

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE IRISH QUESTION

1. What It Means: The Irish Question is about who should control Ireland: the British government or an Irish democracy. Winston Churchill, who knew more about it than most of his political contemporaries, adopted both views at different times. He wrote that "the independence of a hostile Ireland menaced the life of Britain." And he said in Belfast in February 1912: "The flame of Irish nationality is inextinguishable. The quarrel will go on here and all over the world." When England was engaged in wars with France and Spain the Irish tended to favor her enemies. When Ireland was a threat to England she had to be suppressed.

2. The Conquest: The first attempted conquest of Ireland occurred in 1171-72 when Henry II of England landed with a large army and a "bull" from the pope sanctioning invasion -- he had requested it -- so "that the Christian religion may take root and grow..." The Irish had been Christian for seven centuries and during the fall of the Roman Empire had saved Western civilization from the barbarians. Irish kings and prelates swore fealty to Henry. No one resisted him. The papal "bull" took care of that. Henry II summoned a synod of bishops at Cashel who adopted English Church reforms. In Dublin he assigned territories to his barons who then conquered them. His own conquest was symbolic. The Gaelic system of law, culture and territorial government survived until 1603 when Ulster was conquered and Hugh O'Neill, the best military leader the Irish produced, surrendered after a nine-years war. His lands and those of his fellow-Gaelic chiefs were confiscated and planted with Protestant colonists from England and Scotland.

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3. Plantation of Ulster: The man who planned the Plantation of Ulster, Sir John Davies, Attorney General of Ireland under King James I, wrote a book on The True Causes Why Ireland Was Never Entirely Subdued. "But as the conquest was but slight and superficial, so the pope's donation (of Ireland to Henry II) and the Irish submissions were but weak and fickle assurances... But the truth is, the conquest of Ireland was made piece and piece, by slow steps and degrees, and by several attempts in several ages." Henry II did not crown himself "King of Ireland," but named his son John "Lord of Ireland." The first English monarch to call himself "King of Ireland" was Henry VIII in 1541. He began the policy of giving English titles to Gaelic chiefs in return for their fealty. Nevertheless English rule in Ireland was confined to a small English colony around Dublin called the Pale from 1171 to 1603 when O'Neill surrendered to Lord Mountjoy.

4. A New Policy: One way of reducing Gaelic Ireland to English rule was to lay waste its territories one by one -- taking those closest to the Pale first -- and planting them with English colonists. Queen Mary, Henry VIII's eldest daughter, began this policy in the 1550s. It continued under Elizabeth, her half-sister, who concentrated on the region east of Lough Neagh and the River Bann in Ulster, colonized in the 1570s, and Munster, colonized in the 1580s after the suppression of the Desmond rebellion. The Ulster and Munster colonies collapsed.

5. The only successful colony was the one planted in Ulster in 1610-12 after Mountjoy conducted a scorched earth policy to force O'Neill's surrender. He created a famine. People lay in

ditches, a witness wrote, "their mouths all colored green by eating nettles, docks, and all things they could rend up above ground." More than 60,000 died of "sheer hunger," O'Neill informed Philip III of Spain. The subjugation of Ulster made possible "the final and full conquest of Ireland," Davies wrote. "For when this plantation hath taken root, and been fixed and settled but a few years... it will secure the peace of Ireland, assure it to the crown of England for ever, and finally make it a civil and a rich, a mighty and a flourishing kingdom."

6. Rebellion of 1641: In the 1640s England was the stage in the war between King Charles I and the Puritan Parliament which defeated and beheaded him. The Irish rebellion of October 1641 began amid reports of massacres of settlers in Ulster and English Puritan demands for retribution. Reports that reached London were wildly exaggerated. The aftermath was a merciless and thorough new conquest of Ireland by Oliver Cromwell in 1649-50 which was designed to make the Irish pay for their alleged crimes. When Drogheda surrendered -- the garrison was English -- Cromwell exacted retribution by an admitted massacre. He reported to Parliament that it was deserved: "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbued their hands in so much innocent blood, and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future..." The Wexford garrison also was massacred after surrendering. "We pray God may have all the glory" of the bloodshed, Cromwell declared. At New Ross the garrison offered to surrender in return for freedom of conscience. "I meddle not with any man's conscience,"

the Puritan general replied, "but if by liberty of conscience you mean liberty to exercise the mass, I judge it best to use plain dealing, and let you know, where the Parliament of England hath power, that will not be allowed of." The garrison surrendered and marched out with the honours of war. There was no killing.

7. Confiscation: The war in Ireland ended officially with the surrender of Galway in May 1652. The Irish defeat was complete, Cromwell's conquest thorough. The war cost Ireland about 44 per cent of its population, according to Sir William Petty, the Cromwellian who conducted a survey of Ireland and enriched himself in the process. About a thousand English investors who advanced money for the war were repaid with confiscated Irish land. Some 35,000 English officers and soldiers received Irish land in lieu of pay. Many sold their allotments to speculators. Unpardoned Catholic land owners were given the choice, "to hell or to Connacht", the poorest of Ireland's four provinces. "The curse of Cromwell" was the worst of Gaelic maledictions. Irish prisoners were sent to the West Indies as indentured labor on plantations. Their descendents live on Montserrat. (I was there and met some of them.) Catholics were banished from the towns of Ireland. Cromwell's settlement created a new landlord class which was responsible for "the foundation of that deep and lasting division between the proprietary and the tenants which is the chief cause of the political and social evils of Ireland," the historian, W.E.H. Lecky, a Unionist, wrote.

8. Restoration: Charles II did little for Ireland apart from lifting the religious restrictions imposed during Cromwell's

dictatorship. An Act of Oblivion forgave charges of treason and rebellion. A commission investigated war crimes. "Innocent Papists" expected the return of their confiscated properties, but there was an outcry in England against the proposal and the Irish "were actually dispossessed," according to Lecky.

9. James II and William III: Under James, Charles's brother and heir, who became king in February 1685, the condition of Irish Catholics improved beyond recognition. Catholics were given commissions in the Irish army and Irish regiments were posted to England to guard the king. "Of the many errors which James committed, none was more fatal than this," wrote Lord Macaulay, the Whig historian. The great Whig lords of England offered the throne to William, Prince of Orange, and Mary, his wife, James's daughter. Parliament ratified the contract and they reigned as joint sovereigns. "The Glorious Revolution" of 1688 removed one sovereign and appointed two others in his place. Parliament was supreme which undoubtedly was a revolution.

10. The War in Ireland: James fled to France and thence to Ireland where the Catholics supported his attempt to regain his throne. Ulster Protestants were fanatical supporters of William. These 300-year-old events belong to current affairs in Northern Ireland when the Orange Order holds its annual commemorations in the July-August marching season, the high point of which is the July 12 anniversary of the battle of the Boyne. Also the lifting of the 105-day siege of Derry which the city's apprentice boys made possible when they slammed the gates shut to prevent the governor, "the traitor Lundy," from surrendering. Macaulay wrote:

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"And still the wall of Londonderry is to the Protestants of Ulster what the trophy of Marathon was to the Athenians."

11. Treaty of Limerick: The Irish Jacobite army finally retreated to Limerick on the River Shannon to make a last stand under their commander, Patrick Sarsfield, who signed a treaty with the Dutch General Ginkel on October 3, 1691, permitting the Irish army to sail to France on condition they never returned to Ireland. The treaty granted Catholics the same freedom of religion "as they did enjoy in the reign of King Charles II." The "wild geese" sailed down the Shannon and did not return, but Irish Catholics were denied all legal rights under a penal code which forbade them to buy or inherit property, denied them education, and excluded them from trades and professions, serving in the army and navy, or bearing arms. (The Irish Parliament, not Ginkel or William of Orange broke the Treaty of Limerick.) A lord chancellor and a chief justice in the 1740s held "that the law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic." Lecky said the penal code was "the degradation of a nation. It was the instrument employed by a conquering race, supported by a neighboring power, to crush to the dust the people among whom they were planted." Edmund Burke called it "a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

12. Losing Land: Catholic families who had retained their lands through wars and confiscations were forced by the penal code to

conform to the Established Church or lose all their property. Landowners who could prove they had not fought against William of Orange had their property returned. In 1703, after the Williamite confiscation, Catholics still owned 14 per cent of Irish land. By the 1770s, ownership had declined to 5 per cent without further confiscation. Under the penal code the eldest son could secure his full inheritance by conforming. Failing that, the property was divided equally among all sons.

13. Ulster Custom: Ulster Protestant tenants enjoyed "Ulster custom", an unofficial contract to recompense the tenant for improvements he made during his tenancy. (They got it in the South in 1870.) When the leases of Ulster tenants expired in 1717, the landlords demanded such high rents that thousands of Presbyterian farmers, whose fathers had fought for William of Orange at Derry and the Boyne, emigrated to North America, even though their fathers had fought for William of Orange at Derry and the Boyne, emigrated to North America. A Presbyterian middle class grew in Belfast after Samuel-Louis Crommellin, a French Huguenot, established a successful linen industry at Lisburn, and Protestant tenants, who combined weaving with farming, prospered. Huguenots and Quakers were prominent in the commercial life of 18th century Ireland, particularly in banking.

14. "Common Enemy": For the Ascendancy Protestant landlord class Catholic tenants and cottiers were "the common enemy". They lived on a daily diet of potatoes and probably supported agrarian secret societies. When the potato crop failed there was famine. Tenants paid rack rents to landlords' agents and were liable to

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eviction with their families and chattels without when they defaulted. Jonathan Swift, who called the natives "the savage old Irish", described with some compassion their hard lives. In his Short View of the State of Ireland, 1727-28, he wrote:

The miserable dress and diet and dwelling of the people, the families of farmers who pay great rents living in filth and nastiness upon buttermilk and potatoes, not a shoe or stocking to their feet, or a house so convenient as an English hog sty to receive them.

His Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of poor People in Ireland, from Being a Burden to their Parents or Country; and for making them beneficial to the Publick is a masterpiece of savage satire. He was writing for a new generation of colonists, those he called "the true English people of Ireland," when he declared "that by the laws of God, of nature, of nations, and of your own country, you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England."

15. Irish Parliament's Powers: Parliaments had legislated for the English colony in Ireland from 1297. They legislated for the colonists, not for the natives. Both categories were segregated under the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366 in a desperate attempt to turn the tide. The early Norman conquerors, the Fitzgeralds and Burkes, had become "more Irish than the Irish." The colonists were forbidden to play "hurlings", what we call hurling. There were also two churches, Gaelic and English, nearly two centuries before the Reformation. Under Poyning's Law of 1494, the Irish Parliament was made subordinate to the English Parliament. In

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1698, William Molyneux, a philosopher at Trinity College and friend of John Locke, the theorist of the Revolution of 1688, published a book, The Case of Ireland Stated, in 1698 which contended that the Irish Parliament was not subject to the English Parliament because it was the legislature of the "kingdom of Ireland," which was separate from the "kingdom of England", although they shared the same monarch. Gaelic kings had made a contract with Henry II in 1171-72, he added, when they voluntarily submitted to his rule. In 1541, Ireland became a separate kingdom under Henry VIII. "To tax me without consent is little better, if at all, than downright robbing me," Molyneux wrote, anticipating the demand of the American colonists -- "no taxation without representation". The English Parliament ordered his book burned. He died the same year at the age of 42.

16. English Rule: Swift was Molyneux's worthy successor. Most Irish State and Church positions were occupied by Englishmen, for the English government had what Lecky calls "a great field of lucrative patronage, paid for from the Irish revenues." Ireland was ruled by a commission of lord justices, who included the Primate-Archbishop of Armagh, an Englishman; the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, an Anglo-Irishman; the Lord Chancellor of Ireland who before 1789 invariably was an Englishman. Swift could find no law "that makes Ireland depend on England, any more than England does upon Ireland." He added: "In reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery. But in fact eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt." Which is a good definition of

political power.

17. Buying a Majority : To guarantee a majority to pass money bills in the Irish House of Commons, Dublin Castle recruited agents, called "undertakers", who used patronage to buy votes and reward government supporters. Jobbery and corruption were rife in 18th century Irish politics -- and perhaps more so in English politics. Of the 300 members of the Irish House of Commons, only 72 could claim that some form of election put them there. From this group came the so-called Patriot Party. The other 228 MPs voted as the landlords and peers who nominated them dictated. In the 1760s and 1770s the leaders of the Patriot Party were Henry Flood and Henry Grattan who backed the American colonists. But in 1775 when Flood defected for a government post and supported the war on the colonists, Grattan taunted him for his silence when America was fighting for liberty -- "and you were silent for money!"

18. Franklin in Ireland: In 1769 Benjamin Franklin asserted that "all Ireland is strongly in favor of the American cause." In 1771 he visited the Irish Parliament and sat among the members. "I found them disposed to be friends of America," he wrote, "in which I endeavored to confirm them with the expectation that our growing weight might in turn be thrown into one scale, and, by joining our interests with theirs a more equitable treatment from (England) might be obtained for themselves as well as for us." The 13 colonies like Ireland were bound by a British Declaratory Act which empowered the London Parliament to make laws for America. In an address to the "People of Ireland," in September

1774, the Continental Congress declared: "Your Parliament has done us no wrong. You had ever been friendly to the rights of mankind; and we acknowledge with pleasure that your nation has produced patriots who have nobly distinguished themselves in the cause of humanity and America."

19. Concessions to Catholics: In 1778 Britain declared war on France because Paris made a treaty with the American colonists who were rebel subjects of the Crown. There was fear of a French descent on Ireland. To hold Irish Catholic loyalty in the event of an invasion, London amended the penal code. Catholics were permitted to buy land on 999-year leases, the first amelioration of these draconian laws since their enactment in the 1690s. Apart from Grattan, few adherents of the Patriot Party, wanted repeal of the penal laws. A militia bill in July 1778 led to the formation of independent companies of Protestant Volunteers when Ireland was denuded of regular troops. The viceroy provided the Volunteers with 16,000 stands of arms to defend Ireland from the French. The Volunteers used the arms to threaten the British government unless certain demands were met. One was free trade which the British government almost immediately conceded by repealing restrictive trade practices against Ireland. Many Catholics joined the Volunteers and the government permitted Catholics to be recruited for military service in America. (Many deserted and joined the Continental Army which had a high proportion of Ulster Presbyterians.) After Lord North resigned as prime minister in March 1782, Grattan moved a declaration of Ireland's "rights and grievances" which the Irish Parliament

adopted unanimously. Britain repealed the Declaratory Act of 1720, which empowered London to make laws for the kingdom of Ireland, and amended Poyning's Law of 1494 under which bills passed by the Irish Parliament had to be approved by the Privy Council in London. "The question is whether the people ought to be slaves or no," Swift had written. Thanks to America, the answer in 1782 was the Irish were slaves no longer -- provided they were not Catholics, three quarters of the population, whose status did not change at all.

20. Wolfe Tone and the Catholics: When Grattan addressed the Irish as "a free people" after the "Revolution of 1782," he was talking to a Protestant Parliament. Theobald Wolfe Tone wrote: "It was a Revolution, which, while at one stroke it doubled the value of every borough-monger in the kingdom, left three-fourths of our countrymen slaves as it found them, and the Government of Ireland in the base and wicked and contemptible hands, who had spent their lives in degrading and plundering her; nay, some of whom had given their last vote decidedly, though hopelessly, against this our famous Revolution." (An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland.) Tone, a Dublin Protestant lawyer, examined the condition of his country nine years after the Revolution of 1782. "I made speedily what was to me a great discovery," he wrote, "though I might have found it in Swift and Molyneux, that the influence of England was the radical vice of our Government, and consequently that Ireland would never be either free, prosperous, or happy, until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable, whilst the connexion with

England existed." His pamphlet on behalf of the Catholics was addressed to "the Protestants of Ireland". When he wrote it he did not know a single Catholic, such was the divide between the two. He remarked that the Congress of the United States contained Catholics and Protestants, "without any contention arising, other than who shall serve his country best: so may it be in Ireland." Tone's friend, Thomas Russell, an officer of the British army, invited him to Belfast in the summer of 1791, to meet some Presbyterian radicals, admirers of the French Revolution and advocates of Catholic emancipation, who had reprinted his pamphlet. (Because of it Tone was appointed secretary of the Catholic Committee despite being a member of the Established Church.) Tom Paine's Rights of Man was the bible of Belfast. It was a defence of the French Revolution in answer to Edmund Burke's attack. In October 1791, the Belfast radicals with Tone and Russell, founded the Society of United Irishmen to work for "a cordial union among all the people of Ireland (and) a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in Parliament." They proclaimed:

We have gone to what we conceive to be the root of the evil; we have stated what we conceive to be the remedy. With a Parliament thus reformed, every thing is easy; without it, nothing can be done: and we do call on and most earnestly exhort our countrymen in general to follow our example, and to form similar societies in every quarter of the kingdom, for the promotion of constitutinal knowledge, the abolition of bigotry in

religion and politics, and the equal distribution of the rights of man through all sects and denominations of Irishmen. The people, when thus collected, will feel their own weight, and secure that power which theory has already admitted as their portion...

21. The United Irishmen changed from reformers to revolutionaries in 1794 after Britain and the great powers of Europe went to war with revolutionary France. In Ulster (Antrim and Down) Catholics and Protestants fought together for the first and last time in June 1798 for an Irish republic. A French expedition arrived too late to help them. They were crushed and their leaders executed. Thousands died in the rebellion, Tone among them, and the Irish Parliament was abolished and an Act of Union -- more correctly annexation -- was imposed on Ireland which took effect January 1, 1801. "In a cause like this," Tone told the court martial that sentenced him to death, "success is every thing ... Washington succeeded, and Kosciusko failed." The United Irishmen failed.

22. Catholic Relief Act of 1793: When Britain declared war on France in 1793, a Catholic Relief Act eliminated most of the penal laws, but not the denial of representation in Parliament. With the abolition of the Irish Parliament, Prime Minister Pitt believed that full civil rights for Catholics could not continue to be withheld. He had promised as much to the Catholic bishops who repaid him by not publicly opposing the Act of Union. (The Orange Society did oppose it.) George III's view was that to grant full rights to Catholics would violate his coronation oath and Pitt resigned. Emancipation was an important issue for the

rising Catholic middle class of lawyers and merchants, but not for the mass of tenant farmers, burdened with tithes for the clergy of the Established Church and high rents for their landlords. The 1793 Act enfranchised them, but their vote was the property of their landlord and they cast it in public for his candidate, much like the members of the old Irish Parliament who had less reason for servility. Yet it was this small-tenant class that emancipated the lawyers and merchants.

23. Robert Emmet's Rising : In July 1803 Robert Emmet, a student expelled from Trinity College for his United Irish politics-- his brother Thomas Addis Emmet was a leading United Irishman who later became Attorney General of New York -- led a minor rising in Dublin which rose and fell in one night and accomplished nothing. Yet young Emmet, who was hanged as a traitor, is a great Irish hero because of the speech he delivered from the dock, that is still much quoted in Ireland and America. Thomas Russell, Tone's friend, returned from exile in France to lead the rising in Ulster. He also was hanged -- and is forgotten. The aim of the attempted revolution in the streets of Dublin was "to establish a free and independent republic in Ireland." A score of others were also executed and are also forgotten.

24. The Liberator: Daniel O'Connell, who won the battle for Catholic emancipation, was a Catholic, a lawyer and a landlord. Educated at Catholic colleges in France in the early years of the Revolution he developed democratic ideas and joined the United Irishmen briefly. He decided, however, that "the Irish people are not yet sufficiently enlightened to be able to bear the sun of

freedom," as he noted in his diary. He denounced the Act of Union because "he would rather confide in the justice of his brethren, the Protestants of Ireland ... than lay his country at the feet of foreigners." And he admired "the friends of religious and civil liberty -- the Presbyterians of Ireland." Grattan continued to argue in the British Commons for Catholic emancipation during the first two decades of the 19th century. In 1819, the year before Grattan's death, the emancipation bill lost by only two votes in the Commons. In 1821 it passed the Commons with a majority of nineteen votes and lost in the Lords. O'Connell took the issue directly to the people and ignored Parliament. He established the Catholic Association, a mass organization of three million "associate members", collected funds at church doors and founded a daily newspaper to report his meetings and speeches. He had the support of the priests in his mobilization of the masses. It is O'Connell's glory that he created the first democratic political movement in European politics. He challenged the powerful Protestant Ascendancy and the British government and defeated both with the aid of the "forty-shilling freeholders"-- the tenants who could vote under the 1793 Act -- as his shock troops to batter down the doors of Parliament. He made the 1826 election a turning-point in Irish history by defeating the candidate of the most powerful Ascendancy family, the Beresfords of Waterford. Encouraged by their priests, poor tenants stood up to their landlords and publicly voted against them. There was a price of course for such defiance and they paid it. O'Connell's tactics were vindicated. He was elected for Clare in June 1828,

but could not take his seat for he would have to swear an oath repudiating the Pope. The Duke of Wellington, the prime minister, surrendered in March 1829, and sent Sir Robert Peel, the Home Secretary, to the Commons to introduce the Catholic Emancipation Bill and a new oath of allegiance. The long war was won. The price paid was that the "forty-shilling freeholders" lost their franchise. In imitation of Simon Bolivar, O'Connell was titled "the Liberator" by a grateful people.

25. The Tithe War: After emancipation the Irish Catholic middle class could "hold, exercise and enjoy all civil and military offices and places of trust or profit," while the poor tenant farmers lost their only political asset, the vote, without which they could not improve their lot by non-violent means, as the Liberator advised. While hailing the 1830 insurrections in Paris, Warsaw and Brussels, O'Connell denounced any talk of rebellion in Ireland where one was badly needed. Tilled land was subject to church tithes, grazing land was not. To avoid the tax, landlords began to replace their tenants with cattle. There were pitched battles between the tenants who resisted the tithe-proctors and the armed forces of the Crown. An anti-tithe "collective passive resistance" campaign, which was organized by the clergy not by the Liberator, caused hundreds of deaths and special laws to break the will of the tenants, who held firm. Tithe collections fell and by 1835 only about one-eighth of the total was paid despite the forces mobilized to collect the tax. The campaign ended in apparent victory for the tenants when the government gave up trying to collect the tax by force. In a deal with

O'Connell, with whom it had an informal alliance, the Whig government made the tithe a charge on the rent which was raised to cover it. Although it appeared that the landlord was paying the tithe, the tenant still carried the burden.

26. Repealing the Union: O'Connell was a brilliant political tactician, a great public orator and organizer. While the Whigs were his allies, he was silent on repeal of the Union. When the Whigs lost power to Sir Robert Peel's Tories in 1841, O'Connell campaigned to repeal the Union with the support of The Nation, a weekly newspaper, founded in October 1842 by Charles Gavan Duffy, Thomas Davis and John Blake Dillon to preach Mazzini-style romantic nationalism. Davis, a Protestant, wrote patriotic ballads in order to teach Irish history. Duffy, the editor, acknowledged that "Davis was our true leader." John Mitchel, son of an Ulster Presbyterian clergyman who became a Unitarian, was the Nation's most brilliant writer. He said their aim was "to lift up the Irish cause high above both Catholic claims and Protestant pretensions, and unite all sects in the one character of 'Irishmen', to put an end to English domination." Politically their ideas were those of the United Irishmen, Mitchel said. O'Connell wanted to attract Protestants to his "repeal the Union" campaign and thus counteract charges that he wanted a Catholic Ascendancy to replace the old Protestant Ascendancy.

26. "Monster Meetings": In the summer and fall of 1843 O'Connell staged "monster meetings" throughout Ireland but avoided Ulster which he did not know well, he said. His mass meetings which drew the public by the hundreds of thousands were designed to force

the hand of Peel, the prime minister, who warned in May 1843 that he would risk civil war rather than dismember the Empire. Two weeks later the Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament said the government was "firmly determined ... to maintain the Union." A meeting set for Clontarf, Dublin, in October 1843 was banned. O'Connell obeyed the order and told the people to return to their homes. Nevertheless, he and eight associates, including his son John and Gavan Duffy of the Nation, were charged with conspiracy in "state trials" that ran from November 1843 to February 1844. A jury, which did not include a single Catholic, found them guilty. O'Connell, who was sixty-nine, and his fellow-defendants were each sentenced to a year in prison and fined two thousand pounds. The judgment was reversed on appeal because the jury was chosen improperly. The Liberator left prison a broken man and ended his campaign to repeal the Union.

27. Clash With Young Ireland: O'Connell suspected that Davis and Young Ireland, the nickname foisted on the Nation group, were revolutionaries, perhaps atheists, a threat to the Church and of course repeal. Davis's implied criticism of O'Connell was that his methods encouraged bigotry. "To mingle politics and religion in such a country (Ireland) was to blind men to their common secular interests, to render political union impossible, and national independence hopeless," Davis wrote. Committed to inter-denominational education, Davis welcomed the bill to establish university colleges in Belfast, Cork and Galway for Presbyterians and Catholics. The Catholic bishops and O'Connell condemned them as "Godless colleges." The bishops wanted a Catholic university

funded by the government and controlled by the hierarchy. Peel offered the Royal College of St Patrick, at Maynooth outside Dublin, a capital grant of 30,000 pounds sterling. The British government had endowed Maynooth College in 1795 to educate loyal young priests and curb their nationalism. (Most Maynooth priests retained their nationalism.) The argument between Old Ireland (O'Connell) and Young Ireland (Davis) was interrupted by the latter's death of scarlet fever on September 9, 1845, aged 31. The Nation continued to preach non-sectarian Irish nationalism.

28. The Great Famine: In September 1845 a North America fungus blighted the potato crop in the western half of Ireland. It persisted for three years. The potato was the staple diet of about five million of Ireland's almost nine million people. One million to 1.5 million people died of hunger in 1845-48. (There is no record of deaths.) Nearly a million fled to England, Canada and the United States, and more died aboard the "coffin ships" that transported them, or after landing in North America. Famine was not a novelty in Ireland. What was new in 1845-48 was the scale. The potato crop had failed in 1728, 1739, 1740, 1800, 1817, 1821, 1822, 1829-31. Peel allocated eight million pounds sterling for Irish famine relief, and after repealing the corn laws in early 1846, grain was purchased in the United States and stored in depots in Ireland. It was sold to the public for cash earned in public works. With corn no longer protected, pasture became more profitable than tillage and landlords "consolidated" small holdings into larger farms. In June 1846, Peel was defeated in Parliament on an Irish coercion bill and Lord John Russell's

Whigs took office with O'Connell's support. The Whigs were committed to the laissez faire economic doctrine of the Manchester School which opposed government interference with the supply and demand of the market place. The head of the British Treasury, Sir Charles Trevelyan, wrote: "Do not encourage the idea of prohibiting exports, perfect free trade is the right course." The prime minister said that "unhappily the agitation for repeal has contrived to destroy nearly all sympathy in this country" for the Irish. The Irish language, which was spoken generally throughout the West of Ireland, from Donegal to Kerry, the region that suffered most from the potato blight, was a victim of the famine. In the 1851 census, about one-quarter of the population reported Irish as their native speech. By the end of the century, Irish had disappeared from all but a couple of dozen parishes along the Atlantic coast. In February 1847 O'Connell made a final appeal to the British Parliament to save Ireland whose fate "was in their hands. If they did not save her, she could not save herself." The House refused to take any responsibility. The Times sent a special correspondent to Ireland to report on the famine. It blamed the landlords, "who are a curse on Ireland," and O'Connell, "the braggard leader and mouthpiece of the discontent." In May of "black '47" the Liberator died at Genoa en route to Rome, worn out at 72. While his "moral force" won Catholic emancipation, his repeal campaign was a failure. "What he gave us is hard to tell," Sean O'Faolain wrote in King of the Beggars. "Much good, much bad, but one thing was priceless -- the principle of life as a democracy." He taught

the Irish the importance of politics -- and they applied the lesson in America as refugees from the Great Famine. By identifying Irish nationalism with Catholicism he alienated Protestant liberals whose support he needed to repeal the Union.

29. Young Ireland Rebellion: In 1846 William Smith O'Brien led Young Ireland out of the Repeal Association when O'Connell demanded a pledge repudiating physical force. A pledge against force, regardless of circumstances was wrong, O'Brien, the Cambridge-educated landlord, Whig MP and descendant of Brian Boru, believed. Yet within two years Young Ireland, led by Smith O'Brien, would launch a hopeless rebellion. Mitchel, the Nation's best writer, and James Fintan Lalor, son of Peter Laor, an 1830s O'Connellite MP, were radicalized by the famine. In 1847-48 both tried to move Young Ireland along a more revolutionary path. Lalor proposed to link up repeal to the land question, "like a railway carriage to the engine," rallying the peasantry to fight for freedom, while Young Ireland concentrated on converting the landlords to repeal. Mitchel resigned from the Nation in December 1847 to found the weekly United Irishman as "an avowed organ of revolution." A few weeks later, the February 1848 revolution drove Louis Philippe from Paris and France was a republic again. Mitchel explained how "a kind of sacred wrath took possession of a few Irishmen at this time. They could endure the horrible scene no longer, and resolved to cross the path of the British car of conquest, though it should crush them to atoms..." There were barricades on the streets of Vienna, Berlin, Poznan (Poland) and Budapest. Mitchel was convinced the Irish people would respond to

examples of self-sacrifice. "What the people want to see in their leaders is individual heroism; is the determination to do themselves what they incite others to do, and seeing that, I believe they will follow, though it were to the gibbet's foot, or the cannon's muzzle." (The planners of the Dublin Easter Rising followed Mitchel's blueprint. Connolly, a student of revolutions, was invited to lecture Dublin Brigade officers of the Volunteers on street fighting in March 1915.) In May⁹ 1848, Mitchel was charged under the new Treason Felony Act, whose purpose The Times said was "to transport Mitchel, Meagher and Smith O'Brien to Botany Bay." Mitchel's treason was to publish an "Open letter to the Protestant farmers, labourers and artisans of Ulster" to support "an Irish Republic, one and indivisible." He was sentenced to be "transported beyond the seas for the term of 14 years." Lalor repeated the treason in the second number of the Irish Felon on July 8, telling the peasantry, who did not read his words, "to keep our harvest, to offer a peaceful passive resistance, to barricade the island, to break up the roads, to break down the bridges -- and should need be, and occasions offer, surely we may venture to try the steel." It was a good formula for guerrilla warfare but there was no movement to organize it. The Irish Felon was confiscated and its publisher, John Martin of Newry, was arrested under the Act and transported. On July 22, Parliament suspended habeas corpus in Ireland, giving Dublin Castle power to arrest and jail anyone suspected of treasonable intentions without charge or trial. Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher and John Blake Dillon took the field in

Tipperary where thousands of unarmed peasants followed them and Meagher thought, "It was the revolution, if we had accepted it." Smith O'Brien in a "speech from the dock" drafted in prison but not delivered, wrote that Young Ireland controlled "the whole place lying between Thurles and Carrick and between Clonmel and Kilkenny." At Ballingarry they faced opposition from priests who told the people to return to their homes. When a force of 46 constabulary took refuge in Mrs McCormack's substantial home-- not "cottage" as the English press had it -- and held her and her five children hostage for their own safety, Smith O'Brien argued with them. He refused to attack the farm house while the mother and her children were inside. The parish priest refused to ask the police inspector to surrender, saying he feared the police would be killed and "martial law would be proclaimed throughout the district and the atrocities of '98 again renewed." Another priest told the rebels to disperse "in the name of God." Smith O'Brien was prevailed upon to escape on a constable's horse-- Meagher and Dillon abandoned the field earlier -- and the rising was over. The Times correspondent, who was present, wrote: "There is no doubt that the Roman Catholic clergy here, as a body, have used their influence most creditably for the preservation of the public peace by discountenancing rebellion." Smith O'Brien, Meagher, Terence Bellew MacManus, who was also at Ballingarry, were arrested, as was Patrick O'Donoghue, a courier. All were tried and sentenced to death. The Whig government wanted no more Irish martyrs and transported them to Van Dieman's Land for life. MacManus, Meagher, Mitchel and O'Donoghue escaped to America in

the early 1850s and were welcomed in New York with parades and bands. Smith O'Brien refused to escape, but he received a pardon eventually. Meagher wrote: "...we were routed without a struggle, and have been led into captivity without glory -- we suffer not for a rebellion but for a blunder."

30. The Rise of Fenianism : Rebellion or blunder, 1848 fathered Fenianism. Its founders a decade later were James Stephens of Kilkenny and John O'Mahony of Tipperary. They were at Ballingarry and had to flee the country after it -- the first to France, the second to America. As far as rebellion was concerned, the Fenians -- or to give them the title they gave themselves in Ireland, the IRB -- they could not agree whether it meant Irish Republican or Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood. They were as luckless as Young Ireland. In the United States, where its strength lay after the American Civil War, it was styled the Fenian Brotherhood, until it broke into factions and was re-united as Clan-na-Gael. It was condemned by Church and State in Ireland. Pope Pius IX, urged by Cardinal Paul Cullen of Dublin, excommunicated all Fenians on January 12, 1870, because "in the course of 700 years the British government had become legitimate in Ireland." An English historian says the initiative came from the British government, but the late John W. Whyte, a distinguished Irish historian, said correspondence between the Cardinal and his secretary makes it "clear enough that the initiative lay with Cullen." No doubt the British also had a hand in it since their influence at the Vatican through the Duke of Norfolk was substantial. "No priests in politics," was a Fenian slogan. It was coined by Charles

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Kickham, a religious-minded man. The bishop of Kerry said "hell was not hot enough or eternity long enough" to punish Fenians. Their attempt at rebellion in March 1867 was foiled by the weather rather than the Irish Constabulary which became the Royal Irish Constabulary for allegedly thwarting them. Their plans went awry. They hoped to seize an arsenal to arm their men who would be commanded by Irish-American officers. Most of the latter arrived too late in a chartered ship Erin's Hope and were arrested on landing. They were crucified by spies and informers. The invasion of Canada had nothing to do with the rising in Ireland and its purpose remains unclear. To stir up Quebec or establish an exile government in British territory or hand Canada over to the United States? The 700 Fenians under Colonel John O'Neill who captured the Ontario border village of Fort Erie and after a night march defeated a force of British regulars and Canadian militia at Ridgway, styled themselves the IRA, Irish Republican Army. The raid won goodwill among the Irish in America and made the confederation of Canada a reality. Three million Irish had emigrated to the United States between 1846 and 1866. They contributed nearly half a million dollars to the Fenian treasury. Much if not most of the money was frittered away on the Canadian adventure which O'Mahony opposed but could not stop. (His aide, Red Jim McDermott, was working for the British secret service.) Stephens went to America after his escape from Richmond prison in Dublin, with the help of John Devoy and Colonel Thomas Kelly, Irish-American chief-of-staff of the IRB military council. Kelly and his staff ousted him at a meeting in New York. He spent

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most of the rest of his life in France. Kelly was the prisoner the IRB rescued from a police van in Manchester in September 1867 when a sergeant was shot and killed, and Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were hanged for it. The rising was set for February 1867, it was postponed to March, but South Kerry did not get the word in time and rose and seized a coastguard station. They disbanded and the US officer in charge, John O'Connor, returned to the United States. The rising on the night of March 4 achieved little either, mainly because they lacked arms and coordination.

31. Home Rule for Ireland: William E. Gladstone took office as Prime Minister after a sweeping electoral victory in November 1868 with the declaration: "My mission is to pacify Ireland." There was a strong amnesty movement in Ireland to free the Fenian prisoners. Gladstone freed them on condition they left the United Kingdom and did not return. All opted for America except John O'Leary who went to France. The most significant of the US group was John Devoy who had recruited about 3,000 Irish soldiers in the British army for the IRB and had served in the French Foreign Legion to learn the soldier's trade. He spent the rest of his life in America plotting to free Ireland with the help of whatever country was likely to be an enemy of Britain. Isaac Butt who led the Fenian amnesty campaign formed a Home Rule Association in May 1870. One of its MPs was John Martin, the same who was transported to Australia for Lalor's Irish Felon article. Martin represented Meath. When he died in 1875, a 29-year-old Cambridge-educated Protestant landlord, Charles Stewart Parnell, was elected to his seat. Parnell did not waste words. He defined

Home Rule as meaning that the people of Ireland "would rule her affairs and make her laws." In his first House of Commons speech he said "Ireland was not a geographical fragment of England but a nation." He seconded the obstructionist tactics of Joseph Gillis Biggar, a Belfast Presbyterian Fenian. Butt deplored such tactics as unparliamentary. What caught the attention of Ireland and Irish America about Parnell was his response when the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, spoke of the "Manchester murderers." Parnell dissented with a loud "No! No!" When the Chief Secretary remarked, "I regret to hear that there is an honourable member who will apologize for murder," Parnell replied, "I wish to say as publicly as I can that I do not believe, and never shall believe, that any murder was committed at Manchester."

32. The New Departure: Butt's policy was to conciliate English opinion. Parnell's policy was to provoke English opinion. "England respects nothing but power," he said. "Why was some measure of protection given to the tenant? It was because there was an explosion at Clerkenwell and because a lock was shot off a prison van in Manchester." They would get nothing from England by conciliation. During a visit to Mayo before Christmas 1877 he said, "You know I am pledged to obtain for Ireland the right of national self-government, that I have resolved to use every endeavour to secure for the tiller of the soil the fruits of his industry ... and I am at present engaged in helping to direct the attention of the English House of Commons to these questions. How can we best secure that attention? I think by compelling it."

In August 1876 Devoy succeeded in landing in America six soldiers imprisoned in Australia as Fenians. They were rescued by a whaling ship renamed the Catalpa. A fellow-Fenian, James J. O'Kelly, who worked with Devoy as a reporter on the New York Herald, had met Parnell in Paris and praised his qualities of leadership. He told Devoy: "He is cool -- extremely so and resolute." Devoy recommended Parnell to Clan-na-Gael. (In the 1880 general election, O'Kelly was elected to parliament as a Parnellite.) Michael Davitt, also a Fenian, was released from prison in December 1877. His mother lived in the United States and he visited her. He met Devoy who organized meetings for him. Davitt urged his audiences to make "English rule more difficult or impossible" by working with Home Rulers. A number of Home Rule MPs were Fenians. Devoy, who had been thinking along the same lines, discussed with Davitt "vigorous agitation of the land question on the basis of peasant proprietary, while accepting concessions tending to abolish arbitrary evictions." Devoy called this policy "the New Departure". It excluded "all sectarian issues" and supported "all struggling nationalities in the British Empire and elsewhere." The Fenian policy was outdated, both Devoy and Davitt agreed. Attempts to interest Spain and Russia in an Irish rebellion against England were unsuccessful. In March 1879, Devoy discussed the New Departure with Parnell in Boulogne, and again secretly in Dublin the following June. He found Parnell "ready to go more than half way to meet us." The Clan would raise money on the New Departure policy which was based on Lalor's thesis "that the absolute ownership of the lands

of Ireland are vested of right in the people of Ireland." Parnell considered land reform the key to the Irish Question. In October 1881 he remarked, "If the land question were settled every other question would, I think, settle itself."

33. The Land League: In the late 1870s there was fear of another famine in the West of Ireland. Crops were poor, cattle and wool prices down, but the landlords refused to reduce rents. In April 1879 a meeting in Irishtown, Co Mayo, heard a number of Fenians address the subject: Davitt, Patrick Egan, Matt Harris, Thomas Brennan and John O'Connor Power, an MP. The subject of the meeting was a parish priest, Canon Geoffrey Burke, who had inherited an estate from an uncle. His tenants had asked for a reduction of rent. He refused. Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam dismissed Davitt and company as "strolling men" -- persons of no consequence. Catholic landlords were a phenomenon of post-Famine Ireland which had ruined many Ascendancy families. The Irishtown meeting demanded "a reduction in unjust rents." O'Connor Power proposed peasant ownership of the land. Davitt said the meeting was "a great success" because Fenians were "the active spirits" behind the agitation. Parnell agreed to address a tenant rally in Westport against the advice of Archbishop MacHale. "You must not allow yourselves to be dispossessed as you were dispossessed in 1847," he said. The Land League was launched two months later. Before Christmas, Parnell sailed for America to raise funds for famine relief. In a reference to the New Departure, he told a reporter: "A true revolutionary movement in Ireland should, in my opinion, partake of both a constitutional and illegal character."

On February 2, 1880, he told the House of Representatives that the goal of the Land League was to enable every tenant "to become the owner of his farm." He added: "American public opinion would be of the greatest importance in enabling the Irish people to obtain a settlement of the Irish Question." Two days later he was received at the White House. At Cincinnati on February 20, he delivered his most controversial speech. He called for the destruction of the landlord system as "the cornerstone of English misrule." He concluded: "None of us ... will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England." In London these words were tantamount to treason. There was the suggestion that Patrick Ford's Irish World had inserted the "last link" wording. Questioned at the Special Commission in 1889, Parnell replied: "I believe I did not use them (the words), but I cannot be sure..." The North American tour was an enormous success. Parnell returned home with \$200,000 and it established him, at age 33, as unchallenged leader of the Irish nation. After the 1880 election, the Parnellites formed "an independent party reflecting the opinions of the masses of the people," their leader said. It was also the year when more than 2,000 families were evicted, there were 2,500 agrarian crimes and W.E. Forster, the new Chief Secretary, brought in a coercion act that A.M. Sullivan, the Home Rule MP, complained "threw the whole force of the popular feeling to the side of Parnell -- delivered Ireland into his hands." The land war's most effective weapon, the boycott, was first used against Captain Charles Boycott, Lord Erne's land agent in Mayo, a New

York Herald reporter covering Ireland made it part of the English language by employing it in his copy. Despite police guards round the clock and Orange labourers who came down from the North to save his crops but had to be protected by a couple of thousand soldiers, Captain Boycott was forced to retire to England. It gave the Land League a major victory. It proved it was an effective rural trade union. Mayo was under siege. "They know," said Parnell of the British government, "that if they fail in upholding landlordism here -- and they will fail -- they have no chance of maintaining it over Ireland." In that event, "their power to misrule Ireland will go too." Gladstone's Land Bill in April 1881 guaranteed fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale - the historic "three Fs" of Irish land agitation. It provided for a land court where tenants could appeal for reduced rents. It was accompanied by a coercion bill, which clouded the issue and raised the tempers of the Parnellites. It was, however, a death sentence on landlordism which within 25 years would make the tenant an independent farmer, the Land League's goal from the start. Meantime, Forster's coercion made Ireland ungovernable. Evictions grew, Gladstone threatened even more coercion, and on October 12, 1881, the cabinet decided to arrest Parnell. He was lodged in Kilmainham prison the next morning with three MPs and the editor of United Ireland, the Land League weekly. There were baton charges in Dublin. The Weekly Irish Times reported, "The roadway was strewn with the bodies of the people..." The Land League issued a "No-Rent Manifesto" which Parnell and his colleagues signed. The League was outlawed. A bishop said the

rent strike "struck at the foundations of society." The Ladies Land League of Fanny and Anna Parnell took over the "no-rent" campaign. But without Parnell the movement was breaking up. Seven months later Parnell reached "a satisfactory settlement of the (rent) arrears question" with Gladstone. The government would amend the Land Act and grant amnesty to tenants in arrears of rent. Parnell would withdraw the No-Rent Manifesto and advise "the tenants to settle with their landlords." When peace returned he hoped "the government would allow the coercion act to lapse, and govern the country by the same laws as in England." He disbanded the Ladies Land League. "I fear they have done much harm along with some good," he told Davitt. The Land League was not revived. The revolutionary phase was over.

34. Phoenix Park Assassinations: Parnell, Dillon and O'Kelly went by train to Portland Prison on the south coast of England to meet Davitt on his release from jail. "We are on the eve of something like Home Rule," Parnell said as they returned to London. "Mr Gladstone has thrown over coercion and Mr Forster, and the government will legislate further on the land question..." In London they learned of the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Gladstone's nephew by marriage, and the Irish Under-Secretary Thomas Henry Burke, beside the viceroy's mansion in the Phoenix Park. Cavendish, who had just arrived in Dublin, was walking through the park to report to the viceroy. Burke joined him and they were stabbed to death by men with surgical knives. The killers belonged to the Irish National Invincibles, whose leader James Carey turned informer. He said their aim was "to

remove all the principal tyrants of the country." They were ex-Fenians and Land Leaguers. Dublin Castle believed the killings were ordered by senior Land League officials -- Patrick Egan, the treasurer, Thomas Brennan, the secretary, Frank Byrne, head of the League in Britain. All fled to America. Carey gave evidence against his colleagues and five were hanged. He and his family received "safe passage" to South Africa under new names. Carey was shot by a fellow-passenger who discovered his identity. He was Patrick O'Donnell, an Irish immigrant and naturalized American citizen. He was taken to England, tried and hanged.

35. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill: Parnell had good reason to believe that an alliance with Gladstone would win Home Rule for Ireland. In May 1885, after Gladstone announced that he would renew the Crimes Bill enacted after the Phoenix Park murders, Parnell and 39 Irish MPs voted with the Tories against him and the Liberal government fell. Lord Salisbury, the Tory leader, took office without an election. To retain Parnell's support the minority Tory government adopted a Land Bill permitting the tenant to purchase his holding with a state grant. Next, Parnell set his sights on Home Rule. "In the new Parliament ... it may be possible for us to have a programme and a platform with only one plank, and that one plank national independence," he declared. Ireland dominated the 1885 general election and Gladstone decided the solution was Home Rule. Parnell said the Liberals and Tories were "vieing with each other to settle this Irish Question." But he warned that if it were not settled, "Ireland will soon throw off the kid gloves, and she will knock with a mailed hand." In

the winter poll with an Irish electorate that had more than trebled from 200,000 to 700,000 under the 1884 Franchise Act, the party won 85 of the 103 Irish seats, 17 of 33 in Ulster. An Irish seat in Liverpool made it 86. Parnell held the balance of power in the House of Commons. Lord Randolph Churchill, a Tory, decided to play the Orange card. He told Lord Salisbury, "if Gladstone introduced a Home Rule Bill, I should not hesitate, if other circumstances were favourable, to agitate Ulster even to resistance beyond constitutional limits. (Emphasis added.) He crossed to Belfast "to play the Orange card," as he said. He told a mass meeting in the Ulster Hall that "at the proper moment (Protestant Ulster) will resort to the supreme arbitrament of force," and he would be supported by "people of position and influence in England." He gave them a slogan: "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right." There followed the worst outbreak of sectarian rioting in the history of Belfast. In April 1886, Gladstone introduced his bill for a subordinate parliament in Dublin: a lower house, a senate and an executive responsible to it. Foreign affairs and defence would remain the responsibility of the imperial parliament. If Parnell had reservations about the bill, most nationalists had none. Lecky in a letter to The Times wrote that most Irish Protestants believed Home Rule would hand over Ireland "to priests, and Fenians, and professional agitators, supported by the votes of an ignorant peasantry (and) subsidized from America by avowed enemies of the British Empire." Joseph Chamberlain led 93 Liberals against his party. The bill was defeated despite Gladstone's last-minute appeal to think

"not for the moment but for the years that are to come." The dissidents called themselves Liberal-Unionists and teamed up with the Tories who won the general election. Parnell suffered no loss of prestige as a result of the defeat. The contrary in fact. He had pushed a Home Rule bill, even an inadequate one, to a vote and now the Liberal Party was committed to Home Rule for Ireland. It must triumph eventually. Irish nationalists were behind him even when the Vatican came out against him twice -- for a "tribute" to clear the debts on his estate, and the plan of campaign, which Rome condemned, but he had not endorsed. Irish bishops and priests refused to criticize Parnell, for, as Archbishop Joseph McEvilly of Tuam, an anti-Parnellite, wrote: "Right or wrong, the people are under the impression that it was owing to Parnell's action they have been rescued from the direst tyranny ever endured by a people from the landlord class."

36. Parnellism and Crime: The Irish leader's prestige was further enhanced in 1889 when a Parliamentary Special Commission found that accusations against him in a series of articles ("Parnellism and Crime") published in March 1887 by The Times linking him with terrorism were based on forgeries. The Times had purchased letters from Richard Pigott, a Dublin journalist. The secret witness against Parnell was an Englishman named Thomas Beach, alias Major Henri Le Caron, who had spent more than 20 years in America as a spy in the ranks of Clan-na-Gael. He said he interviewed Parnell in the House of Commons in 1881 after giving him a letter of introduction from John Devoy. Parnell invited Devoy through him to a meeting in Paris. Parnell praised the Clan

leader's understanding of the alliance between the constitutional and revolutionary wings of Irish nationalism. "I have long since ceased to believe that anything but the force of arms will ever bring about the redemption of Ireland," Parnell supposedly told Beach/Le Caron, a senior official for many years of Clan-na-Gael. Parnell could not remember the man but said it was possible he talked to him. "He would have no difficulty in obtaining an interview with me if he had wished to do so," Parnell said. The Times published one forged letter, purporting to be from Patrick Egan, the Land League leader, in which "hesitancy" was spelled "hesitency". Egan sent other letters from Pigott with the same misspelling to Parnell's London solicitor. Pigott was cross-examined for three days, then fled to Paris where he confessed in a letter to the Special Commission. Scotland Yard tracked him to Madrid where he shot himself as detectives burst into his room. The Special Commission adjudged the letters forgeries. The Times apologized. The Commons gave Parnell a standing ovation when he appeared in the House. His stock rose in Britain. For the Irish he was an irreplaceable leader, as they would soon discover.

37. The Fall of Parnell: On November 25, 1890, the Irish MPs re-elected Parnell chairman by acclamation. Gladstone warned that his "continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland (and) would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal Party, based as it has been upon the prosecution of

the Irish cause, almost a nullity." No Gladstone, no Home Rule! Parnell told his colleagues that he would remain "to assist them and to guide them to their final victory." He would not resign. The issue arose when Parnell was cited as co-respondent in a divorce action by an Irish MP, Captain William Henry O'Shea, against his wife Katharine. The affair began in 1881. She was the daughter of a clergyman. Her brother, Sir Evelyn Wood, became a field marshal in the British army. O'Shea, the son of a Dublin solicitor, was educated in England. Michael Davitt, who opposed Parnell in the split, wondered, "Who, or what agency, asked, urged, or persuaded (O'Shea) to institute the proceedings for divorce?" He was a witness for The Times before the Special Commission and swore that the forged signature was Parnell's. The split in Committee Room 15 of the House of Commons occurred three days after the Irish bishops condemned Parnell. Devoy cabled his friend, J.J. O'Kelly, "If Parnell yields to English clamour will destroy American movement. No other man or men can keep it together... Assure him may count on unswerving support..." As "the leader of the Irish nation" -- not just chairman of a parliamentary party -- Parnell declared he would not yield. To vindicate his leadership he fought a series of disastrous by-elections, all of which he lost. The Church was against him. O'Kelly believed "Home Rule was all over for our time," James Clancy, a New York Herald reporter, wrote Devoy. "The priests have smashed the movement. Their power is so great that they have crushed Parnell, and Parnell cannot see it." The Kilkenny by-election was the worst. A bishop told Archbishop Walsh of Dublin

that the Fenians and the working class were with Parnell "to a man." Bishop O'Callaghan of Cork informed the rector of the Irish College in Rome, "The mob is for Parnell and the priests were insulted and hooted lately in the streets." Tim Healy accused Parnell of embezzling party funds. He wrote in the National Press: "We called Mr Parnell a thief. We repeat that epithet." Parnell made his last speech on September 27 in the West of Ireland. The rain was heavy and he was soaked. "I know that you look to Ireland's future as a nation if we can gain it," he said. "We may not be able to gain it, but if not it will be left to those who come after us to win..." He died nine days later. In 1897 Gladstone told Barry O'Brien, Parnell's biographer, "Ah! had Parnell lived, had there been no divorce proceedings, I do solemnly believe, there would be a parliament in Ireland now." Chamberlain, who split his own party to defeat Home Rule, compared Parnell with Napoleon: "He allowed nothing to stand in his way. He stopped at nothing to gain his end."

38. The Defeat of Home Rule : Gladstone became prime minister for the fourth time in August 1892, at the age of 83, with the votes of the Irish Party which held the balance of power. In February 1893 he moved the second Home Rule Bill. It was weaker than the first Home Rule Bill but stirred strong passions among Tories, Ulster Unionists and Liberal Unionists nevertheless. A rising Tory star and future prime minister, A.J. Balfour, went to Belfast to rouse the Orangemen, who needed little rousing, warning that "the tyranny of majorities may be as bad as the tyranny of kings ... that what is justifiable against a

certain circumstances be justifiable against a tyrannical majority." The Orangemen had no doubt about that. They passed a resolution to resist an Irish Parliament "by every means in our power..." The Home Rule Bill passed the Commons on September 2, 1893, and a week later was rejected by the House of Lords. In March 1894 Gladstone resigned and Lord Rosebery -- about whom Parnell once asked, "Do you think he knows anything about Home Rule or cares anything about it?" -- succeeded him. Parnell was right: he cared nothing for Home Rule, but insisted England's goodwill as "the predominant partner" in the United Kingdom was essential for its passage. He fell in June 1895, the Tories returned to office for ten years, Balfour as Chief Secretary for Ireland proposed "to kill Home Rule by kindness."

39 The Gaelic League and the Irish Republic: In November 1892, a year after Parnell's death, Dr Douglas Hyde told the Irish National Literary Society in Dublin to "cultivate what they have rejected, and build up an Irish nation on Irish lines." How? By reviving Gaelic, the ancient language of the Irish people which since the Great Famine was disappearing fast. De-Anglicise Ireland and save the language, he told them. The following July, the Gaelic League was born and inspired other movements: the literary revival of W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, who decided to "build up a Celtic and Irish school of dramatic literature," and staged Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan, about the French landing at Killaloe in 1798, with Maud Gonne as the old woman, Ireland, who is transformed into "a young girl (with) the walk of a queen." After 1916 Yeats asked, Did that play of mine send out /Certain

men the English shot? Perhaps. Ireland was stirring in the last years of the 19th century. James Connolly was the first -- since the Fenians in the 1860s -- to call openly for an Irish Republic. He did so in January 1897 in the Shan Van Vocht of Belfast which Alice Milligan edited urging "the frank acceptance on the part of all earnest nationalists of the Republic as their goal." The IRB was active in the '98 centenary celebrations but went to sleep again so that by 1905 police reports called it "dormant" and Leon O Broin, an authority on the organization, would describe it as "nothing but the shadow of a once terrifying name." It had some assets. Denis McCullough of Belfast, the son of a Fenian, recruited Bulmer Hobson, a 22-year-old Quaker teacher and gifted organizer. Harking back to the Volunteers of 1778, Hobson and McCullough gave the IRB a public face in the Dungannon Clubs whose purpose was to unite Orange and Green. They had no success in that but by linking their ideas with Arthur Griffith's Cumann na nGaedheal and National Council in 1905 they emerged with a policy called Sinn Fein (Ourselves) which in April 1907 became the Sinn Fein League. A manifesto written by Hobson said their goal was "to make Ireland a great nation, intellectually and commercially." By withdrawing Irish representatives from Westminster and conducting "a widespread passive resistance movement we can make English government impossible." Pat McCartan, a member of Clan-na-Gael, came home from Philadelphia in September 1905 to study medicine in Dublin and transferred to the IRB. Sean MacDermott from Leitrim who was working in Belfast joined the IRB. John Devoy sent money and in 1907 Tom Clarke

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returned to Ireland. By 1911-12 these men were leaders of a new IRB subsidized by Clan-na-Gael, burrowing underground in the case of Clarke and MacDermott and trying to create an open movement in the case of Hobson. Their influence on events was confined to the IRB monthly, Irish Freedom, which began publication in November 1911 after they had broken with Griffith whose Sinn Fein policy was making little progress. Neither the IRB nor Sinn Fein counted for much in the Ireland of 1912. The issue again was Home Rule.

40. Out of the Ashes : The Liberals returned to power in 1906 with a majority so large they did not need Irish Party support. The new prime minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, favoured Home Rule, but was forced to resign in April 1908 and died seventeen days later. Herbert H. Asquith, an urbane intellectual, became prime minister. In 1909 Asquith's government got into a constitutional tangle with the House of Lords, where the Tories enjoyed a permanent majority, because of budget welfare measures and a tax on undeveloped land which was anathema to the landed gentry. The Lords rejected the budget in November and parliament was dissolved in December. The Lords' veto was the issue of the election of January 1910 which returned 275 Liberals and 272 Conservative-Unionists. The 82 Irish nationalists held the balance of power with 40 Labour MPs who supported Home Rule. In a speech at the Albert Hall, London, Asquith promised to "set up in Ireland a system of full self-government in regard to purely Irish affairs," after the House of Lords lost its veto. A second election in November 1910 gave 272 seats each to Liberals and Tories. The Irish Party and Labour continued to hold the balance

of power with 84 and 42 members respectively. Faced with a Liberal threat to create as many lords as were necessary to break the Tory grip on the upper chamber, the noble lords surrendered in August 1911: they retained the power to delay a bill for three sessions of parliament after which it would be law automatically. Home Rule would be enacted two years after Commons approval.

41. Enter Sir Edward Carson: In November 1910 the Ulster Unionist Council appointed Sir Edward Carson, Unionist MP for Trinity College, lawyer and onetime Dublin Castle prosecutor, its chairman. "I am not for a mere game of bluff," Carson told Captain James Craig, the Unionist MP for East Down, who brought him the invitation to lead the Ulster Unionists, "and unless men are prepared to make great sacrifices, which they clearly understand, the talk of resistance is no use..." Craig, a distillery millionaire who earned his captaincy in the Boer War, must have assured him he was not bluffing. Ten months later Carson opened his campaign by reviewing an Orange hosting at Craigavon, Craig's seat, marching in military formation. "We must be prepared ... the morning after Home Rule passes, ourselves to become responsible for the government of the Protestant province of Ulster..." Carson told them. "And the day that a British government sets its soldiers to drive you and me out of the community of the United Kingdom, that day will be the end of the British Empire." Two days later, 400 delegates from Orange lodges and Unionist clubs proposed a constitution for "a Provisional Government for Ulster ... to come into operation on the day of the passage of any Home Rule Bill, to remain in force until

Ulster shall again resume unimpaired her citizenship in the United Kingdom and her high position in the great British Empire." Carson lauded them. "Any government will ponder long before it dares to shoot a loyal Ulster Protestant, devoted to his country and loyal to his king," he said.

42. Churchill in Belfast: A member of the Liberal cabinet at the time Churchill supported Home Rule for Ireland. "Is the question of making a national settlement with Ireland never to be fairly tried?" he asked. He advised Unionists to "pause again before they commit themselves to fomenting an anti-Catholic agitation." Andrew Bonar Law, the Canadian-born son of an Ulster Protestant, had replaced Balfour in November 1911 as Conservative-Unionist leader in the House of Commons. Bonar Law said he would go to any extreme to defeat Home Rule. He accused Asquith of "selling" the constitution for Irish nationalist support. Churchill went to Belfast in February 1912 to put the Liberal case for Home Rule as his father 26 years earlier had put the Tory case against Home Rule. Some Orangemen tried to topple Churchill's car as he left his hotel. They desisted, they said, because Mrs Churchill was in it. Churchill's sponsors in Belfast, Lord Pirrie, the liberal chairman of Harland and Wolff, the Rev. J.B. Armour of Ballymena, a pro-nationalist Presbyterian minister, and Joseph Devlin, Irish Party MP for West Belfast, tried to book the Ulster Hall where Churchill senior had declared that "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right", but the Ulster Unionist Council would not permit such blasphemy in the centre of "the loyal city of Belfast." Churchill spoke in Celtic Park as five battalions

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of infantry and two companies of cavalry stood to in their barracks in case of riots. Churchill said the overseas Irish "have done us much harm in the past" because of Ireland. "They have on more than one occasion unfavourably deflected the policy of the United States. They are now the more serious obstacle to Anglo-American friendship." The Unionists had "disqualified themselves for ever from governing Ireland" because they preached lawlessness and violence.

43. Bonar Law Reviews Ulster Volunteers: On April 9, 1912, two days before the third Home Rule Bill was introduced, Bonar Law warned that if it became law "then God help Ulster, but heaven help the government that tried to enforce it." The same day the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition went to Balmoral, a Belfast suburb, to review a parade of 100,000 Ulster Volunteers who marched past the largest Union Jack ever made -- there may have been some exaggeration in these claims. The Volunteers were a private militia organized by the Orange lodges. It was all perfectly legal. Someone -- Carson perhaps -- had discovered an old law that permitted two justices of the peace to authorize military training to maintain "the constitution of the United Kingdom as now established." This presented no problem in Ulster. The Primate of the Church of Ireland and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church opened the rally with prayers and hymns. Bonar Law compared Unionist opposition to Home Rule to the defence of Derry in 1688-89. "Once again you hold the pass, the pass for the Empire," he told them. "You are a besieged city. The timid have left you ... but you have closed your gates."

44. The Home Rule Bill: Asquith's Home Rule Bill proposed a subordinate legislature for "matters exclusively relating to Ireland." The RIC would remain under British control for six years. "The supreme power and authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things in Ireland and every part thereof." John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Party, called the bill a "final settlement" of the Irish Question. Patrick Pearse, not yet a member of the IRB but a leading figure in the Gaelic League, warned in Irish from a Home Rule platform: "If we are again betrayed there shall be red war throughout Ireland." Churchill in the House of Commons also issued a warning: "Whatever Ulster's rights may be she cannot stand in the way of the whole of the rest of Ireland. Half a province cannot impose a permanent veto on the nation. Half a province cannot obstruct for ever the reconciliation between the British and the Irish democracies..." What was being offered was "colonial autonomy," he said, not separation from Great Britain. As for Ulster: "I ask, do they claim separate treatment for themselves? Do the counties of Down and Antrim and Londonderry, for instance, ask to be excepted from the scope of the Bill? Do they ask for a parliament of their own...?" Privately Churchill favoured excluding "the Orange counties," as he called Antrim, Down, Armagh and Derry, from Home Rule. In cabinet he and Lloyd George proposed a partition solution. In 1886 when Gladstone mentioned "cutting off from Ireland all that small portion of Ulster in which the Protestants are so concentrated as to form a great majority," he said they

vehemently opposed such a solution, which Parnell rejected outright. A local legislature for three counties "would abandon the majority of the Protestants to their fate," the Irish leader said. "No, Sir, we cannot give up a single Irishman. We want the energy, the patriotism, the talents and work of every Irishman to ensure that this great experiment shall be a successful one."

45. The Origin of Partition: In June 1912 a Liberal MP proposed the exclusion of "Londonderry, Antrim, Down and Armagh" from Home Rule. Carson supported the amendment as a tactical device against Redmond. (Carson never fully accepted partition.) What was being proposed in 1912 was the partition of Ulster, five of whose nine counties had endorsed Home Rule in the 1912 elections. Even in the "Orange counties" there were large nationalist blocs, amounting to 45.8% in Derry, 45.3% in Armagh, 31.6% in Down and 20.5% in Antrim. In Belfast 24.1% and in Derry City 56.2% were nationalists, and in both cities Catholics formed the underclass. The motion lost by only 69 votes. Lloyd George and Churchill did not vote, which meant the cabinet was not united. Asquith had no doubts. "You can no more split Ireland into parts," he said, "than you can split England and Scotland into parts."

46. Ulster Covenant and UVF: After church services on September 28, 1912, Carson and Craig led a procession of Protestant notables to Belfast City Hall where they signed the "Ulster Covenant" which pledged them to use "all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland." Carson signed first: 447,197 other names followed. The Ulster Unionist Council formally created the Ulster

Volunteer Force in January 1913 which united the local Orange militias. General Sir George Richardson, a veteran of the Afghan wars, was appointed commander-in-chief of the UVF on the recommendation of Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Britain's most popular soldier. By March 1914, the UVF had a muster roll of 84,540 Volunteers. They were commanded by retired British officers, trained by former non-commissioned officers and financed by Belfast businessmen. Arms were procured in Britain and Germany and smuggled into the North. Customs impounded crates of rifles in London and Belfast but a government under siege did nothing to interfere with the buildup of men and arms.

47. Exclusion of Ulster Defeated : On January 1, 1913, Carson moved to exclude Ulster from the Home Rule Bill. When Bonar Law said Ulster would rather be annexed by a foreign country than submit to Home Rule, Churchill asked if Ulster would secede to Germany? Noting that the Catholic minority in Ulster was "practically as large, almost as numerous as the Protestant community," he wondered if "You propose to mete out to the Catholics of Ulster exactly the same treatment that you regard as cruel and unfair when meted out to Protestants... We are then at the position that the minority in Ireland claim the right for all time and in all circumstances to bar the path of progress for the whole of the rest of Ireland, and to bar it not merely by constitutional means but, if necessary, by the use of armed force." Carson's amendment was defeated. The Home Rule Bill passed the House of Commons on January 16, lost in the Lords as expected, and proceeded on course to become law by June 1914

under the procedures of the Parliament Act of 1911.

48. Manoeuvres Behind the Scenes: In September 1913, Bonar Law in a "private" talk with Churchill said Carson was determined to establish a provisional government in Ulster when Home Rule became law and he (Bonar Law) would support him. If Asquith ordered troops to Ulster he might not be obeyed. (emphasis added) In recounting this "remarkable conversation" to the prime minister, Churchill wrote: "I have always wished to see Ulster provided for, and you will remember how Lloyd George and I pressed its exclusion upon the cabinet..." (Churchill and Lloyd George would exclude "the Orange counties" from Home Rule.) Relaying the substance of his talk with Churchill to Carson, Bonar Law said: "As you know I have long thought that if it were to leave Ulster as she is, and have some form of Home Rule for the rest of Ireland, that is on the whole the only way out..." Carson said the difficulty was how to define Ulster. "My own view is that the whole of Ulster should be excluded but the minimum would be the six plantation counties, and for that a good case could be made." (The "plantation counties" were Donegal, Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Cavan, Armagh: four had Home Rule majorities. No doubt Carson meant by "plantation counties" Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Armagh, Antrim, Down: four had Unionist majorities.)

49. The Curragh Mutiny: In a speech at Dundee, on October 8, Churchill openly suggested partition. Redmond rejected it without equivocation. "Irish nationalists can never be assenting parties to the mutilation of the Irish nation," he said. "Ireland is a unit..." But in 1913 the issue had shifted from Home Rule to

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partition. Asquith conferred secretly and separately with Bonar Law and Carson and in February 1914 told Redmond: "Their one demand is the total exclusion of Ulster." Redmond "shivered visibly and was ... perturbed." On March 3 Asquith persuaded Redmond, Dillon and Devlin to accept partition for three years to allow time for a general election. On March 9 Asquith told the House that "any Ulster county might, by a majority of its parliamentary electors, vote itself out of the operation of the Bill for six years" -- doubling the time limit without bothering to inform the Irish leaders. Carson dismissed this as "a sentence of death with a stay of execution for six years." Churchill said that the acceptance of temporary partition was "the hardest sacrifice ever asked of Irish nationalism." How would Unionists treat nationalists under their control? He recalled Craig's reply when Asquith said, "If Home Rule were to fail now, how would you govern the West of Ireland?" Craig said: "We have done it before." Churchill responded: "There is the obstacle to the peace and unity of Ireland." Churchill accused Carson of "a treasonable conspiracy." The extent of the conspiracy would be revealed a week later when plans for government-ordered naval and military movements in Ulster over the week-end of March 21-23, 1914, were passed to Carson by General Sir Henry Wilson of the War Office. At the Curragh, the largest military base in Ireland, officers threatened to resign their commissions if ordered to the North. Brigadier-General Sir Hubert Gough, commander of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, and 57 of his 70 officers would "accept dismissal if ordered North." Suspended from his command and summoned to the

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War Office in London, Gough was reinstated after conferring with Wilson, an Irish Unionist, who said he should demand a written guarantee from the Minister for War that he and his officers need not serve in Ulster. Gough wrote his interpretation of the guarantee, which the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John French, and the adjutant general countersigned: "The troops under our command will not be called upon to enforce the present Home Rule Bill on Ulster, and that we can so assure our officers." The mutinous officers were vindicated. The Liberal government's attempt "to coerce Ulster" collapsed. (Technically it was not a mutiny: they did not disobey an order. They did not receive one to disobey but made clear they would not carry out an order "to enforce the present Home Rule Bill on Ulster.) "The army has killed the Home Rule Bill, and the sooner the government recognizes the fact the better for the country," the Tory Morning Post proclaimed. The Pall Mall Gazette called it "a fiasco unparalleled in the history of this country." The Minister for War and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff resigned. But Belfast was quiet over the week-end of July 21-23 and all the conspirators were gathered there waiting for the bell to toll for them. European correspondents interviewed Carson in Craigavon amid heavy security. Their reports strengthened the perception in Europe's capitals that an England on the verge of civil war in Ireland was unlikely to engage in a conflict of the kind that broke out in the Balkans a few months later and caused Germany to make a major miscalculation that Britain would be neutral. The significance of the "Ulster crisis" went far beyond the shores of

Ireland. It was reinforced by an event that took place one month after the mutiny which clarified the kind of game that was afoot.

50. Gun-Running at Larne: On the night of April 24-5, 1914, some 24,600 rifles and three million rounds of ammunition were landed at Larne, Bangor and Donaghadee near Belfast, and transported by fleets of motor cars -- rare at that time, owned mainly by the wealthy -- throughout Ulster and taken to safe hiding places. The operation was planned and supervised by an ex-staff officer of the British army who returned to active duty a few months later when war broke out. Care was taken to avoid nationalist areas. Through the night and early morning the UVF controlled the province's communications and main roads. Police, coast guard and customs stayed out of sight. The arms were purchased in Hamburg by Belfast businessman Fred Crawford with money contributed to Carson by his rich backers. Crawford bought a cargo ship in Bergen and transported the munitions to the Irish Sea where they were transferred to a coal-boat in a remote Welsh bay. The prime minister declared that the government "will take without delay appropriate steps to vindicate the authority of the law." No one was charged, no one was punished. "Irish nationalists have always been urged by both great parties in the state," Churchill said, "to abandon unconstitutional agitation. They have not only been urged to do so but great violence has been used against them... and now they have brought their cause to the very threshold of success. If by an act of violence and under threats of violence the cause of Home Rule were to be shattered now, I say that the Conservative party would themselves have taught the nationalists

of Ireland the truth that there was in John Bright's famous saying that Ireland never gained anything but by force."

51. Home Rule Suspended: Home Rule passed its final reading on May 25, 1914. Asquith, Bonar Law and Carson agreed at a secret meeting in London on a separate amending bill to deal with changes such as the areas to be excluded from its operation. It contained Asquith's March 9 Ulster county option proposal and was introduced in the Lords on June 23 when Lord Lansdowne, one of the largest landowners in Ireland, further amended it to exclude all Ulster permanently and without county option from Home Rule. Redmond informed Asquith he would go no further than the March agreement on a county option six-year exclusion vote. King George V called a conference at Buckingham Palace to break the deadlock. He warned of civil war and urged "generous compromise". Carson demanded the exclusion of all Ulster. Redmond and Dillon rejected his claim. Carson proposed "the exclusion of a block consisting of the Counties: Antrim, Down, Armagh, Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh, including Derry City and Belfast: all to vote as One Unit." Redmond circulated a memorandum saying that only "those districts should be excluded in which the population was predominantly Unionist, and those districts should be included in which the population was predominantly nationalist." Carson found that unacceptable. He said Ulster Protestants would not abandon their co-religionists "in another county just because there may be a majority here or a majority there." On July 24 -- the day Austria sent an ultimatum to Serbia on the June 28 assassination of the Archduke at Sarajevo -- Asquith told the Commons that the

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Buckingham Palace conference had failed. He advised the king he would go ahead with the county option without a time limit. "The Irish acquiesced in this reluctantly," Churchill wrote. A House vote set for July 30 was postponed indefinitely. On August 4, Britain declared war on Germany for invading Belgium whose neutrality the great powers had guaranteed. Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey said "the one bright spot in the very dreadful situation is Ireland." On September 18, the Home Rule Bill for all Ireland, titled the Government of Ireland Act 1914, received the royal assent along with an Amending Act suspending its operation until after the war. Asquith added a second caveat: Home Rule would not take effect "until parliament has had the fullest opportunity, by an Amending Bill, of altering, modifying, or qualifying its provisions in such a way as to secure the general consent of Ireland and of the United Kingdom." The Government of Ireland Act 1920, which partitioned Ireland, performed this function. It had the assent of the British Parliament but not of the Irish people. However, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 incorporated Carson's 1914 partition proposal.

52. The Irish Volunteers: Bulmer Hobson of the IRB, which otherwise seemed quiescent, came up with the idea in the summer of 1913 to raise a force of nationalist Volunteers. The British government had tolerated the Ulster Volunteers against Home Rule. Could it suppress nationalist Volunteers who supported Home Rule? IRB circles began to drill. Hobson needed "a respected figure who would become the focal point of a public movement" to call a founding convention. He asked Professor Eoin MacNeill to endorse

the proposal. MacNeill wrote an essay for the Gaelic League's bi-lingual weekly, An Claidheamh Soluis, "The North Began," praising the Ulster Volunteers and suggesting that nationalist Ireland should follow their example. Hobson set up a broadly-based organizing committee controlled by the IRB and a convention was held in the Rotunda hall, Dublin, on November 25, 1913. "A steady supporter of John Redmond," as he described his politics, MacNeill presided at the convention which drew nationalists of all persuasions. Patrick Pearse had written a follow-up article to MacNeill's "The North Began" and Hobson made him a member of the organizing committee. After the convention he invited him to join the IRB. Clarke kept John Devoy informed of developments and the previous year (1912) the IRB's new supreme council had sent its national organizer, Sean MacDermott, to the Clan convention at Atlantic City, NJ, where he reported IRB membership as 1,660 in Ireland and 367 in Britain. The Clan increased its IRB subsidy to two thousand pounds a year. The Dublin correspondent of the Clan newspaper, Gaelic American, which Devoy edited, was Hobson. At the end of May 1914 as Volunteer enrollment reached 60,000, Redmond demanded the right as the national leader to appoint 25 members to the Volunteers' governing committee. Ten IRB committee members -- including Clarke, MacDermott and Pearse --opposed the demand. Hobson, MacNeill and Sir Roger Casement, a longtime friend of both, pressed for compliance. Hobson resigned from the supreme council of the IRB and gave his time and considerable energy to the Volunteers. Friends of Casement set up a committee in London to buy arms. Erskine Childers purchased 1,500 Mauser

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rifles and 49,000 rounds of ammunition in Hamburg and ran them to Ireland in two yachts: his own Asgard and Conor O'Brien's -- a grandson of William Smith O'Brien -- Kelpie. The arms were landed at Howth on July 26, 1914, and Kilcoole, south of Dublin, on August 2. Volunteers took the Howth arms into Dublin the same day. Troops fired on a jeering crowd at Bachelor's Walk, killed four and wounded 37 --the first casualties of political violence in Ireland since the land war. The Howth arms were used in the Easter rebellion of 1916 which an IRB military council planned after Devoy was promised German aid in August 1914. The Irish Volunteers split over the great war. About 80,000 followed John Redmond in support of Britain and for Home Rule and 10,000 did not. The latter the IRB intended to mobilize for a rising since its members held key positions in the leadership. Casement was in Germany holding talks with the Foreign Office and recruiting Irish prisoners of war for an Irish Brigade with little success. He returned to Ireland on a U-boat a few days before Easter to stop the rising which MacNeill also tried to stop when he learned the Volunteers were being used without his or Hobson's knowledge in what he considered a hopeless cause. The rising took place, the IRB declared an Irish Republic, the leaders were executed, and the aftermath changed the politics of Ireland. For, as George Bernard Shaw correctly predicted on May 10, 1916: "The shot Irishmen will now take their places beside Emmet and the Manchester martyrs in Ireland and beside the heroes of Poland and Serbia and Belgium in Europe; and nothing in heaven or on earth can prevent it."

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53. Solutions to the Irish Question: Prime Minister H.H. Asquith arrived in Dublin on the morning of May 12, 1916, as two leaders of the rebellion, James Connolly and Sean MacDermott, were being executed. It was an inauspicious start to his task which he told the cabinet a week later was to find a "permanent solution" to the Irish Question. Redmond and Carson agreed to a settlement but "it had to be imposed on them both," they said. Asquith appointed Lloyd George, the Minister of Munitions, to negotiate it. "If I am allowed to make some arrangement about Ulster I can promise to get you Home Rule for all the rest of Ireland," he told T.P. O'Connor, an Irish Party MP for Liverpool. The problem was partition which in 1912 Lloyd George and Churchill saw as a solution. Lloyd George's 1916 plan was to bring Home Rule into force immediately with an Amending Bill excluding six Ulster counties from Home Rule until after the war when an imperial conference would deal with the issue. Meanwhile a member of the British cabinet would administer the six Ulster counties. John Dillon correctly interpreted this to mean that "Carson was to have his way, that no pressure was to be put on Ulster and that if they (the nationalists) did not agree to terms thus placed, they were to be told that they had wrecked all efforts at conciliation and must accept the consequences," he told C.P.Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian. On May 27, 1916, Lloyd George sent Carson a copy of his draft proposals for a settlement. The Amending Bill would exclude Antrim, Down, Armagh, Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh and the boroughs of Belfast and Derry from Home Rule. "We must make it clear that at the end of the

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provisional period Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge in the rest of Ireland," Lloyd George assured Carson in writing. He assured the Irish Party leaders verbally "that all the arrangements should be temporary," Dillon recalled. The Amending Bill was "a strictly war emergency act to cover only the period of the war and a short specified interval after it," Lloyd George added. Home Rule would take effect immediately in the 26 counties. While the war lasted Irish MPs would continue to sit at Westminster in "their full numbers." Lloyd George insisted on the consent of the nationalists in the six counties to temporary partition, and gave Redmond a guarantee, "if we obtained that consent, we could rely on him and the prime minister not to tolerate any further concession being sprung upon us. He gave us the most emphatic assurance." Asquith in a speech guaranteed it would be "a provisional settlement." The Unionists did not agree.

54. Northern Nationalists Meet: On June 23, 1916, nationalist delegates representing the six counties met in St Mary's Hall, Belfast, to vote on temporary partition which, unknown to them, was permanent. That morning's Irish Times explained: "The Ulster Unionists have been told that the exclusion of the six counties is to be permanent. The nationalists are assured by Mr Redmond that it will be provisional and the prime minister says Mr Redmond is right. One might have supposed that the unionists of Ulster who are hard men in the matter of business would have demanded an immediate explanation of this contradiction in terms. We shall tell the public why they have not demanded it. Sir Edward Carson possesses a written promise from Mr Lloyd George

that the exclusion of Ulster is to be permanent. There is no doubt about the terms of this document. It is clear and explicit. It means, if words mean anything, that Ulster is to be excluded from Home Rule saecula saeculorum unless and until of her own free will she makes another choice." Redmond denounced the Irish Times statement as "an absolute lie." He threatened to resign if the delegates rejected temporary exclusion of the six counties in return for Home Rule in the other twenty-six. They took his word and voted 475 to 265 for temporary partition as "the best means of carrying on the fight for a united self-governing Ireland." Lord Lansdowne, Conservative Unionist leader of the Lords and a member of the cabinet, pulled the rug from under Redmond's feet on July 11 when he said the partition of Ireland was "permanent and enduring", not "temporary and provisional" as the Irish leader claimed. Asquith was forced to admit Lansdowne was right. Redmond rejected the deal and felt betrayed.

55. Fermanagh and Tyrone: Lloyd George became prime minister of the coalition war cabinet before Christmas 1916 when Asquith suddenly resigned in a bid to reshuffle his government and give himself more control. Instead he was replaced by Lloyd George in a deal with Bonar Law, the leader of the Tories. Most of the Irish prisoners were released at Christmas 1916 and became a political force. In April 1917 the US Congress declared war on Germany and President Woodrow Wilson sent Lloyd George an unofficial message that "If the American people were once convinced that there was a likelihood that the Irish Question would soon be settled, great enthusiasm and satisfaction would

result and it would also strengthen the co-operation which we are now about to organize between the United States and Great Britain." As Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British ambassador, interpreted the message: "The President ... is the leader of the Democratic Party in which the Irish play a prominent part, and he is bound in every way to give consideration to their demands." The Irish in America wanted an Irish settlement. Lloyd George's response was to exhume his June 1916 Home Rule-and-partition plan and make it acceptable to the Irish Party which had lost a by-election in North Roscommon to Count Plunkett whose son Joseph was a signatory of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, and had its back to the wall in another by-election set for May 10 in South Longford. (Joe McGuinness, an IRB man nominated by Michael Collins, won the seat.) Because of Lloyd George's double-dealing in 1916 about "temporary" versus "permanent" partition, Dillon and Devlin refused to meet him, Dillon told Scott on May 1, 1917. (Devlin met the prime minister later.) "The fact was that opinion in Ireland had greatly hardened," Dillon added. "All the young forces were going over to Sinn Fein." Partition in any shape was scorned, enthusiasm for Home Rule "had disappeared." Scott breakfasted with Lloyd George the following morning. "(He) took me apart to explain the Irish situation," Scott wrote in his diary. "Carson was his difficulty. Both he and Craig were personally quite ready to concede county option which would settle the whole business, but both said they would be denounced by their followers as traitors and couldn't do it." He quoted Carson: "I promised them that I would see them through and I

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can't desert them." If Carson resigned from the cabinet, Bonar Law would go too "and that meant the complete break up of the government." (The diary entry is vague on identifying speakers, but Carson and Bonar Law are quoted as if they were present.) What is one to make of this conversation? Carson's claim to Fermanagh and Tyrone -- which he declared at the Buckingham Palace parley in July 1914 -- was based on the fact that each had about a 45% Unionist/Protestant minority and therefore should be excluded from Home Rule without a vote! He and Craig were fearful of county option for it would deny them Fermanagh and Tyrone. President Wilson, whose goodwill was essential, might have a problem with Irish-American Democrats if that happened. The Irish Party was losing ground and needed a settlement to recover.

56. Council of Ireland: Lloyd George explained in detail to Scott on May 2 his plan for an Irish settlement. The Home Rule Act would be put into operation immediately with "the 'clean-cut' for the six counties provisionally." (Meaning that Fermanagh and Tyrone would be excluded from Home Rule without a vote.) There I would be a Council of all Ireland with "16 members for the excluded counties" and 16 members to be appointed by the Dublin parliament. The Council to "have power to apply to the whole of Ireland any legislation within the competence of the Dublin parliament on which both sides are agreed." The settlement would be provisional "for five years certain or three years after the end of the war." Lloyd George asked Scott to find out if the Irish MPs "were still obdurate" against partition. (They were.) Yet this was the settlement that finally prevailed, although not

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in this exact form. The 26 counties would be upgraded to Dominion status and a subordinate Unionist parliament provided for the six counties. Dillon and Devlin considered a Council of Ireland "irrelevant" and Redmond "would hardly listen" to the editor's explanation when he visited him at Bath where he was taking the waters for his health. He was willing to give the Unionists a majority in the Irish Senate and control of finances in return for an all-Ireland parliament. "There was almost nothing he would not concede for the sake of conciliation and unity," Scott wrote. He would give them their own subordinate parliament with Ireland as a Dominion. He regretted his cooperation with Britain in the war. He did it as "a means of national reconciliation." If the war had ended in a year it might have worked. "Then came the rebellion and a complete change of sentiment as a result of the executions..."

57. Irish Convention: Scott reported his conversation to Lloyd George who wrote a letter narrowing "the choice of alternatives" for an Irish settlement to immediate Home Rule for 26 counties with the six Ulster counties excluded for five years until parliament reconsidered the situation. He proposed a Council of Ireland with delegations from North and South to deal with common problems. The alternative was "a convention of Irishmen of all parties for the purpose of producing a scheme of Irish self-government." The idea of a convention was Redmond's who had proposed it earlier as an alternative to partition. He accepted as long as the convention was "fully and fairly representative of Irishmen of all creeds, interests and parties."

58. Sinn Fein Abstains: Home Rulers, Southern Unionists and Ulster Unionists -- Carson persuaded them to attend, reminding them that Ulster was part of the Home Rule Act and "they would not be bound by any majority vote" -- churches, peers, chambers of commerce, trade unions, universities, county councils, city corporations, teachers attended. Sinn Fein refused to attend because of Lloyd George's stipulation that Ireland must remain in the Empire. De Valera interpreted this as a denial of Ireland's right to independence. Sinn Fein, however, was kept well informed about what took place for it had a couple of unofficial observers among the 95 delegates and 15 government nominees. The convention opened in Trinity College, Dublin, on July 25, 1917, with Sir Horace Plunkett in the chair. The delegates worked through the autumn and the winter without achieving anything. Redmond was determined to submit a majority report and worked with the Southern Unionists who also opposed partition to bring it about. They wanted customs and excise as a reserved imperial service and Joe Devlin and two Northern bishops would not agree to that. Redmond left the convention in January and died in March. Lloyd George had said that if the delegates reached "substantial agreement (on) a constitution for the future government of Ireland within the Empire" he would draft a bill and put it through parliament. Redmond had aimed to have a report signed by Nationalists, Southern Unionists and Labour, but as it hapened this would not have met Lloyd George's stipulation about "substantial agreement" which for him meant the Ulster Unionists. Since that was impossible the ten months' work was

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largely a waste of time. Lloyd George told the Ulster Unionists it was essential to settle the Irish Question, "this skeleton in our closet," before the peace conference at the end of the war.

59. Resistance to Conscription: The majority report -- backed by 74% of the delegates -- endorsed a Home Rule parliament for all Ireland, and 73% rejected the exclusion of Ulster. When the convention adjourned indefinitely on April 4, 1918, Plunkett delivered the report to Lloyd George five days later as the House of Commons was deliberating on how to stop a German breakthrough on the Western front. They needed manpower and one place to get it was in Ireland. Parliament extended conscription to Ireland and Lloyd George threatened ruthless action against any resistance. "If men were to be shot they were to be put up against a wall and shot on the spot, as happened in the Paris commune," he told Scott. All nationalists united against conscription and Sinn Fein took the lead in the campaign of resistance that followed which had the endorsement of the Catholic bishops. The campaign made Sinn Fein the dominant political force in the country. Its leaders were rounded up on May 17-18, 1918, and jailed in England for participating in an alleged "German plot." The war ended six months later but they were not released. In the December 14 general election, Sinn Fein won 73 of the 105 Irish seats to 26 for the Unionists and only six for the Irish Party. On January 21, 1919, Sinn Fein elected representatives, who were not in jail or on the run, established Dáil Éireann and ratified the Irish Republic "proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916 by the Irish Republican Army acting

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on behalf of the Irish people." On the same day, purely by coincidence, Irish Volunteers shot dead two RIC constables escorting a cart of gelignite to Soloheadbeg quarry, about three miles from Tipperary Town, the first action in a guerrilla War of Independence that continued to the truce on July 12, 1921.

60. Government of Ireland Act 1920: The Government of Ireland Act 1914 was on the statute book and would go into operation after ratification of the last peace treaty with Britain's wartime enemies. The Act applied to all Ireland. A cabinet committee was set up in September 1919 to examine the legal position. The result was "An Act to provide for the Better Government of Ireland" to replace the 1914 Act, went through all its stages in parliament with little opposition, and received the royal assent on December 23, 1920, and is accordingly known as the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. On the same day de Valera, the president of the Irish Republic, arrived back in Dublin after 18 months campaigning in the United States: making speeches, raising funds, lobbying sympathizers and politicians, and selling Irish Republic bonds. Also, organizing Irish Americans in support of Irish independence. The Act has 76 articles, beginning with the functions of the parliaments of Southern and Northern Ireland and their legislative powers -- and also power to establish a parliament for the whole of Ireland, "when on the date of Irish union the Council of Ireland shall cease to exist..." Article 75 says: "Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliaments of Southern and Northern Ireland, or the Parliament of Ireland, or anything contained in this Act, the supreme authority of the

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Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters, and things in Ireland and every part thereof." It no longer applies to Southern Ireland, formerly the Irish Free State, Eire, the Republic of Ireland and now Ireland, but it still applies to Northern Ireland which has not changed its name since it was established in June 1921. The final Article 76 (2) says "The Government of Ireland Act, 1914, is hereby repealed as from the passing of this Act." It led a ghost-like existence from September 1914 to December 23, 1920, during which time it was in storage.

61. General Macready's Comment: Reporting to a cabinet conference on July 23, 1920, General Nevil Macready, commander-in-chief, Ireland, commented that "no amount of coercion could settle the Irish Question." His conclusions coincided with the views of two Dublin Castle officials, J.O. Wylie and Alfred Cope, who were seeking authorization "to explore the grounds on which a pact could be concluded with Sinn Fein." The diehards in the cabinet such as Lord Birkenhead, did not want any truck with Sinn Fein. Agreement would allow the prime minister to call a conference of political leaders and offer a plan for peace in Ireland. "Crush them with iron and unstinted force, or try to give them what they want," counselled Winston Churchill, the Secretary for War, who was recruiting "a special force" of 8,000 wartime officers to serve in Ireland with the Black and Tans, also a special police force of ex-servicemen. Churchill said "he was not afraid of full Dominion Home Rule, except as part of a defeat." The cabinet first tried coercion. On August 9, 1920, the Restoration of

Order in Ireland Act came into force. It conferred extensive powers of arrest, imprisonment, trial by secret courts martial and suppression of coroners' inquests on the agents of the state. Black and Tans and Auxiliaries --the latter Churchill's "special force" of ex-officers -- were given "a free hand in the South and West of Ireland," according to the British Labour Report on Ireland. "Wherever reprisals have been scientifically carried out so as to cause the maximum economic and industrial loss to an Irish countryside or city, they have almost invariably been the work of detachments of cadets," i.e. Churchill's special force. The report concluded: "The final solution of the Irish problem will not be found through a policy of violence or vengeance. Ultimately it will have to be found along the lines of conciliation and consent by the more enlightened method of negotiation."

62. Kilmichael Ambush : Lloyd George was not interested in negotiation. On October 9, 1920, in Caernarvon, Wales, the prime minister said he did not object to Dominion rule for Ireland, provided Britain's security was not endangered. "There is no one in Ireland, speaking for Ireland, who can give that word, or if we gave Dominion Home Rule, that they would stand up for the Empire as General (Louis) Botha stood up for the Empire in South Africa." Four days later he said: "It would be a mistake at this stage to make any great concessions, especially when the prospects of getting anything in return were so small. Nothing would be left with which to negotiate if the Irish adopted a conciliatory attitude... Sinn Fein would have to come forward and

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immediately enable constitutional discussions to begin and peace to be restored." Conditions discussed with Archbishop Clune on December 13 were "all arms, ammunition, uniforms, explosives in area under martial law to be surrendered to the Government. All arms in the rest of Ireland to be handed over to safe custody of Government, no distinction to be made between the rest of Ireland and Ulster. Sinn Fein to order the cessation of all violence ..."

On Christmas Eve a verbal message from Archbishop Clune said that Michael Collins desired peace, "but the main obstacle was the handing over of arms which Sinn Fein objected to." Collins in a secret message to Griffith in Mountjoy wrote: "It seems to me that no additional good can come from further continuing these discussions... We have clearly demonstrated our willingness to have peace on honourable terms. Lloyd George insists on capitulation. Between these two there is no mean; and it is only a waste of time continuing."

Sean Cronin, *Sean Cronin*
Washington, DC,

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