin, however, the Irish Parliamentary Party did not support female suffrage as John Redmond felt such a campaign would complicate the more important issue (as he saw it) of Home Rule. This lack of an official endorsement from the leading nationalist organization in the country merely succeeded in dividing opinion on the primacy of Home Rule and led to the formation of several new groups. Those who viewed Redmond's position as politically pragmatic (however reluctantly they might have arrived at this decision) remained in the conservative Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA, est. 1901). While those who refused to appease the constitutional party, and objected to any dilution of their demands, adopted a more militant stand. This latter group, headed by a thirty-one-year-old activist named Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, determined to 'start a fire' and established the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL) in 1908.<sup>50</sup> Others torn between women's rights and the national struggle for independence formed several smaller societies who coalesced into the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation (IWSF, est. 1911). A by-product of the IWSF was the Irish Women's Reform League (IWRL, est. 1911), headed by an emerging convert to the socialist campaign for better working conditions for working-class women, Louie Bennett.<sup>51</sup> As Rosemary Cullen Owens succinctly notes, with the establishment of all these organisations 'the era of dumb self-effacing women' was well and truly a thing of the past.<sup>52</sup>

The IPP's position on female suffrage, however, revealed more than a passing concern for the fortune of any proposed Home Rule Bill for it masked an alarming patriarchy within the structures of organizations the party exercised direct control over. This is best exemplified when juxtaposing the issue of women serving as delegates in local branches and as officers on national executives of the UIL in Ireland with its transnational affiliates elsewhere. In Britain, the United Irish League of Great Britain (UILGB, est. 1900) was headed by one of Redmond's staunchest

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<sup>50</sup> Margaret Ward, 'Hanna Sheehy Skeffington (1877-1946)' in Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (eds.), *Female Activists: Irish Women and Change, 1900-1960* (Dublin: The Woodfield Press, 2001), p. 92

<sup>51</sup> Rosemary Cullen Owens, 'Louie Bennett (1870-1956)' in Cullen and Luddy (eds.) *Female Activists*, p. 38

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

allies, the MP for Liverpool, T.P. O'Connor. Despite holding a similar view to his chairman regarding the role of women in the wider body politic, O'Connor facilitated Irish women in Britain who wished to join their local branch of the British League.<sup>53</sup> So liberal was O'Connor in this regard he even allowed Dr Sophie Bryant of the Women's Social and Patriotic Union (WSPU, est. 1903) address a UILGB convention to argue the case for female suffrage.<sup>54</sup> While there is little evidence to suggest that female delegates played a particularly prominent role in the British League, their inclusion, even at local level, protected the embryonic organisation from the full wrath of British suffragettes. Over time, however, the Irish Party came to oppose various bills submitted to parliament calling for votes for women and the UILGB became a legitimate target for the wider suffragette movement in general.

While Irish immigrant women in America are liberally remembered as domestic servants, factory workers and school teachers, little has been written about their involvement in Irish-American nationalism.<sup>55</sup> After the short-lived Fenian Sisterhood of the 1860s, and before the establishment of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the American AOH (1894), the Irish Ladies' Land League of the United States (ILLUS, est. 1880) represented the first significant contribution made by Irish-American women to the struggle for Irish independence. With Parnell's mother Delia serving as president, and his sister Fanny joining Ellen Ford as vice-presidents, the ILLUS had as many as 10,000 members spread over 150 branches.<sup>56</sup> Despite this relative success, the ILLUS soon split into conservative and radical wings, with those who advocated social reform in Ireland only opposing those who prioritised extending such reform to America. After the leader of the conservative wing, Fanny Parnell, had the leader of the radicals, Ellen Ford, expelled, Fanny's untimely death in 1882, and the Irish Party's adoption of a broader political programme thereafter, signified

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<sup>53</sup> Darragh Gannon, 'On the Home Rule Platform: Irish Nationalist Women in Great Britain, 1912-19'. Conference paper delivered at the Women's History Association of Ireland Annual Conference, NUI Galway, 21 Apr. 2017. Gannon credits the UILGB with facilitating female membership in at least ten branches.

<sup>54</sup> Gannon, 'On the Home Rule Platform'

<sup>55</sup> The seminal book on Irish immigrant women in America remains Hasia Diner's *Erin's Daughters: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1983). See also Margaret Brennan, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840-1930* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009)

<sup>56</sup> Ely M. Janis, 'Petticoat Revolutionaries: Gender, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Irish Ladies' Land League in the United States', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Winter, 2008), pp. 10-11

the demise of the organization.<sup>57</sup> Brief as the American Ladies' Land League may have been, its impact should not be underestimated. Its significance lies in the important introduction it provided for the public participation of a new generation of Irish-American women who demonstrated their capacity and fitness for admittance to traditionally male-dominated organizations.<sup>58</sup> And just as female suffrage broadened into a transnational movement, those women who had campaigned for social reform in the 1880s could be found heading the campaign for political reform in the 1890s.

The establishment of the Irish National League (INL) in 1882 as the successor to the Irish National Land League was replicated in America in 1883. Unlike in Ireland, however, Parnell's directive that women be excluded from participating in the new organization was deemed too conservative for the 'New World'. Adopting a more inclusive attitude, the American National League allowed many Irish societies (literary, fraternal, and charitable) to affiliate with the national organization, and since its ultimate objective (Home Rule) was political, suffragists were among those who began to take notice.<sup>59</sup> Tara M. McCarthy has highlighted how suffragists used monthly periodicals like the *Woman's Journal* to compare the position of disenfranchised American women with the subjugation of Ireland, while noting how nationalists such as Marguerite Moore, Lillie Devereux, and Delia Parnell lent their corresponding support to the suffrage movement.<sup>60</sup> However, with much of their initial enthusiasm tempered by the split in the Irish Party in 1890, it took the establishment of the UILA in 1901 before a new opportunity for Irish-American women to re-engage in nationalist politics emerged. Although their numbers paled in comparison with the ILLUS, women soon organized auxiliary branches of the UILA or requested membership from their local male-run branch. Indeed, McCarthy cites one particular New York branch of the UILA which had three hundred and fifteen delegates, of which sixty-five were female.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Tara M. McCarthy, 'Women Suffrage and Irish Nationalism: Ethnic Appeals and Alliances in America', *Women's History Review* Vol. 23, No. 2 (2014), p. 190

<sup>60</sup> McCarthy, 'Women Suffrage and Irish Nationalism', pp. 191-195

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 196.

The United Irish League of America had several women on its National Executive, and Sabina Davitt, Ellen Ford, and Mary O'Flaherty were among those who could be found on the platform at biennial National Conventions.<sup>62</sup> Like their male counterparts, however, these women were precluded from any meaningful participation in the formulation of national policy, and as a result were compelled to channel their collective energies into fundraising. This was a task the women excelled at, and one for which Redmond and his fellow MP's were indebted to for their political survival at Westminster. As fundraising was the soft underbelly of the IPP's over-reliance on Irish America, these women expected to capture the attention of their party leader when suffrage became a broader transnational movement. And suffrage campaigners duly informed Redmond during his regular trips abroad that funds collected for the party would be stopped unless he adopted a more pro-suffragist view.<sup>63</sup> However, during the Irish leaders visit to America in September 1910, the women were clearly disappointed to learn that they were not the political force they imagined themselves to be, and their threats to hold the party to ransom had little or no impact on the contributions pledged at the biennial UILA National Convention.<sup>64</sup>

Blinkered in his pursuit of home rule, Redmond was prepared to side-line any issue that might distract him from achieving his life-long political goal. And if Irish women and their demands for electoral enfranchisement constituted collateral damage in his pursuit of this goal, then that was a risk he was prepared to take. Having rode out the twin controversies surrounding language and female suffrage, Redmond now had to deal with a renewal of the land question.

#### The Land Question (revisited)

The land question had always aroused Irish immigrant sentiment in America. And because of such sentiment, fundraising efforts during the days of the Land League and the Plan of Campaign had always been well received. While the IPP would have loved the 1903 Land Act to have represented a final settlement, shortfalls in the Tory

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<sup>62</sup> Sabina Davitt was the sister of Michael Davitt, Ellen Ford the sister of Patrick Ford, and Mary O'Flaherty the daughter of Edward O'Flaherty, a prominent Land League activist in the US.

<sup>63</sup> Cliona Murphy, *Women's Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p. 175

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 175-176

initiative required revisiting this most sensitive of nationalist issues in 1909. With John Redmond lending his support to a new land bill, the UILA were anxious lest the Irish Party undermine its recent achievements at Westminster. And for this very reason, events unfolding in Ireland were subjected to intense scrutiny across the Atlantic.

Despite the relative success of the preceding legislation, the issue of land reform remained problematic whenever landlords refused to enter the spirit of the 1903 Act. This was particularly true in the west of Ireland where the Congested Districts Board (CDB) was under enormous pressure to confront several large graziers' intent on resisting all efforts at land reform. A 1908 Royal Commission on Congestion (known as the Dudley Commission) had sat against a backdrop of renewed agrarian agitation directed against graziers, agitation which would enter nationalist folklore as the Ranch Wars.

To be considered a grazier a person usually had to hold over 200 acres of land which he, or she, normally reserved for the wholesale grazing of large herds of cattle. As Paul Bew has noted, however, the UIL's own newspaper (the *Irish People*) could drop that number to 100 acres whenever it suited them.<sup>65</sup> In a microstudy of one Ranch War at Riverstown, Co. Sligo, Patrick Cosgrove provides a detailed account of the tactics employed by the agitators and the effect their agitation had in forcing the issue of congestion to the top of the nationalist agenda. In this instance, graziers who were perceived to have violated the unwritten Laws of the League [i.e. refused to consider the redistribution of untenanted lands] were typically branded as objectionable by the UIL and became victims of some form of agitation.<sup>66</sup> The offender was normally subjected to intimidation through a variety of tactics, the most effective of which was cattle-driving. Cattle-driving involved the removal of cattle by stealth, usually at night, and their scattering throughout the area in all directions. In many instances the animals returned lame, or with serious injuries, and the owner usually suffered a pecuniary loss associated with the beast's depreciation in value.<sup>67</sup> Other tactics employed by the agitators included boycotting and the use of the local

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<sup>65</sup> Paul Bew, *Conflict and Conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 8

<sup>66</sup> Patrick Cosgrove, *The Ranch War in Riverstown, Co. Sligo, 1908* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), p. 12

<sup>67</sup> Cosgrove, *The Ranch Wars in Riverstown*, pp. 12-13

press to report on UIL tribunals which adjudicated on the status of untenanted lands in their area.<sup>68</sup> Augustine Birrell's attempt to introduce a new land bill then should be viewed as much as a response to this renewed agitation (a vindication of Dillon's earlier insistence on retaining such tactics as weapons in the nationalist arsenal) as much as any attempt to further compensate Redmond after the Councils Bill debacle of 1907.

The newly proposed land bill was intended to bring into force the recommendations of the Dudley Commission. As such, compulsory purchase powers were to be extended to the CDB to compel reluctant landlords or graziers to break up and sell their lands wherever the board identified an urgent requirement for them to do so. Radically amended by the Upper House, the bill only received government approval because the Liberal Party was conscious of the battle its controversial budget proposals was about to trigger with the House of Lords.

Like almost every other reform issue of its day, however, the Birrell Land Bill was responsible for heated nationalist debate. Despite having only just returned to parliament, William O'Brien remained a staunch defender of the Wyndham Land Act. O'Brien believed any attempt to amend this would undermine the principle of compulsion by inducement that he had so vigorously championed at the original Land Conference. At a UIL Convention called to ratify the new bill on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1909, O'Brien's attempts to voice his objections to any deviation from the 1903 Act were drowned out in a sea of protest. With the Cork MP compelled to retake his seat, the convention chairman moved to put the issue to the floor. A show of hands in support of O'Brien's motion to reject the new bill yielded a paltry ten votes while the remainder of the estimated 3,000 in attendance voted overwhelmingly in favour of accepting the new measure. The story of O'Brien's defeat gained notoriety over the treatment allegedly meted out to those who stood opposed to the party resolution, at an assembly widely-referred to today as the 'Baton Convention'.

On the charges that Joe Devlin employed Belfast Hibernians to violently suppress all opposition to the new land bill, A.C. Hepburn alludes to 'a number of gross exaggerations by hostile critics of the BOE.'<sup>69</sup> Hepburn does, however, maintain that

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 13

<sup>69</sup> Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland*, p. 99

Devlin's use of a trusted security element was 'indicative of a ruthless centralism with which he sought to infuse the organization and the increasing extent to which the movement as a whole relied for its vigour on Ulster Nationalism.'<sup>70</sup> In a slightly darker interpretation of the relationship between the BOE and the constitutional movement Fergal McCluskey cites 'a dependency culture' which developed within the party leadership at the time of the UIL Convention two years earlier, and which saw Devlin, 'in his role as a political fixer, employ the Ribbonmen to crush all factionist tendencies.'<sup>71</sup> The controversy over what did or did not happen at the convention was fuelled by wildly-contrasting reports of proceedings in the local, national, and international press.

Over the course of the following week the *Skibbereen Eagle* reported on the 'yelling, stamping of feet, whistling and cat-calling' that accompanied Mr O'Brien's address and how Mr Crean, MP, was 'unceremoniously bundled off the platform' when he approached the Chair to remonstrate over his colleague's treatment.<sup>72</sup> The *Kerry News* told of 'violent scenes on the platform' and of Mr O'Brien being a 'target' of abuse.<sup>73</sup> The *Irish Independent* carried a letter from a 'Southern Priest' who lamented the 'intolerance shown to O'Brien' and the behaviour of those who had 'robbed the convention of its character as a deliberative assembly.'<sup>74</sup> The predominantly IPP-friendly *Freeman's Journal* was a little more forgiving, describing how the carriage of the resolution by such a sizeable majority had given the party 'a fresh vote of confidence and renewed its mandate.'<sup>75</sup> While in Britain, *The Times* of London spoke of a 'violent manifestation of hostility' directed towards Mr O'Brien while deriding the convention for having 'indulged itself in such scenes of ungoverned riot' that observers could be pardoned for regarding the Irish Party's efforts to conduct an assembly of free speech as 'distinctly unsuccessful.'<sup>76</sup>

In Irish America, coverage of the convention aroused just as much controversy. There, within the pages of their respective organs, the Clan and the American

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Fergal McCluskey, 'Make Way for the Molly Maguires!' The Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Irish Parliamentary Party, 1902-14', *History Ireland*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January/February 2012), p. 35

<sup>72</sup> *Skibbereen Eagle*, 13 Feb. 1909

<sup>73</sup> *Kerry News*, 10 Feb. 1909

<sup>74</sup> *Irish Independent*, 10 Feb., 15 Feb. 1909

<sup>75</sup> *FJ*, 10 Feb. 1909

<sup>76</sup> *The Times*, 10 Feb., 13 Feb. 1909



League were effusive in their condemnation and approval of the Mansion House proceedings. As early as December 1908 the *Gaelic American* had railed against the proposed introduction of Birrell's 'fake land bill', and cited articles from William O'Brien's *Irish People*, Arthur Griffith's *Sinn Féin*, and a periodical titled *Investors Review* to support its position.<sup>77</sup> The paper's post-convention reports damning the IPP/UIIL's ratification of the bill were scathing in the extensive coverage they afforded recent events in Ireland. Under the front page headline 'Redmond Convention A Turbulent Mob', references could be found to Devlin's BOE hirelings, to the exclusion of Munster UIL branches who had failed to affiliate with the Standing Committee, of the party machine securing a pyrrhic victory, and of disgraceful scenes of violence and disorder going unrebuked by the chairman.<sup>78</sup> In a lengthy editorial John Devoy attributed the packing of the Convention by delegates known to be favourably pre-disposed to the new bill as the sole reason Redmond permitted any discussion on the matter whatsoever.<sup>79</sup> The Clan Chief even referenced John Dillon's defeat on a motion to make the Irish language compulsory for matriculation to the NUI as evidence of how tenuous support for the party machine truly was 'when free speech was given free rein'.<sup>80</sup>

As to be expected, the *Irish World* saw things rather differently. Responding to the deluge of criticism, T.P. O'Connor assured Irish Americans that 'reports of wild confusion with priests and members of parliament pulling each other's hair' were all gigantic lies.<sup>81</sup> Any confusion on the platform, O'Connor added, 'lasted thirty seconds, and not a blow was struck.'<sup>82</sup> The popular MP for Liverpool remarked that after six years of the country bearing the brunt of O'Brien's concerted efforts to disrupt the Nationalist Movement, 'neither Redmond, nor Dillon, nor Divine Providence could restrain the Convention from relieving its feelings of revolt'.<sup>83</sup> Patrick Ford concurred with O'Connor's assessment. While acknowledging that O'Brien was indeed interrupted during his attempt to oppose the bill, the editor of the *Irish World* concluded that the hearing the Cork MP was afforded was far better

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<sup>77</sup> *GA*, 12 Dec. 1908

<sup>78</sup> *GA*, 13 Feb. 1909

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>81</sup> *IW*, 27 Feb. 1909

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*

than any hearing he would have got at any like-minded assembly anywhere else in the world.<sup>84</sup> And in referencing ‘the limit to human patience’ any assembly of men could rightfully be expected to endure, Ford regarded O’Brien’s factionist performance ‘to have overstepped the mark on this occasion.’<sup>85</sup> As valued as the *Irish World’s* support was, the League’s new periodical was eagerly employed to refute the damning allegations in even greater detail.

The *Bulletin* ridiculed any notion of discord and disunity among the attending delegates and dismissed reports attesting to a difference of party opinion on the language question.<sup>86</sup> In hailing the party’s inclusivity, the *Bulletin* applauded the leadership’s decision to invite Douglas Hyde to address the UIL Convention knowing full well that his opinion on the matter was at variance with their own. On the allegations that William O’Brien and his supporters were manhandled during the Cork MP’s laborious address opposing the land bill, the *Bulletin* carried the full report of the trial in which an attendee at the Mansion House, Mr Eugene Crean MP, brought an action against Joe Devlin and Denis Johnson, the President and Secretary of the BOE, for their alleged roles in restoring order at the Convention. In this enlarged 24-page edition, a full exoneration of Devlin’s and Johnson’s behaviour on the day in question appeared under the headline ‘Nationalist Ireland Triumphant: Attempt to Besmirch Convention Ridiculed’.<sup>87</sup> The *Bulletin* was complemented on this occasion by another of those special promotional pamphlets produced to bolster the party whenever it got into trouble. Published in April 1909, *Some of the Results Achieved by Parliamentary Agitation* was ‘an answer to the absurd statements sometimes made by people ignorant of the subject’ that Ireland had gained nothing from its participation at Westminster.<sup>88</sup> The evidence to counter these statements was provided by ‘a simple enumeration of the principal measures won by Ireland since the Irish Party was founded by Parnell.’<sup>89</sup> Between 1879 and 1906 various Land Acts, Labourers Acts, the Light Railway Act, the Migration Act, and monies expended by

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> *IW*, 27 Feb. 1910

<sup>86</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 4 (Mar. 1909)

<sup>87</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 5 (Apr. 1909)

<sup>88</sup> *Some of the Results Achieved by Parliamentary Agitation* (Boston, Ma.: United Irish League of America, 1909), p. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

the Congested Districts Board, were calculated to total \$953,028,856.<sup>90</sup> In addition, figures for benefits won during the most recent parliamentary session (1908), primarily those resulting from the Universities Act, the Old Age Pensions Act and a Remission on Sugar Duty, were given as \$15,860,000.<sup>91</sup> Taken together, this figure of close to \$1 billion, won over thirty years of largely peaceful agitation, was offered as validation of the work the parliamentary party had done, and continued to do, for Ireland. And to augment these achievements the new land bill was expected to add an extra \$415,000,000 to this figure once it received royal assent.<sup>92</sup>

If the UILA was resolutely defending John Redmond and the IPP, it didn't neglect to support Joe Devlin and the Board of Erin. Every opportunity the *Bulletin* had to highlight those responsible for the continuing schism within the Ancient Order of Hibernians was taken. And Matthew Cummings, the 'Clan tool' serving as the American Order's president, was routinely vilified as the man most responsible for fostering transatlantic enmity.<sup>93</sup>

#### Hibernian hostility

Addressing the UILA Convention at Boston in 1908, Joe Devlin spoke at length about the relations (or lack of) between the American Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Board of Erin. Mindful not to be perceived to be dictating to the American Order, Devlin confined his speech to rejecting spurious claims which alleged the BOE was a divided body. Reminding those in attendance that the Hibernian movement in Ireland had been reunited four years earlier, the Member of Parliament for West Belfast laid claim to presiding over five hundred active and living branches with a total membership of fifty thousand.<sup>94</sup> Aware that his words would resonate far beyond Faneuil Hall, Devlin confirmed his knowledge of a committee of American Hibernians intending to visit Ireland to investigate the true state of the Board of Erin's health. Warning that this committee must be constituted in such a way 'as to command the confidence of those it was coming to investigate', Devlin maintained that 'impartial men, having judged the situation for themselves, would come back to

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>91</sup> *Some of the Results Achieved by Parliamentary Agitation*, p. 3

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> For reference to Cummings as 'a Clan tool' see Chapter 3

<sup>94</sup> Joe Devlin, *Addresses of Irish Envoys*, p. 25

tell them that the Ancient Order in Ireland were discharging similar functions to their organization here in America.’<sup>95</sup>

The impulse to investigate/discredit the BOE only arose because Devlin had been making inroads with the American Hibernian rank-and-file. In a broadside directed at the American Order’s leadership, the *Bulletin* carried an article by M.J. Kelly, Secretary of the AOH in Providence, Rhode Island protesting against ‘the attitude of the national, state and county officers of the AOH of America towards Ireland’s national representatives’.<sup>96</sup> And Kelly lent substance to his Division’s displeasure by announcing its intention to unite with the Board of Erin.<sup>97</sup> In the following edition, John D. Nugent and John Higgins, officers on the National Executive of the BOE, informed the *Bulletin*’s readers that no official reception by the Irish Order had been planned for the American Committee being sent to investigate them, and none would be until their work had been completed and their actions justified.<sup>98</sup> Higgins went so far as to warn Irish nationalists in America not to be fooled by Cummings and the Clan na Gael ploy, even accusing the Gaelic League of having gone over to the side of Sinn Féin by agreeing to host the American delegation at the Gaelic League offices at Rutland Square.<sup>99</sup> The same edition reproduced articles from *The Leader* and the *Irish News*. *The Leader* ridiculed ‘the so-called neutral inquiry’ into the AOHBOE as Cummings had been accompanied on his trip to Ireland by Seamus McManus.<sup>100</sup> McManus was the head of the secessionist AOH in Ireland and Scotland who objected to Devlin’s Board of Erin using the Ancient Order of Hibernians in their official title. The *Irish News* described the self-invited envoy from America as ‘a mere charlatan – a humbug without a definite idea of an Irish policy beyond the notion that if he succeeded in wrecking the Irish movement ... something might turn up to the advantage of Mr Matthew Cummings and his friends [in the Clan].’<sup>101</sup> In June, the *Bulletin* ran with a headline proclaiming ‘Cummings Mission a Fiasco.’<sup>102</sup> And an *Irish World* article refuted the Gaelic League’s defence

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 5 (Apr. 1909)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 6 (May 1909)

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 14. Citing *The Leader* (17 Apr. 1909)

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 15. Citing the *Irish News* (22 Apr. 1909)

<sup>102</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 7 (Jun. 1909)

of its position by labelling Cummings' investigation 'a mendacious sham.'<sup>103</sup> To augment the article from the *Irish World*, an article from the *Chicago Citizen* derided Matthew Cummings 'as the voice of the decadent Clan na Gael, ruled and controlled by reactionary leaders, as incapable of intelligent practical work for Ireland as the watchdog that barks at the moon.'<sup>104</sup> And a letter of protest from Division No. 1 of the AOH in Boston denouncing Cummings' mission for having been 'actuated by ulterior motives' appeared further on in the same edition.<sup>105</sup>

The BOE went on the offensive again in July when the *Bulletin* launched the Irish Order's appeal for transatlantic reunion. That this reunion had already gained traction became evident with reports of an AOH revolt in Canada and condemnation of Cummings from Division No. 21 of the AOH in Philadelphia and the AOH in Jenkintown, Pa.<sup>106</sup> By September, further evidence of revolt in Indiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Alabama, Vermont, New Jersey, Illinois, Kansas, Rhode Island, and New York, appeared to indicate the BOE president was on the right track.<sup>107</sup> However, with Devlin back in Ireland, and Redmond understandably preoccupied with events at Westminster, it was imperative that John O'Callaghan kept a close watch on developments in the US. It must have been with great alarm then that the UILA secretary learned of a series of secretive meetings between League president, Michael J. Ryan, and the head of the American Order, Matthew Cummings.

### Hibernian intrigue

News of the meetings was leaked in a *Boston Post* article dated 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1910 and became the subject of a succession of letters from O'Callaghan to Redmond over the months that followed. Citing his concern that Cummings had outmanoeuvred Ryan, O'Callaghan warned Redmond that the Clan were paving the way for a takeover of the American League.<sup>108</sup> And the League secretary pointed to Ryan's rejection of the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Citing the *Irish World*, 8 May 1909. To its credit the *Bulletin* did acknowledge the Gaelic League had little option other than to host Cummings, since the American Order had welcomed Douglas Hyde to the US in 1905 and founded a Chair in Irish at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. Citing the *Chicago Citizen*, 8 May 1909.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 8 (Jul. 1909)

<sup>107</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 10 (Sep. 1909)

<sup>108</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 21 Feb. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/12

*Bulletin*'s policy of tackling the Clan with the gloves off as indicative of the president's softening attitude towards the League's chief adversary.<sup>109</sup> O'Callaghan concluded this first letter on the matter by qualifying Ryan's actions as well-intentioned if somewhat naïve.<sup>110</sup>

Less than three weeks later, O'Callaghan was compelled to write to Redmond again. This time the secretary voiced concerns over a request from Ryan that the League convention be brought forward to late April or early May, and that it be held in New York City.<sup>111</sup> The low esteem in which Ryan traditionally held the New York men in, and the mystery as to why the president would want to hold the League convention in the Clan's back-yard, had left O'Callaghan feeling 'perplexed'.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, Ryan's intimation that he would like to finish his term in office early, and his request to hold the League convention before the Clan and the AOH held theirs, caused the secretary further alarm.<sup>113</sup> The fact that Ryan had been meeting with Cummings in secret must have prompted O'Callaghan and T.B. Fitzpatrick to confront the president in person for the next correspondence with Redmond provided telling evidence of a heated discussion between all three men. And considering what transpired, O'Callaghan's initial concern seems more than justified.

Supporting his earlier contention that Ryan had been outmanoeuvred, O'Callaghan detailed the president's proposal that the AOH, the Clan, and the League meet in conference to settle their outstanding differences and work together.<sup>114</sup> Under such a proposal Ryan had suggested to Cummings that the conference might comprise 20 delegates from the AOH, 10 delegates from the Clan, and 10 delegates from the UILA.<sup>115</sup> Given so many of the AOH delegates whom Cummings could be expected to nominate would be Clan sympathisers O'Callaghan came to regard this proposal as 'preposterous', and when he and Fitzpatrick confronted the League president to protest, Ryan reverted to playing the resignation card if he did not get his own way.<sup>116</sup> The final correspondence from O'Callaghan pertaining to this particular

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>111</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 11 Mar. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/12

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>113</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 11 Mar. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/12

<sup>114</sup> O'Callaghan to Redmond, 1 Apr. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,213/12

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*

matter referred to rumours of a blazing row between John Devoy and Cummings. Little detail regarding this alleged row is provided, but if it did occur it could only have been because Devoy was furious with Cummings for having failed to entrap Ryan in a pre-conceived Clan plot, or because Cummings had acted independently and met Ryan without Devoy's knowledge.

While O'Callaghan was apprising Redmond of everything the UILA president was getting up to behind the National Executive's back, Ryan was busy regaling the Irish leader with his version of events. Outlining his plan to 'stop the antagonism of the AOH to our organization by the formation of something like a Federation of Irish Societies' Ryan expressed his belief that 'if we got the rank-and-file together, the hostile leaders, whether in the Clan or otherwise, would be speedily eliminated.'<sup>117</sup> Motivated by a desire to deny William O'Brien any potential allies in America following his most recent high-profile split from the party, Ryan was convinced that if he could get Joe Devlin to come before the American Hibernians and speak to them directly, 'the opposition would fade away like mist before the sun.'<sup>118</sup> The League president informed his party chairman that he had broached the subject with T.P. O'Connor when he was last in America and he had given the Liverpool MP a letter to give to Devlin explaining the plan in detail. A point to note here is that Ryan had been in contact with Cummings since October 1909 (according to O'Callaghan) yet he only chose to inform his party leader of this the following February. Redmond's reply was curt, if not entirely dismissive. On the matter of an early UILA convention in April [for which knowledge he had O'Callaghan to thank] this was out of the question, and September/October, as was the norm, was the preferred option. On the alleged bridge-building with Cummings, Redmond would consult with Devlin and the BOE president would let the League president know how best he wanted him to proceed.<sup>119</sup>

When Devlin did respond, Ryan was left in little doubt as to how his clandestine activities had been received. In a lengthy 7-page letter the folly of entering any kind of Federation of Irish Societies which contained elements of Clan na Gael, and which was deemed a danger to both the party and its leader's image, was clearly

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<sup>117</sup> Michael J. Ryan to John Redmond, 27 Feb. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24

<sup>118</sup> Ryan to Redmond, 27 Feb. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24

<sup>119</sup> Redmond to Ryan, 23 Mar. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24

spelled out. Among the reasons given were the stark ideological differences the advanced and constitutional nationalist movements held vis-à-vis parliamentary participation, and the damage Parnell's reputation in Britain had suffered over the former Chief's alleged association with the Clan in the 1880s.<sup>120</sup> Redmond's enemies, Devlin maintained, would jump at the opportunity to tarnish the present Irish leader with the same brush if given half a chance. Devlin closed with the prospect of responding positively to any genuine olive branch the Clan or the AOH might extend in the future but only after the party leadership had considered it in detail first. This, he maintained, was the wisest course to take in the present circumstance and no further action was to be taken in this regard until Redmond had been given a chance to discuss the matter with him in person when he visited America in the autumn.<sup>121</sup> Compelled to eat a large slice of humble pie Ryan agreed to follow Devlin's directive but closed with the assertion that he had, 'at the very least, spiked O'Brien's guns.'<sup>122</sup>

As matters transpired, the Ryan/Cummings fiasco was quickly laid to rest. The Clan na Gael tool was subsequently replaced as president of the American Order by James Regan at the very next Hibernian convention and full reunification with the BOE followed thereafter. This suggests Cummings might already have sensed a shift in Irish-American nationalist opinion and that perhaps his collaboration with Ryan was more a ploy to enhance his re-election prospects than a legitimate change of heart. Wherever the truth lies, developments in the political arena ensured all such machinations were soon forgotten. The UILA Convention went ahead in its traditional slot, Ryan was persuaded to continue in office for another term, the attending delegates were kept blissfully ignorant of their president's flirtations with the enemy, and the illusion of League harmony was skilfully maintained.

If Redmond needed assurance that the Irish language and suffrage were but secondary matters in the greater scheme of things, he found it in the constitutional crisis that enveloped Britain in 1909-10. It was then that a controversial Finance Bill threatened bicameral relations between the House of Commons and the House of

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<sup>120</sup> Joe Devlin(?) to Michael J. Ryan, 31 Mar. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24. This letter is unsigned but everything in its content and Redmond's earlier intimation to Ryan that the BOE president would respond on this matter suggest it was Devlin who wrote it.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Ryan to Redmond, 4 Apr. 1910, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24



Lords. Managing this crisis correctly would provide the Irish Party with the leverage it needed to secure home rule. And Irish-American support whilst doing so was critical to its chances of success.

### The People's Budget (1909)

A highly-publicized and extremely well-received visit to Ireland by John O'Callaghan and Edward O'Meagher Condon took place in the autumn of 1909. While O'Callaghan was roundly welcomed as the presiding Secretary of the United Irish League of America, O'Meagher Condon was revered as one of the men of '67. It was in 1867 that O'Meagher Condon conspired with others to rescue two Fenian prisoners from police custody in Manchester, England. Having been found guilty of the murder of a policeman, O'Meagher Condon, by then a US citizen, had his death sentence commuted after the American government interceded on his behalf. In stark contrast, the execution of three of his associates, William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien, saw them go down in Fenian folklore as the Manchester Martyrs.

Shortly after their arrival in Ireland, both men made a triumphant appearance on O'Connell Street. Responding to the welcoming committee's address, O'Meagher Condon replied that he and O'Callaghan had come to Dublin at the invitation of John Redmond. They were not there to criticise anything the Irish Party had done, he added, for he believed it had done the best it could under the conditions that confronted it.<sup>123</sup> The policy of the Irish people is our policy, he declared, and while it is yours to lead it is ours to follow and assist.<sup>124</sup> For the next eight weeks the American envoys travelled the length and breadth of Ireland, receiving in the process the Freedom of several Irish cities. Their visit also included appearances in English and Scottish cities where heavy concentrations of Irish immigrants resided, and these cities provided the men with equally enthusiastic receptions to the ones they had received in Ireland. It was as the delegates were preparing to return to America that a potentially ground-breaking development appeared on the political horizon. Few could have foreseen the prospects a burgeoning constitutional crisis in Britain would

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<sup>123</sup> *Irish Independent*, 6 Sep. 1909

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*

hold for Irish nationalism but within a matter of weeks the advantage of hitching the Irish Party cart to the Liberal Party wagon in 1906 began to bear significant fruit.

As if to highlight the transnational nature of the home rule campaign, British concerns over German naval rearmament saw Irish nationalists appeal to American immigrants to effect liberal reforms in a bastion of old-world conservative imperialism.<sup>125</sup> The government's Finance Bill of 1909 (or the People's Budget as it became widely known) had been prompted by a need to raise additional revenue for the Liberal Party's progressive social programme coupled with an urgent requirement to construct new dreadnoughts for the Royal Navy.<sup>126</sup> The controversy aroused by its introduction, however, stemmed not from the raft of new taxes the budget would impose on the wealthier classes, but on the potential the bill held for a showdown between the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament. Aware that certain aspects of the bill were unpopular in Ireland (a tax on the licensing trade and an excise duty on tobacco to name but two), the budget represented a bit of a conundrum for the IPP. Opposing it meant opposing the Liberal Party and endorsing the Unionist Upper House, while approving it carried the threat of [future] electoral humiliation should it fail to pass.<sup>127</sup> Taking a gamble on the Liberal alliance, Redmond directed the Irish Party to support the government's contentious bill. And aware that the budget would be rejected by the Lords, Redmond and Asquith determined to wage an assault on the power of veto enjoyed by the Upper House.

After passing through the House of Commons, the Finance Bill was, indeed, rejected by the Lords on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Prompting a general election scheduled for the following January (1910), Redmond demanded that the Prime Minister publicly renew his commitment to Home Rule as the price for continued Nationalist support.<sup>128</sup> Compelled to oblige, Asquith pledged himself to a policy that 'while safeguarding the supremacy and indefeasible authority of the Imperial Parliament will set up in Ireland a system of full self-government in regard to purely Irish

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<sup>125</sup> The liberal reforms referred to included unprecedented taxes on land, higher death duties, and a supertax on the rich to fund a wide array of social welfare programmes.

<sup>126</sup> Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, p. 231

<sup>127</sup> Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History*, p. 107

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*

affairs.<sup>129</sup> The implications of such a statement were immediately evident. As the Upper House was the essential obstacle to both the Finance Bill and Home Rule, its reform, by the abolition of its power of veto, was the only guarantee the Liberals and the Nationalists had that the will of the people would no longer be thwarted by the will of the unelected Lords. Now bound by a common goal, the degree to which each party would have to rely on the other to attain it would depend on their respective performances at the polls. While the issue of Ireland's overrepresentation in parliament posed a temporary pre-election threat to the IPP, the status quo prevailed, and voting, held between 15<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January 1910, proceeded along well-established lines. The result saw the Liberals win 275 seats, the Tories 273, Labour 40, and the Nationalists 82 [70 pledge-bound IPP members and 12 Independents].<sup>130</sup> With the two largest parties effectively cancelling each other out the Irish now held the balance of power in any new parliament.

This outcome received its traditionally mixed response in Irish America. A succession of *Irish World* editorials lauded Redmond as 'a figure almost as important as the Prime Minister' while citing a former French Minister for Foreign Affairs characterization of the new legislature as 'an Irish Parliament' where Irish Party MP's could impose their will upon England 'in an act of righteous revenge.'<sup>131</sup> For its part, the *Gaelic American* acknowledged the attainment of the balance of power but cast serious doubt on the Irish Party's willingness or capacity to use it. Calling the situation 'a supreme test' of Redmond's leadership, the paper maintained there was 'nothing to be gained by supporting the Liberals.'<sup>132</sup> Recommending the Irish Party align itself with the Tories, the *Gaelic American* advocated defeating or amending the objectionable provisions in the Finance Bill, bringing the Tory Party to power, and making such terms with them on Tariff Reforms as would materially benefit Ireland.<sup>133</sup> Convinced that the Liberals would never deliver on reforming the Lords, the *Gaelic American* even regarded amending or defeating the budget to be a more productive use of nationalist power.

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<sup>129</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 155. Asquith's declaration came in a speech delivered at the Albert Hall on 10 Dec. 1909.

<sup>130</sup> Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History*, p. 107

<sup>131</sup> *IW*, 29 Jan. 5, 12, 19 Feb. 1910. The former French Minister cited was M. Flourens.

<sup>132</sup> *GA*, 5 Feb. 1910

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*

Redmond, however, had already made his decision. In the same week that John Devoy was deriding him for lacking the requisite mettle to hold the government to account, the Irish leader began applying political pressure on Asquith to conform to Irish Party demands. At a banquet in Dublin Redmond warned the new government that any attempt to pass the budget without first attaining a bill curtailing the power of the House of Lords represented a policy that Ireland could not, and would not, uphold.<sup>134</sup> After consultation with the King, however, the Prime Minister was persuaded to delay any action against the Upper House in the search for some sort of political compromise. Unsurprisingly, a political stalemate ensued. The Finance Bill eventually made it through both Houses at the end of April after the Irish Party softened its position and the Lords opted not to antagonise the government any further. Yet, despite receiving assurances that the question of the veto would be addressed as a matter of government priority, the party's critics in America had a field day. The *Gaelic American* denounced Redmond for cutting a sorry figure who had loosened his grip on the budget, let the lever of power slip from his grasp, and voted for the 'false and rotten policy' he had pledged to resist.<sup>135</sup>

The Prime Minister did attempt to keep his end of the bargain but no sooner had parliament began to consider how best to proceed with nationalist demands than all parties concerned were stunned by the sudden death of King Edward VII. Thereafter, the accession to the throne of George V had an immediate impact on developments. Widely accepted as less engaged politically than his recently deceased father, the new Monarch adopted a policy of extreme caution. Conscious that constitutional reform was an undertaking of mammoth significance, George proposed holding a compromise-seeking Constitutional Conference at Buckingham Palace, a conference at which the Irish Parliamentary Party would not be invited to participate.

Exclusion from the conference invited all sorts of speculation as to what was being discussed behind closed doors. The prospect of limited reform of the House of Lords rather than the abolition of its power of veto was very real, as was the prospect of a

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<sup>134</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 173. Redmond made his speech on 10 Feb. 1910 while the Cabinet were meeting to discuss how best to proceed. His declaration compelled Asquith to consult with the King on the procedures to be adopted in the event of continued Lords' intransigence.

<sup>135</sup> *GA*, 7 May 1910. The news of the King's death the previous day must have only reached the paper after it had gone to press.

Liberal-Tory coalition.<sup>136</sup> The Liberal Finance Minister's (Lloyd George) suggestion that Home Rule all-round for the United Kingdom might solve the Irish question and lessen the current government's dependency on the Nationalist Party failed to gather enough support. Unionists objected to Ireland being granted full national rights under any such scheme and argued that rather than enjoying the rights of a sister nation within the Empire as Canada did, such rights should be limited to those of a province or state as enjoyed by Ontario or Quebec.<sup>137</sup>

With Redmond and the party leadership preparing to go to America for the Fifth National Convention of the UILA, the party chairman addressed the issue prior to his departure. Two set-piece speeches delivered at Kilkenny and Limerick repeated his demand that Home Rule meant the full executive and legislative control of purely Irish affairs and anything less than that they would not accept.<sup>138</sup> However, in an article prepared for an American monthly, *McClure's Magazine*, and timed to be published shortly after his arrival in the US, Redmond indicated his veering towards federalism by stating that all Ireland wanted was to take her place with the other portions of the Empire – 28 in total – which govern purely local affairs by freely representative institutions of their own.<sup>139</sup> The party leader remained silent on whether Ireland would be a nation or a province, the distinction so important to British Unionists, and his demand for parity with the other self-governing parts of the Empire was in keeping with his penchant for ambiguity.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> For the definitive account of the Constitutional Conference see Roy Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle* (London: Heinemann, 1954). The reference to the House of Lords as Mr Balfour's Poodle arose from a parliamentary debate in which David Lloyd George, in response to a Tory backbencher's intimation that the Upper House was the watchdog guarding the constitution, replied that it was 'the Right Hon. Gentleman's [A.J. Balfour] poodle. It fetches for him. It carries for him. It bites anybody he sets it on to.' See Hansard, HC Deb, 26 Jun. 1907, Vol. 176 cc.1429

<sup>137</sup> Michael Wheatley, 'John Redmond and Federalism in 1910', *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 32, No. 127, p. 346

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, p. 349. The speeches in question were delivered on 28 August and 11 September 1910 and given widespread coverage in the national press.

<sup>139</sup> Wheatley, 'John Redmond and Federalism in 1910', p. 350. *McClure's Magazine*, Oct. 1910, p. 691. *McClure's Magazine* was established in 1893 as an American literary and political magazine publishing the works of the popular authors of the day. By 1902 it had begun to specialize in 'muckraking journalism', making it a rather strange choice for Redmond to publish an article in. See <http://spartacus-educational.com/USAmclureM.htm>

<sup>140</sup> Wheatley, 'John Redmond and Federalism in 1910', p. 350

Redmond was feted even before his arrival in New York with the *Bulletin* reproducing the English Tory Press' take on his 'masterful policy'.<sup>141</sup> Yet, while the touring envoys were giving cautious consideration to what might emerge from the Constitutional Conference, the clamour for a federated solution to the Irish question already had an unlikely convert in Moreton Frewen. A member of the Anglo-Irish gentry with extensive business interests in America, Frewen was related through marriage to the Liberal MP Winston Churchill and the Irish Party MP Shane Leslie.<sup>142</sup> Motivated more by a desire to counter any social or political revolution which might arise from the Liberal Party's assault on the landed class, rather than any overriding concern for Home Rule, Frewen sought allies in America who would finance those opposed to the Redmond/Asquith alliance.<sup>143</sup> In doing so he hoped to weaken the nationalist hand and convince the IPP to accept whatever federated proposal might emerge from the Buckingham Palace proceedings. To this end Frewen alluded to having the support of prominent Irish Americans (including William Bourke Cockran) in his effort to undermine the Irish Party in America while simultaneously intimating to Asquith that William O'Brien (an ardent supporter of federation) was the rising Irish star.<sup>144</sup> Frewen's attempts ultimately floundered, however, when the esteemed Cockran pointedly refused to publicly endorse federalism and Redmond's subsequent tour surpassed all expectations.

From a fundraising perspective, it needed to; and the response the party chairman's appeal for donations met must have filled him with hope for the future. After informing the attending delegates that Ireland itself could not provide the requisite funds to fight another election, Redmond told them that 'the fate of Ireland hung in the balance.'<sup>145</sup> Alluding to 'no particle of shame or misgiving' he said he had come

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<sup>141</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. III, No. 8 (Aug. 1910). The *Bulletin* cited a variety of articles which had appeared in *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Standard*, the *Birmingham Post*, *The Globe*, the *Yorkshire Post*, the *Belfast News-Letter*, and the *Dublin Daily Express*

<sup>142</sup> Alan J. Ward, 'Frewen's Anglo-American Campaign for Federation, 1910-12', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 59 (Mar. 1967), p. 256. Frewen had been a member of William O'Brien's All-for-Ireland League in 1910 and once entertained hopes of establishing a League of Federals as an American-Canadian rival to the UILA. See Bridget Hourican, 'Frewen, Moreton' *DIB* <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?article=3373>

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, p. 257

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 259-260

<sup>145</sup> John Redmond, *Proceedings of the Fifth National Convention of the United Irish League of America* (Boston, Ma.: United Irish League of America, 1910), p. 35

to America to ask for their help in fighting the coming battle ahead.<sup>146</sup> That his message was heard loud and clear was immediately evident. Within an hour over \$150,000 had been pledged, a figure Redmond attributed as much to League President Ryan's unique powers of persuasion as it was to any impassioned plea made by a visiting envoy.<sup>147</sup> In fact, the Fifth National Convention of the UILA (1910) turned out to be Redmond's most successful fundraising venture ever, and the contributions raised from this tour earned him the controversial moniker 'The Dollar Dictator'.<sup>148</sup> With the electoral war-chest replenished and the support of the diaspora assured, the party leader returned home determined to force the government's hand.

### Redmond's Finest Hour

As stated, the Constitutional Conference proceeded without Irish Party participation. The government was represented by Prime Minister Asquith, Lloyd George, Lord Crewe and Augustine Birrell, and the opposition by A.J. Balfour, Lord Lansdowne, Austen Chamberlain and Lord Cawdor.<sup>149</sup> While a press blackout prevailed, subsequent revelations of a Unionist memorandum submitted for proposal during proceedings suggests legislation was divided into three distinct categories, financial, ordinary, and constitutional.<sup>150</sup> Talks floundered, however, on any attempt by the government to have Home Rule treated as a separate stand-alone bill, as the dominant interest of the Unionists in attendance was always 'to prevent any easing of its passage.'<sup>151</sup> The Tories would only accept a rule encompassing all bills, and with the Liberals believing they had already conceded more than enough, the conference broke down.<sup>152</sup> When the Prime Minister then decided that the best course of action was to go back to the people as swiftly as possible, the King agreed, delighted that Asquith sought no pre-election guarantee in the process.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, p. 56

<sup>148</sup> Redmond's moniker 'The Dollar Dictator' is attributed to James Louis Garvin, the editor of *The Observer* newspaper. A Conservative and a Unionist, Garvin objected to the influence Irish America brought to bear on British politics through its financial support for the Irish Parliamentary Party.

<sup>149</sup> Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle*, p. 149.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 151

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 155

<sup>152</sup> Edward Pearce, *Lines of Most Resistance* (Great Britain: Little, Brown and Company, 1999), p. 299

<sup>153</sup> Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle*, p. 174

The second general election of 1910 raged throughout the early weeks of December. While the issues on which it was fought were almost identical to those which dominated January's contest, there were two major differences; a new King was on the throne, and the constitutional conference confirming the political impasse made all parties wary of contributing to further strife.<sup>154</sup> Despite these differences the election result produced little overall change. The Liberal Party won 272 (-3) seats, the Tories 272 (-1), Labour 42 (+2) and the Nationalists 84 (+2). Strengthened by this vote of confidence the Prime Minister made the Parliamentary Bill the first order of business for the new government. After speedy progression through the House of Commons, the bills introduction in the House of Lords was delayed by the coronation ceremony for the new King in June and his visit to Ireland in July, events which posed considerable diplomatic problems for the Irish Party. Anxious not to cause undue offence, its declaration that the time had not yet come to participate in such celebrations while the country continued to be deprived of its constitutional rights and liberties seemed to strike the right note of regret and pragmatism.<sup>155</sup>

It was mid-July before the government informed the opposition that a pledge to create enough new peers to ensure the bill's passage through the Lords had been obtained from the King, and that nothing would induce the government to run the risk of it being defeated.<sup>156</sup> When attempts were then made to amend the bill, Asquith was compelled to inform them that it was the government's intention to secure its passage 'in substantially the same form as it had left the House of Commons.'<sup>157</sup> After three weeks of hostile and acrimonious debate, the Parliament Bill abolishing the power of veto was approved by the Lords by a majority of 17 (131-114). The 131 who voted for the bill constituted 81 Liberals, 37 extremely reluctant Unionists, and 13 Bishops, while the 114 who opposed it had been more than prepared to call the Prime Minister's and the King's bluff on the creation of new peerage had they secured the requisite number of votes. The effect of the dispute on the Conservative Party was dramatic. A.J. Balfour, recognizing the level of discontent at his leadership, duly resigned. The principal claimants to succeed Balfour, Austen Chamberlain and Walter Long, struggled to unite the party faithful

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<sup>154</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 186

<sup>155</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 188

<sup>156</sup> Pearce, *Lines of Most Resistance*, p. 338

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, p. 339



and the position went instead to a Canadian-born ironmonger of Glaswegian descent, Andrew Bonar Law.<sup>158</sup> And under Bonar Law, the Unionist Party, enraged rather than discouraged by the defeat over the Parliamentary Bill, became ever more extremist in word and deed.<sup>159</sup>

The political events of 1911 were primarily a British affair, one from which the Irish Party remained aloof, save when ensuring a strong Nationalist presence during key votes in the House of Commons. When the National Insurance Act, establishing a state insurance scheme for workers against sickness, disability and unemployment, passed relatively unscathed onto the Statute Books, the *Daily Mail* speculated that Irish Party facilitation was due to their chairman's directive that the next session of parliament be left clear for the issue of Home Rule.<sup>160</sup> Such speculation was correct. Having bided his time, Redmond determined that the Liberal Party be held to account for their repeated promises to yield to Ireland the full measure of self-government it so richly deserved.

### Conclusion

The anxiety the UILA had begun to feel in the wake of the Councils Bill fiasco of 1907 had all but subsided with the passage of the Parliament Act in 1911. In the interim, the Party (with the financial assistance of the League) had won substantial new reforms and negotiated potentially damaging obstacles raised by advanced, cultural, and progressive nationalists. If anything, the opportunity now afforded constitutional nationalism by the abolition of the Lords' veto heralded a swifter and more promising outcome than any it could dare to have hoped for just a few short years earlier. In such heady circumstances, few could have chastised the Party, or the League, had they chosen to bask in the glory of the moment.

In Ireland, the challenge posed by Sinn Féin appeared inconsequential as the IPP maintained its pre-eminent hold over the electorate. William O'Brien's pitiful attempt to obstruct a new land bill had failed miserably and the Cork MP increasingly resembled a man totally out of tune with nationalist sentiment. The Board of Erin's reunification with its American Hibernian counterpart, coupled with

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<sup>158</sup> Jenkins, *Mr Balfour's Poodle*, p.271

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 272

<sup>160</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, pp. 188-189

the boost Joe Devlin's organization received from registering as a Friendly Society under the National Insurance Act, ensured the Irish Party's political enforcers went from strength to strength. And separatist efforts to discredit parliamentary participation were countered by the material benefits accrued from successful constitutional agitation.

Redmond's handling of the political crisis in Britain was widely heralded as masterful, even if the influence he exercised on the Constitutional Conference is far from clear. By maintaining an admirable level of consistency at the polls, Nationalists retained the balance of power at Westminster when the Liberal and Tory parties divided English opinion. In holding the government to its pre-election pledge to abolish the House of Lords veto Redmond demonstrated a supreme knowledge of parliamentary protocol and procedure. With Irish America persuaded to increase its financial support at such a critical juncture in Anglo-Irish relations, nationalists considered Redmond's nickname as 'The Dollar Dictator' to be a badge of honour. And if events continued their present trajectory, it appeared only a matter of time before an Irish parliament would once again determine Irish affairs.

Today's victory however, is very often the precursor to tomorrow's defeat. And just as the proverbial nationalist chickens were coming home to roost there appeared on the horizon new adversaries determined to subvert the road to independence. In a gross under-estimation of the strength of Unionist opposition to Home Rule, Redmond and the Irish Party fell into a quagmire of conciliation and appeasement. And in the ensuing political stalemate, Redmond's willingness to compromise *ad nauseum* would account for much of the turmoil which was to follow.

## Chapter 5

### Mounting Anxiety, 1912-14

If the IPP thought passage of the Parliament Act (1911) would cure all ills it was gravely mistaken. In Ulster, unionists incensed by the House of Lords recent betrayal mounted sterling resistance to Home Rule. The signing of a Solemn League and Covenant (1912) pledging to oppose the setting up of an Irish parliament was followed twelve months later by a declaration of intent to form a Provisional Government for Ulster should unionist protestations go unheeded. In Dublin, a protracted labour dispute brought the capital to its knees (1913). Urban-dwellers, living in deplorable ramshackle tenements, fought pitched battles with the authorities and called every nationalist achievement won at Westminster into question. And all the while, the potential for an ideologically-fuelled civil war hovered menacingly in the background (1914). Unsurprisingly, events of this nature rang alarm bells in Irish America.

On tours to the US, party envoys attempted to assuage diasporic fears by characterising unionist resistance as nothing more than a calculated bluff. While the *Irish World* and *Gaelic American* differed over the Irish Party's handling of the Dublin Lockout, both papers agreed with the Catholic Church's view that socialism was both un-American and un-Christian. And when militarism threatened to undermine John Redmond's authority as the elected Irish leader, the chairman's belated decision to take control of the Irish Volunteers was acclaimed as both expedient and necessary. With advanced nationalists growing ever more sceptical about the prospects for Home Rule, moderates continued to profess all was well in the world.

Believing its job to be done, the UILA became a lethargic imitation of its former self. Just as the necessity to continue campaigning for Home Rule waned, so too did the requirement to finance elected Members of Parliament now in receipt of an exchequer salary.<sup>1</sup> Several valued and experienced stalwarts of the American

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament voted to award MP's a salary of £400 p.a. from 1911.

organization died and their replacements failed to measure up to those they replaced in office. And the National Executive even contemplated winding down operations given its recent relative redundancy. The League, not unlike its parent organisation in Ireland, stagnated in the misguided luxury of complacency.

This chapter explores how the Irish Party attempted to whitewash all remaining obstacles to Home Rule when addressing its Irish American audience. Charges of elitism and political indifference are examined, together with allegations that Redmond was too conciliatory in his effort to appease unionist opposition at Westminster. While the party chairman might well have been hostage to events outside his control, there is a valid argument that the decisions he made in response to these events account for the subsequent deterioration in the transatlantic alliance. Some of the factors governing these decisions are what we are about to discuss.

### The Unionist 'Bluff'

Detached from events on the ground, the UILA could be forgiven for requiring constant reassurance over ongoing developments in Ireland. Throughout 1912-14, concern over the strength of unionist opposition to Home Rule and the potential for a civil war in their beloved mother country, occupied League members private, if not public, fears. To offset such concern, the Irish Party repeatedly asserted that the protagonists in Ulster who were raising such a political furore over a proposed Dublin parliament were only bluffing. If this was a considered tactical ploy to assuage the diaspora's fears one could readily understand why it would be adopted. The fact that it represented John Redmond's personal assessment of the threat posed by half a million committed unionists for as long as it did, is almost unforgivable.

Unionist resistance to the Third Home Rule Bill was resolute, multi-faceted, and transnational. Determined by characters who played on racial and ideological prejudices to frame their argument, unionists objected to perceived threats to their economic, religious and civil liberties in the event of self-government being granted to Ireland. In James Craig, Sir Edward Carson, and Andrew Bonar Law, Ulster Unionist and Conservative Party leaders fluctuated between seeking to scrap Home Rule in its entirety, nullifying any application of it to the north-east corner of the country, and making any such extraordinary legislation the stand-alone subject of another general election. The opposition began in earnest as soon as the Parliament

Act (1911) brought home the reality that the traditional brake on nationalist designs had been subverted with the abolition of the House of Lords veto.

Despite his popularity at the polls, James Craig was happy to cede leadership of the Ulster Unionist Party to the charismatic Dublin-born solicitor, Sir Edward Carson.<sup>2</sup> And as a celebrated doyen of the legal establishment, Knight of the Realm, and prominent opponent of the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893, Carson was well placed to lead the opposition to Home Rule's third, and most recent, incarnation.<sup>3</sup> The unionist triumvirate was completed by the newly-elected leader of the Conservative Party, Andrew Bonar Law. As leader of the opposition at Westminster, Bonar Law sought to make Home Rule the stand-alone subject of a new general election, and when the government refused to comply, found justification to indulge in all manner of behaviour to resist it.<sup>4</sup> However, with Craig playing second fiddle to Carson by design, Law seems to have done so by default. Alvin Jackson describes how political contemporaries during the Home Rule crisis came to treat the Tory chief as 'secondary to the Irish Unionist leader' ... and the normally implacable Glaswegian was widely perceived to have 'grudgingly acquiesced in this ranking.'<sup>5</sup> By Jackson's reckoning, Carson used this elevated status to exercise great autonomy when it came to matters pertaining to Ulster, 'briefing Bonar Law on actions that had already been taken' as opposed to consulting him on decisions yet to be agreed upon.<sup>6</sup>

Unionist resistance to Home Rule, however, preceded Bonar Law's accession to the leadership of the Tory Party. On 23 September 1911, the first major demonstration opposing Irish self-governance took place when a monster gathering in the grounds of Craigavon, the ancestral home of James Craig, saw Carson pledge to defeat 'the most nefarious conspiracy that has ever been hatched against a free people.'<sup>7</sup> A Liberal Party response in the form of a pro-Home Rule address given by Winston Churchill at Belfast in February 1912 did little other than commit Bonar Law to the

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<sup>2</sup> Alvin Jackson, 'Craig, James 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Craigavon', *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleid=a2144>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Smith, *The Tories and Ireland: Conservative Party Politics and the Irish Home Rule Crisis, 1910-1914* (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2000), p. 4

<sup>5</sup> Alvin Jackson, *Judging Redmond and Carson: Comparative Irish Lives* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2018), p. 126

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 48

unionist cause, a commitment he was happy to declare at Balmoral that April. Unperturbed, Prime Minister Asquith proceeded to introduce the Third Home Rule Bill that very month and Craig soon recognized the need for a more elaborate display of resistance. Using a 1643 Scottish Covenant as a template, Thomas Sinclair, a Liberal Unionist, set about drafting a similar document for Ulster.<sup>8</sup> On 28 September 1912, newly designated as Ulster Day, a meticulously orchestrated propaganda coup saw the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant (with its attending Declaration of Support for women) attract close to half a million signatures. And in a pledge that should have rang nationalist alarm bells, those who signed the Covenant resolved to use ‘all means which may be found necessary’ to resist any Home Rule Parliament forced upon them.<sup>9</sup>

Nationalists, however, chose to dismiss this latest Unionist performance. They had experienced similar theatrics before. As history had shown, ‘every considerable reform that had been won in Ireland during the previous one hundred years had been accompanied by threats which at times equalled the new campaign in recklessness.’<sup>10</sup> The Orange drums had been heard when Catholic Emancipation (1829), the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869), the first Land Bill (1881), and the two previous attempts to pass Home Rule (1886 and 1893) were proposed.<sup>11</sup> Why, nationalists asked, should they deem these protestations any more credible than the ones made on those occasions? In fact, not only did Irish Party MP’s persuade themselves that this latest opposition was a ‘bluff’ and a ‘bogey’, they also convinced their supporters of this.<sup>12</sup> In Dublin, the *Freeman’s Journal* made light of ‘The Belfast Farce’ amid a revival of Ulsteria.<sup>13</sup> More crucially for this study however, the bluff theory was fed to the nationalist diaspora in America.

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Aldous & Niamh Puirseil, *We Declare: Landmark Documents in Irish History* (UK: Quercus, 2008), p. 102

<sup>9</sup> Aldous and Puirseil, ‘The Ulster Solemn League and Covenant’, *We Declare*: p. 103

<sup>10</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 206

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> James McConnell, *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), p. 271. McConnell cites Charles Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance Since 1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 256

<sup>13</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 221. ‘Ulsteria’ was the term coined to describe the irrational Unionist fear of Home Rule in 1893. It became the subject of renewed debate in *Irish Review* Vol. 2, No. 15 (May 1912) and Vol. 2, No. 16 (Jun. 1912)

As early as June 1912 a letter from UILA President Michael J. Ryan appeared in the *United Irish League Bulletin of America* echoing Redmond's dismissal of the Ulster dissent. The letter alluded to 'religious rancour being banished in Ireland; and with a unanimity unparalleled in the history of our Cradleland all creeds and races of the island are moving together to bring back peace, happiness, prosperity and freedom to all its inhabitants.'<sup>14</sup> The editorial for this issue boldly forecast the collapse of the Orangemen, even dismissing them as 'a negligible quantity.'<sup>15</sup> In addition, John O'Callaghan's visit to Ireland in March 1912 had given the League Secretary no indication of an impending crisis in Ireland. Perhaps sharing a platform with John Redmond for a mass pro-Home Rule rally in O'Connell Street, and attending the UIL Convention in the Mansion House which approved the first passage of the Third Home Rule Bill, had led O'Callaghan to share his party chairman's dismissive attitude to Unionist resistance.<sup>16</sup>

The *Irish World* also began to echo the IPP's assertion that the Orangemen were all bluff and bluster. In a pre-Covenant commentary, Edward Carson was castigated for using inflammatory speeches that did little other than increase 'the petty and squalid crime rate in Belfast.'<sup>17</sup> In Philadelphia for the Sixth National Convention of the UILA (Sep. 1912), Willie Redmond denied 'there was any intense hostility to the Home Rule Bill in the whole of Ulster' and considered reports of the potential for a civil war to be 'greatly exaggerated.'<sup>18</sup> The visiting envoy even declared that the 'Blasphemous Covenanters' had been beaten in the field of reason and argument, before denouncing them for the 'pious dodge' they sought to employ in seeking to enlist the Almighty to their cause.<sup>19</sup> While the chairman's brother was repeating this message to a New York audience, a cable from T.P. O'Connor pouring scorn on the 'Orange Fiasco' lent weight to Willie's declaration that the Covenant was 'a tottering

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<sup>14</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. V, No. 6 (Jun. 1912)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>16</sup> *Sunday Independent*, 21 Apr. 1912

<sup>17</sup> *IW*, 7 Sep. 1912. Citing an undated article from the *London Chronicle*.

<sup>18</sup> Willie Redmond, Statement on arrival for the Sixth National Convention of the UILA, made at Philadelphia, 21 Sep. 1912. Cited in the *Irish World*, 28 Sep. 1912. Taking the whole nine counties of Ulster into account Redmond was not exactly telling a lie. However, his failure to accurately portray the intensity of unionist opposition within significant sections of the province can best be described as selective.

<sup>19</sup> *IW*, 28 Sep. 1912

fabrication [by] which the deadheads of Sandy Row seek to buttress up their insensate braggadocio.’<sup>20</sup>

Inadvertently confirming the Irish Party’s misguided assessment, advanced nationalists also considered Ulsteria to be bordering on the farcical. Bulmer Hobson, a regular contributor to the *Gaelic American* during this period, echoed O’Connor’s sentiment. In a front-page report titled ‘All Wind; No War in Sight’, Hobson considered the events in Belfast to represent ‘the biggest game of bluff this country has seen for a long time.’<sup>21</sup> Whatever may be thought of the ethics of the whole business, ‘it’s humour was delicious’ [and] ‘he had little doubt that if Home Rule did indeed come to pass, Unionists would settle down and make the best of things.’<sup>22</sup>

With offers of \$135,000 pledged by the delegates in attendance, and \$175,000 expected to be raised in total, the UILA convention was portrayed as another resounding success.<sup>23</sup> And once proceedings concluded, the Irish domestic press was quick to acknowledge the benefits of continued Irish-American support. The material results of the convention apart, the *Freeman’s Journal* reported, the great gathering at Philadelphia was a reminder to England that ‘she had to deal not only with the Irish in Ireland, but with the scattered millions of the race throughout the world, and the power for which they stand.’<sup>24</sup> Further intoxication with the perceived power of the diaspora appeared in the *Kilkenny People* with a report stating that ‘the spectacle of Australasia, America and Canada endorsing the policy of home rule with hard cash cannot fail to impress the English people.’<sup>25</sup> It wasn’t the English who needed to be impressed however, it was Ulster unionists. And rather than entertain any possibility of ceding to the power of persuasive argument, Ulster was preparing to go it alone.

### Partition

The idea of Ulster as a separate entity entered mainstream political discourse in May 1912 when a Liberal Unionist, T.C. Agar-Robartes, proposed excluding the four

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<sup>20</sup> *IW*, 5 Oct. 1912

<sup>21</sup> *GA*, 7 Sep. 1912

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 26 Sep. 1912

<sup>24</sup> *FJ*, 27 Sep. 1912

<sup>25</sup> *Kilkenny People*, 5 Oct. 1912



most north-easterly counties (Antrim, Armagh, Down and Londonderry) from home rule. While partition had been considered before, Ged Martin has noted how speculation surrounding it never entered the realm of the practical in 1886 while the expected veto of the House of Lords obviated any need to address it in 1893.<sup>26</sup> Its introduction in 1912, however, was urged less for any merits of its own than it was as a measure with which to thwart Home Rule.<sup>27</sup> Debated and defeated in June, the proposal gained traction owing to the concentration of Protestants in that section of Ireland and the unique character this more industrialized region had from the predominantly agricultural south.<sup>28</sup> Subsequent arguments abounded as to how many counties should be excluded before Carson raised the political ante by proposing a new amendment in January 1913 designed to exclude the province in its entirety. While nationalists everywhere were vehemently opposed to the exclusion of any part of the country, unionists in the south were particularly aghast at the prospect of being abandoned by their northern brethren. They had, after all, played a significant role in the defeat of the first two Home Rule Bills and never envisaged that opposition to this third attempt would prevaricate a division within unionist ranks.<sup>29</sup> Yet, while Ulster Unionists' acceptance of the concept of partition was hardly a compromise, it did mark recognition of the defeat of its primary objective, the scuppering of Home Rule in its entirety.<sup>30</sup> And for this reason alone the passage of the Third Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons on its first reading (Jan. 1913) represented a significant victory for the Irish Party.

A flood of congratulations lauded Redmond on this latest success and he obtained 'many public statements of approval from the most important friends of Home Rule in the Dominions.'<sup>31</sup> In addition to the expected messages of support he received from UILA officials a note from Judge Keogh of the United States Supreme Court commended the Irish Leader for having achieved more than anyone believed was

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<sup>26</sup> Ged Martin, 'The Origins of Partition' in Malcolm Anderson and Eberhard Bort (eds.), *The Irish Border: History, Politics, Culture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 58

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 60

<sup>28</sup> Proposed on 2 May 1912 Agar-Robartes Amendment was first debated in the House of Commons in June. See Hansard 'Clause 1. (Establishment of an Irish Parliament.)' HC Deb 11 June 1912, vol. 39 c771

<sup>29</sup> P.J. Buckland, 'The Southern Irish Unionists, the Irish Question, and British Politics, 1906-14', *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 15, No. 59 (Mar. 1967)

<sup>30</sup> Martin, 'The Origins of Partition', p. 61

<sup>31</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 202

possible, before assuring him that the Irish race, at home and abroad, are ‘solidly, sincerely, and almost unanimously with you.’<sup>32</sup> However, despite the understanding that this was only the beginning of a process that had some distance to run, the UILA had already begun to wind down. When advertising the biennial National Convention six months earlier, the *Irish World* began touting the Philadelphia gathering as the organization’s ‘Last Rally.’<sup>33</sup> Here, in a letter from the League president, the near-certainty attached to the realisation of an Irish Parliament was used to release the League from having to organise any such future event. Another letter from Ryan reinforced this belief when he regarded the prospect of Home Rule finally coming to pass as negating the necessity for the organizations ‘continued existence.’<sup>34</sup> Ryan arrived at this decision having interpreted the League to have fulfilled the ‘sole function’ for which it was created, namely to raise the funds required to enable the Irish Party to successfully pursue the campaign for independence.<sup>35</sup> The haste the League president was exercising in seeking to rid the organisation of future commitments proved misguided at best. For not only would the party’s US affiliate be required to remain an effective body beyond 1912, its critical importance to the constitutional struggle thereafter would grow exponentially as the Home Rule crisis deepened over time.

Nationalism was not the only ideology that could elicit support from abroad. With British tentacles spread across the globe, unionists, or those who championed all things imperial, enjoyed influence far beyond Ireland’s shores. And while never matching the fervour of the Home Rule movement, transnational unionism did exist throughout the Dominions.

### Transnational Unionism

While Jeremy Smith charges the Tory Party with manufacturing the Home Rule crisis to serve its own political ends (i.e. to bring about the downfall of the Liberal government), Ulster unionists were no strangers to rallying the Empire in defence of their cause.<sup>36</sup> And in acknowledging that Ulster unionism did indeed precede the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> *IW*, 20 Jul. 1912

<sup>34</sup> *IW*, 31 Aug. and 7 Sep. 1912

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Smith, *The Tories and Ireland*, p. 4

imperial jingoism of the late Victorian period, Alvin Jackson has highlighted how unionists in the province were still keen to exploit the imperial link.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to the former colony that was America, Lindsey Flewelling maintains Ulster unionists artificially homogenised their own movement by calling upon ethnic and religious traditions and playing upon the established Scotch-Irish connection.<sup>38</sup> In this telling, a reciprocal flow of Presbyterian clergymen and Princeton-educated ministers, strong transatlantic associations through Loyal Orange Institutions and the Scotch-Irish Society of America, and past shared experiences, were all invoked to portray Ulster unionists as a liberty-loving, hard-working, God-fearing people, resistant to tyranny and coercion.<sup>39</sup> Across the Empire proper, mass anti-Home Rule meetings were held in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with heavily subscribed petitions and pledges of volunteers from prairie, veldt, and outback.<sup>40</sup> In this exhibition of pan-Britannic unity, founded on allegiance to the principle of racial solidarity, colonial national identity is more profitably analysed when viewed through an imperial lens.<sup>41</sup>

Yet, while there is no denying the centrality of prejudice in explanations of Orangeism, Donald MacRaild has shown how the movement meant more to its members than a plain diet of anachronistic no-popery rhetoric and action.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, in all places of Irish settlement, Orangeism [like Nationalism] became a mixture of different aspects: social clubs, pseudo-religious sect, benefit society, and militant political movement.<sup>43</sup> While pledges of support were plentiful, Orangemen abroad framed the Ulster crisis to suit their own unique situation within the Empire. In Canada, Orangeism was viewed in the larger context of the struggle against Catholicism, as French-Canadian expansion from its heartland of St. Lawrence to the interior permitted Toronto Orangemen to equate the threat from Quebec with the

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<sup>37</sup> Alvin Jackson, 'Irish Unionists and the Empire, 1880-1920: Classes and Masses' in Keith Jeffery (ed.), *An Irish Empire* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 135-138

<sup>38</sup> Lindsey Flewelling, 'The Ulster Crisis in Transnational Perspective: Ulster Unionism and America, 1912-14', *Éire/Ireland* Vol. 51, No's 1 & 2, Spring/Summer, 2016, p. 121

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 127-133

<sup>40</sup> Donal Lowry, 'Ulster Resistance and Loyalist Rebellion in the Empire' in Jeffery (ed.), *An Irish Empire*, p. 192

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 193

<sup>42</sup> Donald MacRaild, 'The Associationalism of the Orange Diaspora' in David A. Wilson (ed.), *The Orange Order in Canada* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), p. 25

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26

threat posed by southern Ireland.<sup>44</sup> And in Australia, Orangemen regurgitated the 1868 failed assassination attempt on the Duke of Edinburgh [most likely the act of an unbalanced individual] to greatly exaggerate the Fenian threat on both sides of the Tasman Sea.<sup>45</sup>

However, just as Orangemen across the empire were fighting a strenuous rear-guard action in defence of their Ulster brethren, Home Rulers in America were suffering from a succession of telling blows to their own movement.

### A National Misfortune

On 27<sup>th</sup> July 1913 the Secretary of the United Irish League of America, John O'Callaghan, passed away after a brief but fatal illness. O'Callaghan was no ordinary administrator, he was the very soul of the organization in America. A long-time confidant of John Redmond, O'Callaghan held office since the League was established in 1901 and in the dozen years since had played a major role in promoting the constitutional party. It was O'Callaghan who kept Redmond apprised of developments in Irish America, organised the biennial UILA conventions, hosted and managed visiting envoys from Ireland, planned and supported their itineraries, liaised with key individuals in other centres of Irish settlement, established and managed the *Bulletin*, and countered every disparaging remark uttered by the 'Dervish of Dutch Street', John Devoy. To say that his death represented a great blow to the League and the Irish Party is an understatement, and the *Freeman's Journal* described his passing as 'A National Misfortune.'<sup>46</sup> Tributes from his friends and colleagues in Ireland and America poured into the *Irish World* with testimonials heralding him as a 'Guiding Star' whose 'Irreparable Loss' would be felt by all.<sup>47</sup> A cable from John Redmond to Michael Ryan told of a special meeting convened in the House of Commons by the Irish Party on hearing the tragic news from America. A resolution, seconded by T.P. O'Connor, agreed that O'Callaghan's passing 'causes a gap which only those like us and others intimately associated with him can

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<sup>44</sup> William Jenkins, 'Views from the Hub of the Empire: Loyal Orange Lodges in Twentieth-Century Toronto' in Wilson (ed.), *The Orange Order in Canada*, p. 142

<sup>45</sup> Malcolm Campbell, *Ireland's New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922* (Madison, Wi.: University of Wisconsin Press, c2007), pp. 113-116

<sup>46</sup> *FJ*, 29 Jul. 1913

<sup>47</sup> *IW*, 2 August 1913

understand.<sup>48</sup> This theme of O'Callaghan's irreplaceability was also a feature of an *Irish World* editorial which doubted the prospect of 'ever seeing his likes again.'<sup>49</sup>

To fully appreciate the nature of the man and to demonstrate the esteem in which he was held in nationalist circles it is worth recalling a testimonial to him from the Mayor of Boston, John 'Honey Fitz' Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald recalled how O'Callaghan had obstinately refused to abide by a 1903 League motion to pay the Secretary an annual salary of \$2,500.<sup>50</sup> After asserting that the party in Ireland needed every cent it could muster in America O'Callaghan declared his intention to resign rather than be forced to dilute the League's coffers by receiving a wage. When another plan to compensate him with a house was broached, O'Callaghan had the same answer.<sup>51</sup> If O'Callaghan had refused to take any stipend for his labour when he was alive there was little he could do when his friends rallied to his family's need in death. Recognizing an opportunity, indeed an obligation, to repay the debt of gratitude they felt they owed O'Callaghan, a fund was started to care for the future welfare of his perennially-ill wife and four young children. Initial pledges of \$3,000 soon realised closer to \$10,000 as the acknowledgment of the sacrifices the League Secretary had made in office were made public.<sup>52</sup>

After O'Callaghan had been laid to rest in St. Paul's Cemetery in Arlington on 30<sup>th</sup> July, a meeting of the National Executive, scheduled by the League secretary before his demise, proceeded as planned on 8<sup>th</sup> August. At this meeting, the matter of filling the vacancy left by the death of O'Callaghan became the most pressing issue, and it was agreed to entrust this responsibility to President Ryan and League Treasurer T.B. Fitzpatrick. A decision was reached that a new Secretary would be 'appointed' by them once Fitzpatrick's return from a visit to Europe had provided both men with a chance to confer on the matter.<sup>53</sup> Reflecting on this decision now it seems strange that with forty-six members of the Executive assembled in session, and only one member absent, the position of Secretary was not put to a vote. Whether this was deemed to be inappropriate so soon after O'Callaghan's passing does not stand up to

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> *IW*, 9 Aug. 1913

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 6 Oct. 1913. The figure donated by this date was \$9,622.37

<sup>53</sup> *IW*, 9 Aug. 1913

scrutiny as Ryan and Fitzpatrick had no hesitation in ‘appointing’ Michael J. Jordan to the office a few days later.<sup>54</sup> It might better be construed as evidence of the sway Ryan held within the organization and of the failure to properly observe the protocols laid down in the UILA Constitution now that O’Callaghan was not there to oversee procedure.

In this Constitution, adopted at the First National Convention in 1902, it clearly states that ‘the National Committee [read Executive] shall have full control of the organization when the Convention is not in session.’<sup>55</sup> In such an instance as occurred in early August the assembled Executive had a moral responsibility to elect O’Callaghan’s successor, as it would have done at convention, rather than abdicate responsibility by deferring the matter to the President and the Treasurer alone. This is not to cast personal aspersions on O’Callaghan’s replacement, Michael Jordan. It is merely to illustrate that procedure, so meticulously adhered to when O’Callaghan was in office, was nonchalantly dispensed with now he was gone. A graduate of the RUI and speaker of seven languages, Mayo-born Jordan was eminently qualified to succeed O’Callaghan, and would, I feel, have been elected to the post of secretary if it had been put to the assembled executive. His appointment did receive John Redmond’s subsequent approval and was heralded in the Irish press as being a decision taken ‘in the best interests of the organisation.’<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, questions must be asked over the irregularity of his appointment at such a critical juncture in the League’s history.

If losing O’Callaghan was a hammer-blow to the Irish Party, the death of Patrick Ford on 23<sup>rd</sup> September was equally devastating. As editor of the *Irish World* Ford had been one of Redmond’s staunchest allies ever since the turbulent days of the Parnell split. As the voice of Home Rule in America, Ford’s paper had devoted time, money, and considerable column inches to the constitutional movement. Now that he too had passed away the party had been forced to accept the loss of another stalwart to the cause. At the time of Ford’s death, the *Irish World* was under the stewardship of his son Patrick, who acted as managing editor, and his brother Augustine, who

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<sup>54</sup> *IW*, 13 Aug. 1913

<sup>55</sup> UILA Constitution, Article IV, Membership and Organization, *Proceedings of the First National Convention*, p. 74

<sup>56</sup> *FJ*, 20, 22 Sep. 1913

acted as business manager and publisher.<sup>57</sup> And just as the news of O'Callaghan's passing had initiated an outpouring of grief in Ireland and America so too did this latest loss to the Irish Party. John Redmond, John Dillon, T.P. O'Connor, and Joe Devlin, joined Michael Ryan, T.B. Fitzpatrick, Michael Jordan and high-ranking clergy and municipal dignitaries in offering their condolences to Ford's family. Redmond's deep sorrow at the loss of 'one of the best men I have ever met' was embellished by T.P. O'Connor's sense of grievance at the passing of 'one of the truest, bravest champions of the Irish cause' and Joe Devlin's heartfelt sympathy for 'one of the noblest and most uncompromising[sic] fighters for Irish freedom.'<sup>58</sup>

Unlike O'Callaghan's death, however, Ford's passing received mixed responses in publications long opposed to the fulfilment of the veteran nationalist's life-long dream. The *Manchester Guardian*, the prominent liberal newspaper of the day, recalled how the Ford of the dynamite years became an ogre for the unionist press, before tempering its report with details of how the shy and sensitive nature of the man in private secured him the loving devotion of many a friend.<sup>59</sup> The *Irish World*, however, also made plenty of references to the unnamed 'British Yellow Press' which told of the 'sordid gratification' and 'literary pyrotechnics' which had greeted the news of their editor's passing.<sup>60</sup> As someone who had persuaded Gladstone to abandon coercion, who had helped decapitate the monster that was absentee landlordism, and who had decreed the extirpation of religious and political ascendancy, Ford was portrayed as a constant thorn in British sides.<sup>61</sup> Now that he was gone, the Galwayman's death significantly weakened the nationalist hand in America.

Ford's passing came amid a crippling labour dispute in Ireland, and as such the loss of the veteran journalist robbed the Irish Party of one of its ablest defenders. His loss would be keenly felt as the deteriorating situation in Ireland provided IPP detractors

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<sup>57</sup> Maureen Murphy, 'Ford, Patrick', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=F50FDA4B574699400612C1C20F8FEF11>

<sup>58</sup> *IW*, 4 Oct. 1913

<sup>59</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Sep. 1913

<sup>60</sup> *IW*, 4 Oct. 1913. The *Irish World* did not name specific publications when referencing the 'British Yellow Press' although one can assume they were directed at those papers sympathetic to a Tory/Unionist agenda.

<sup>61</sup> *IW*, 4 Oct. 1913. Ford had authored *The Criminal History of the British Empire* in 1881 which included five letters he had written to Gladstone indicting the British government for its failed policies in Ireland. Murphy, 'Ford, Patrick', *DIB*.

with a plentiful supply of ammunition with which it could lambast John Redmond and the entire constitutional movement.

### The Dublin Lockout

Perhaps the most damning evidence to counter the argument that a rising tide lifts all boats could be found in the relative stagnation experienced by those residing in Dublin in the opening decade of the twentieth century. While Ireland's rural population benefited exponentially from progressive land legislation, poorly paid workers in the second largest city in the British empire continued to toil long hours for pitiful remittance before returning home to ramshackle tenements unfit for human habitation.<sup>62</sup> Such deprivation provided ideal conditions for a social revolution and were it not for the concerted efforts of the authorities that is precisely what might have occurred. In their determination to effect such a revolution, distinguished 'hybrids' James Connolly and Jim Larkin fronted campaigns for greater social justice and improved working conditions.<sup>63</sup> Both men became familiar to Irish-American audiences at different junctures in time and as Connolly was the first to do so it is to him we turn now.

Born in Edinburgh in 1868, Connolly came to Irish attention with the establishment of the Dublin Socialist Club (DSC) in 1896 and the Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP) in 1897.<sup>64</sup> Success eluded him, however, as Ireland's preoccupation with all things nationalist meant there was little appetite for ideological distraction. After a series of lecture tours to Britain and America, Connolly decamped to the US for a more protracted stay in 1903. America was experiencing a significant wave of immigration when Connolly arrived, with concern over an influx of social radicals from the poorer nations of Europe dominating political discourse. Yet, despite their reputations as nationalist adversaries, Patrick Ford and John Devoy agreed on the common threat posed by the foreign menace and regularly 'seized upon popular contemporary prejudices' when reporting this concern in their respective

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<sup>62</sup> For more see Enda Leaney, 'Infernos of Degradation: A Visual Record of Tenement Life in Dublin', in Francis Devine (ed.), *A Capital in Conflict: Dublin City and the 1913 Lockout* (Dublin: Dublin City Council, 2013)

<sup>63</sup> T.P. MacGloin, 'Hybrids: Connolly and Larkin', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* Vol. 88, No. 349 (Spring, 1999), p. 53. MacGloin describes hybrids as those 'Irish' born, bred, or spawned abroad, a cohort of individuals which included Swift, Tone, and de Valera.

<sup>64</sup> Fergus D'Arcy, 'Connolly, James', *DIB*. <http://bid.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleid=a1953>



newspapers.<sup>65</sup> To counter such bias, Connolly established his own publication, *The Harp* (1908), which admirably made no distinction between Irish immigrant workers and their East European compatriots. Returning to Ireland in 1910, Connolly was recruited by James Larkin in the latter's effort to advance the cause of trade unionism in Ireland.

Born in Toxteth, in 1874, Larkin had come from a similar ethnic background as Connolly. A foreman docker by trade, Larkin came to prominence when his performance during a strike in Liverpool in 1905 led to him accepting a post as an organizer for the National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL) in 1906.<sup>66</sup> Mounting friction over confrontational tactics employed during subsequent strikes in Belfast, Dublin and Cork led to Larkin's dismissal from the NUDL, and he went on to establish his own organisation, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, in 1909.<sup>67</sup> Larkin's profile in the US would only be truly established in the aftermath of the Dublin Lockout of 1913, a bitter industrial dispute which threatened, albeit briefly, to undermine constitutional nationalism.

The Dublin Lockout followed what was by then a well-worn pattern of civic action and state reaction. Earlier disputes, particularly at Wexford in 1911, became synonymous with confrontations between striking workers and the forces of law and order.<sup>68</sup> Rioting, stone-throwing, and widespread intimidation invited excessive police brutality as clerical condemnation of all things socialist came to dominate the surrounding narrative. By 1913, however, the industrial unrest that had so far been confined to lesser urban centres began to engulf the nation's capital. A dispute initially involving workers at the *Irish Independent* eventually incorporated those employed at the Dublin Tramway Company before spreading to multiple other trades where the ITGWU had managed to gain a foothold. And after a particularly vicious

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<sup>65</sup> Meredith Meagher, 'American Social Reform and the Irish Question: An Irish-American Perspective on the 1913 Lockout' in Conor McNamara & Padraig Yeates (eds.), *The Dublin Lockout 1913: New Perspectives on Class War & its Legacy* (Kildare, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2017), p. 69

<sup>66</sup> Emmet O'Connor, Larkin, James', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4685>

<sup>67</sup> Emmet O'Connor, 'Big Jim Larkin: Hero and Wrecker', *History Ireland* Vol.21, No. 4 (Jul/Aug 2013), p. 15

<sup>68</sup> For more on Wexford see Kieran S. Roche, 'The Forgotten Labour Struggle: The 1911 Wexford Lockout', *History Ireland* Vol. 21, No. 4 (Jul/Aug 2013). For disputes elsewhere see John Cunningham, *Labour in the West of Ireland: Working Life and Struggle* (Belfast: Athol Books, 1995)

battle with the police (Bloody Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1913) prospects for an amiable solution to the crisis quickly evaporated.

By September, as many as 400 employers were locking-out as many as 15,000 employees as Larkinism, the new catchword for militant Irish trade unionism, refused to yield to the establishment. Woefully inexperienced when it came to extra-parliamentary urban agitation, the Dublin Lockout proved to be uncharted territory for the Irish Party leadership.<sup>69</sup> And with Redmond seeking political refuge at Aughavanagh, John Dillon was left to explain the Irish Party's seemingly indifferent attitude to the rapidly-escalating crisis taking place in the very seat of a proposed Home Rule parliament. How Irish America perceived such indifference makes for very interesting reading.

### Irish-American Opinion

As the primary organs through which the majority of Irish American's received their news, newspapers were critical in helping shape public opinion on the Lockout. And New York's leading Irish publications, the *Irish World* and the *Gaelic American*, were consistent in their evocation of English misrule as the root of all social injustice in Ireland. Meredith Meagher recalls how Con O'Leary, Ireland correspondent for the *Irish World*, accused Unionists and the Tory Press of conspiring to distort the facts of the Lockout in their efforts to prejudice home rule.<sup>70</sup> The IPP-friendly paper also went to great lengths to report how nationalist opinion on the Lockout was varied, with some supporting the workers, some supporting the employers, and many remaining neutral. This, the paper argued, was consistent with the balanced and nuanced view one would expect from an informed society in any similar city in the world. Another regular contributor, Robert Ellis Thompson, criticised the strikers and the employers in their respective handling of the crisis before equating the lamentable actions of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) with the attitudes of law enforcement officials during an industrial dispute in Paterson, New Jersey, a year earlier.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 245

<sup>70</sup> Meagher, 'American Social Reform and the Irish Question', p. 74

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75

Unsurprisingly, the *Gaelic American* also took up the theme of DMP brutality with Bulmer Hobson and Tom Clarke providing first-hand accounts of the situation in Ireland. One week after Bloody Sunday the newspaper's editorial lambasted the Irish Party for being the slaves of the English Liberals, before part-legitimising the clubbing of the striking workers as 'deserving of a people who repeatedly failed to demonstrate their contempt for such poltroons.'<sup>72</sup> Clarke, a former deputy-editor of the *Gaelic American* and head of the Irish Republican Brotherhood since his return to Ireland in 1907, accused the police of behaving with 'downright, inhuman savagery' in their interactions with striking workers.<sup>73</sup> John Devoy also focused on denigrating British philanthropists, most notably Lady Aberdeen, who used her connections with the *New York Times* to project an image of humanitarian concern completely at odds with the actions of her 'nincompoop husband', the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.<sup>74</sup> In December (the fourth month of the Dublin Lockout), the advanced nationalist organ reproduced a lengthy letter from a Liberal Unionist, Colonel F.T. Warburton, contrasting the destitution many Dublin families were forced to live in with the comfortable lifestyles enjoyed by Nationalist MP's salaried since 1911 to the tune of £400 (\$2,000) a year. Warburton's riposte alluded to the increasingly common perception of IPP indifference and made a compelling argument that 'the Irish Party's failure to make any attempt to remedy their people's plight spoke volumes for their value as Irish representatives.'<sup>75</sup> While editors would use their respective papers to advance nationalist views on the Lockout, other voices clamoured for attention. And chief among these was the American Catholic Church.

### Socialism and the Church

Emmet Larkin has noted how socialism, which called for the complete restructuring of the existing social order, constituted a real threat to the power and influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland.<sup>76</sup> And concern that such a radical ideology had taken root in Dublin alarmed the Irish Catholic Hierarchy in 1913. The clergy had always

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<sup>72</sup> GA, 6 Sep. 1913

<sup>73</sup> Meagher, 'American Social Reform and the Irish Question', p. 76. For more on Clarke see James Quinn, 'Clarke, Thomas James ('Tom')', *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a1713>

<sup>74</sup> Meagher, 'American Social Reform and the Irish Question', p. 77

<sup>75</sup> GA, 6 Dec. 1913

<sup>76</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'Socialism and Catholicism in Ireland', *Church History* Vol. 33, No. 4 (Dec. 1964), p. 465

agreed with secular authorities on what was desirable for the community and in the political agitation witnessed during the Lockout the maintenance of law and order and the adherence to constitutional nationalism for the airing of grievances remained paramount.<sup>77</sup> Whilst trade unions were accepted in principle, strikes were considered particularly ruinous and this truism applied as much to America as it did to Ireland.

As for the American Catholic Church, Damien Murray has noted how historical opposition to radical left-wing movements and political ideologies had been a consistent feature of its late nineteenth-century position.<sup>78</sup> Then, with the primacy on assimilation, early immigrants were routinely told that dabbling in such a contentious enterprise as socialism was not only un-American, it was un-Christian. In re-asserting this position in the early twentieth-century, former Archbishop of Boston (later Cardinal) William O'Connell employed the famous Catholic orator David Goldstein to spread the Church's anti-socialist message across America, before giving his blessing to Goldstein's founding of the Common Cause Society in 1912.<sup>79</sup> O'Connell's message was also carried by Bishop John P. Carroll of Helena, Mont., at the 1912 AOH National Convention where the assembled delegates, numbering 1,200 in total, were implored to 'stand with the Catholic Church in its fight against Socialism.'<sup>80</sup> Described as 'the greatest challenge confronting this country' Bishop Carroll declared 'every Irish soul should burn with indignation at the propositions that this doctrine set forth for acceptance.'<sup>81</sup> With the capacity to 'reduce human beings to mere brutes' socialism was derided for creating laws that would 'destroy the sanctity of marriage' and 'ruin home life.'<sup>82</sup> That the Church's anti-socialist tirade began appearing in the *Irish World* long before the Dublin Lockout, can, in part, be attributed to Patrick Ford's experience with socialism some years earlier.

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<sup>77</sup> Joseph A. MacMahon, 'The Catholic Clergy and the Social Question in Ireland, 1891-1916', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* Vol. 70, No. 280 (Winter, 1981), p. 263

<sup>78</sup> Damien Murray, "Go Forth as a Missionary to Fight It": Catholic Antisocialism and Irish American Nationalism in Post-World War 1 Boston, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 28, No. 4, (Summer, 2009), p. 44

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Goldstein (b.1870 - d.1958) was a London-born Jew who converted to Catholicism after he became disenchanted with what he saw as the irreligious and immoral implications of a Marxist society.

<sup>80</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 Jul. 1912

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

In the 1870s Ford directly challenged Catholic spokesmen on the very nature of America's socio-economic and political woes.<sup>83</sup> Then, as a disciple of Henry George, the Galway-born nationalist was closely associated with the leading advocate for a socialist America.<sup>84</sup> Serious labour unrest in the 1880s, however, and the establishment of the nativist American Protective Association in response to this unrest, persuaded Ford to break with George and re-engage with Catholicism.<sup>85</sup> When socialism re-emerged as a threat to the American way of life two decades later Ford must have deemed it a penitential duty to support the Church by placing his newspaper at Cardinal O'Connell's disposal. Advocating peaceful agitation and the recognition of mutual rights along Christian principles, O'Connell ridiculed the very notion of a Catholic Socialist through the popular Catholic Periodical *Sacred Heart Review*, before repeating this message in the *Irish World*.<sup>86</sup> Only when Catholics began to understand the malice of those who stirred up strife, O'Connell stated, would 'the clamour of those noisy hawkers of poisonous social panaceas' be revealed for the vicious propaganda it was.<sup>87</sup>

As the constitutional movement was tip-toeing around the Lockout and coming to terms with the loss of two of its leading lights in America, observers outside party control were challenging the unionist 'bluff' theory. When Eoin MacNeill, the Antrim-born Gaelic League advocate, penned an article titled 'The North Began' for *An Claidheamh Soluis*, he did so after becoming impressed with the 'crypto-nationalism' demonstrated by Edward Carson.<sup>88</sup> While the respected UCD academic would abandon this stance over time, his article persuaded local IRB enthusiasts in Dublin to approach him with a view to establishing a volunteer movement down south.<sup>89</sup> MacNeill's acquiescence, and the subsequent creation of the Irish

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<sup>83</sup> James P. Rodechko, 'An Irish-American Journalist and Catholicism: Patrick Ford of the Irish World', *Church History*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Dec. 1970), p. 524

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p. 527

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 531. Ford distanced himself from labour activism after the 1886 Haymarket Affair. It was then that a demonstration in Chicago in support of workers demanding an eight-hour working day led to a bomb and gun attack which killed seven policemen and four civilians.

<sup>86</sup> *Sacred Heart Review* (1881-1918) was a Church bulletin with a nation-wide subscriber base. Primarily dealing with the Catholic Church, and with the Church in New England in particular, it carried local, national, and international news. See <https://newspapers.bc.edu/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=BOSTONSH>

<sup>87</sup> *IW*, 6 Dec. 1912

<sup>88</sup> Patrick Maume and Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'MacNeill, Eoin (John)', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do?jsessionid=DCC8BC17018795578B16BD56B18AF899#>

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*

Volunteers in November 1913, signalled an increasing militarization of Irish society. And with the prospects of a smooth transition to Home Rule seeming ever more remote, constitutional nationalists were forced to consider bearing arms themselves in defence of their hard-fought political gains.

### The Irish Volunteers

The prospect of Irish nationalists having to bear arms to secure rights won through successful constitutional agitation must have confused League officials in America. Had not their organisation, through its association with the Irish Party, spent the last dozen years castigating those who professed obtaining independence at the point of a gun. If Unionist resistance was only the bluff the UILA had been led to believe why now was there a need to follow militants up north into uniform? Furthermore, did not the prospect of two armed camps in Ireland, as ideologically opposed as any two opposing camps could be, not increase the chances of the civil war they were long chastised for fearing? How, indeed, had all this come to pass?

Although the Lords rejected the Third Home Rule Bill on first receipt, opponents knew the government would prevail in the end. Forewarned, however, is forearmed, and unionists had already prepared themselves for the political inevitability of Irish self-governance by creating the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in January 1913. Drawn largely from the ranks of the Orange Order, the UVF were continuing a long-standing Protestant voluntary tradition which can be traced back to the time of the plantations.<sup>90</sup> As early as 1911 the police had received firm intelligence that Orange Lodges in Co. Armagh had started to obtain rifles [predominantly licensed hunting rifles] and had established drill classes as a form of cheap and popular recreational activity.<sup>91</sup> The mass signing of the Solemn League and Covenant however, had infused the Orange Order with a greater sense of purpose. And before the Ulster Unionist Council felt it prudent to approve the establishment of a provisional government for Ulster as a counter-measure to any enforced implementation of home rule, a robust militarization of the loyalist paramilitary organisation had begun. Just four short months after returning from Philadelphia, Willie Redmond's assertion that

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<sup>90</sup> Timothy Bowman, 'The North Began ... But When? The Formation of the UVF', *History Ireland* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Mar/Apr. 2013), p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31

the deadheads of Sandy Row were all ‘braggadocio’ was beginning to look distinctly foolish.

While the Ulster Volunteers might have initiated the militarization of Ireland it wasn’t long before the ideals they extolled, self-reliance, resistance to coercion, and steadfastness in the face of adversity, garnered apostles throughout the rest of the country. When government reaction to the Dublin Lock-out threatened life and limb, socialists and workers had united to form the Irish Citizens Army (ICA, est Nov. 1913). Invoked in response to the violence perpetrated by the DMP, the ICA was led by James Connolly, Jim Larkin, and a Boer War Veteran Captain Jack White. Larkin had declared that the masses of striking workers ‘must no longer be content to assemble in hopeless, haphazard crowds, in which a man does not know and cannot trust the man that stands next to him.’<sup>92</sup> In all future assemblies he wanted them to be so organized that everyone would know their place and duty. And White, with considerable military experience behind him, was selected as ‘the man to bring this change about.’<sup>93</sup>

The ICA was soon eclipsed, however, by the formation of a more nationalist-oriented organization, the Irish Volunteers (IV). This movement, the fruits of MacNeill’s appreciation of the merits of Unionist volunteerism, held its inaugural meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1913 at the Rotunda in Dublin. The Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers, read out at the launch and published in the *Irish Review* the following month, gave a clear indication of the progressive and pacific nature of the movement’s objectives. Founded to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland, this Manifesto declared the Volunteers duties to be defensive and protective in nature, with the added proviso that they would not contemplate either oppression or domination.<sup>94</sup> This inclusivity extended giving a role to Irish women, whom the Volunteers recognized were ‘especially enthusiastic’ for the success of the movement.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Leo Keohane, *Captain Jack White: Imperialism, Anarchism & The Irish Citizen Army* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2014), p. 123

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> Anon., ‘Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers’, *Irish Review* Vol. 3, No.34 (Dec. 1913), p. 505

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

While the Irish Volunteers had designs to emulate their Unionist counterparts by arming, drilling, and imparting the requisite discipline essential to any paramilitary organization, their capacity to do so was immediately thwarted by a Royal Decree prohibiting the future importation of arms into Ireland. And given that the UVF had met no such obstacle upon its establishment ten months earlier, this new decree could only be interpreted as another example of sectarian bias favouring one community over the other. The amusement the decree aroused in unionist circles made it onto the pages of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* where ‘the universal comment among Ulsterites likened it to an attempt at locking the stable door after the horse had been stolen.’<sup>96</sup> To rub more salt into nationalist wounds unionists laid claim to already having required some 80,000 rifles, and that they would attach greater fun to future gun-running now that the government had decided to prohibit it.<sup>97</sup>

Obvious bias aside, the decree was viewed by the Provisional Committee established to run the Irish Volunteers as a blatant attempt to strangle the new movement at birth. This committee included separatists as well as representatives from other walks of Irish life. Numbering thirty in total it comprised twelve members who were affiliated to the IRB, eight who were connected to the Irish Party, and ten who could claim to be formally unattached.<sup>98</sup> Among this latter group resided Patrick Pearse, Thomas McDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Roger Casement, The O’Rahilly, and Eoin MacNeill.<sup>99</sup> A newspaper, the *Irish Volunteer*, was founded to promote the new movement and Pearse used this to advance recruitment. In building on the Volunteer Manifesto’s pledge to accommodate women, Pearse, as Director of the Organization, approved the establishment of an auxiliary body, Cumann na mBan, in April 1914. By then, however, developments were driving home to nationalists just how precarious their position was becoming in the face of continued unionist resistance to home rule.

In March, pre-empting what they erroneously construed to be a government directive to move against the UVF, fifty-seven British Army officers stationed at the Curragh declared their intention to resign their commissions rather than follow any such

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<sup>96</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 Dec. 1913

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>98</sup> Joost Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse: The Making of a Revolutionary* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave and MacMillan, 2010), p. 243

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*



order. When the government then failed to discipline the would-be mutineers Unionist gun-runners were emboldened to continue their clandestine importation of arms from the continent. At Larne, on the night of 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> April, the landing of a further 25,000 rifles and over 3,000,000 rounds of ammunition were, in terms of logistics, a ‘spectacular tactical success.’<sup>100</sup> Nationalists were aghast at the audacity displayed by the Unionists and perceived their own relative obeisance to the rule of law as indicative of a pronounced lack of commitment on their behalf. The *Freeman’s Journal* called the Larne operation ‘a violent and contemptuous defiance of King and Parliament ... [which] doubled the effect of the Curragh incident upon progressive opinion.’<sup>101</sup> Precipitating a change in the nationalist mind-set Willie Redmond wrote an article for the *Freeman’s* acknowledging the burgeoning Irish Volunteer movement. In it, the party chairman’s brother reminded the Carsonites that ‘these young men [the IV] will never tolerate the old system of rule being imposed upon them in Ireland ... [and that] two sides can play at volunteering.’<sup>102</sup>

### Redmond and the IV

The Irish Parliamentary Party had no desire to see a ‘National defence force’ established outside its own authority.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, Redmond and the party leadership feared the prospect a violent confrontation between the new nationalist paramilitary organisation and the UVF might hold for home rule.<sup>104</sup> For these reasons the Irish leader initially cold-shouldered the Irish Volunteers before being ‘surprised’ and alarmed at their progress in the Spring of 1914.<sup>105</sup> The Liberal governments reluctance to confront Unionist intransigence, however, its abject handling of the Curragh ‘mutiny’, and the brazenness displayed at Larne, prompted a reassessment. On 25<sup>th</sup> May the Third Home Rule Bill passed the House of Commons for the third and final time and Redmond decided it was time to bring the Volunteers under his control. However, for those who charge the Irish Party with attempting to ‘smother’ the provisional committee by nominating ‘non-entities’ to the Volunteer executive,

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<sup>100</sup> Alvin Jackson, ‘The Larne Gun-Running of 1914’, *History Ireland*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), p. 36

<sup>101</sup> Joseph P. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), p. 70

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p. 71

<sup>103</sup> James McConnel, ‘Après La Guerre’: John Redmond, the Irish Volunteers and Armed Constitutionalism, 1913-1915, *English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXXI, No. 553 (Dec. 2016), p. 1450

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid* citing D Figgis, *Recollections of the Irish War* (New York: 1928), p. 13

or with ‘vampirizing’ the movement at grassroots level, it should be remembered that it was Volunteers themselves, through Colonel Maurice Moore, who initiated contact with the constitutional movement.<sup>106</sup>

Writing some eighteen years later, Eoin MacNeill considered Redmond’s subsequent demand to have the nomination of additional members of the Volunteer Committee equal the existing membership to have brought on a crisis for the organization.<sup>107</sup> Given that the Provisional Committee already contained members who were affiliated to the Irish Party, Redmond’s demand would have seen him inherit a substantial controlling majority.<sup>108</sup> After much heated debate, and in the interest of averting a serious rupture in nationalist ranks, the existing committee agreed to accept twenty-five new nominees from the Irish Party. And whether individual members of the newly-constituted body were inclined towards the IRB, or whether they were Redmond loyalists, most agreed that the acquisition of arms for the Volunteers was of paramount importance. A fund had already been started to assist this endeavour and the customary appeal to America for financial support had followed. However, with the IPP slow to embrace the Volunteers, the new organisation had turned to Clan na Gael for support. And considering this, Redmond’s subsequent takeover in June 1914 did not sit well with advanced nationalists.

The original committee proceeded with its plan to send Sir Roger Casement to the US to promote the Volunteers and to set about raising the necessary funds to purchase arms. Dublin-born Casement was a well-respected humanitarian, knighted for his service to the crown after an illustrious career as a British Consul in Africa and South America.<sup>109</sup> A Gaelic League enthusiast, Casement had retired from the Foreign Office in 1913, allowing him more time to sate another of his more enduring

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<sup>106</sup> McConnel, *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis*, p. 269. McConnel cites Alvin Jackson, Charles Townshend, Michael Tierney and David Fitzpatrick. A soldier and politician, Mayo-born Moore was a UIL representative on the Provisional Committee of the original Irish Volunteers. As Inspector-General of the Volunteers Moore was selected to initiate contact with Redmond’s constitutional party in June 1914. See Marie Coleman, ‘Moore, Maurice George’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do>

<sup>107</sup> Brian Hughes (ed.), *Eoin MacNeill, Memoir of a Revolutionary Scholar* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2016), p. 52. MacNeill dictated his memoir in 1932

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>109</sup> Michael Laffan, ‘Casement, Sir Roger David’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do>

passions, Irish nationalism.<sup>110</sup> To facilitate Casement's mission to America Eoin MacNeill furnished him with a letter requesting that he 'act as accredited representative of the arms sub-committee.'<sup>111</sup> Received with scepticism on arrival in New York, Casement soon won Devoy over by virtue of his obvious sincerity and commitment to the Irish cause. The Clan 'had not been enamoured with Redmond and his limited aspiration of Home Rule', and understandably viewed the party takeover of the Volunteers with great suspicion.<sup>112</sup> Redmond's speeches in America had always tended to 'blur the distinction between his moderate aims and those of the republicans [and] his belief that separation from Britain was neither possible nor desirable' continued to rankle with advanced nationalists.<sup>113</sup> Casement's task however, profited greatly from the success of an enterprising adventure he himself had initiated some weeks before his departure, and which came to fruition just as he was struggling to make an impression on his Irish-American audience. At Howth in County Dublin, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1914, the Irish Volunteers landed some 1,500 rifles in a daring, if somewhat limited, repetition of the UVF's operation at Larne. Despite a confrontation between irate nationalist supporters and the Kings Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) at Bachelors Walk, in which three innocent bystanders were shot dead, the exercise was deemed a resounding success. Devoy was ecstatic. While the veteran Fenian described the event as 'the greatest deed done in Ireland for 100 years', Casement was delighted to find that the plot in which he had played such a prominent part in organizing had left the Irish in America 'mad with pride, joy, and hope.'<sup>114</sup> In a letter to his dear friend and fellow nationalist, Alice Stopford Green, he confessed that 'the Irish here would make me a demi-god if I let them.'<sup>115</sup> Maximising the publicity to be garnered from the atrocity perpetrated by the KOSB 'Casement attended a commemorative ceremony in Philadelphia in which as many as 1,000 men, many in Volunteer uniforms, marched behind empty coffins.'<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid

<sup>111</sup> Séamas Ó Síocháin, *Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2008), p. 381

<sup>112</sup> Mary N. Harris, 'Irish Americans and the Pursuit of Irish Independence' in Matjaz Klemencic and Mary N. Harris (eds.), *European Migrants, Diasporas and Indigenous Ethnic Minorities* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2009), p. 136

<sup>113</sup> Ibid

<sup>114</sup> Brian Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1973), p. 277

<sup>115</sup> Ó Síocháin, *Roger Casement* p. 384

<sup>116</sup> Harris, 'Irish Americans and the Pursuit of Irish Independence', p. 136

Despite Redmond having assumed control of the Volunteers some six weeks earlier, the landings at Howth were completed without his prior knowledge. However, seeing how these developments were received by nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic left the Irish Party with little choice but to acknowledge the success of Howth and the outrage at Bachelors Walk in equal measure. In America, the UILA were struggling to keep up with a re-energized Clan. There, a battle for support (ideological and financial) was already being waged in which the pre-Redmond Volunteer movement seemed to have stolen first march on the constitutional party.

### Volunteer fundraising

The initial American Committee to raise funds to arm and equip the Irish Volunteers had been established at the beginning of June. Styling the new organization as Ireland's National Army of Defence, the American Committee was chaired by Joseph McGarrity and included prominent veteran Fenians such as John Devoy.<sup>117</sup> McGarrity, an Ulster Catholic immigrant to the US in 1892, was the leader of Clan na Gael in Philadelphia, and a member of the organization's National Executive from 1912.<sup>118</sup> The subsequent appeal for assistance stated that the practicability of getting arms into Ireland had already been demonstrated by the Orange Volunteers in a most striking manner ever since the issuance of the proclamation banning their importation.<sup>119</sup> If the money was forthcoming for the Irish Volunteers, arms could be acquired in a similar fashion, and once a few thousand had been landed an attempt at disarmament 'would be one of the most serious problems that any British government has ever had to face'.<sup>120</sup> The success of this first appeal was attributed in part to 'every section and shade of Nationalist opinion' the Provisional Committee in Ireland laid claim to represent, including 'Parliamentarians, Sinn Féiners, Advanced Nationalists, Hibernians, and Protestants, who all stand shoulder to shoulder and work in harmony for the common good of the country.'<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> 'To Aid the Irish National Volunteers, 1 June 1914'. Joseph McGarrity Papers, Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University, <https://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:138667#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&z=-0.049%2C0.0788%2C1.0503%2C0.4608>

<sup>118</sup> Francis M. Carroll, 'McGarrity, Joseph', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=48C7A7837F086213FE429C9181820574>

<sup>119</sup> 'To Aid the Irish National Volunteers'

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*

Unsurprisingly, once Redmond completed his takeover, attempts were made to hijack this success, and a fresh appeal was made through the offices of the UILA. A cablegram from the Irish leader to Michael J. Ryan was published in the *New York Times* and the *Boston Daily Globe* citing the ‘audacious movement on the part of the Tories of Great Britain and the Orangemen of Ulster to overawe by armed force the will of Parliament and the British and Irish democracies.’<sup>122</sup> Declaring the necessity for the Irish people to be ‘placed in a position to defend their country and to defend themselves’ the cable concluded with ‘an appeal to friends in the United States for financial aid for the Nationalist Volunteers.’<sup>123</sup> The appeal to America was widely publicised in the Irish domestic press which afforded it extensive coverage with a largely positive commentary. The *Cork Examiner* declared the Irish Volunteer movement ‘will be strengthened as a result of the Irish leader’s appeal to the United Irish League of America, and while all will hope that Home Rule will be attained by peaceful means, still if it be necessary, evidence will quickly be forthcoming that Irish Nationalists are determined to secure their country’s liberty despite the attempts by the British aristocracy and Orange minority to deprive them of it.’<sup>124</sup> The *Evening Herald* however, brought a degree of incredulity to proceedings when it stated that Mr Redmond ‘clearly thinks that it is unwise to consider the Ulster preparations as a mere bluff, for he says they involve a serious risk to the lives and property of the Irish people.’<sup>125</sup> This was particularly rich given the party chairman had spent the previous two years assuring nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic that a bluff is exactly what such preparations were.

The appeal to the UILA made no mention of the obstacle posed by the arms proclamation, or how the party intended to circumvent it. Despite the New York Municipal Council of the UILA pledging itself to give ‘prompt aid in the patriotic work of arming and equipping the National Volunteers of Ireland’, and attacking Queen Mary for ‘attempting to influence the King against the Home Rule measure’, critics of the Party and the League remained sceptical.<sup>126</sup> By refraining from categorically declaring that all funds raised in America would be spent solely on

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<sup>122</sup> *New York Times*, 23 Jun. 1914; *Boston Daily Globe*, 23 Jun. 1914

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>124</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 23 Jun. 1914

<sup>125</sup> *Evening Herald*, 23 Jun. 1914

<sup>126</sup> *New York Times*, 4 Jul. 1914

arms for the Volunteers, Redmond had left himself open to attack from the original Clan-dominated Volunteer Committee.

Arms, not money, wanted from America

Addressed to Joseph McGarrity, a letter from Eoin MacNeill gave a clear indication of the friction that was beginning to emerge between the Provisional Committee in Ireland and the new party-dominated version. Prioritising the necessity to acquire arms, MacNeill justified writing ‘to impress upon McGarrity and those acting in concert with him ‘that grateful as we are for the prompt and significant help given in money ... the Irish Volunteers look to America not so much for pecuniary aid as for a supply of rifles, to be purchased and sent to us.’<sup>127</sup> Obviously fearful that funds sent to Redmond might be used for the Party rather than the Volunteers, MacNeill made it crystal clear their supporters in America would do best ‘by keeping the power of expenditure in their own hands, and by limiting such expenditure to the provision of arms and ammunition.’<sup>128</sup> Buoyed by MacNeill’s letter, McGarrity called on the Irish Volunteers to stand by their demand for ‘an undivided Irish nation’ amid growing fears Redmond was increasingly prepared to grant concessions on the exclusion of some, if not all, of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill.<sup>129</sup> A cable was also sent to Redmond in which McGarrity openly doubted the party chairman’s intention to purchase the necessary arms with the money raised in America. Citing the IPP as men who neither approve nor condemn the British government’s prohibition on the importation of arms, Redmond was implored to force the government to withdraw the restrictive proclamation altogether or to give up his control of the Volunteers.<sup>130</sup>

Ignoring both requests the party continued with their own fundraising drive, enjoying considerable success in the process. By mid-July the UILA had promised Redmond \$100,000 with a pledge to send \$10,000 immediately.<sup>131</sup> Michael J. Ryan,

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<sup>127</sup> Letter from Eoin MacNeill, Chairman of the Provisional Committee of the Irish National Volunteers to Joseph McGarrity, National President of the Irish Volunteer Fund Committee, ‘Arms, Not Money, Wanted From America’, 1 Jul. 1914, McGarrity Papers, <https://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:138687#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&z=-0.4718%2C-0.0867%2C1.669%2C0.7323>

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>129</sup> *New York Times*, 6 Jul. 1914

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>131</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 17 Jul. 1914

who presided over the meeting at which the majority of the funds were raised, called on those present who could not send their contributions through the UILA to send them direct to John Redmond, as it was he who now had control of the Volunteers.<sup>132</sup> Dollars and cents aside, the damage the existence of two separate appeals to America was doing to the credibility of the nationalist movement in Ireland is evident from an analysis of a series of letters between John Quinn, Roger Casement, and William Bourke Cockran.

Quinn, whom we encountered in Chapter 3, was the renowned patron of the arts who resided in New York. A natural affinity with Casement was to be expected given the latter's status as a celebrated humanitarian, language enthusiast, author, and Knight of the Realm. The two men liked each other. When Quinn heard Casement was coming to America he offered to put him up, and being much closer in general sympathies to Quinn than he was either Devoy or McGarrity, Casement was happy to accept.<sup>133</sup> Whilst Sir Roger was busy touring America Quinn wrote regularly with his views on the Volunteer movement. Enclosing a cheque for \$250 the normally moderate Quinn stipulated his desire to see the monies raised in America used for the arming of the Volunteers, 'as only by arming them will Ireland get her rights.'<sup>134</sup> Expounding a more radical view than would normally be attributed to a man of culture, Quinn declared that parliamentary agitation had run its course. Betraying sympathies more in line with many of the more advanced nationalists living in his midst Quinn stated that he could not understand how Redmond was even a member of the Volunteers, or how he was authorized to collect monies on their behalf.<sup>135</sup> The key to the whole situation, he added, is the arming of the Irish Nationalists, and it is you [Casement] who represent that movement here.<sup>136</sup> References were made in this letter to a failed attempt by Quinn at making contact with William Bourke Cockran to ascertain his thoughts on the matter. Having succeeded by telephone later that evening, Quinn wrote to Casement again the very next day relating the frustration the former US Congressman admitted to experiencing with the whole Volunteer situation. Marking this letter Confidential, Quinn recalled how Cockran had been

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>133</sup> Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 283

<sup>134</sup> John Quinn to Roger Casement, 30 Jul. 1914, The New York Public Library, John Quinn Memorial Collection, 1900-1924, General Correspondence, Box 7, Folio 3-4

<sup>135</sup> Quinn to Casement. 30 Jul. 1914, NYPL, JQMC, Box 7, Folios 3-4

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*

contacted by two leading newspapers inquiring whether he was going to be the Chairman of the [Redmond] Committee to collect money in America; an inquiry to which Cockran categorically replied that he was not.<sup>137</sup> Quinn added that Cockran had also informed him that Patrick Egan had received a letter from Willie Redmond admonishing the Land League veteran and his associates for no longer being ‘dependable’.<sup>138</sup>

In consideration of this alleged breach of fidelity, Egan was appealing to Cockran ‘not to support the National Volunteers but to send all funds to J.E.R.’<sup>139</sup> Quinn told Cockran that such a request was ‘poppycock and an absurdity’, and that it was further proof of the party’s attempt to block the Volunteers and get control of the money for themselves.<sup>140</sup> When Quinn asked Cockran how he replied to Egan he was delighted to hear that Cockran told him he had already sent his cheque. Quinn then emphasised to Casement the necessity to keep this news from McGarrity and Devoy as he did not want Cockran to feel that he had quoted him. In a post-script to this letter Quinn seemed to glory in referencing Cockran as Redmond’s ‘strongest supporter here’ while citing another prominent parliamentary man [Judge Morgan O’Brien], who had never previously recognised the Radicals, for having made a similar contribution to the Casement fund.<sup>141</sup>

As it transpired, Casement had been in contact with Cockran himself, writing to the Sligo-born lawyer on 27<sup>th</sup> July. In referencing the Bachelors Walk incident, Casement delighted in taking great credit for the way events unfolded on the day in question. Not only did Sir Roger confess to having ‘planned this gun-running before I left Ireland’ but he also stated that ‘we [the Volunteers] knew the government would fire on us – the only thing wherein we failed was in not having our cartridges ready to meet fire with fire.’<sup>142</sup> Casement closed his letter to Cockran by reminding him that ‘money sent to Redmond for arming the Volunteers is money in doubt. He

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 31 Jul. 1914

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*. (J.E.R. being John E. Redmond, MP)

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>142</sup> Roger Casement to William Bourke Cockran, 27 Jul. 1914, NYPL, WBCP, 1881-1924, MssCol 582, Series 1 B2



has no official right or connection with the Volunteers. He got his twenty-five nominees on the Governing Body and there his action ended.’<sup>143</sup>

If concern over the competition to arm and equip the Volunteers was not enough to unsettle Irish Americans, the possibility of a major war in Europe involving Britain certainly was. Unsurprisingly, America’s and Ireland’s position in any such conflict was an obvious topic for debate whenever the prospect of an Anglo-German conflict arose. And conscious of British attempts at entangling the US in an international alliance before hostilities began, Irish Americans strove to preserve America’s neutrality. The effort they put into this endeavour, and the relative success they enjoyed as a result, demonstrated the priority Irish immigrants attached to their status as American citizens. And this was a lesson that properly heeded might well have better influenced Irish Party decision-making once the expected conflict arrived.

#### (Mis)Interpreting Anglophobia

One of the UILA’s primary functions was to bring influence to bear on the US government to adopt policies consistent with Irish nationalist aspirations. And because it felt that holding any potential Anglo-American alliance hostage to the implementation of Home Rule in Ireland was the best way to achieve this, this was the policy it sought to pursue. However, as the Irish Party’s delegated affiliate in the US, the American League could not be seen to be too Anglophobic in practice for fear it might fuel intense criticism of Redmond in the House of Commons. For this reason, most of the efforts to hinder any such alliance were left to more advanced nationalists in the guise of the United Irish Societies and Clan na Gael.

Advanced nationalists had a proven track record when it came to ‘Twisting the Lion’s Tail’.<sup>144</sup> Another opportunity to engage in this most favoured of all nationalist pastimes surfaced in 1911 when Anglophiles who styled themselves as international advocates of peace sought to establish a US/UK General Arbitration Treaty. Arbitration was popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a solution to international disputes. Intended to rely on legal opinion, as opposed to negotiation or compromise, Irish Americans viewed the outcome of the arbitration

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid

<sup>144</sup> See Chapter 2

surrounding the 1895 Venezuela/British Guiana dispute to be sufficient evidence of an Anglo-American imperial conspiracy.<sup>145</sup> Fearing the prospect of another Machiavellian attempt to consolidate imperial hegemony, nationalists deemed it obligatory to counter every effort to facilitate Anglo-American rapprochement while Ireland was denied its independence.

Clan na Gael returned to its tried and trusted formula and launched a new letter campaign to members of Congress urging the General Arbitration Treaty's defeat. John Devoy even distributed reprinted pages from the British Ambassador James Bryce's book, *American Commonwealth*, which highlighted the author's critical view of the US Senate's control of foreign affairs.<sup>146</sup> This policy of pitching the Legislative branch of the US government against the Executive had worked well in the past and nationalists saw no reason to abandon it on this occasion. However, while the American Irish were considered 'the most active opponents of the British treaty outside Congress', they were always cautious to couch their opposition to it 'using symbols from traditional American foreign policy.'<sup>147</sup> And it was this that made them such a formidable force to be reckoned with. President Taft was so concerned with the influence Irish Americans were beginning to wield that he attempted to 'mollify them' with a promise to help secure the release of Luke Dillon, a convicted Fenian dynamiter imprisoned in Canada for attempting to blow up the Welland Canal in 1900.<sup>148</sup> Unsurprisingly, Canadian Orangemen's objection to Taft's scheme saw Dillon remain in captivity and the Clan continued their campaign of opposition. By the time it was finished being amended the proposed Treaty so differed from the original draft that the president refused to sign it altogether.<sup>149</sup> And believing it constituted a '*de facto* alliance' with Britain, Irish Americans resolved to prevent it from ever passing through the Senate.<sup>150</sup>

While working to defeat this 'alliance', the Clan denounced John Redmond for linking their campaign in America to the opposition the Home Rule Bill was facing in parliament. As early as November 1911, the *Gaelic American*, citing an undated

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid

<sup>146</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-1923*, p. 28

<sup>147</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921*, p. 67

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question*, p. 28

<sup>150</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations*, p.68

article from the *Butte Independent*, chastised Redmond for comments he was alleged to have made when giving a speech at South-End-on-Sea. The Devoy-edited paper considered it ‘absurd for the present incumbent of the chairmanship of the Irish Parliamentary Party to hold up to a Saxon audience the delusive mirage of an alliance with this country [America] as a possible bait for Home Rule.’<sup>151</sup> What right, the paper asked, had Mr Redmond to suppose that because of any possible legislative enactments of the English Parliament the Irish people in this country would forego the traditional policy of the American people and embrace in the arms of an entangling alliance the most treacherous, base and cunning of foreign nations?<sup>152</sup> Considering such suppositions to be ‘an unwarranted insult to our intelligence’, the paper warned Mr Redmond and his colleagues that even the unlikely procurement of ‘a far more generous and statesmanlike Home Rule measure’ would fail to wean the Irish in America from their ‘unflinching fealty’ to the grand principles of the Republic.<sup>153</sup>

That the IPP chairman and his colleagues continued to ignore such warnings is evident from further attacks of this nature in April 1912. Just one week before Prime Minister Asquith was due to introduce the Third Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons, the *Clan*-inspired weekly rounded on several prominent constitutional nationalists in Ireland, namely William O’Brien, Bishop Kelly of Ross, and Joe Devlin. Citing O’Brien’s *Cork Free Press*, a speech Kelly delivered at a St. Patrick’s Day banquet in London, and an article accredited to Devlin in the *Irish News*, the *Gaelic American* ridiculed the ‘foolish theory’ that American Irish opposition to the Arbitration Treaty was based on a desire to aid Home Rule.<sup>154</sup> While the aforementioned persons were credited with acknowledging the role the American Irish played in the Treaty’s defeat, they were accused of having entirely misinterpreted the motives that prompted such actions.<sup>155</sup>

The Treaty was defeated, the paper argued, because it was not in America’s best interests. Had it been, the Senate would have voted in favour of it accordingly. Any attempt by the American Irish to link their opposition to the Treaty with the

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<sup>151</sup> GA, 30 Nov. 1911

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>154</sup> GA, 6 Apr. 1912

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*

campaign for Home Rule would have been rejected out of hand. No mention of anything other than America's best interests appeared in the resolutions made or the speeches delivered at the hundreds of meetings held by the American Irish, or in the communications addressed to individual Senators by their Irish constituents.<sup>156</sup> There was no mention whatsoever of Ireland, or of her treatment by England, for if there had been it would have weakened their argument.<sup>157</sup> However, while the Irish in America were not unmindful of the effect the defeat of the Treaty would have on England, the *Gaelic American* maintained most of them did not care a thraneen about Home Rule and would have no use for an Ireland that would promote the glory and power of the British Empire.<sup>158</sup>

That the American Irish had their finger firmly on the American political pulse is attested to in Alan J. Ward's claim that 'when the Irish in America chose to support Americanism, and the prerogatives of the Senate, they always found themselves in the ranks of the victorious.'<sup>159</sup> That one of these victories was so recently overturned should have given rise to greater concern.

#### A rare but significant defeat

The Senate's reluctance to ratify a General Arbitration Treaty appeared to pay dividends when a dispute over American ships passing through the soon-to-be completed Panama Canal surfaced in 1912. This dispute provoked a storm of controversy when the US attempted to pre-exempt its own ships from having to pay toll charges on the canal once it opened for business in 1914. While an initial bill proposing an exemption for US ships engaged in foreign commerce was defeated, a second bill proposing an exemption for US ships engaged in coastwise trade was ratified by the Senate and signed into law on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1912. Once again, the Irish were heavily involved in the debates surrounding the latter bill and its ratification was heralded as evidence of yet another nationalist victory. The campaign on this occasion was led by Senator James O'Gorman of New York and backed by the Clan, and employed the same *modus operandi* as previous campaigns (i.e. the holding of large public meetings and the sending of numerous petitions to members of

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>159</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations*, pp. 68-69

Congress).<sup>160</sup> The arguments the Irish made in this debate were straightforward enough; because America had built the canal American ships should be given free passage, to charge American ships would put them at a disadvantage to British ships, and that any compromise on the matter was mere truckling to Great Britain.<sup>161</sup>

Understandably, the British cried foul and counter-argued that any exemption for the US was a direct violation of the terms of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty governing the construction of the canal. Despite widespread international support British protestations fell on deaf ears, and it was only the threat to refer the matter to the International Court of Arbitration (which the US had reluctantly signed up to in 1908) that had any discernible impact on proceedings. However, before the need for such a drastic measure arose, political developments in the US offered fresh hope for an amicable solution to the impending crisis.

Whilst President Taft had signed the Panama Canal Tolls Act into law, a new occupant sat in the White House before the controversial legislation came into effect. Woodrow Wilson was elected US President in November 1912 after the disastrous decision to split the Republican Party's ticket between Taft and Theodore Roosevelt paved the way for the return of the Democrats. Disturbed by the enmity the Panama dispute was stoking internationally, Wilson looked for a way to appease America's Anglo-Saxon cousins and restore the country's damaged reputation. On taking office in March 1913 Wilson had but three options regarding the contentious bill open to him. He could either uphold the Tolls Act as it stood, agree to send it to arbitration, or rescind the decision taken by his predecessor. He considered that taking the first of these options would bring dishonour on America while taking the second would run the risk of embarrassing the country should any ruling arrived at go against it. That left him with only the third option, to rescind the bill altogether.

A fierce battle ensued, with the Irish at the centre of those who sought to uphold the Act as it stood. Joseph McGarrity organized one meeting in Philadelphia which was attended by as many as three thousand people, and William Bourke Cockran and other prominent Irish Americans appeared as delegates of the 'Committee for the Preservation of American Rights in the Panama Canal'.<sup>162</sup> Cockran was particularly

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<sup>160</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question*, p. 28

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>162</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations*, pp. 82-83

livid over Wilson's attempt to rescind the Panama Act for to do so, he argued, was tantamount to admitting to having knowingly violated an international treaty in the first instance.<sup>163</sup> The real motive behind Wilson's actions, Cockran protested, is that 'he may be allowed to proceed without interference from a certain power [England] to deal as he pleases with matters South of the Rio Grande River [the US/Mexican border].'<sup>164</sup> This reference to appeasing the English so that America could pursue a nefarious foreign policy elsewhere was reminiscent of the reciprocal indifference each power expressed towards the other's previous engagements in Cuba, the Philippines and South Africa. Both Cockran's and the wider Irish American efforts were in vain however, as Wilson's campaign to rescind the Panama Act succeeded in gaining Congressional and Senate approval in June 1913.

From an Irish American perspective, this represented a rare but significant defeat. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the newly-appointed British Ambassador in Washington, remarked that the political strength of the Irish in America was in decline and that 'the Irish vote is not as well organized as it once was.'<sup>165</sup> More importantly for Irish Americans perhaps, it indicated President Wilson's complete disdain for those who clung to a hyphenated identity, a disdain the president would articulate when unveiling a statue to commemorate Commodore John Barry, the father of the American Navy, in May 1914. In celebrating Barry's Americanism, Wilson's insistence that 'when the whole man has come over the hyphen drops of its own weight out of his name,' was seen as a clear rap to those who looked to the other side of the water when casting their votes in America.<sup>166</sup>

While Irish Americans who petitioned Congress demonstrated admirable political restraint when opposing prospective alliances with Britain, Irish Americans who embraced fellow Anglophobes in less formal theatres had no such obligation to tact. Under the leadership of Matthew Cummings, the American AOH had signed an agreement with the German-American National Alliance in January 1907 in which

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<sup>163</sup> Cockran, 'Address at the Citizen's Meeting, Carnegie Hall, called to Protest the Surrender of American Rights on the Panama Question', 20 Mar. 1914. NYPL, WBCP, Series 1 B.2 Irish Correspondence, Box 26, Folio 9

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. A revolution in Mexico had been underway since 1910 and the prospect of direct US intervention was just one of the foreign policy dilemmas Wilson had inherited on taking office at the White House.

<sup>165</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question*, p. 28

<sup>166</sup> *New York Times*, 17 May 1914

both sides agreed to oppose American alliances with any foreign power.<sup>167</sup> This agreement survived Cummings' tenure as President of the AOH and remained Hibernian policy up to the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914. Irish Americans also teamed up with Indian Nationalists in the US and used every opportunity to educate an ignorant American public on British misrule in the Raj. Indeed, Irish nationalism had a long history of association with Indian nationalism and the late nineteenth century had seen leaders of both movements 'share romanticized notions of a common struggle against the British Empire.'<sup>168</sup> On several occasions, Dadabhai Nauroji, a leading Indian Nationalist, attempted through Michael Davitt's offices to secure an Irish constituency.<sup>169</sup> And in 1883, Parnell only abandoned the scheme because he feared it would not be completely understood in Ireland.<sup>170</sup> In early twentieth century America, however, collaboration with Indian Nationalists became the preserve of Clan na Gael. The *Gaelic American* regularly offered them a platform for expression before the Clan Executive expanding on this to provide more material assistance in a subsequent plot to send arms to India.<sup>171</sup>

How well-informed John Redmond was about prevailing Anglophobic attitudes in Irish America is open to conjecture. Correspondence with his primary contacts before the war reveal little warning as to the depth of animosity advanced nationalists felt towards any Anglo-American rapprochement. While they were only too aware of the earlier campaign opposing the Boer War, there is little evidence of O'Callaghan, Jordan or Ryan attaching any great significance to the campaigns opposing the US/UK General Arbitration Treaty or the Panama Canal Tolls Act. If anything, correspondence from America is noticeable for an avoidance of the subject and League officials did not repeat Redmond's mistake of affiliating the Home Rule movement with the more recent demonstrations of Anglophobia. With the prospect of a European war ever-present, little thought seems to have been given to the dilemma constitutional nationalist loyalty to the empire might inspire. This absence

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<sup>167</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations* pp. 59-60

<sup>168</sup> Michael Silvestri, 'The Sinn Féin of India': Irish Nationalism and the Policing of Revolutionary Terrorism in Bengal', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Oct. 2000), p. 457.

<sup>169</sup> Howard Brasted, 'Indian Nationalist Development and the Influence of Irish Home Rule, 1870-1886', *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 14, No. 1 (1980), p. 49

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>171</sup> Matthew Plowman, 'Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War 1', *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua*, Vol. 7 No. 3 (Autumn 2003), pp. 81-105

of foresight would prove decisive once the sabre-rattling was over and the ideological battle lines drawn.

### Conclusion

There is compelling evidence to suggest that some of the decisions which undermined the IPP/UILA alliance between 1912-14 could, and indeed should, have been avoided. A more sympathetic response to the Dublin Lockout might have better endeared the Irish Party to the aggrieved working classes and robbed Party and League detractors of the opportunity to attack them. A more accurate assessment of the threat posed by Ulster unionist intransigence might have better prepared supporters for what lay ahead rather than dismissing their fears of a civil war as groundless. An earlier recognition of the necessity for a nationalist volunteer movement, and a move towards strengthening its capacity as a paramilitary force capable of defending home rule once it arrived, would surely have helped to bridge the chasm that developed between constitutionalists and separatists. And paying more attention to Irish-American motives in opposing entangling alliances with England would have avoided the danger of taking immigrant support in the US for granted once the conflict in Europe began. Making decisions which took these concerns into consideration, however, required Redmond to be in receipt of honest and reliable information regarding the diasporic mindset. And as far as the UILA leadership can be said to have provided this there is an obvious and identifiable shortfall.

The terms of the Parliament Act (1911), which all but guaranteed the passage and implementation of Home Rule within the lifetime of the current government, led the American League to all but grind to a halt. The biennial National Convention scheduled for 1912 was touted as the last time the League would be required to hold such an occasion, at the very moment Ulster unionists were solidifying their campaign of resistance. John Redmond's decision not to attend said convention in person meant his supporters in America had not seen their leader since 1910, and while this was not too big a deal in 1912 it was bordering on neglect by 1914. The official organ of the UILA, the *United Irish League Bulletin of America*, ceased publication as the cause for which it was established to promote was deemed to have



been secured.<sup>172</sup> Correspondence between Redmond and John O'Callaghan fell away even before the latter's death facilitated Michael Jordan's accession to secretary of the American organization. Jordan, for his part, proved markedly less informative than his predecessor given the nature of events that developed on his watch, while the League president, Michael J. Ryan, appeared overly anxious to bring the organisation to an end. Starting a rival fund to aid the Irish Volunteers, while professing ambiguity over where exactly the monies raised would be spent, added to suspicions surrounding the party chairman's motives for muscling his way into control of the paramilitary organization in the first instance. And crediting Irish-American Anglophobia as a by-product of opposition to Home Rule did little other than anger those who led the campaign of resistance to prospective US/UK alliances.

These errors in judgement would come back to haunt Redmond as the political situation spiralled out of Irish Party control. When a Buckingham Palace Conference convened as a last desperate attempt to avert conflict in Ireland failed to reach a resolution, few could have foreseen how a Serbian nationalist's assassination of an Austrian Archduke and his wife could offer some respite. How Home Rule fared as a result is where we go now.

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<sup>172</sup> Exactly when the *United Irish League Bulletin of America* ceased publication is difficult to pinpoint. Wake Forest University in North Carolina, which holds the most comprehensive collection of the UILA periodical, finishes with Vol. V, No. 6 (June 1912).

## Chapter 6

### The Long Divorce, 1914-18

While few could have imagined it, the spring of 1914 turned out to be the high-water mark for the Irish Party and the United Irish League of America. Despite nationalist reservations over the future of Ulster, decades of painstaking parliamentary agitation meant home rule for the majority of Ireland appeared a political inevitability. Nothing, it seemed, could derail this process save a calamity of epic and global proportion. Yet, as fate would dictate, this is precisely what occurred. The Great War in Europe (1914-18) and the effect it had on Irish constitutional nationalism, contributed, over time, to the ultimate demise of the IPP and the UILA. In a devastating conflict between rival imperial powers, the struggle for Irish independence was marginalised, while the existential threat to the established global order was afforded primacy of thought, action, and deed. No longer the pressing issue of the day Home Rule was suspended (albeit temporarily), and nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic were left angry, bewildered, and confused. How John Redmond managed these developments from a domestic perspective has been the subject of numerous studies.<sup>1</sup> How he managed them from an Irish-American one has not.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will examine the tumultuous years of World War 1 from the context of the declining fortunes of constitutional nationalism in Irish America.

Acknowledging, rather than dwelling on, the dominant historiography to date (i.e. focusing on the Volunteer split, the Easter Rising and the Irish Convention), it will concentrate on the impact such seismic events had on the moderate nationalist

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<sup>1</sup> The Great War and the portents it held for Irish constitutional nationalism feature in the biographies of John Redmond by Denis Gwynn and Dermot Meleady. However, for an in-depth analysis of this period the reader should consult Joseph P. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004), and James McConnel *The Irish Parliamentary Party and the Third Home Rule Crisis* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> The go-to studies on Irish-American nationalism during this period remain Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969) and Francis M. Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-23* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1978). More recent works include Michael Doorley, *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism: The Friends of Irish Freedom, 1916-1935* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005) and Miriam Nyhan Grey (ed), *Ireland's Allies: America and the 1916 Easter Rising* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2016).

movement in the US, and on why the apostles of that movement increasingly lost faith in the Irish Parliamentary Party and its leader, John Redmond.

The chapter will also serve to highlight the debilitating effect questionable leadership, lethargy, internal dissension, and the establishment of new rival organisations, had on the United Irish League of America. It will assess a detached and largely ignorant diaspora's interpretation of the Irish revolution, its abhorrence of the atrocities which followed, and the reaction to British government proposals aimed at putting the militant genie back in its extremist bottle. Once the US entered the Great War, the complexities which challenged Irish immigrants seeking to accommodate patriotic allegiance to the Republic of their choice with nationalist obligations to a Republic created in their name, are examined. And as efforts to rescue the constitutional movement are seen to fail, belated recognition of the scant attention the Irish Party paid to its invaluable Fifth Column in America begins to emerge. How such a grievous situation was allowed to develop is what we are about to discover.

#### War and the Home Rule movement in America

After the optimism of early spring, Irish Americans watching events unfold in late summer 1914 must have been filled with a deep sense of dismay. No sooner had the Buckingham Palace conference which convened to resolve the Home Rule impasse collapsed in failure than the events at Bachelors Walk added to the sense of impending crisis in Ireland. With diametrically-opposed Volunteer movements readying themselves to respond to the implementation of Home Rule - whether to defend or thwart it - few could have imagined that relief would come in the guise of the greatest, most destructive, conflict imaginable. However, in responding to this catastrophic development, Irish Party policy, which had hitherto been followed without reservation by the UILA, called the allegiance of prominent individuals central to the constitutional movement in America into question.

When an Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, issued following the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Isabella in Sarajevo in June 1914, went unheeded, war between rival European powers became inevitable. As Russia mobilised in support of Serbia, Germany followed suit in support of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And with Britain morally bound to defend France and Russia, the

violation of Belgian sovereignty in a subsequent German attack on its Gallic neighbour rendered continued diplomacy futile.<sup>3</sup> On the eve of Britain's entry into the war John Redmond made an impassioned, if impromptu, address to the House of Commons outlining the Irish Party's position. Responding to the Foreign Secretary Lord Grey's statement that Ireland was the one bright spot in the present crisis, the leader of the Irish Party assured the packed House that Ireland would stand by Britain in her hour of need. After cursory consultation with two of his party colleagues, one of whom counselled caution, Redmond proceeded to tell a captive audience that the government could at once 'withdraw every one of its troops from Ireland.'<sup>4</sup> Championing Ireland's capacity to defend itself from foreign invasion, the Irish leader optimistically declared 'that armed Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with armed Protestant Ulstermen in the North.'<sup>5</sup> Redmond's statement received widespread parliamentary approval, and with the crisis in Ireland averted, the government was better positioned to honour its obligations to its European allies. Indeed, such a welcome turn of events completely blindsided the German High Command, which expected prevailing tensions surrounding Ulster to mitigate against Britain getting involved in any continental conflict.<sup>6</sup> For Redmond, however, the offer of Volunteer support without first having secured Home Rule received a mixed response. While nationalists largely welcomed the opportunity to diffuse the prevailing tensions in Ireland, those living in America appeared confused over the recent turn of events.

The *New York Times* reported how a crowd of Englishmen, Irishmen, Frenchmen and Belgians marched down Broadway with Union Jacks in their hats 'cheering madly' for the Home Rule leader.<sup>7</sup> Yet, while largely supportive of Redmond, the *Boston Daily Globe* conceded his decision 'puzzled many', and warned its readers

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<sup>3</sup> For studies dedicated to how the Great War impacted Ireland see Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), John Horne, *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008), and Kevin Johnston, *Home or Away: The Great War and the Irish Revolution* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 2010). Britain's moral obligation to France and Russia resided in the 1904 Triple Entente.

<sup>4</sup> Hansard, HC Deb 03 Aug. 1914 vol. 65 cc.1829. The colleagues in question were J.P. Hayden and T.P. O'Connor, with the senior party member, O'Connor, the one who counselled caution. Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 297

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Jérôme aan de Wiel, *The Irish Factor, 1899-1919: Ireland's Strategic and Diplomatic Importance for Foreign Powers* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2008)

<sup>7</sup> *New York Times*, 6 Aug. 1914

that there were other voices who believed the present crisis represented an opportunity that should be taken advantage of.<sup>8</sup> For Irish Americans, party policy had never demanded more immediate articulation. Fortunately, League Secretary Michael Jordan and fellow National Executive member, Patrick Egan, were about to embark on a visit to Ireland, where their anticipated consultation with John Redmond was expected to alleviate growing diasporic anxiety.<sup>9</sup>

Both men received a hearty welcome wherever they travelled in Ireland. The *Irish Examiner* reported how the UILA envoys accompanied Joe Devlin and Willie Redmond on an inspection of Irish Volunteers in Armagh.<sup>10</sup> And while the report states that the visitors gave stirring speeches, little detail is given as to what they actually said. An interview Jordan gave to the *Freeman's Journal* two weeks later, however, is notable for the secretary's declaration that 'all thinking Irishmen in America were ready to follow wherever Mr Redmond and the Party led.'<sup>11</sup> After professing all was well with the Irish cause in America, Jordan's assertion that 'the friends of that cause are in buoyant spirits and perfectly united' must have sounded like music to the party chairman's ears.<sup>12</sup>

Little changed during the period the League envoys were away (6<sup>th</sup> Aug.-12<sup>th</sup> Sep.). Redmond's initial offer to employ the Volunteers to defend Ireland from invasion had been welcomed by the government, and its potential realisation had been entrusted to Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War. Kitchener, however, was averse to the whole concept of armed militias and wanted all Volunteers, Nationalist and Unionist, to be seconded to the British Army to be deployed as, and how, he saw fit. With parliament prorogued, Redmond had plenty of time to consider Kitchener's demands. And with the UILA having already professed its readiness to follow his lead, the Irish leader might be forgiven for taking the loyalty of his American constituents for granted. That Redmond's valuation of the strength of his transatlantic support carried little weight with his nationalist contemporaries, however, can be deduced from a conversation Jordan and Egan had with Eoin MacNeill, the founder of the Irish Volunteers, at a meeting held in the Gresham

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<sup>8</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 9 Aug. 1914

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *Irish Examiner*, 24 Aug. 1914

<sup>11</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Sep. 1914

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*

Hotel in Dublin. Despite the envoys best efforts to present a picture of a united transatlantic front, MacNeill subsequently confessed in his edited memoirs to having dismissed Egan's opinion altogether on the grounds that he believed him to be 'quite senile', while he considered Jordan's assertion that Irish America had Redmond's back to have been 'quite unnecessary.'<sup>13</sup> Tellingly, for the future direction of the Volunteers at least, MacNeill also stated that it was evident from this meeting that Redmond was already committed to 'some sort of plan with the War Office', and that 'a break with him [over this matter] could not be avoided.'<sup>14</sup>

After arriving back in the US Jordan eulogised over the marvellous material changes that had taken place in Ireland since the occasion of his last visit. In interviews given in his native Mayo the League Secretary had attributed the great improvement in the country to the Irish Party, before adding that nowhere else in the world had there been wrought such a wonderful change for the better during the last twenty years.<sup>15</sup> While this was the message he repeated to the *Boston Daily Globe*, nationalists were more interested in how the war in Europe was affecting their mother country. And to this end Jordan declared that 'Erin was neutral' in the present conflict.<sup>16</sup> The League Secretary qualified these remarks, however, with the caveat that if Ireland's sympathies were drawn upon, they might, with propriety, go out to France, which was the asylum of Irish exiles for five centuries and on whose battlefields much Irish blood had been shed.<sup>17</sup> As to whether the League envoys had any prior knowledge of Redmond's intention to broaden Irish Volunteer commitment to the war shortly thereafter, one can only speculate. Given the pattern of events which transpired, one might be forgiven for thinking they had.

Shortly after Jordan left Ireland, Parliament placed the Home Rule Act - with the provision for an Amending Bill - on the Statute Book, while a Suspensory Act suspended its implementation 'for twelve months or until the end of the war, whichever came later.'<sup>18</sup> These Acts, together with a desire not to be upstaged by

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<sup>13</sup> Hughes (ed.), *Eoin MacNeill: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Scholar*, p. 66. While the date of the meeting is not given it had to have taken place no later than the first week of Sep. 1914

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67

<sup>15</sup> *Western People*, 5 Sep. 1914; *Connaught Telegraph*, 12 Sep. 1914

<sup>16</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 13 Sep. 1914

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918*, p. 87

their Unionist counterparts, convinced Redmond to reconsider his initial stance on the role of the Irish Volunteers. Reviewing a body of men at Woodenbridge, County Wicklow, on 20<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1914, the Irish leader announced a radical change to party policy by calling on those present to account for themselves as men ‘not only in Ireland itself, but wherever the firing line extends.’<sup>19</sup> And as a departure from his earlier position, Redmond’s most recent appeal oscillated somewhere between controversial and downright incendiary.

### Redmond’s ‘Treason to Ireland’

Within days of Redmond’s Woodenbridge address, the Volunteers had split. The majority (approx. 158,000) remained loyal to the Irish leader and took the name National Volunteers, while a minority (approx. 12,000), led by Eoin MacNeill, broke with the main body and retained the original title of Irish Volunteers.<sup>20</sup> And if Redmond was quick to dismiss the seceders as ‘well-known cranks and mischief-makers’, time would demonstrate they were much more.<sup>21</sup> While the split would deprive the Irish Volunteers of the military knowledge of ex-British army men like Col. Maurice Moore, it compensated by keeping the advanced nationalists, many of whom were IRB men, in one select group.<sup>22</sup> Across the Atlantic, news of the split played out along familiar Clan na Gael/UILA lines.

A series of meetings held in early October gives some indication of the conflicts of opinion that were emerging in Irish America post-Woodenbridge. At Terence Garden in New York, a meeting held under the auspices of the Irish National Volunteer Committee convened to protest against Redmond’s ‘treason to Ireland’.<sup>23</sup> Yet, while the event was said to have attracted as many as 4,000 people, one report maintained ‘four-fifths’ of those in attendance were German Americans.<sup>24</sup> A denunciation of Redmond read out at this meeting stigmatized the Irish Party leader as ‘a British imperialist, a traitor to Ireland’s highest ideals, and a corrupt trustee of

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<sup>19</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 307

<sup>20</sup> Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918*, p. 90

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement*, p. 164

<sup>23</sup> *New York Times*, 10 Oct. 1914

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*. A subsequent refutation of the ‘four-fifths’ allegation put the constituency of the Terence Garden audience at ‘half and half’. *New York Times*, 13 Oct. 1914

American money collected for Ireland's national welfare.'<sup>25</sup> Concurrently, pro-Redmond meetings were taking place in other parts of the city. At a UILA meeting at Madison Avenue and Fifty-Ninth Street, resolutions were passed endorsing the IPP chairman for his successful work on behalf of Home Rule. Dr John G. Coyle of the New York Municipal Council of the UIL repudiated the Terence Garden meeting as being wholly unrepresentative of Irish-American sentiment, and claimed fellow League members had telephoned the *New York Times* to register similar protests.<sup>26</sup> The *Boston Daily Globe* carried a direct appeal from Redmond for Irishmen everywhere to 'Back the Empire.'<sup>27</sup> This appeal, in the form of an official address written at Aughavanagh on 14<sup>th</sup> October, was supplemented by a letter from John Dillon pledging to use any influence he could exercise to 'induce our people to stand by England.'<sup>28</sup>

By November, the UILA were compelled to disclaim any alliance between German and Irish citizens in the US, an alliance *The Times* of London had alluded to in an effort to discredit advanced nationalists living in America. The disclaimer did recognize the affinity between Clan na Gael and some German-American societies but took pains to point out that 'the Clan was a secret organization, and any alliance it entered into had little effect except upon its own diminishing numbers.'<sup>29</sup> One could hardly charge *The Times* with libel, however, when evidence of widespread collaboration was everywhere. By 1914 any lingering nineteenth-century frictions between the two largest ethnic communities had been put aside, and 'a common hostility' to the prospect of closer Anglo-American relations had 'forged a new unity.'<sup>30</sup> A mixed audience at a meeting called by the New York Irish Volunteer Committee was notable for the fantastic assertion that 'unification of the 20,000,000 German Americans and the 13,000,000 Irish Americans would make it easily possible to change the attitude of the newspapers and the federal government toward

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 25 Oct. 1914

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> *New York Times*, 11 Nov. 1914

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Edward Cuddy, *Irish America and National Isolationism* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), p. 36. As the husband of a German-American woman, UILA President Michael J. Ryan felt compelled to remind John Redmond of the warm relations between the two ethnic communities, and of the difficulty he was having reconciling himself to the Irish Party's pro-allied stance. Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, pp. 417-418



Germany and the German cause.’<sup>31</sup> This meeting included some interesting observations from Jim Larkin, the labour agitator of Dublin Lockout notoriety, and Kuno Meyer, the Gaelic League enthusiast and Professor of Celtic Studies at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin.<sup>32</sup>

Larkin had recently decamped to America from Ireland where he sought to pursue a new career as ‘a freelance, globe-trotting, public speaker.’<sup>33</sup> And his contribution to this meeting amounted to a passionate denunciation of John Redmond’s leadership in the sensationalist rhetoric he had become renowned for. Playing on a carefully fostered sense of outrage, Larkin declared that if he thought the four little boys he had left behind in Ireland would have to go through their lives under the British flag, ‘he would [sooner] take them on his knee and break their necks.’<sup>34</sup> In stark contrast to Larkin’s volatility, Meyer’s contribution amounted to a considered defence of free speech when referencing an objection to a paper he was due to deliver at Harvard University for fear it might violate America’s strict neutrality laws.<sup>35</sup> The appearance of such diverse characters on the same stage, however, one a scion of the working-class and the other a celebrated academic, served to demonstrate that opposition to Ireland’s war-time policy went well beyond physical-force nationalism.

Another voice to rail against Irish support for Britain was that of Sir Roger Casement. In America since June fundraising for the Volunteers, Casement was utilised by John Devoy to advance the prospect of a German-Irish alliance to further Irish independence. While Devoy was not particularly enamoured with Germany, he was a firm believer in the Young Irelander John Mitchel’s idea that ‘a European war should be exploited for Ireland’s benefit.’<sup>36</sup> Collaboration thereafter between the Clan chief and German Embassy officials at Washington saw Casement depart for Germany in October, from where he hoped to raise an Irish Legion from British POW’s captured at the Front. As it transpired, Casement did not need too much

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<sup>31</sup> *New York Times*, 18 Dec. 1914

<sup>32</sup> In recognition of his contribution to Celtic Studies Meyer had been awarded the freedom of the cities of Dublin and Cork in 1912. However, he would be stripped of the former in 1915 for his pro-German wartime propaganda. See Aidan Breen, ‘Meyer, Kuno’, *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do.jsessionid=B2C840D515D06512A5948E7145C62E1>

<sup>33</sup> Emmet O’Connor, ‘Big Jim Larkin: Hero and Wrecker’, *History Ireland* (Jul/Aug. 2013), p. 15

<sup>34</sup> *New York Times*, 18 Dec. 1914

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>36</sup> Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 278

persuasion. As the author of *The Crime Against Ireland and How the War May Right It*, Casement had sought to contribute to the cause of Irish freedom by advancing the case for Germany as a friend of Ireland and a foe of England some three years earlier.<sup>37</sup> This collection of individual essays, begun in 1911 and completed and published in January 1914, was prohibited under the *Defence of the Realm Act* (DORA) enacted by the British Government shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe.<sup>38</sup> In January 1915, however, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* carried a report from London which stated that Casement's pamphlet was 'now being issued [in America] under the auspices of the German government in its effort to promote anti-British sentiment regarding Ireland.'<sup>39</sup> Totalling almost 100 pages, the controversial publication cautioned Irishmen in America to remain 'ready, armed, keen, and alert.'<sup>40</sup> The German guns that sound the sinking of the British Dreadnoughts [Casement wrote] will be 'the call of Ireland to her scattered sons.'<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately then, Redmond's Woodenbridge address, the subsequent split in the Volunteers, and the potential for a schism in Irish-American and German-American relations, caused moderate nationalists in America no small degree of anxiety. This was evident at the leadership level of the UILA where a pronounced lethargy appeared to be affecting the day-to-day operations of the organisation. National Executive members wholly supportive of the party's position were quick to denounce those who were deemed to be less than enthusiastic, with character assassination the default weapon of choice. And it was John Redmond who was left with the unenviable task of playing devil's advocate.

#### Internal UILA dissension

While the Clan revelled in Redmond's ousting from the Provisional Committee of the Irish Volunteers, the UILA National Executive greeted the news with a far greater degree of circumspection. A letter Michael J. Ryan received prior to the Volunteer split, assuring him that once Home Rule received royal assent the Sinn Féiners would 'absolutely disappear', must have appeared misguided at best.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Sir Roger Casement, *The Crime Against Ireland and How the War May Right It*, (New York: 1914)

<sup>38</sup> *Defence of the Realm Act, 1914* (4 & 5 Geo. 5 c. 29)

<sup>39</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 Jan. 1915

<sup>40</sup> Casement, *The Crime Against Ireland*, p. 6

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>42</sup> Redmond to Ryan, 17 Sep. 1914. NLI, RP, MS 15,524

Compounding his errant prediction, Redmond alluded to ‘our friends having complete control of the Volunteers’, and that ‘while a few will separate we think it wiser to let this happen rather than to expel them from the main body.’<sup>43</sup> Taking the latter course (the party chairman mused) ‘would inevitably have led to the establishment of a counter-organisation, and this, no matter how small and unrepresentative, would have been a source of weakness to us at the present moment.’<sup>44</sup> How troubling then must it have appeared to Ryan to see that the feared counter-organisation emerged nonetheless, and, that it was anything but small and unrepresentative. It was approximately 12,000 strong, had the backing of Clan na Gael, and had given new impetus to advanced nationalism at home and abroad. As UILA president, Ryan accepted ‘without a murmur of [public] protest’ Redmond’s right as Nationalist leader to act as he saw fit, but admitted in private that, as an Irish American, the decision to support England ‘left him cold.’<sup>45</sup> To compound matters, Redmond could not but have felt concerned to read that Ryan and Treasurer T.B. Fitzpatrick intended to tender their resignations if the American League was not wound up, and to facilitate such a drastic measure the subject of a rearranged date for the seventh biennial UILA convention, and whether an Executive-only session would suffice, came up for discussion.

Executive-only, or delegate-attended, no further convention ever came to pass. Growing concern over the optics of holding any sort of official gathering while opinion was so divided on the party’s war-time policy had prompted other League members to row in on the debate. Secretary Jordan wrote to Redmond in late October enclosing a letter from P.T. Barry, a leading League member in Chicago. Barry had advised Jordan against holding any UILA Convention as ‘it could not be controlled ... from spilling over on the German sympathy question’.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Barry lamented the fact that ‘many, if not most of the delegates in attendance would be office holders, job holders, or engaged in the work of getting jobs, and the German vote is too important a factor in their line of industry not to cultivate at a time when the German element in our population is naturally looking for sympathy

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 417

<sup>46</sup> P.T. Barry to Jordan, 29 Oct. 1914. Barry’s letter is enclosed in a letter from Jordan to Redmond, 31 Oct. 1914. NLI, RP, MS 15,524

in the life and death struggle now going on in Europe.<sup>47</sup> Jordan himself appeared to agree with Barry's sentiment but took care to qualify his views as an obligation he was under to present the situation 'as we see it here from day to day.'<sup>48</sup>

Less than one week later, a letter to Redmond from Edward J. Gallagher, the editor of the *Lowell Sun*, confirmed the growing sense of despair among League members. Gallagher agreed that there was nothing to be gained by holding a convention 'as it would most likely result in a split in the organisation and be used by our enemies to demonstrate discord with the position adopted by the party.'<sup>49</sup> That elements of discord already existed was evident from remarks Gallagher made regarding Jordan and Ryan. In addition to castigating Jordan for exercising 'little or no control' over the various branches, Gallagher rounded on Ryan, who as a candidate for Governor in a state heavily populated by German Americans, remained silent 'for political reasons.'<sup>50</sup> Before long, the proposed convention had been pushed out to December. Jordan and Ryan attributed this change to the exigencies of war-time politics, given parliament was due to reconvene and Irish Party attendance was required at Westminster.<sup>51</sup> By mid-November the convention had been postponed indefinitely, with the continuance of the European conflict cited as the reason behind this latest decision.<sup>52</sup> The failure to convene any major gathering at which party policy could be better explained, individual League members' fears assuaged, and general confidence restored, did great damage to the constitutional movement in America, and this was exacerbated by the defection of the *Irish World* newspaper.

Since the termination of the *United Irish League Bulletin of America* in 1912 the UILA had been left without an official voice in America.<sup>53</sup> The *Irish World*, which had steadfastly championed the reunited Irish Party under the editorship of Patrick Ford, was, since the death of the veteran nationalist in 1913, markedly more ambivalent towards it under his son Robert. In fact, one could say that post-

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Jordan to Redmond, 31 Oct. 1914. NLI, RP, MS 15,524

<sup>49</sup> Edward J. Gallagher to Redmond, 5 Nov. 1914. NLI, RP, MS 15,524

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Regarding Ryan's gubernatorial ambitions see Dennis J. Clark, 'Intrepid Men: Three Philadelphia Irish Leaders, 1880 to 1920' in Timothy J. Meagher (ed.), *From Paddy to Studs* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Inc., 1986), p. 106

<sup>51</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 20 Oct. 1914

<sup>52</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 14 Nov. 1914

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 5

Woodenbridge the *Irish World* became openly hostile to Redmond over the pro-British policy he had advocated for the National Volunteers. Patrick Egan, who contrary to MacNeill's assessment, appeared anything but senile, was particularly scathing in his damnation of the now renegade newspaper. The former Treasurer of the American Land League resigned from his position as business manager for the *Irish World* after it refused to publish a critique he wrote of a 'bitter editorial' which appeared following the Volunteer split.<sup>54</sup> Egan was so incensed with the position the paper had adopted on the temporary postponement of Home Rule that he felt compelled to inform Redmond that it had opened its columns to every 'crank, crook and ignoramus who sought to attack you.'<sup>55</sup> And in what should have been a troubling indicator of growing distrust between officers on the National Executive, Egan painted a worrying picture of collusion between its new editor Robert Ford and League President Michael J. Ryan. With the *Irish World* having closed its Volunteer fund, Egan highlighted a recent trip Ford undertook to Philadelphia. While Egan stopped short of accusing Ryan of being a party to the wider campaign denouncing the IPP's position on the war, he did state his belief that Ryan had given his approval to Ford to act in the manner he had.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Egan confirmed that he had heard 'over and over again' that Ryan would not accept re-election, and alluded to rumours reaching him that the League president was preparing to 'assail your policy.'<sup>57</sup> By late October, having given up on the *Irish World* altogether, Egan assured Redmond that he was 'endeavouring to secure all possible publicity through other channels' and cited the *Boston Sunday American* and the *New York Advocate* as potential options.<sup>58</sup>

Putting himself forward as a candidate who would like to do more work for the League on a full-time basis, Egan asked Redmond for a stipend of £25 per month. When he received £100 soon after as four months payment in advance he could only have interpreted this as a sign to continue in the manner he was.<sup>59</sup> Correspondence between Egan and Redmond, as well as between Egan and T.J. Hanna (Redmond's private secretary), understandably increased from this point, and the search for a

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<sup>54</sup> Patrick Egan to John Redmond, 29 Sep. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>55</sup> Egan to Redmond, 12 Oct. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Egan to Redmond, 20 Oct. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

suitable organ through which the party could appeal to its support base in America became central to these discussions. Having first broached the subject of establishing a new paper in November, Egan enquired from Hanna the following month whether funds for this purpose could be found. This enquiry saw Egan declare that ‘with \$10,000 now, and a further \$5,000 to follow, he could get the enterprise up and running.’<sup>60</sup>

Other League stalwarts had also been in touch with Redmond regarding the newspaper dilemma. Dr John G. Coyle of New York wrote to Redmond enquiring if the Irish Party had, in the past, ‘provided a financial allowance to the *Irish World*’.<sup>61</sup> If so, Coyle added, its withdrawal now ‘could be part responsible for that paper’s about turn and could also be the reason it is now accepting German money and advocating a pro-German position.’<sup>62</sup> Redmond was also corresponding with T.B. Fitzpatrick on the matter of a new voice for the party. In December, the Irish leader surprisingly dismissed the suggestion that the *Bulletin* be restarted as he did not think ‘that would meet the case at all.’<sup>63</sup> Perhaps, Redmond asked, it might be possible for some of the party’s friends in America ‘to obtain possession of some existing Irish American paper, or, failing that, to start a paper of their own’?<sup>64</sup> To further advance this cause Egan informed Hanna that he was going to Philadelphia to see Thomas F. Reilly and Hugh McCafferty, ‘excellent fellows, and rich.’<sup>65</sup> Jordan, for his part, posited the news that the *Sacred Heart Review (SHR)*, a Church bulletin which had published favourable commentary on the UILA and the IPP in the past, was about to change hands, and ‘will be managed by a friend of ours here on whom we can absolutely rely.’<sup>66</sup> A cursory check of its editorial board throughout this period, however, indicates that the *SHR* did not change hands as Jordan anticipated but remained under the management of the Right Rev. Monsignor O’Brien. And whether O’Brien was the ‘friend’ the League Secretary had in mind, or whether he was

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<sup>60</sup> Egan to Hanna, 12 Dec. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>61</sup> Dr John G. Coyle to John Redmond, 11 Nov. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,524

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. That the *Irish World* was being funded by the Germans was unsubstantiated.

<sup>63</sup> Redmond to T.B. Fitzpatrick, 16 Dec. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,524. Given his earlier support, the Irish leader’s aversion to restarting the *Bulletin* in 1914 is difficult to fathom. Perhaps, with John O’Callaghan’s passing, Redmond felt its reincarnation would be a pale imitation of the original.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Egan to Hanna, 17 Dec. 1914, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>66</sup> Jordan to Redmond, 31 Dec. 1914, NLI, RP, MS,15/236/11. See Chapter 5 re the *Sacred Heart Review*

alluding to the influence Cardinal O'Connell continued to hold over the paper, is unclear. While this option might appear to have been the simplest solution to the crisis, the fact that the *SHR* was a dedicated Catholic journal with limited space to devote to political discussion of any kind rendered it a poor substitute for the loss of the *Irish World*.

Another blow to the Party and the League occurred late in 1914 when the *Chicago Tribune*, which had regularly published articles by T.P. O'Connor, terminated its contract with the long-serving MP.<sup>67</sup> While O'Connor would go on to write for an American news syndicate later in the war, the loss of the contract with the *Chicago Tribune* represented yet another link that had been broken in the interim.<sup>68</sup> In other developments, Patrick Ford Jr., a brother of the new *Irish World* editor Robert Ford, proposed establishing a paper of his own supporting the Home Rule movement. Patrick Egan, however, had grave reservations about this. Welcoming of the idea in general, Egan lamented the fact such a paper would be outside the control of the League and doubted whether the individual championing the proposal had 'the education, the training, or the ballast to take any controlling point in such an enterprise.'<sup>69</sup> Egan also intimated that an acquaintance of Patrick Jr.'s, a Mr Maxwell, was preparing to approach Lord Northcliffe with a view to the British newspaper magnate funding the project. In an interesting postscript, however, Egan reported the tragic 'news' that Maxwell was on board the RMS *Lusitania*, the transatlantic liner sunk by a German U-Boat off the coast of Ireland on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1915.<sup>70</sup> Fearing Maxwell to be lost at sea, Hanna obviously considered Patrick Jr.'s proposal to have been dealt a fatal blow.

Running parallel to the efforts to secure a new paper for the party was a debate over the retention of the UILA office in Boston. This debate, more than any other, was responsible for bitter acrimony between National Executive officers holding conflicting opinions on the matter. Francis M. Carroll's account of the furore wrought by the proposal to close the office is primarily gleaned from the Redmond

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<sup>67</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-23*, p. 44

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Egan to Hanna, 7 May 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. Egan's report that Maxwell was on board the *Lusitania* was made in error as a search of the passenger list will confirm. See <https://www.rmslusitania.info/lusitania-passenger-list>

Papers which are held in the National Library of Ireland.<sup>71</sup> And returning to these sources is obligatory if one is to build on Carroll's research and fully understand the animosity that surfaced between the American League's New York Municipal Council and its National President, Michael J. Ryan.

The proposal to close the Boston office appears to have been taken by Ryan and League Treasurer T.B. Fitzpatrick without prior consultation with fellow Executive officers. The audacity of Ryan and Fitzpatrick in making such a proposal, together with the belief that the closure of the office 'would serve as a trump card for all the enemies of our cause,' elicited widespread consternation among League members in New York.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps, in an effort to better understand Ryan and Fitzpatrick's decision, the ceding by the National Executive of the appointment of a new League Secretary in 1913 to the President and Treasurer on that occasion had led both men to believe they could dispense with protocol at will.<sup>73</sup> This was demonstrably not the case however, as Egan and Jordan, supported by Redmond himself, led the counter-argument to keep the office open. Ryan and Fitzpatrick claimed that with the League all but defunct for the duration of the war, there was no need to incur the annual costs of \$1,500 associated with running the office. Both men argued that the clerical work which was needed to sustain the organisation could be done on their own business premises, that the current stenographer Miss Delaney could be let go, and that they would support reopening a dedicated office after the war if the need for one arose. When the New York Council ridiculed the view that financial considerations were behind the proposal and demanded a meeting of the National Executive before any such decision was acted upon, Ryan replied with a stinging rebuke to the Council President, Stephen McFarland. In brief, Ryan defended his position by alleging that the closure of the office in Boston had been contemplated and discussed with John O'Callaghan before the former League Secretary died, and that its retention since then had only been to facilitate Mr Jordan in his capacity as O'Callaghan's successor.<sup>74</sup> A sarcastic retort that if the New York Council was so concerned about the Boston office it might 'finance it themselves' preceded personal

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<sup>71</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-23*, pp. 41-43

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 5

<sup>74</sup> Michael J. Ryan to Stephen McFarland, 9 Mar. 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24



digs Ryan made at the expense of both Jordan and Egan.<sup>75</sup> Ryan denounced Jordan for ‘the dissemination of his interviews, the stories of his banquets, and the tales of his receptions’ while he castigated Egan for ‘his [unspecified] adventures abroad.’<sup>76</sup> Needless to say, the tone of Ryan’s letter to McFarland drew Egan’s ire like no previous action the League President had taken to date.

Egan’s frustration with the leadership of the League was compounded by Michael Jordan’s obstructionist approach to any attempts by the New York Council to reorganise the organisation at a local level. Egan informed Hanna in March that he had written to the League Secretary seeking a list containing the names of UIL members in New York so he could begin such a process and that Jordan had replied that he had been so upset by recent events that ‘he had not had the chance to give the affairs of the office any attention lately.’<sup>77</sup> Egan assured Hanna that his request constituted no more than ‘one hour’s work’ and that such obstacles demonstrated ‘the impossibility of doing anything in this country for the cause at home’ as long as the present leader is permitted to continue as the head of the movement.<sup>78</sup> More damning indictments followed in early April. By then Egan had begun to lament ‘the futility of temporizing with any one of the three [Ryan, Fitzpatrick, and Jordan]’ and he spelled out his growing concerns regarding each individual.<sup>79</sup> Ryan, Egan complained, ‘was bitterly hostile to our entire crowd, but, for political purposes, desired to maintain a plausible claim to honour – and to maintain that claim he is making to strangle the League.’<sup>80</sup> Fitzpatrick, Egan wrote, ‘has fallen absolutely under the influence of Ryan’, while Jordan ‘will do nothing that will be displeasing to Fitzpatrick.’<sup>81</sup> This, Egan believed, was the sole reason Jordan refused to send him the names he requested ‘although in every Board of Directors, or Council, or Committee, each member is entitled [Egan’s underlined emphasis] to the addresses of his associate members.’<sup>82</sup> Egan closed by assuring Hanna that he would await instructions from Redmond and that he would do nothing in the interim.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Ryan to McFarland, 9 Mar. 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24

<sup>77</sup> Egan to Hanna, 19 Mar. 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Egan to Hanna, 2 Apr. 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. The ‘political purposes’ Egan refers to are Ryan’s aforementioned gubernatorial ambitions.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

Redmond's reply must have exasperated the former Land League veteran. On receiving instructions to abandon his plans to reorganise the UIL in New York, however, Egan demonstrated admirable loyalty with his conviction that 'the party leader's word is law.'<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, he did remark that 'many of our friends here feel disappointed at being restrained from taking some organised action to help you, and to show in an authoritative manner that the Clan na Gael, the *Irish World*, the pro-German mosquito press, and their howling fanatical followers, do not voice the true sentiment of Irish America.'<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, Egan reported that they 'feel deeply the miserable attitude assumed by the so-called Executive officers in this crisis, who, instead of executing in good faith the duties of the offices to which they were elected have attempted to execute the League itself.'<sup>85</sup> As a consequence, Egan added, 'we all look upon Ryan and his colleagues, the Fords [Robert more than Patrick Jr.], as no more deserving of consideration than is usually accorded in our time to the soldiers who desert in the face of the enemy, while Messrs' Fitzpatrick and Jordan are regarded [here] as very ordinary malingerers.'<sup>86</sup>

In the context of the crises facing the American League at this juncture Redmond's response must have seemed belated and inadequate. Faced with the cancellation of the biennial convention, the loss of the *Irish World*, and a veritable insurrection over the proposed closure of the Boston office, the Irish leader chose to dispatch Daniel Boyle to America to soothe furrowed brows and restore confidence in the increasingly undermined constitutional movement.

#### Papering over the cracks

Daniel Boyle was well known to the American League, having accompanied John Redmond on the party chairman's visit to the US in September 1910. A native of Fermanagh (b. 1859) Boyle emigrated to Manchester, England, in 1877, where he enjoyed a successful career in that city's municipal transportation system.<sup>87</sup> Founder of the first Manchester Branch of the Irish National League, Boyle entered national politics in January 1910 when he contested - and won - the North Mayo seat for the

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<sup>83</sup> Egan to Redmond, 6 May 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> Mervyn Busted, 'Resistance and Respectability: Dilemmas of Irish Migrant Politics in Victorian Britain', *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 27, No's 2-3 (Jul/Nov. 2009), p. 188

Irish Parliamentary Party.<sup>88</sup> When Boyle arrived back in America in May 1915, the retention of the UILA office in Boston had been secured after the New York Municipal Council agreed to share the associated expenses with the Catholic Federation of the Archdiocese of Boston.<sup>89</sup>

The correspondence Boyle entered into with Redmond during this mission is revelatory, not only for the clarification of prevailing attitudes among the officers on the League Executive but for Redmond's directive as to how best he wanted them to proceed. Boyle's initial letter from Boston was notable for two reasons; Michael Jordan's failure to greet him due to 'a prior engagement in Maine', and the admission by T.B. Fitzpatrick that 'his confidence in Jordan was plenty disturbed.'<sup>90</sup> Boyle's next letter, from Philadelphia, added to these concerns when Thomas Reilly's 'useful resume of the local situation' confirmed League President Michael Ryan's 'pro-German sympathies.'<sup>91</sup> Fortunately, Boyle added, Reilly's view of the attitude to be adopted by Irish Americans 'harmonises exactly with your [Redmond's] suggestions to me, viz, to keep the Boston office going, and to avoid all Conventions, Committee Meetings, and Conferences until the end of the war, after which the new conditions must guide future action.'<sup>92</sup> Boyle finished by assuring his chairman that Ryan had agreed to avoid any gathering where 'differences of opinion' might be expressed, but that the League president was very disappointed with Michael Jordan's 'failure to rise to the necessities of his position', and that he thought the whole debate surrounding the potential closure of the Boston office to have been 'very petty.'<sup>93</sup> It was Boyle's final letter, however, which is the most revealing of all. In it, Boyle recalls a dinner party held in his honour the night before he left Philadelphia at which twenty-five of Redmond's most loyal supporters in that city were in attendance.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question*, p. 42. The Catholic Federation of the Archdiocese of Boston was led by William Henry Cardinal O'Connell, a long-time friend of the UILA. See Chapter 5 re O'Connell's collaboration with Patrick Ford in denouncing socialism before and during the Dublin Lockout.

<sup>90</sup> Daniel Boyle to John Redmond, 3 May 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/1

<sup>91</sup> Boyle to Redmond, 6 May 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/1

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

Describing the event as informal and intimate, Boyle was struck by Ryan's opportune use of the occasion to highlight his personal views regarding the war in Europe. After Boyle made a speech outlining the Irish Party's position, all the remaining guests had agreed that, given the prevailing circumstances when the conflict broke out, Redmond had chosen the only course of action open to him, and that they were willing to abide by his decision going forward. As the host, however, Ryan's speech was the last and lengthiest of the evening, and was remarkable for both its tone and invective. Going beyond a mere expression of sympathy for his Teutonic friends, Ryan confirmed his belief that 'Germany would smash England', his aspiration that 'England's hour had been struck', and his conviction that 'Germany was to be the new world power.'<sup>94</sup> If such rhetoric did not do enough to spoil the hitherto jovial atmosphere, Ryan went on to describe 'the hellish past of England' ... 'the famine period' ... 'the coffin ships' ... [and] 'the whitened bones marking a path from Galway to New York.'<sup>95</sup> Boyle recalled how Ryan's long recital was listened to 'in absolute silence', with the League president's wife dutifully 'nodding [her] assent.'<sup>96</sup> Although Ryan wound up with a pledge to continue supporting Redmond and the Irish Party, few present could but have been alarmed at the nature of his speech or the expression of views so obviously at variance with those of the organisation he purported to represent. As guest of honour, Boyle was afforded the opportunity to close the formalities. Gracious (if not a little patronising), the Party envoy said he considered the League president's attitude to be 'understandable', before diplomatically stating that 'the duty of Nationalists was to apply themselves to the problems and circumstances of today, not to past generations.'<sup>97</sup>

Returning to New York the very next day, Boyle reported on another meeting he had, this time with Patrick Egan. Egan, it appeared, was at complete odds with the directive to avoid any, and all, gatherings where divisions of opinion might be expressed. With Dr Coyle holding similar reservations, it took a concerted effort by Boyle to get both men to agree to toe the party line. Egan, it appears, was not too happy, for he wrote to Redmond again in June ridiculing the 'quasi-assurance of

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<sup>94</sup> Boyle to Redmond, 14 May 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/1

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*

loyalty' Ryan was said to have given to Boyle when the two men met in Philadelphia.<sup>98</sup> Pulling no punches, Egan pleaded with Redmond that for the League to remain relevant something had to be done 'to abate the scandal of having this man [Ryan] masquerade as its president.'<sup>99</sup> These letters, and others of a similar nature, are remarkable for the fact that Redmond's perceived remedy for the malady affecting the constitutional nationalist movement in the United States was to paper over the cracks and sit the war out. Having ignored Irish-American opinion when the conflict broke out, it seemed he wasn't going to pay too much attention to it now. Unfathomably believing the crisis attributed to the war to be temporary, Redmond perfected the art of procrastination, and the United Irish League of America continued to go into decline.

A new paper, *Ireland*, was established in January 1916 following Egan's successful appeal to the 'rich fellows' in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, its opening New Year's Greeting from John Redmond was followed by the tragic news reporting the recent death of Edward O'Meagher Condon, the UILA's strongest link to the men of '67.<sup>100</sup> Describing itself as 'a weekly periodical devoted to the interests of Ireland, to encouraging interest in Irish art, industries, music, literature and history, and more especially, to supporting the Irish Parliamentary Party in restoring and preserving self-government in Ireland' *Ireland* believed it was fit for purpose.<sup>101</sup> And a Board of Directors which included John G. Coyle, Thomas F. Reilly, Stephen McFarland and Shane Leslie, offered encouragement that it was. With Coyle, Reilly, and McFarland prominent in the UILA, the latter was known to Redmond from his time in Ireland. A nationalist convert from a leading Co. Monaghan Ascendancy family, Leslie had been introduced to the Irish leader by none other than Winston Churchill, Leslie's first cousin.<sup>102</sup> After suffering a nervous breakdown at the Front, Leslie moved to the US from where he worked to neutralise Irish opposition to America's entry into the war.<sup>103</sup> Given the new paper's broad mission, however, early editions appear to have

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<sup>98</sup> Egan to Redmond, 18 Jun. 1915, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/5

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter 5

<sup>101</sup> *Ireland*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 8 Jan. 1916. See

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951000750823q;view=1up;seq=5>

<sup>102</sup> Charles Lysaght, 'Leslie, John Randolph (Shane)', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=D818A190BF9099580A09A2542683FC2A#>

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

fallen short of expectation, and John Redmond wrote to Daniel Boyle to tell him as much.<sup>104</sup>

*Ireland* was edited by Joseph Cyrillus Walsh, a Canadian-born journalist with a keen interest in Irish affairs.<sup>105</sup> A former editor of the *Montreal Herald*, it was Walsh's move to New York at the outbreak of World War 1 which brought him to the attention of Irish Americans seeking to establish a new publication dedicated to the Irish Party.<sup>106</sup> After extending congratulations to Walsh on the attractiveness of the new paper, Redmond was highly critical of the primacy afforded historical and literary subjects over those relating to the current situation in Ireland.<sup>107</sup> To address this imbalance Redmond suggested that the copious newspaper extracts sent out to America every week detailing Irish political and war news, together with an 'Irish Letter' which accompanied this material, should be the lead features in the paper.<sup>108</sup> While Redmond may have felt his intervention via Boyle would suffice, he was compelled to write to Walsh in person a mere fortnight later. This time Redmond was forced to admonish the editor for publishing an article which stated "Home Rule is promised no more". Redmond reminded Walsh that not only was this 'an injurious impression to create in the minds of our friends in America ... it was simply not true.'<sup>109</sup> Whatever explanation Walsh offered in his defence must have placated the Irish leader, for Redmond wrote back the following month in a far more conciliatory tone. Pronouncing his amazement at the editor having achieved a paying circulation of 10,000 the party chairman gently reminded him of his obligations under their 'arrangement' to circulate additional copies for free.<sup>110</sup> However, given the proximity of this letter to the events that were about to engulf Ireland, one wonders if the distribution of free copies thereafter proved detrimental to the Irish Party in the long run.

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<sup>104</sup> Boyle had returned to America early in the autumn of 1915 at the behest of his party leader.

<sup>105</sup> Joseph Cyrillus Walsh Papers, 1913-1947. 'Introduction', <https://archives.nypl.org/mss/3212#bioghist>

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>107</sup> Redmond to Boyle, 21 Feb. 1916, NYPL, Joseph Cyrillus Walsh Papers, Box 2, Folio 5

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>109</sup> Redmond to Walsh, 6 Mar. 1916, NYPL, Walsh Papers, Box 2, Folio 5

<sup>110</sup> Redmond to Walsh, 7 Apr. 1916, NYPL, Walsh Papers, Box 2, Folio 5

## The Rising and Irish America

The long-awaited (from a separatist perspective) insurrection against British rule in Ireland began on Easter Monday, 1916. On that date, 24<sup>th</sup> April, Irish Volunteers and members of the Irish Citizen Army, led by members of a secret military council within the IRB, occupied several key buildings in Dublin in anticipation of a larger uprising nationwide.<sup>111</sup> That their hopes were dashed was down to a series of logistical and administrative failings, some of their own making and some outside of their control. After five days of fighting the inevitable outcome of a battle between brave but inexperienced ideologues and a numerically superior and better equipped army, was realised. The rebel surrender which followed should have relegated this latest insurrection to the annals of Irish history, there to sit alongside the equally heroic, yet futile, efforts of earlier generations. That it did not is purely down to British incompetence. In an exhibition of base brutality, fifteen individuals suspected of leading the rising were executed on the authority of hastily convened military tribunals, while thousands of others suspected of varying degrees of involvement were rounded up and imprisoned.<sup>112</sup> As far as this study is concerned, the Easter Rising, or more accurately its bitter aftermath, confirmed the parlous state of constitutional nationalism in both Ireland and Irish America. And its ultimate demise can be attributed as much to IPP impotence in the wake of the insurrection as it can to any sudden appetite for the re-emergence of Fenianism.

Before the first shots had been fired in Dublin, efforts to effect a sea-change in nationalist opinion in Irish America had already taken place. Recognising the need to address the ‘conspiratorial nature’ of Clan na Gael, advanced nationalists in the US had established a more publicly palatable organisation, the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF, or the Friends), at an Irish Race convention held in New York in March 1916.<sup>113</sup> The Friends were the brainchild of John Devoy and Daniel F. Cohalan, a New York State Supreme Court Justice and long-time associate of the veteran Fenian. And evidence that even moderate Irish-American opinion was beginning to

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<sup>111</sup> The Military Council of the IRB was established in Dec. 1915 with a view to planning an insurrection at the earliest possible opportunity.

<sup>112</sup> A sixteenth individual, Roger Casement, was executed on 3 Aug. 1916 after a lengthy public trial in London.

<sup>113</sup> Michael Doorley, *Irish American Diaspora Nationalism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 36-37

seek an alternative to the UILA could be found in William Bourke Cockran's role as 'one of the principal speakers' in attendance.<sup>114</sup> When the Easter Rising occurred Cohalan used the Friends 'to exploit the Irish American emotional response' in his effort to further the campaign to keep America neutral in the European war.<sup>115</sup> And while Victor Herbert, the renowned Irish American composer, was elected president of the new organisation, it was Cohalan who controlled its Clan-dominated executive.<sup>116</sup> With reports slow to cross the Atlantic, the Irish rebellion was practically over before details of the fighting appeared in the Irish-American press. Predictably, when news did arrive, the papers associated with advanced nationalism were effusive in their support for the rebels while the papers sympathetic to the constitutional movement condemned the absence of democratic legitimacy attached to the recent revolt.

One prominent newspaper carried conflicting messages on how the rising was viewed from a wider imperial perspective. The *Boston Daily Globe*, in deference to Redmond, reported a flood of cablegrams from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and other parts of the Empire, repudiating the action of the rebellious elements in Dublin.<sup>117</sup> Simultaneously, the same report cited John D. Moore's (the National Secretary of FOIF) argument that recent events in Dublin had shattered 'the carefully constructed myth that the mere passage of a mock Home Rule bill had transformed Ireland into an integral part of the British Empire.'<sup>118</sup> All things considered, Redmond managed to retain the sympathy of the majority of Irish Americans in the immediacy of the moment. This included the Irish Party's American affiliate, the United Irish League of America, and the highly-influential American Catholic Church. Michael J. Ryan wrote to Redmond expressing the National Executives' abhorrence at recent events while several Catholic dignitaries used the American Catholic press to denounce the rebellion.<sup>119</sup> Nationalist opinion soon changed,

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<sup>114</sup> Paul Rouse, 'Cockran, William Bourke', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do;jsessionid=A13B9C4B04292F134DAB254ED82B2953>

<sup>115</sup> Michael Doorley, 'Judge Cohalan and American involvement in the Easter Rising' in Miriam Nyhan Grey (ed), *Ireland's Allies: America and the 1916 Easter Rising* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2016), p. 152

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p. 159

<sup>117</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 28 Apr. 1916

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>119</sup> Catholic dignitaries who denounced the Rising included the Dean of the American Catholic prelate, James Cardinal Gibbons and New York's John Cardinal Farley, while Catholic publications which condemned the rebellion included the *Catholic Messenger*, *Catholic Transcript*, and *Catholic*



however, when news of Britain's disproportionate response filtered through. And if John Devoy and the Clan were dismayed by the hostile reception the Rising received in Irish-American and Catholic circles, they were delighted by the revulsion which greeted its aftermath.<sup>120</sup> Considering the Dublin Castle authorities' abject failure to prevent the IRB-led insurrection the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Augustine Birrell, resigned his Cabinet post. Now under Martial Law, Ireland was placed under the control of British Army General, Sir John Maxwell. Determined to exact maximum retribution, Maxwell convened a series of Military Tribunals designed to make those deemed culpable for the rebellion pay for their treasonous behaviour. And it was because of this draconian response that fifteen men were summarily executed between 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> May 1916.

Despite repeated warnings that demonstrations of such cold-hearted vindictiveness would prove counter-productive, Maxwell made the grievous error of providing the republican movement with the currency it most valued, nationalist martyrs.<sup>121</sup> Initial outrage at the insurrection soon morphed into collective sympathy for the condemned men. And it is no exaggeration to say that with every rebel who fell to a firing squad another nail was firmly driven into the constitutional nationalist coffin. The 'Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic', issued on the day of the Rising and read out by Padraig Pearse outside the GPO in Dublin, laid claim to the support of Ireland's 'exiled children in America.'<sup>122</sup> And few can dispute that John Devoy and Clan na Gael did indeed provide financial and ideological support to the rebels. Robert Schmuhl notes that the Clan are estimated to have contributed '\$100,000 for weaponry and other costs associated with the Rising' ... while 'the *Gaelic American*, and its circulation of 28,000, was an unwavering advocate for the rebel cause.'<sup>123</sup> However, if there is a spurious legitimacy associated with the claim in the Proclamation, Alan J. Ward has argued

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*Citizen*. See Thomas J. Rowland, 'The American Catholic Press and the Easter Rebellion', *Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 81, No. 1 (Jan. 1995), pp. 67-83

<sup>120</sup> Thomas J. Rowland, 'The American Catholic Press and the Easter Rising' in Grey (ed), *Ireland's Allies*: p. 296

<sup>121</sup> John Dillon had identified the necessity to refrain from any 'wholesale shooting of prisoners' while Redmond pleaded that 'the greatest possible leniency should be shown to the rank-and-file.' See Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 475

<sup>122</sup> Aldous & Puirseil, 'The Proclamation of the Irish Republic', *We Declare*: p. 114

<sup>123</sup> Robert Schmuhl, 'All Changed, Changed Utterly': Easter 1916 and America, UCD Scholarcast, Series 6: (Spring 2012) The UCD/Notre Dame Lectures

that, post-rebellion, greater numbers [of Irish Americans] were ready to be mobilised.<sup>124</sup>

William Bourke Cockran, increasingly alarmed at the British response to the rising, was moved to remonstrate against the atrocities taking place in Dublin. Addressing a meeting at Carnegie Hall convened by the Friends of Irish Freedom on 14<sup>th</sup> May, the Sligo-born Congressman described the recently executed rebels as ‘men of excellence, equal to the best that could not be paralleled anywhere in the world.’<sup>125</sup> By June, Cockran was justifying US intervention in Ireland when revisiting a radical solution first proposed by W.T. Stead in 1902.<sup>126</sup> For Cockran, a precedent for American intervention had been established forty-five years earlier when eight Cuban medical students had been similarly executed by Spanish troops for defacing the grave of a Spanish folk hero.<sup>127</sup> And in alluding to such a possibility in this instance, the widely-respected Congressman was reminding the entire Atlantic World that the United States had both the means and the mandate to do so again.<sup>128</sup> While nationalists of every persuasion were busy denouncing British injustice, John Redmond was adhering to the protocols of the conscientious parliamentary statesman he had always prided himself on being. Once the appetite for executions appeared sated, Prime Minister Asquith visited Ireland to gauge the mood of the nation for himself.<sup>129</sup> And convinced that only a measure of self-government could placate the country (and make a proposed Conscription Bill acceptable to the masses) Asquith determined to revisit Home Rule with a view to its more immediate implementation. The political horse-trading that ensued centred, as ever, on the question of partition. And just as they had two years earlier, the negotiations failed ‘amid a welter of

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<sup>124</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations*, p. 111

<sup>125</sup> William Bourke Cockran, 14 May 1916, NYPL, Cockran Papers, Box 28, Folio 2. That the meeting was convened by the Friends of Irish Freedom can be found in Doorley, *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism*, p. 47. See also Brundage, ‘Key Themes in the Social Thought of New York’s Irish Nationalists, 1890-1916’ in Bayor and Meagher (eds.), *The New York Irish*, p. 334

<sup>126</sup> Cockran, 25 Jun. 1916, NYPL, WBCP, Box 28, Folio 2. W.T. Stead’s reference to US intervention in Ireland appears in W.T. Stead, ‘The Americanization of the World’ in *Review of Review’s Annual 1902* (London: 1902), p. 26

<sup>127</sup> Patrick M. Sweeney, ‘“Bursts of Impassioned Eloquence”: William Bourke Cockran, American Intervention, and the Easter Rising’ in Grey (ed.), *Ireland’s Allies*: p. 217

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>129</sup> Asquith arrived in Ireland on the same day (12 May) that James Connolly and Seán McDermott were executed. No further executions took place until Roger Casement was sent to the gallows in London on 3 Aug.

competing interpretations and accusations of underhandedness'.<sup>130</sup> The immediate impact was to undermine the IPP by its failure to deliver yet again on the promise of self-government, and Redmond resolved thereafter, even when Lloyd George succeeded Asquith as Prime Minister in December 1916, to refrain from ever again entering into direct negotiations on the question of Home Rule.<sup>131</sup>

The damage to Redmond's reputation in the eyes of advanced nationalists on this occasion stemmed not from the Irish leader's default recourse to compromise and conciliation, but from the detached indifference he was accused of displaying to events in Ireland and elsewhere. This accusation had some merit, in that Redmond made no public denunciation of British repression which could accurately be said to have matched the mood of the nation at that time. Not only were thousands of Irishmen wrongfully detained in internment camps in England and Wales, but the much-anticipated public trial of Roger Casement in London had resulted in the now infamous Knight of the Realm being sentenced to death. The public perception of Redmond as indifferent to the suffering of his fellow countrymen arose not because he did not care about their individual plight, but because Lloyd George, who had been tasked by Asquith with leading the Home Rule negotiations after the rising, had requested all parties involved refrain from making any inflammatory statements which might derail the process.<sup>132</sup> Ever the statesman, Redmond assented. And advanced nationalists were quick to portray the Irish leader's silence as acquiescence, taking every opportunity to accuse the party chairman of having lent his tacit support to the repressive measures then in operation. Moderates, exasperated by recent events, waited more in hope than expectation. And if confusion reigned in Ireland it was certainly exaggerated in Irish America, where the IPP's failure to keep the UILA adequately informed of ongoing developments placed further strain on transatlantic relations.<sup>133</sup>

In the aftermath of the Easter Rising, Redmond confidant Shane Leslie joined with the British Ambassador, Cecil Spring Rice, in urging the British government not to

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<sup>130</sup> M.C. Rast, 'The Ulster Unionists "On Velvet" Home Rule and Partition in the Lloyd George Proposals, 1916', *American Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 14 (2017), p. 113

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, p. 132

<sup>132</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 499

<sup>133</sup> The Redmond Papers in the NLI are notable for the dearth of correspondence between the Irish leader and UILA officials in the summer of 1916.

execute the leaders of the Irish rebellion.<sup>134</sup> In a cable dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1916, the ‘unanimous horror provoked in Irish America by the executions’ led Leslie to inform the Irish leader that ‘it is wise for the Party, as a Party, not to expect much popularity or support again in America.’<sup>135</sup> Touching on the sentiment aroused by the government’s actions, Leslie concluded by warning ‘I do not think that anything will ever induce the Irish Americans to repudiate or forget the dead Sinn Féiners.’<sup>136</sup> Whether Leslie’s advice had any effect on Redmond is open to debate. What we know with a fair degree of certainty is that the party chairman continued to place all his eggs in the Home Rule basket, and this unerring faith in the constitutional process served only to divide nationalist opinion in Irish America.

The reprieve the Irish Party had enjoyed under the Suspensory Act was over. And now that Home Rule was back on the negotiating table stumbling blocks that had thwarted its implementation in 1914 began to resurface. However, of all the problems associated with the nationalist struggle for independence, few created as much controversy as the prospect of partition. And this truism applied to Irish America as much as it did to Ireland itself. There, the animosity aroused by John Redmond’s initial willingness to compromise on this issue had alienated many of the UILA’s most fervent supporters, and Catherine M. Burns has highlighted how this was particularly true for the women in the organisation.<sup>137</sup> Their passion for the preservation of one, indivisible, Ireland preceded the crisis brought about by the onset of the Great War, and their defection from the American League can be identified as the moment the organisation began to unravel.

### Partition and Irish America

Highly-publicized appearances by Miss Ellen Ford, Miss Sabina Davitt, and Miss Mary O’Flaherty at biennial UILA conventions were anything but a public relations stunt.<sup>138</sup> The National Executive was indebted to its female members for their fundraising prowess while the women, in turn, were welcoming of the opportunity to

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<sup>134</sup> Lysaght, ‘Leslie, John Randolph (Shane)’, *DIB*.

<sup>135</sup> Shane Leslie to John Redmond, 3 Jul. 1916, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/14

<sup>136</sup> Leslie to Redmond, 3 Jul. 1916, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/14

<sup>137</sup> Catherine M. Burns, ‘The Loyal Irish: Pro-War Patriotism and Home Rule Activism in New York City’, *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer/Samreadh 2016)

<sup>138</sup> Tara M. McCarthy, ‘Woman Suffrage and Irish Nationalism: Ethnic Appeals and Alliances in America’, *Women’s History Review* Vol. 23, No. 2 (2014), p. 196

contribute to the struggle for home rule.<sup>139</sup> Yet, while the IPP's position on suffrage had been a constant bug-bear for the majority of Irish-American women, those affiliated to the UILA generally refrained from indulging in any overt criticism of the League's parent organisation. And that remained the case until 1914. It was then that a group of resolute women broke ranks in a demonstration of nationalist, rather than gender-inspired, indignation.

The first 'signs of discontent' arose when female Home Rulers in New York formed a distinct body, the United Irishwomen, to protest against Prime Minister Asquith's plan to exclude certain parts of Ulster from the Third Home Rule Bill.<sup>140</sup> Led by Dr Gertrude B. Kelly, the United Irishwomen believed they were taking a stand against 'a misguided parliamentary path to Home Rule'.<sup>141</sup> A pioneering abdominal surgeon by profession, Kelly came from a family with strong nationalist traditions; from her father's involvement with the New Jersey branch of the Land League to her own association with the UILA.<sup>142</sup> At a Carnegie Hall meeting organised by Dr Kelly in March 1914, a resolution questioning the authority of the power holders in Ireland presented Ireland's nationhood as an ethical issue transcending politics.<sup>143</sup> And in July, a further resolution stating her continued opposition to the geographical mutilation of Ireland was cabled to the *Freeman's Journal* as well as to the main Irish leaders including T.P. O'Connor, Edward Carson and John Redmond.<sup>144</sup> Together with visiting speakers from Ireland, the New York women laboured to oppose subsequent Irish participation in the Great War and demanded the immediate establishment of a free and united Ireland. This practical alignment of Irish-American and Irish Republican women would lead to the eventual amalgamation of the United Irishwomen with Cumann na mBan, and to this end the work of another female nationalist, Sydney Gifford, was critical.

A former member of Inghinidhe na hÉireann, a member of the Sinn Féin executive since 1911, and an activist in the suffrage campaign, Gifford often contributed

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid

<sup>140</sup> Burns, 'The Loyal Irish:', p. 60

<sup>141</sup> Mary C. Kelly, *The Shamrock and the Lily: The New York Irish and the Creation of a Transatlantic Identity, 1845-1921* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2005), p. 63

<sup>142</sup> Miriam Nyhan Grey, 'Dr Gertrude B. Kelly and the Founding of the New York Cumann na mBan' in Grey (ed), *Ireland's Allies*, pp. 76-77

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 79

<sup>144</sup> Ibid

articles to the *Irish Freedom* newspaper under the pen-name John Brennan.<sup>145</sup> Her sister Muriel's marriage to Thomas McDonagh (one of the rebels subsequently executed for his role in the Easter Rising) in 1912 is believed to have 'encouraged her radicalism', while two of Sydney's other sisters shared the family trait for idealism.<sup>146</sup> When she arrived in America in June 1914, an introductory letter from Tom Clarke facilitated a meeting with John Devoy that left her disappointed with the Clan na Gael leader's patronizing attitude.<sup>147</sup> On her departure from Ireland she had promised to start Cumann na mBan branches in the US but found it difficult to find like-minded women during the first few months of her stay in America.<sup>148</sup> After coming to the attention of Gertrude Kelly, however, Gifford was invited to speak before the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and having impressed its president, Mary McWhorter, foundations for the first branch of the US Cumann na mBan were laid.<sup>149</sup>

Cumann na mBan, who were introduced briefly in Chapter 5, became the dominant nationalist organisation for Irish women from 1914. Eclipsing Inghinidhe na hÉireann (INE, est. 1900) in popularity, Cumann na mBan began life as a support organisation for the newly-established Irish Volunteers. While INE and the Cumann were both committed to the complete independence of Ireland, the Cumann were markedly more pragmatic in their efforts to achieve it. Margaret Ward has highlighted how, in addition to fundraising on the Volunteers behalf, women in the Cumann were practicing first aid, learning how to drill, mastering signalling techniques, and perfecting their marksmanship, in preparation for the time such skills might be required on the field of battle.<sup>150</sup> The attraction of engaging in such valuable work saw Cumann na mBan grow in tandem with the Volunteers and by October 1914, six months after its establishment, the women's organisation could

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<sup>145</sup> Frances Clarke, 'Czira (Gifford), Sydney Madge ('John Brennan')', *DIB*.  
<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2356&searchClicked=clicked&quickadvsearch=yes>

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* Of Sydney's other sisters, Grace would marry Joseph Plunkett hours before his execution in 1916 while Nellie was a prominent socialist and member of the Irish Citizen Army.

<sup>147</sup> Sydney Gifford Czira, *The Years Flew By: Recollections of Madame Sydney Czira* (Dublin: Gifford and Craven, 1974), p. 73

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76

<sup>150</sup> Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1989), p. 93

boast sixty-three branches nationwide.<sup>151</sup> Redmond's Woodenbridge address, however, split the Volunteers, and female nationalists faced the very same dilemma as their male counterparts.<sup>152</sup> While Sinéad McCoole alleges that no branch of the Cumann became associated with Redmond's National Volunteers after the split, Ann Matthews maintains the situation mirrored that of the Volunteers themselves, with the original organisation reduced to a rump.<sup>153</sup> Cal McCarthy defers to a leading member of the Cumann at the time, Jennie Wyse Power, on the matter. Wyse Power recalled that 'for many weeks after what is known as the Volunteer split, Cumann na mBan made no move to stand by the Irish Volunteers only. This was not due to want of sympathy with the stand taken by them, [Power continued] but from practical reasons.'<sup>154</sup> There is no disputing the fact, however, that the original Cumann Executive did issue a manifesto in October 1914 'repudiating John Redmond', and sent it to all branches for approval.<sup>155</sup> The effect of this action was to create a split in the Cumann very much along the lines of the split in the Volunteer movement itself. While the majority rejected the manifesto, the rump declared its allegiance to MacNeill's Irish Volunteers and a second Cumann na mBan, committed solely to the ideals of separatism, was born.<sup>156</sup> It was to this separatist Cumann that Sydney Gifford, Labour activist and republican Countess Markievicz, and literary critic Mary Colum subscribed, and it was to this same Cumann that Kelly and the New York women came to lend their support.<sup>157</sup>

The stand the New York women took over partition and the war alienated them from the mainstream UILA. And in October 1914 Kelly reacted to this alienation by formally redirecting her efforts to persuade the women of Ireland to follow her lead. Imagining 'a unity of all women of the Irish race' Kelly expressed her belief that 'the

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 95

<sup>152</sup> See Chapter 5 for Redmond's Woodenbridge speech.

<sup>153</sup> Sinéad McCoole, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years, 1900-1923* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press Ltd., 2003), p. 30 and Ann Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women, 1900-1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010), p. 89

<sup>154</sup> Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2007), p. 35

<sup>155</sup> Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women, 1900-1922*, p. 107

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 109

<sup>157</sup> Countess Constance Markievicz went on to take a leading part in the Easter Rising in 1916. See Senia Pašeta, 'Markievicz, Constance Georgine', *DIB*.

<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5452> Mary Colum immigrated to America in 1914 with her husband, the renowned poet Padraic Colum. Despite plans to stay in the US for only a few months the Colums settled there for the rest of their lives. See Maureen Murphy, 'Colum, Mary Catherine ('Molly')', *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId-a18888>

women at home will see to it that no husband, brother, father or son, leaves its shores until Ireland is free.’<sup>158</sup> The establishment of the first American auxiliary to Cumann na mBan that December, which became known as the Irish Women’s Council (IWC), only served to embolden Kelly and her cohort of dissenters. Under the guidance of Mary Colum, a former member of the provisional committee of the Cumann na mBan in Ireland, the IWC set out to encourage women ‘whose bodies birthed and hearts protected the members of the race’ to stop their men from joining the British army and dying for an England and a Home Rule that barred Ulster.<sup>159</sup> And as a direct result of the New York women’s refusal to stay silent on policies they were vehemently opposed to, the American League changed ‘from a mixed-sex organisation to one composed of men who blended support for Irish Home Rule with jingoistic American patriotism.’<sup>160</sup>

The full impact of Irish and Irish-American women campaigning against the potential exclusion of Ulster from Home Rule and Ireland’s participation in the war would not be felt until after the 1916 Easter Rising. It was then that a procession of Republican women made several visits to the US undermining the Irish Party’s failed policies. The most celebrated of these was undoubtedly Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, the leading Irish suffragette, whose pacifist husband Francis was murdered by British soldiers in the immediate aftermath of the Irish revolution. Building on the work of Min Ryan, Margaret Skinnider, Nellie Gifford, and Nora Connolly, Sheehy-Skeffington spoke at over 250 meetings in America between January 1917 and June 1918.<sup>161</sup> At Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Hanna gave a lengthy address in which she blamed John Redmond for the deaths of many misguided young Irishmen who went out and enlisted for England thinking she [England] had changed her position toward Ireland.<sup>162</sup> And on other notable occasions the recently-widowed suffragette spoke in California opposing any division of Ireland, and gave a

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<sup>158</sup> Burns, ‘The Loyal Irish’, p. 65

<sup>159</sup> Ibid

<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Joanne Mooney Eichacker, *Irish Republican Women in America: Lecture Tours, 1916-1925* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2003), pp. 58-62. Min Ryan, Margaret Skinnider, Nellie Gifford and Nora Connolly had all played an active role in the Rising, as members of either Cumann Na mBan or the Irish Citizen Army.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p. 67



lengthy interview to the *Chicago Examiner* dismissing the Home Rule settlement that had been offered as a solution to the Ulster Question in 1914.<sup>163</sup>

On reflection, the New York Home Rule women became a constant thorn in the side of the constitutional movement in Irish America, and the decline that began with the revolt over partition was rendered permanent by Redmond's decision to offer the Volunteers for service in the war. As significant as these women's actions were, however, they were dwarfed post-Rising by the debate surrounding President Woodrow Wilson's bid for re-election and the prospect of US entry into the war. And with admirable consistency, advanced and moderate nationalists were as polarised on this as they were on so many other matters.

### US entry into the Great War

The American presidential election of 1916 divided Irish-American opinion like no other election before it. Traditional support for the Democratic Party candidate (the sitting president, Woodrow Wilson) was called into question by those who labelled him 'an Ulster Orangeman.'<sup>164</sup> Wilson's record in office had done little to endear him to Irish Americans. He had, after all, reversed the Panama Canal Tolls Act in 1913, and cast aspersions on immigrant patriotism by alluding to its hyphenated identity as evidence of misplaced loyalty. Subsequently accused of failing to prevent the execution of Roger Casement in August 1916, Wilson was regarded by advanced nationalists as pro-British. While Robert Ford of the *Irish World* mistakenly believed the election would 'in all probability' depend on the Irish-American vote, Wilson himself appeared unconcerned.<sup>165</sup>

In response to a declaration of disapproval from the Irish-born president of the American Truth Society, Jeremiah O'Leary, Wilson declared he would be 'deeply

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<sup>163</sup> Eichacker, *Irish Republican Women in America*: p. 77. The *Irish World* gave extensive coverage to Sheehy-Skeffington's tours of the United States, even sponsoring a trip she took to San Francisco in April 1918. This provides further evidence of Robert Ford's pro-Republican stance. See Eichacker, p. 84

<sup>164</sup> William M. Leary Jr., 'Woodrow Wilson, Irish Americans, and the Election of 1916', *Journal of American History* Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jun. 1967), p. 57. The 'Ulster Orangeman' theme was regularly employed by the *Gaelic American* and the *Irish World* and Leary Jr. references Charles Callan Tansill, *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom, 1866-1922: An Old Story based upon New Data* (New York: Devon-Adair, 1957), p. 213 to support this.

<sup>165</sup> Leary Jr., 'Woodrow Wilson, Irish Americans, and the Election of 1916', p. 60

mortified if O’Leary, or anybody like him, voted for me.’<sup>166</sup> Wilson was right not to be overly concerned, for he proved popular enough to defeat the Republican Party candidate Charles Evan Hughes without the support of those hostile to his pro-British leanings. As events transpired, most immigrants were members of the working class, and labour issues were central to how Irish Americans cast their votes. For this reason, Wilson’s support for the Child Labor Act (1916) and the Adamson Eight Hour Act (1916) proved decisive. The same must also be said, however, for Wilson’s determination to keep America neutral in the ongoing conflict in Europe. Even William Bourke Cockran, vehemently opposed to Wilson on Panama and Mexico, privately endorsed the Democratic candidate because of the opinion both men shared on the avoidance of US involvement in the war.<sup>167</sup>

While William J. Leary cites Irish-American support for Wilson as evidence of its tendency to vote on American rather than Irish issues, he castigates individual Irish-American leaders who failed to understand the distinction between the two.<sup>168</sup> This failure erroneously led them to believe the president had little interest in Irish independence, and that his record in office was proof of such indifference. A nuanced and more sympathetic view might attribute Wilson’s lack of engagement in Irish affairs to the limitations diplomatic necessities placed on the president when exercising US foreign policy.<sup>169</sup> In this telling, Michael Hopkinson believes the only real option open to Wilson was the application of informal pressure on the British government, a tactic the president often employed, and that the impossibility of America’s public intervention on Ireland’s behalf meant the president’s own personal views were of little importance.<sup>170</sup> Irish-American opinion aside, Wilson was re-elected, and this generated a heated debate over the future implications of US

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid, p. 64. The American Truth Society was established by representative Americans on 18 Jan. 1912. The Society committed to propagate a spirit of pure Americanism; to preserve the tradition of the United States inviolate; and to oppose and resist by truth all attempts to dominate public opinion by discrimination. See

<http://cudl.colorado.edu/luna/servlet/detail/UCBOULDERCB1~58~58~440587~128175:American-Truth-Societyy>

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. See also James McGurrin, *Bourke Cockran: A Freelance in American Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), p. 292. Cockran’s endorsement of Wilson, however, did not extend to campaigning on his behalf, as a refusal to do so at a Democratic rally in Butte in October 1916 testifies.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, p. 72

<sup>169</sup> Michael Hopkinson, ‘President Woodrow Wilson and the Irish Question’, *Studia Hibernica* No. 27 (1993), p. 89

<sup>170</sup> Ibid

war-time policy on Irish nationalism. As Clan na Gael continued to advocate for US neutrality, Home Rulers yearned for the day the US would throw its lot in with the allies. And in New York, a proxy war between nationalists holding conflicting opinions on the issue came to dominate the Irish-American narrative.

While Wilson had campaigned on keeping America out of the conflict in Europe, as the sitting president he had a duty to ensure America was ready to fight in it should the need arise. To this end, and on the advice of his Irish-born Private Secretary Joseph P. Tumulty, Wilson undertook a preparedness tour of the mid-West in January 1916 to rid the country of its complacency to the threat posed by the ongoing conflict.<sup>171</sup> The American Preparedness Movement followed soon after when William J. Stone, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the US Senate, recommended the rapid development of the military and the navy in a government programme titled 'Preparedness for Defence'.<sup>172</sup> The relevance of the American Preparedness Movement to this study can be found in many of its most enthusiastic converts; Irish Americans in positions of municipal authority. This was particularly true in New York, where Home Rulers like Mayor John Purroy Mitchel (grandson of the famed Young Ireland nationalist of the 1840s) and Timothy Healy (founder of the engineer department of the New York Naval Militia) advocated American intervention in the war.

Mitchel's influence over the police department 'gave muscle to the UILA', and allowed Home Rulers 'undercut their republican rivals whose Irish politics did not square with championing the Allies.'<sup>173</sup> Healy's connections enabled him to acquire the advantage in a battle between different factions of the AOH seeking to control the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York in 1916, a tactic he repeated in 1917. By obtaining licences for the pro-Redmond Board of Erin, Healy prevented Roderick J Kennedy's Clan na Gael-affiliated Hibernians from espousing Irish republicanism on Fifth Avenue, while ensuring the parades reflected the militarist American patriotism

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<sup>171</sup> William L. Genders, 'Woodrow Wilson and the Preparedness Tour of the Mid-West, Jan/Feb 1916', *Australasian Journal of American Studies* Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jul. 1990), p. 76

<sup>172</sup> William J. Stone, 'Effect of Preparedness upon America's Influence and Power', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 66: Preparedness and America's International Programme (Jul. 1916), p. 127

<sup>173</sup> Burns, 'The Loyal Irish', p. 66

that could help Irish Home Rule come to fruition with an Allied victory.<sup>174</sup> The *Gaelic American* ridiculed Healy with abandon when reporting on the parades. A front page article noted how the UILA and the BOE, with the force of Mayor Mitchel and the police to protect them, could not turn out more than five-hundred men in New York.<sup>175</sup> And the Devoy-edited paper triumphantly noted Cardinal Farley's refusal to review the 1916 parade, and the absence of the traditional reviewing stand in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral.<sup>176</sup>

In May 1917 relations between moderate and advanced nationalists took on a more sinister character when a meeting held in support of America's recent entry into the European war (6<sup>th</sup> Apr. 1917) saw police officers at Cooper Union attack Irish republicans at the behest of the Home Rulers.<sup>177</sup> In describing events as 'a police-made riot', the *Gaelic American* alluded to 'a little gang of discredited politicians, acting on England's behalf, attempt[ing] to side-track the cause of Ireland and speak in the name of the Irish citizens of New York.'<sup>178</sup> With Healy credited as the 'prime mover behind the plot', the paper reported how 'real nationalists' who objected to Home Rulers speaking on their behalf were avenged by pro-Britishers who employed plain-clothes thugs 'to club and kick men and women acting within their rights.'<sup>179</sup> Events at Cooper Union made it all too apparent that Home Rulers had the ear and sympathy of the municipal authorities, if only for the reason that any opposition to the war was now deemed distinctly unpatriotic. And the Clan began to realise it had better align itself with American national sentiment or risk being completely out-manoeuvred by its nationalist rival. Not everyone connected to the Friends of Irish Freedom agreed, however, and those who were 'disenchanted with the ultra-Americanism and inactivity of Devoy and Cohalan' established the Irish Progressive League (IPL) on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1917.<sup>180</sup> The founding of the IPL coincided with Wilson's attempts to bring about a speedy resolution to the war, and it soon became apparent that holding the US president to account for his post-conflict guiding principle governing the rights of small nations, appeared an infinitely better

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 67-68

<sup>175</sup> *GA*, 25 Mar. 1916

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>177</sup> Burns, 'The Loyal Irish', pp. 70-71

<sup>178</sup> *GA*, 12 May 1917

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>180</sup> Doorley, *Irish American Diaspora Nationalism*: p. 71

strategy than cowing before the Federal government for fear Irish Americans might be labelled unpatriotic. To Devoy's dismay, the IPL's credibility would be further enhanced when Eamon de Valera, the newly-elected President of Sinn Féin, offered the new organisation his party's unmitigated support.<sup>181</sup>

US entry into the war had completely transformed the Irish question. Considered a major stumbling block to Anglo-American relations, its immediate resolution was the focus of a widely-publicized Congressional appeal to Lloyd George. Suggesting 'nothing will add more to the enthusiasm of America in this war than a settlement now of the Irish problem' the appeal was signed by 100 members of the House of Representatives.<sup>182</sup> It was this, more than any lingering desire to appease Irish nationalists, that led the British Prime Minister to propose an Irish Convention meet in Dublin in an effort to realise Home Rule. News of this Convention aroused heated debate in Irish America and the *Boston Daily Globe* highlighted the division of opinion created by George's proposal. Mayor Curley of Boston doubted whether 'England would keep her word to accept whatever decision was arrived at', while John F. Kelly, President of the Massachusetts Branch of the Friends of Irish Freedom, considered the Convention to be nothing more than 'an assembly of hand-picked notables ... warranted to do nothing democratic or prejudiced to English rule in Ireland.'<sup>183</sup> Martin E. Joyce, Supreme Chief Ranger of the Irish National Foresters, believed the plan was intended to delay Home Rule by showing that 'the Irish cannot agree on anything tangible', while Patrick F. Cannon, National Vice-President of the AOH, felt Irish reverence for liberty and the law would either 'compel their oppressors to again demonstrate their perfidy or make good their claim to champion the cause of democracy and the rights of small nations.'<sup>184</sup> Even Michael Jordan, the Secretary of the UILA, had reservations. While Jordan believed the Convention could succeed if 'the patriotic desire of the Nationalists to meet all opponents halfway is respected', he worried that the record the implacable handful of Orangemen had demonstrated to date made it 'impossible to expect any form of unanimity could be reached.'<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73

<sup>182</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Apr. 1917

<sup>183</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 3 Jun. 1917

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*

The constitutional movement in America was in urgent need of direction, and Shane Leslie wrote to Redmond admitting as much. Highlighting the importance of sending out envoys from Ireland, Leslie acknowledged that while ‘Dillon or Devlin would be acclaimed ... [Stephen] Gwynn or your brother [Willie], or both, would be most welcome.’<sup>186</sup> And with the Irish Party having agreed to participate in the forthcoming Convention, Redmond was finally warming to the idea. The man who would be sent out, however, was not from the quadrumvirate suggested by Leslie, but someone of the Irish leader’s choosing, T.P. O’Connor. While not totally averse to the idea, O’Connor would have preferred to delay going to America until September, anxious as he was to avoid the ‘suffocating heat of July.’<sup>187</sup> Redmond and necessity dictated otherwise, however, and O’Connor, accompanied by Richard Hazleton, arrived in New York in late June.<sup>188</sup>

The battle for American public and political opinion saw three different missions from Ireland and Great Britain arrive in the US in a matter of weeks. O’Connor’s arrival followed hot on the heels of Lloyd George’s decision to appoint Lord Northcliffe as the government’s unofficial Minister for Propaganda with a portfolio ‘to tell the people of America the truth.’<sup>189</sup> Perhaps Northcliffe, finding that the Irish Americans he spoke to were ‘sceptical’ about the Convention, was responsible for Redmond’s decision to send O’Connor to the US.<sup>190</sup> And perhaps Redmond’s dispatching of O’Connor influenced Sinn Féin’s subsequent decision to send Dr. Pat McCartan to America to espouse the Irish Republican view. The expected arrival of the opposing nationalist missions was picked up on by the local press and was the subject of a lengthy report in the *New York Times*. This report contrasted the opinions of leading conservatives, Monsignor Lavell and John D. Crimmins, with those of leading radicals, Justice Daniel F. Cohalan and Jeremiah A. O’Leary.<sup>191</sup> While Lavelle and Crimmins believed the coming of the Irish missions meant ‘a long

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<sup>186</sup> Leslie to Redmond, 21 May 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/14

<sup>187</sup> T.P. O’Connor to John Redmond, 31 May 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,215/2/B

<sup>188</sup> Hazleton seems something of a strange choice given the controversy surrounding his visit to America in 1906. John O’Callaghan, had he still been alive, would probably have had something to say about this. See Chapter 3.

<sup>189</sup> J. Lee Thompson, ‘To Tell the People of America the Truth’: Lord Northcliffe in the USA, Unofficial British Propaganda, June–November 1917, *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 34, No. 2 (Apr. 1999), pp. 243–262

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, p. 252

<sup>191</sup> *New York Times*, 22 Jun. 1917

step toward the settlement of the Irish problem at the coming Dublin Convention', the paper reported how Cohalan and O'Leary attached less importance to their arrival 'because, they say, the Dublin Convention will not amount to much.'<sup>192</sup> On a personal and professional level, O'Connor found returning to America in 1917 to be a markedly different experience to the one he had enjoyed in the company of Redmond seven years earlier. And his letters to his party leader clearly stated as much.

On 9<sup>th</sup> July, in only the second week of his mission to the US, O'Connor's despair is all too obvious. The party's longest-serving MP was forced to concede that 'it became clear, before I was twenty-four hours in New York, that the Irish here – at least of the masses – had just got back to the old position; and had learned nothing and forgotten nothing since 1846.'<sup>193</sup> Moreover, O'Connor reported that 'every post brought me abusive letters, some signed, some not; the language in some of them was coarse beyond imagination.'<sup>194</sup> With the *Gaelic American* joining the *Irish World* in making 'blackguardly attacks' upon him, a distinctly low-key reception from the officers of the American League convinced O'Connor that 'for the moment we are down and out as far as the great masses of the people are concerned.'<sup>195</sup> O'Connor was dismayed to add that 'Jordan is against Ryan ... Fitzpatrick begs we reserve judgement ... Ryan and Cohalan had a meeting engineered, I believe, by Cockran; their arrangement, if any, I do not know ... and Egan is, of course, violently against Ryan.'<sup>196</sup> In light of the above O'Connor felt it prudent not to risk a meeting of the National Executive, because not only did he consider such a meeting to be premature, he recognised the opportunity it would present to Ryan to effect his immediate resignation.<sup>197</sup> However, it would probably be fair to say that the most distressing thing Redmond learned from O'Connor was that a memorial service held for his recently-deceased brother, Willie, had been rudely interrupted by republican women hostile to the Irish Party and its continuing support for the war.

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid

<sup>193</sup> O'Connor to Redmond, 9 Jul. 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/2/B

<sup>194</sup> Ibid

<sup>195</sup> Ibid

<sup>196</sup> Ibid

<sup>197</sup> Ibid

Major Willie Redmond had been killed on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917 when, defying orders to stay at the rear, he joined his regiment in the initial assault on Messines Ridge. Wounded by shrapnel, Major Redmond was carried from the field of battle by soldiers from the neighbouring 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division. He died within a matter of hours, the severity of his injuries taking their toll on the body of a middle-aged man long past his prime. For the Irish leader, Willie's death was a blow from which many doubt the party chairman ever truly recovered. Stephen Gwynn would later write that the news had left John 'lonely and sorely stricken in his affections'.<sup>198</sup> Not only had he lost 'the sole near kinsman of his generation; he lost in him the closest of those comrades who had been allied with him in all the stages of his life's fight.'<sup>199</sup> Unsurprisingly, tributes to Major Redmond poured in from every quarter, though 'it was noticeable that tributes on the nationalist side came overwhelmingly from the nationalist political establishment, and that the separatist wing largely ignored the death, being more exercised by the opportunity it provided for another by-election.'<sup>200</sup> And while the party chairman stoically attempted to mask his personal grief, questions surrounding his own failing health and his capacity to engage in the pressing affairs of office abounded.

Irish Americans were routinely told that John Redmond was dying and that the Irish Party was near collapse. It is an open secret, the *Gaelic American* reported, that John Redmond's health had broken down, and that his death was not far off.<sup>201</sup> The reason for this, it surmised, was that 'everybody who is in the know is aware that he was always a heavy drinker, and his shrivelled appearance in recent years showed that his liver has been in very bad condition.'<sup>202</sup> These reports were obviously wide of the mark, and particularly distasteful given the nature of Redmond's recent loss. There is evidence, however, of the party leader's gradual disengagement from public life, despite his prominent role as head of the IPP delegation attached to the Dublin Convention. Redmond's understandable absence prompted Sir Horace Plunkett, the Chairman of the Convention, to write to the Irish leader expressing concern for its success 'both from an Irish and an Irish-American set of reasons.'<sup>203</sup> One month later

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<sup>198</sup> Stephen Gwynn, *John Redmond's Last Years*, p. 264

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>200</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 423

<sup>201</sup> *GA*, 23 Jun. 1917

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>203</sup> Sir Horace Plunkett to John Redmond, 23 Jul 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,221



Sir Horace had occasion to lament ‘the great mistake we are making in refusing to give a little more interesting intelligence to the public. We are playing into the hands of Sinn Féin, whose speakers, I notice, give a much fuller account of our proceedings than we do.’<sup>204</sup> Before long, Plunkett was compelled to remark that ‘an appalling arrears of correspondence’ had prevented him from deciding how best to proceed.<sup>205</sup> The Convention, or at least nationalist aspirations behind it, became the subject of a short book produced in New York by John Quinn, perhaps with the intention of filling the void identified by Plunkett. While considering the Convention contained ‘good material for a real constitutional settlement’ Quinn felt obliged to warn the Irish Party that ‘there must be no repetition of the weakness and timidity that prompted it to agree to partition twice.’<sup>206</sup> Among Quinn’s other observations were ‘regret that Sinn Féin had opted out of attending the Convention’ ... a warning to the IPP that ‘unless it moved along better and sounder lines than it had in the past it could never lead the people’ ... and an optimistic conclusion that despite the ‘wretched history of the last few years’ he believed the Convention could succeed.<sup>207</sup>

Quinn’s misguided optimism was shared by the leadership of the Irish Party, and John Dillon wrote to O’Connor in September in a similar vein. Not named as one of the five IPP delegates chosen to attend the proceedings at Trinity College, Dillon based his assessment on reports he said he had received from Redmond and Joe Devlin. These reports had led him to surmise that ‘the spirit is excellent, and there does really seem to be an off chance of an agreement.’<sup>208</sup> Such optimism, however, seemed to be flying in the face of separatist opinion. Eamon de Valera, an American-born survivor of the Easter Rising who had enjoyed a fortuitous stay of execution in 1916, emerged as the Sinn Féin candidate in the East Clare by-election following the recent death of Major Redmond. The opening of the Irish Convention in Dublin was sandwiched between de Valera’s victory in East Clare and another Sinn Féin success in the guise of W.T. Cosgrave’s election in Kilkenny City.<sup>209</sup> Within weeks of

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<sup>204</sup> Plunkett to Redmond, 25 Aug. 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15/221

<sup>205</sup> Plunkett to Redmond, 28 Sep. 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,221

<sup>206</sup> *The Irish Home Rule Convention* incl. ‘Thoughts For a Convention’ by George W. Russell (Æ); ‘A Defence of the Convention’ by Rt. Hon. Sir Horace Plunkett; and ‘An American Opinion’ by John Quinn (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917), p. 54

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 66-76

<sup>208</sup> John Dillon to T.P. O’Connor, 4 Sep. 1917, TCD, DP, MSS 6741

<sup>209</sup> De Valera’s victory in East Clare occurred on 10 July 1917. The Irish Convention opened at Trinity College on 25 July, and W T. Cosgrave won the by-election in Kilkenny City on 10 August.

proceedings getting underway at Trinity, another boost for the separatist movement occurred with the death of Thomas Ashe. Ashe was one of a number of republican prisoners held in Mountjoy prison who had gone on hunger strike in pursuit of their demand for political status. Force-fed by the authorities, Ashe died after suffering heart failure. His death 'generated a new wave of Anglophobic fervour' and presented Sinn Féin with 'its biggest propaganda coup' since the death of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in 1915.<sup>210</sup> The formal inquiry into Ashe's death was conducted by Redmond's old nemesis Timothy Healy, and the verdict arrived at 'indirectly damaged the party leader' by inferring the Prisons Board (whose chairman was Redmond's son-in-law, Max Sullivan Green) was partly responsible for Ashe's death.<sup>211</sup>

While the Irish Party recognised the challenge posed by advanced nationalism, it soon discovered that barriers to an Irish settlement resided in the familiar intransigence associated with Ulster unionism. To this end, IPP proposals centering on the granting of fiscal autonomy, the loosening of control over taxation, and the degree of restrictions pertaining to Customs and Excise that would apply to any new Irish Legislature, were opposed by Ulster Unionist M.P. Hugh Barrie.<sup>212</sup> A compromise solution was put forward by the head of the Southern Unionist delegation, Lord Midleton, an offer which the Irish leader was inclined to accept. However, with Lloyd George failing to give Redmond the 'definite assurances' he required in order for him to sell this proposal to his fellow nationalists, the party chairman agonised over how best to proceed.<sup>213</sup> Some respite arrived over Christmas when O'Connor forwarded £10,000 (\$50,000) from America, money which went to the *Freeman's Journal* in an effort 'to keep the wolf from the [party] door.'<sup>214</sup> And days later, O'Connor wrote again with the prospect of further remittances. His confession, however, that \$25,000 was promised by a friend of his indicated that the financial lifeline keeping the Irish Party afloat came not from the masses it needed to keep onside but from a select number of wealthy individuals prepared to offer the constitutional movement an occasional dig-out. Redmond cabled his gratitude, but

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<sup>210</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 439

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, p. 440

<sup>212</sup> Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918*, pp. 219-221

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, p. 220

<sup>214</sup> Gwynn, *The Life of John Redmond*, p. 577

what used to make front-page news in the *Boston Daily Globe* before the war was now relegated to a fifteen-line paragraph on page eight.<sup>215</sup> Increasingly concerned at the direction of recent events Dillon wrote to O'Connor in January conceding his belief the Irish leader 'had gone too far on the road to concession' ... and his fear that IPP acceptance of the Midleton plan would see them 'swept off the field in weeks.'<sup>216</sup>

Dillon's fears for the party proved unfounded, for no sooner had it demonstrated something resembling a spine than it recovered some of its fading lustre with victory at the South Armagh by-election in February. This contest was unusual in that the characters which dominated the narrative before the polls opened were thousands of miles away in the United States. The Irish Party put forward a local man, Patrick Donnelly, while Sinn Féin opted to put forward Dr. Pat McCartan. McCartan, however, was in America, part of the Sinn Féin delegation sent to the US to garner support for the republican movement. And to advance McCartan's ticket in South Armagh, Sinn Féin strategically chose not to denigrate Patrick Donnelly, but to castigate the conspiratorial nature of T.P. O'Connor's trip to America on behalf of the IPP. As a consequence, Sinn Féin 'invested a great deal of energy into arguing that O'Connor was on a British mission, and that McCartan was the true representative of Ireland's demand for independence in America.'<sup>217</sup>

The South Armagh by-election took on added importance because the IPP needed to reverse recent electoral losses and Sinn Féin was anxious to see how it would fare competing for a nationalist seat in an Ulster constituency. In the campaign which ensued, Sinn Féin charged that O'Connor was sent to the US as 'the guest of the British government ... to help England's, and prejudice Ireland's, case in America.'<sup>218</sup> The republicans also maintained O'Connor was not too concerned about the difficulties he encountered raising money because 'it was a façade to cover up for the fact that the Irish Party was actually receiving funding from the

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<sup>215</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, 27 Dec. 1917

<sup>216</sup> Dillon to O'Connor, 10 Jan. 1918, TCD, DP, MSS 6742

<sup>217</sup> Erica Doherty, 'The Party Hack, and Tool of the British Government'; T.P. O'Connor, America and Irish Party Resilience at the February 1918 South Armagh By-Election, *Parliamentary History* Vol. 24, Pt. 3 (2015), p. 340

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, p. 346

government in order to fight the election in Ireland.<sup>219</sup> The Irish Party, for its part, struggled to counter the accusation that O'Connor was on a British mission, as his regular appearances on platforms advocating that American men enlist for service in the war supported the theory that he was. What the IPP did have in Ulster, however, was a formidable electoral machine exercised through the BOE which had gained invaluable experience contesting tightly-fought local elections. Utilising this machine enabled Donnelly to defeat McCartan in South Armagh, reversing recent IPP losses in North Roscommon (Feb. 1917), South Longford (May 1917), East Clare (Jul. 1917), and Kilkenny City (Aug. 1917). Irish Party success in South Armagh was bitter-sweet, however, for it was soon reeling from the premature death of its revered leader, John Redmond.

### The end of Home Rule

John Redmond's death (6<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1918) took his party colleagues by surprise. It was common knowledge that the Irish leader had been unwell for some time, but his decision to undergo surgery, for what was believed to be a problem associated with gallstones, had offered the prospect of a return to better health. His succumbing to heart failure within days of his operation, however, left supporters on the both sides of the Atlantic distraught. In Irish America, opinion was divided over the legacy Redmond left behind. In the immediate aftermath of his passing the *New York Times* reported William Bourke Cockran's 'grievous shock' upon hearing the news and how the veteran US Congressman felt it 'no exaggeration to say that the world is dimmed by his death.'<sup>220</sup> The same paper also reported that while Daniel F. Cohalan would concede Redmond was 'a genial and kindly man' it did not alter the fact that 'he was not fit to be the militant leader of a fighting cause.'<sup>221</sup> After people had come to terms with the news T.P. O'Connor led a memorial tribute to his life-long friend at the Knickerbocker Hotel in New York. Acknowledging the three great achievements of Redmond's life – the preservation of party unity, the affection all members of the party held him in, and the placing of Home Rule on the Statute Book – O'Connor declared that 'the one question which must now be asked is whether the rulers of England will persist in that policy of stupid blundering which wrecked the

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid, p. 347. Doherty notes that Sinn Féin could provide no evidence to support this claim.

<sup>220</sup> *New York Times*, 7 Mar. 1918

<sup>221</sup> Ibid

statesmanship of Redmond by permitting the delays which have refused the liberties of Ireland.’<sup>222</sup> As events transpired, he did not have to wait too long to discover that they did.

The Irish Convention in Dublin ‘dragged on pointlessly for weeks ... ultimately breaking up in April with no majority report but instead a multitude of toothless minority reports.’<sup>223</sup> Lloyd George’s disastrous attempt to re-introduce a Military Services bill extending conscription to Ireland was roundly rejected by an unlikely alignment of all parties with a vested interest in the national question, an alignment that even saw John Dillon (Redmond’s successor as head of the Irish Party) share a platform with Eamon de Valera (the recently-elected Sinn Féin president) at Ballaghaderreen. However, despite Dillon’s best efforts to rid the Irish Party of its conciliatory image, the sixty-six year-old chairman ‘made little impression on the younger generation of nationalists.’<sup>224</sup> A mass arrest of Sinn Féin members on a fabricated charge of a fresh German conspiracy soon followed before it became apparent that everyone was being detained on evidence ‘too flimsy to sustain a prosecution against any of them.’<sup>225</sup> If anything, such a crass attempt at undermining the anti-conscription movement did little other than garner sympathy for the republican movement. The *Gaelic American* carried a report in which John Dillon was said to have condemned the wholesale arrests and assailed Sinn Féin in the same breath.<sup>226</sup> While commending Dillon (and Joe Devlin) for having opposed the application of conscription to Ireland, the paper declared that Irish Americans were bitterly disappointed to see the Irish Party continue with its futile home rule policy and its leader return to ‘his old, rancorous, scalding habits.’<sup>227</sup> And the Representation of the People Act (6<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1918), which broadened the electoral franchise to include votes for all women over the age of 30 and all men over the age of 21, all but guaranteed there would be a post-war political revolution in Ireland.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> *New York Times*, 11 Mar. 1918

<sup>223</sup> Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912-1918*, p. 223

<sup>224</sup> Meleady, *John Redmond: The National Leader*, p. 458

<sup>225</sup> Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921*, p. 161

<sup>226</sup> *GA*, 1 Jun. 1918

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>228</sup> *Representation of the People Act (7 & 8 Geo. 5c. 64)*

The Irish Parliamentary Party was, by now, a pale imitation of its former self, and ageing politicians from Parnell's era were replaced in the public psyche by a younger, more vibrant, generation unwilling to compromise on the question of independence. And with the demise of the IPP went any last vestige of support from Irish America. T.P. O'Connor returned from the US in August 1918 denying he had ever been on a British mission, only for his protestations to fall on deaf ears. While the IPP did manage to retain Waterford, when Redmond's son Capt. William Archer Redmond won his father's seat, and enjoyed another notable victory in East Tyone in April, the political writing was on the wall. The December 1918 general election confirmed as much, with Sinn Féin's return of seventy-three seats making a mockery of the Irish Party's paltry total of six. How the recently-deceased Irish leader might have prevented such a rout we will never know.

### Conclusion

If the constitutional movement in America did not exactly die from a thousand cuts it surely haemorrhaged from the near fatal blow it sustained when the IPP decided to support Britain in the prosecution of the war in Europe. And for this we can look no further than John Redmond.<sup>229</sup> Once this decision was arrived at, the party chairman's reluctance to rid the UILA of those at variance with party policy permitted the American League to fester from within. And coupled with his apparent indifference to the plight of his fellow countrymen in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, Redmond's failure to deliver Home Rule on two further occasions - the Lloyd George proposals in 1916 and the Dublin Convention in 1917 - rendered the constitutional party ineffective.

Another Irish Race Convention assembled in New York on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1918 under the auspices of the Friends of Irish Freedom. While Michael Doorley credits Clan na Gael, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Irish Progressive League, and several Irish American literary societies among those in attendance, the gathering was notable for the absence of the United Irish League of America in any official

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<sup>229</sup> The Irish Parliamentary Party Minute Books clearly show that Irish-American opinion was not an item of concern during the months of August and September 1914. Indeed, the UILA did not warrant more than half a dozen mentions in eighteen years, and when it did, it was only ever perfunctory. See IPP Minute Books, NLI, MS 12,080 Vol. I; MS 12,081 Vol. II; MS 12,082 Vol III.

capacity.<sup>230</sup> That is not to say they were entirely absent to a man. Dennis J. Clark has noted how former UILA president, Michael J. Ryan, had successfully manoeuvred himself into a position from where he was chosen to make a major address at this convention.<sup>231</sup> Known for his pro-German sentiment and early opposition to American participation in the war, Ryan had, by then, become something of a bridge between the moderates and the militants.<sup>232</sup> However, with news of the Sinn Féin German plot barely twenty-four hours old, delegates attending the convention at the Central Opera House feared the discovery of a similar plot in the US.<sup>233</sup> Relieved to find that there was none, those in attendance signed a petition supporting Ireland's case for independence and gave it to President Wilson's Private Secretary, Joseph Tumulty, for presentation to the American leader.<sup>234</sup> This endorsement of Wilson's war aims, together with holding England to account for the rights of small nations in any post-war settlement, became the new Irish-American strategy going forward.

As for the UILA itself, it is impossible to state with any clarity when the organisation officially ceased to operate. The last recorded meeting of its National Executive, pre-approved by John Redmond, occurred on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1917 in Washington D.C.<sup>235</sup> This was shortly after the US entered the conflict and subsequent reports of proceedings at this meeting gave the party chairman the distinct impression things were looking up.<sup>236</sup> In fact, Michael Jordan described the prevailing atmosphere to have been 'absolutely harmonious', with a 'full and spirited attendance' demonstrating ample evidence of 'enthusiasm and good will.'<sup>237</sup> We know, however, from T.P. O'Connor's visit in June that this did not last very long, and the American League as the voice of the Irish Party in America never regained the authority it commanded before 1914. O'Connor confessed as much to John Dillon later in the year when he wrote that the UILA had disintegrated.<sup>238</sup> 'There is

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<sup>230</sup> Doorley, *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism*: p. 76

<sup>231</sup> Dennis J. Clark, 'Intrepid Men, Three Philadelphia Irish Leaders, 1880 to 1920' in Meagher (ed.), *From Paddy to Studs*, p. 107

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108

<sup>233</sup> Doorley, *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism*: p. 76

<sup>234</sup> Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-1923*, p. 113

<sup>235</sup> Redmond to Ryan, 1 May 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/24

<sup>236</sup> Jordan to Redmond, 7 May 1917, NLI, RP, MS 15,236/11

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>238</sup> Francis M. Carroll, 'The Collapse of Home Rule and the United Irish League of America, 1910-1918' in Grey (ed.), *Ireland's Allies: America and the 1916 Easter Rising*, p. 41

no organisation,' he conceded, 'probably it has ceased to exist.'<sup>239</sup> As for the individuals at the heart of the American League some had the good fortune to pass away before seeing their Home Rule dream destroyed, others retired from public life or returned to their primary affairs of business, while still more joined the FOIF, the IPL, or the subsequent American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (AARIR, est. 1920).

While John O'Callaghan, Patrick Ford, and Edward O'Meagher Condon were among those who passed away before or during the war, another League stalwart, Patrick Egan, died shortly after it.<sup>240</sup> T.B. Fitzpatrick no doubt welcomed the opportunity to retire from office and seems to have disappeared entirely from public life while Michael Jordan was content to channel his energies into advancing his career as a lawyer back home in Boston. The one man who remained wedded to the nationalist struggle was none other than Michael J. Ryan. Ryan was one of a three-man commission, selected by representatives of the main body of Irish American nationalist organizations, to go to Paris in 1919 to argue that the Irish Republican leadership be allowed to stake Ireland's claim to independence at the post-war Peace Conference. While the victorious Allies were deciding how best to treat this request, the commission members embarked on a brief visit to Ireland. And on speaking engagements throughout the country their comments on everything from Irish independence to the powers of the new Dáil drew 'strong adverse reactions from the British.'<sup>241</sup> The American Ambassador in London was particularly critical of Ryan and even accused him of advocating action 'similar to that adopted in Easter Week in 1916.'<sup>242</sup> Suitably outraged, Woodrow Wilson accepted Lloyd George's insistence that the Irish question was an internal matter, and on their return to Paris the Irish Americans were denied the opportunity to present their case. Despite Ryan's role in this failure, the former UILA president was central to subsequent Irish-American efforts to exact retribution on Wilson when helping to rally the Senate to oppose US participation in the proposed League of Nations. At the Robert Emmet commemoration on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1919 at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, Ryan gave

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid

<sup>240</sup> See previous re O'Callaghan, Ford and O'Meagher Condon. Egan died in New York on 30 Sep. 1919. See Owen McGee, 'Egan, Patrick' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds.), *DIB*.

<sup>241</sup> Eichacker, *Irish Republican Women in America*, p. 52

<sup>242</sup> Ibid



an address at which he ‘savagely’ attacked Wilson’s proposals before characterising the ongoing peace conference in Paris as ‘a gathering of birds of prey.’<sup>243</sup> And this was a message Ryan repeated in June when the three-man commission addressed a 12,000-strong crowd at Madison Square Garden in New York in the company of Eamon de Valera.<sup>244</sup> Further evidence that Ryan remained an Irish American of some standing over the following years can be found in his inclusion on a welcoming committee for W.T. Cosgrave on the occasion of the Irish President’s visit to Philadelphia in 1928.<sup>245</sup>

For the remaining members of the IPP leadership the future held mixed fortunes. John Dillon lost his seat in Mayo East to Eamon de Valera in 1918 by a margin of two to one.<sup>246</sup> Thereafter he had little public involvement, dying in London in August 1927 after an operation for gallstones.<sup>247</sup> T.P. O’Connor was largely unaffected by the demise of the Irish Party and spent much of the 1920s rallying the Irish community in Britain behind the British Labour Party.<sup>248</sup> His death in 1929, however, went almost unnoticed in Ireland, a fact much lamented by his old colleague Joe Devlin.<sup>249</sup> Despite retaining his seat, Devlin had little chance to influence events after 1918.<sup>250</sup> The demise of the Irish Party, coupled with the attitudes of Free State politicians after 1922, meant he was excluded from consultation, and increasingly isolated and depressed he lost hope in parliamentary politics.<sup>251</sup> He died in 1934 after a bout of gastric illness. The rank-and-file IPP went on to join a host of political parties that emerged in post-independent Ireland or retired from public life altogether.<sup>252</sup> And in the climate of revolutionary triumphalism that swept the country after 1922 the party’s achievements as the

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<sup>243</sup> Clark, ‘Three Philadelphia Irish Leaders’, in Meagher (ed.), *From Paddy to Studs*, p. 109

<sup>244</sup> Dave Hannigan, *De Valera in America* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), pp. 43-44

<sup>245</sup> Letter from Timothy A. Smiddy to Patrick McGilligan, Washington D.C., 9 Jan. 1928, Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, No. 127, NAI DT S4529, <http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume3/1928/842.htm>

<sup>246</sup> Frank Callanan, ‘Dillon, John’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2603>

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>248</sup> Owen McGee, ‘O’Connor, Thomas Power’, *DIB*. <http://dib.cambridge.org/quicksearch.do#>

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>250</sup> Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland*, p. 282

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>252</sup> For more see Thomas Patrick Martin O’Donoghue, *The Legacy of the Irish Parliamentary Party in Independent Ireland, 1922-49*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway (2016)

vanguards of the Irish nationalism through decades of endeavour at Westminster was largely forgotten.

In hindsight, that most fortuitous of historian's attributes, the Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League of America had been drifting apart for quite some time. It is how much of that drift was of their own making, and whether anything could have been done to arrest it, that motivated this body of work. As anyone unfortunate enough to go through a protracted divorce will confirm, neglect and a failure to communicate will always undermine the strongest of marriages. And perhaps, in this instance, the responsibility for the inevitable break-up resided on both sides of the Atlantic.

## Conclusion

This dissertation examined the working relationship between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League of America between 1901 and 1918. It did so because what had appeared to be a strong, secure, transatlantic affiliation unravelled with alarming speed once Irish Party policy was seen to be at complete variance with Irish-American political opinion. Whilst this has been a recognised fact, brokering little or no argument, historians who have addressed this subject in the past have neglected to ask themselves why. Content to blame John Redmond's policy of lending Irish Volunteer support to Britain at the onset of the Great War for the diaspora's subsequent loss of faith in constitutional nationalism, few have troubled themselves to question the nature of the IPP/UILA affiliation before then. Yes, Irish America has been acknowledged as the Irish Party's 'milch cow', financing nationalist participation in a series of general elections throughout the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> And yes, the role the diaspora played in promoting the Home Rule party across the wider US has received its fair share of academic attention.<sup>2</sup> However, no-one has yet questioned the IPP's parental responsibility to its Irish-American affiliate, or, how the UILA operated in its role as a designated auxiliary to the Irish Party. That is until now. This body of work demonstrates the fragility of a demonstrably one-sided transatlantic alliance, where Irish-Americans seeking to make a contribution to their mother country's independence were essentially told to put up and shut up. And in doing so, it broadens the existing narrative and enhances our understanding of the critical period preceding the collapse of Irish and Irish-American constitutional nationalism.

On assuming the chairmanship of the reunited Irish Party in 1900, John Redmond correctly identified the need to re-engage with Irish America. And to guide him in this endeavour, he relied on a wealth of knowledge and experience. Having observed

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<sup>1</sup> Alan O'Day, *Irish Diaspora Politics in Perspective: The United Irish Leagues of Great Britain and America, 1900-1914*, *Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration, and Diaspora* Vol. 18, No's 2-3 (1999), p. 229

<sup>2</sup> Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1899-1921* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969); Francis M. Carroll, *American Opinion and the Irish Question, 1910-1923: A Study in Opinion and Policy* (Dublin; New York: Gill and MacMillan; St. Martin's Press, 1978)

the New Departure, Redmond was acutely aware of the Fenian perception at having been sold out by Parnell. As a young MP in the 1880s he accompanied William O'Brien to the US to help mediate with Alexander Sullivan, before applauding Irish-American contributions to the relief of agrarian distress during the Plan of Campaign. And as the leader of the minority faction throughout the 1890s, he lamented the abject apathy immigrants appeared to hold for constitutional nationalism in the wake of the Irish Party split. These were just some of the factors Redmond had to consider when attempting to define the nature of any new transatlantic affiliation. And in deciding on how best to proceed he is exposed to the charge of cherry-picking.

In assigning the United Irish League of America a wholly subordinate role Redmond was punitively denying those who had helped foster reunification in the US any say in formulating party policy. And to be kind to the party chairman this appears erroneous at best. In the wake of the Kilmainham Treaty it was the Fenian element in Irish America who demonstrated contempt for the constitutional party, not the moderates. The dynamite campaign in Britain in the 1880s and the damage to Parnell's reputation caused by prior association with advanced nationalists in America had served to undermine the then Irish leader at the Special Commission on Crime and Parnellism in 1889-90. As a result, the IPP grew cautious of Irish-American organisations seeking to influence party policy at home. This caution, however, should have been limited to those who had turned their backs on the party, and this was not a charge one could level at the Irish National League in America, or indeed, the Irish National Federation in America. While both had shown signs of disaffection with the constitutional movement over its inability to reunite sooner after the death of Parnell, disaffection is not disloyalty and does not deserve to be treated as such. Moderate nationalists in the US had done much to heal party wounds at a time when their peers in Ireland were in bitter dispute, and they had, in fact, laid the ground for the establishment of the UILA before Redmond formally endorsed the organisation in December 1901. If anything, they deserved to be rewarded with a voice, if not a vote, in future policy direction. However, while acknowledging the fledgling American League's willing acceptance of the new Irish leader's punitive diktat, we must reflect on his aspiration to see existing Irish-American organisations unite under the umbrella of moderation. Surely, in adopting the position he did,

Redmond all but guaranteed that those who might legitimately seek to question his authority going forward would balk at the very prospect of blind subservience. And rather than promoting a culture of healthy debate, essential to the proper functioning of any democratic organisation, individuals with a policy axe to grind were more likely to remain on the outside looking in. Surrounding oneself with lackeys, and refusing to countenance differences of opinion, serves only to delude oneself into a false sense of security. And in this instance, an argument that Redmond engaged in such folly vis-à-vis Irish America appears to pass muster.

Having delegated the UILA its wholly subordinate role, attempts at maximising the potential inherent in the American League proved inadequate. Whilst party envoys occasionally toured the US in an effort to help grow the League, no permanent representative was ever appointed to offer direction or provide oversight. John Pius Boland has highlighted the mundane existence many Irish Party MPs lived in London as they whiled away the hours in an assortment of boarding houses when not attending the House of Commons.<sup>3</sup> Identifying a party member with a capacity for leadership, and dispatching him to America to manage the UILA, would have been a far more beneficial use of party assets in addition to providing real substance to the notion of a transatlantic link. Such a position could have been rotated on an annual basis, perhaps viewed as a reward for a party member's activism at home or in parliament. And in an age before MPs were paid, the individual selected to represent the party could have been salaried from the funds raised in America. Moreover, officers on the UILA National Executive were all committed to individual professional careers, be it in journalism, the law, or commerce. And, as a direct consequence, the League only ever operated on a part-time basis. We know from John O'Callaghan's correspondence with Redmond that John Finerty's lethargy was pronounced, Michael J. Ryan distracted by gubernatorial ambition, Patrick Ford and T.B. Fitzpatrick entering the twilight of their years, and others sorely lacking the motivation for greater engagement. How much more proficient the UILA might have been under direct party supervision is purely speculative but neglecting to even

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<sup>3</sup> John Pius Boland, *Irishman's Day: A Day in the Life of an Irish MP* (London: MacDonald & Co. Ltd., 1944)

extend the American organisation the micro-management it so plainly warranted indicates a lack of foresight if nothing else.

As the IPP's affiliate in the US, the UILA considered all challenges to constitutional nationalist hegemony at home to be a threat to its position in Irish America. Irish Party concern that cultural nationalism might come to rival constitutional nationalism was evident in the American League's less than enthusiastic reception for Douglas Hyde in 1905-06. The party's dismissive attitude to an emerging separatism, dutifully repeated in the pages of the *United Irish League Bulletin of America*, served only to galvanise those committed to the Fenian ideal of insurrection. The Irish leadership's detached indifference to the Dublin Lockout was reinforced by the *Irish World's* and the Catholic Church's denigration of all things socialist. And the party's failure to support women campaigning for the vote amply demonstrated its continuing attachment to Victorian conservatism. In addition, Redmond's penchant for conciliation, together with his gross underestimation of Ulster Unionist resistance to Home Rule, left the American League exposed to Clan na Gael recriminations over the merits of constitutional nationalism. The party chairman's failure to visit the US after 1910 can only be described as negligence, given that the period in question represented a time of great anxiety for a diaspora thirsting for reassurance. And in allowing the UILA to even contemplate winding down before Home Rule was on the Statute Book, Redmond and the party leadership can be labelled foolhardy at best. That such situations were allowed to develop reflects poorly on the IPP, and leads one to wonder where Irish America - outside the financial lifeline it so generously provided to the party - figured in the organisation's list of priorities.

If further evidence that Redmond was out of tune with Irish-American political sentiment was required, then one need only look at his failure to understand manifest immigrant Anglophobia. Kerby Miller's attestation to emigrants as exiles stacks up, and England as the root of all evil still conceptualised immigrant nationalist thinking. Indeed, rallying together to defeat Anglo-American conspiracies had served to unite moderate and radical Irish Americans at the *fin de siècle*. The various United Irish Societies worked tirelessly to defeat the Olney-Pauncefote Treaty in 1897, and they combined with Clan na Gael and the AOH to lead opposition to the Second Boer War in 1898. That such unity of purpose continued after the establishment of the

UILA can be seen in a variety of campaigns opposing further arbitration treaties, together with support for America in its dispute with Britain over the newly-constructed Panama Canal in 1912. Redmond's decision, then, to offer Irish Volunteer support to Britain in 1914 in the prosecution of what Irish Americans perceived to be an imperial war, beggars belief. And this decision could only have been taken under the following considerations. Either the party chairman knew Irish America would be vehemently opposed to any such measure and he chose to ignore its concerns, or he believed the misguided tokens of assurance UILA envoys Michael Jordan and Patrick Egan gave him during their visit to Ireland. The evidence suggests the latter, and the folly of listening to men subdued by over a decade of subservience was laid bare. If Redmond was, indeed, ill-informed, then he only had himself to blame. In countenancing no disputation of party policy, an imposition he carefully crafted when establishing the American League in 1901, the Irish leader ensured he heard only what he wanted to hear.

Once the conflict in Europe began Redmond's reticent leadership of the UILA continued in much the same vein. It is true that the Irish leader was labouring under difficult conditions, given how he had declined an invitation to partake in a coalition government and the Irish Party was unable to exercise the influence it had become accustomed to wielding before the war broke out. On the flip side, however, he did not have to concern himself with the prospect of a general election for some time and Home Rule had at least made it to the Statute Book. However, rather than regard this as an opportunity to pay greater attention to the party's US affiliate, Redmond continued to ignore the American League. Michael J. Ryan's borderline revolt against party policy during the war went unchecked. Ryan's stubborn independence had been identified earlier when John O'Callaghan alerted the Irish leader to the UILA president's clandestine machinations with the Clan tool Matthew Cummings. And perhaps Redmond's failure to properly admonish Ryan on that occasion contributed to the League leader's effrontery when he made no secret of his personal support for the German war effort. In addition, the party chairman seemed relieved at the postponement of the biennial National Convention in 1914 as it meant he did not have to go before a hostile diaspora to explain his increasingly unpopular decision. This appears a dereliction of duty more than anything else given the UILA was under increased attack from advanced nationalists perplexed at the recent turn of events.

Debilitating procrastination seemed to sum up 1915 as Redmond, inexplicably awaiting the war's end, dispatched Daniel Boyle to America in a forlorn attempt to rescue the IPP's terminally-ill auxiliary. And the Irish leader's failure to adequately address the travesty of the British reprisals to the Easter Rising, under Lloyd George's direction it must be added, all but ended the constitutional nationalist movement in America. In stark contrast to the IPP/UILA decline, the republican transatlantic connection grew ever stronger. Tom Clarke's return to Ireland in 1907 had restored links with the IRB and Bulmer Hobson had helped foster closer relations during the time he spent working for John Devoy. The original Irish Volunteers (aided by Sir Roger Casement's trip to America in 1914) endeared themselves to Clan na Gael with the boldness of their actions at Howth, O'Donovan Rossa's funeral had provided the separatist movement with an invaluable propaganda coup in 1915, and the establishment of the Friends of Irish Freedom in 1916 had a disturbing inevitability about it. The relevant success of the rising, Fenian exploitation of sympathy for the executed rebels, and the failure of the Irish Convention at Trinity to arrive at any compromise solution on the Irish question thereafter, rendered the whole constitutional movement, and its American affiliate, obsolete. It increasingly seemed as if Redmond, the Irish Party, and the American League had been fighting a losing battle ever since the Irish leader threw the nationalist lot in with the British war effort in 1914.

The only records that shed any real light on the nature of the IPP/UILA relationship are the personal correspondence from League and Party officials, the published *Proceedings of National Conventions*, a few individual pamphlets, and the four-year collection of the *United Irish League Bulletin of America*. And as valuable as all these are, there is a notable absence of supporting material critical to the arrival of any concrete conclusions. There are no records of the minutes of National Executive meetings, no records of private discussions held when party envoys were in America, and no records of debate over contentious policy outside those reflected in this work. What we have instead is a record of an organisation (the UILA) in complete thrall to a parent organisation (the IPP) that treated it with obvious disdain. John O'Callaghan passed away before the Home Rule crisis and the Great War combined to defeat the constitutional nationalist alliance, while his successor, Michael Jordan, failed to adequately apprise the Irish leader of the manifest Anglophobia permeating much of



Irish America. Visiting envoys from Ireland were preoccupied with raising funds for the party and paid little attention to gauging Irish-American opinion. If anything, the diaspora were routinely told what was going on in Ireland as opposed to being canvassed for any thoughts it might have on future policy direction. The biennial National Conventions represented mutual celebrations of League and Party achievements to date more than they did occasions for formulating a strategy going forward. And the *Bulletin* simply regurgitated IPP propaganda rather than providing a necessary critique of the Home Rule campaign as it developed over time. Nowhere, it seems, was debate welcomed or encouraged.

On reflection, Redmond's attempt to combat an irrational fear of Irish-American organisations by exercising dictatorial control over them proved counter-productive. His failure to invest sufficient time and energy in the American League left it exposed to a renewed challenge from a revitalised adversary. And a pre-disposition to see and hear only what he wanted to see and hear contributed to errant decision-making during a period of existential crisis. This dissertation, 'Home Rule from a Transnational Perspective: The Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League of America, 1901-1918', opens our eyes to some inescapable truths. Students of Irish constitutional nationalism are alerted to the fact that John Redmond's claim to continent-wide support in the US was only ever illusory. A well-oiled propaganda machine, the absence of any credible opposition during the American League's formative years, and relative success at fundraising allowed the party leader to paint the transnational relationship in a far rosier hue than it warranted. And students of Irish-American nationalism will realise that deeply-ingrained Anglophobia, a persistent and pervasive ideology inhabiting the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century immigrant psyche, served more to unite the diaspora than traditional differences at the heart of the Clan na Gael/UIILA divide served to undermine it. Subsequently, when the crisis initiated by Redmond's continued support for Britain during the Great War demanded Irish-American introspection, a significant number of nationalists affiliated to the constitutional movement felt compelled to break ranks.

Irish-American opinion did not appear to matter to the IPP when it established the UILA. How ironic, then, that through the Irish Party's own machinations, Irish-

American opinion played such a prominent role in constitutional nationalism's ultimate demise.

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