IRISH HOME RULE POLITICS AND INDIA 1873-18 6:

Frank Hugh O'Donnell and Other Irish 'Friends of India'

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Acknowledgements

This thesis owes its origin to a stimulating article by Dr. Mary Cumpston entitled "Some early Indian Nationalists and their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906", which suggested the interesting avenue of exploring the connection between Irish Home Rulers and Indian political leaders. The present writer, while subsequently on holiday in County Galway, Ireland, stumbled across a copy of Frank Hugh O'Donnell's A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party and was confirmed in his rather tentative idea of examining the validity of the extraordinary claims and allegations contained within this work. Irish biographies, memoirs, and histories, revealed little about O'Donnell and nothing at all about the Indian interests of the Irish Parliamentary party under either Isaac Butt or Charles Stewart Parnell.

That this investigation developed into a reappraisal of the Home Rule movement between 1870 and 1886 from the angle of its significance in the extended empire, is due partly to circumstance, partly to discussions on the subject with Mr. Owen Dudley Edwards of Edinburgh University. Mr. Edwards managed to conjure up the flavour of the period and almost to bring the characters involved, not least O'Donnell himself, to life, as only an Irishman can do. It is doubtful whether, without his invaluable advice and criticism, the writer would have been able to negotiate the many pitfalls of a hitherto unfamiliar field. The greatest debt, however, is to Professor V.G. Kiernan who, despite the numerous calls on his time, provided over four years of research vital though always tactful counsel and supervision. With the benefit of Professor Kiernan's profound knowledge of Indian and Imperial History, the writer was able to tackle, if not always to overcome, the special problems involved in the co-ordination of several distinct, but overlapping, themes.

The writer must also accord his grateful thanks to Professor G.A. Shepperson for his constant encouragement and his unfailing support and generosity. Dr. S.R. Mehrotra, of the London School of African and Oriental Studies, spontaneously volunteered most valuable information about the Indian interests of both Charles James and Frank Hugh O'Donnell. Dr. James Maclean of Edinburgh University was always at hand to render help and to offer suggestions. The writer is also obliged to the Association of Commonwealth Universities for the award of a Commonwealth Scholarship (1968-1971), enabling him to engage in research in the first place.

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SUMMARY

Frank Hugh O'Donnell is perhaps the most neglected man to have been involved in Home Rule politics between 1873 and 1885. Except for a fleeting appearance here and there and a few dismissive asides, he is ignored in the majority of Irish histories of the period. In the rest, he is depicted as an eccentric, almost comic figure, who held absurd if unexplored theories not only about Ireland's role in the British empire, but about almost every issue of the day, and who had the supreme impudence to challenge Parnell for the tribuneship of Irish nationality. The titles "Crank" and "Imperialist", with which he is invariably endowed, are never explained but suffice to discredit him utterly. This thesis sets out to redress the balance by restoring O'Donnell to the immediate context of the Home Rule movement, and by describing his efforts to stimulate an Irish parliamentary interest in imperial affairs in general, though in Indian affairs in particular. How relevant were O'Donnell's internationalist views to the cause of Irish self-government? How successful was he in moulding the Home Rule party into an anti-imperial though progressive force within the empire? To what extent did the Irish struggle for independence serve as a model and inspiration for the development of an Indian nationalist movement? These are some of the questions it is hoped to shed light on.

The Home Rule Conference of November 1873 has been adopted as the point of departure, because it sets the scene for the struggles that are to follow under Isaac Butt and Charles Stewart Parnell, marking out the conflicting positions of moderate and activist nationalists on parliamentary tactics and the nature of the imperial connection. Chapters two and three are concerned with the origin, development and

advertisement of O'Donnell's policy of imperial intervention, which answered the call for action and offered an original approach to the solution of the Irish Question. Demonstrated in the historic defence of Transvaal independence in 1877, in the campaign to abolish corporal punishment in the armed services, and in the championship of Afghan and Zulu sovereignty, "intervention" evolved not simply as a tactical weapon but embodied principles that revived and extended a humanitarian side to Irish nationalism. Its wider implications are suggested by the proposal of alliance with the Home Rule party by an Indian political association in 1878. Chapter four deals with the infringement of this new code of parliamentary behaviour by Butt and O'Donnell and the furore occasioned by their voting with the Conservative Government on the Eastern Question. O'Donnell's published defence of his action, which provides the most complete statement of his "imperial" philosophy, is analysed to show the extent of contemporary and current misrepresentation, and to indicate that the goal he was working towards was a Commonwealth of free and equal nations. The tentative overtures by Irish-American Fenians to the activist contingent, culminating in the "New Departure" programme, are also discussed within the context of a "skirmishing" strategy of war against the British empire.

Chapters five to seven are broadly concerned both with the rivalry between Parnell and O'Donnell for the directorship of the party, and with the incorporation of the powerful new factor of land agitation in the political programme of Home Rule, temporarily at least taking pride of place on the list of nationalist priorities. They attempt to reveal the areas of disagreement separating the two antagonists and to account for the ascendancy and eventual victory of the former. It is shown that although not unmindful of tenants'

grievances, O'Donnell obstinately pinned his faith on the continued efficacy of seeking "Power in the Empire", a policy which he advocated as an alternative to that of land agitation, arguing the superior merits of attracting imperial allies over the harnessing of peasant resentment. The view is put forward that this was a grave miscalculation, for the land issue, if at first tending to provincialise the movement, ultimately advanced the internationalist cause.

Chapters eight to eleven, indeed, direct attention to the strides made by internationalism in several directions. Chapter eight discusses the existence of an Indian land problem which was affected indirectly by the crisis in Ireland and directly by the spectacular representation of Charles James O'Donnell of the Bengal Civil Service. He is not only presented as the direct link connecting the Irish with the Indian situation, but is shown as the catalyst who launched India into controversy about land reform and who prompted the Home Rule party to renew its interest in parliamentary intervention. Thus, on the one hand, Frank Hugh O'Donnell was inspired to emulate Edmund Burke as a sentinel of imperial justice, causing the Indian Government to review and reform its gaol administration and to investigate a number of contentious issues; while, on the other, Michael Davitt, conceiving Ireland as a nursery of missionary ideas and ideals, sought to "spread the light" of land nationalisation throughout the empire. In chapter ten both are seen advancing ambitious schemes involving the transformation of the Parnellite party into the instrument of democratic and imperial reform. A plan of Indian representation at Westminster via Irish seats was revived by Davitt, and the foundations of an Indian Home Rule organisation were laid by O'Donnell, a task he had been contemplating since 1875. Chapter eleven considers the partial

fulfilment and failure of both initiatives, and concludes with an evaluation of the Irish influence in the promotion and growth of an Indian Congress party.

The thesis ends with O'Donnell's retirement from parliamentary politics in 1885, but looks beyond that in attempting to estimate his contribution to the movement for Irish Home Rule and the pervasiveness of his internationalist theories.

Assessment of Sources

A. Irish

It should be said at once that no O'Donnell papers have been traced, but equally that there is no evidence of their destruction. A d eply suspicious man throughout his life, Frank Hugh O'Donnell mentions in A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, published in 1910, that he had scrupulously preserved all his correspondence, partly to substantiate the allegations contained in that work, partly for posterity. Everything he wrote had to be proved to the hilt. When he died in 1916, unmarried, all his possessions passed to his younger brother Charles James O'Donnell, with whom in the last years of his life he had been living. The latter also died without heirs. Efforts to get in contact with the trustees of his Will have so far proved unsuccessful. Such papers, if they survive, would naturally be of immense value, not only in elucidating the role of Charles James O'Donnell as a "Home Rule" informant on Indian affairs when he was in the employ of the Bengal Civil Service, but also in clarifying and further explaining Frank Hugh's views on Home Rule itself, on his relationship with Parnell and other members of the nationalist party, on his policy of "Power in the Empire", and on his scheme of Pan-Indian union.

Attempts to trace material emanating from, or about, O'Donnell, in the correspondence of his immediate political associates as well as his political opponents, have not been particularly rewarding either. A few miscellaneous letters from O'Donnell can be found in the National Library of Ireland, sprinkled among the Harrington and Redmond papers, while some illuminating comments about O'Donnell's influence in Irish politics are made by various correspondents of Isaac Butt. There are also some fifteen to twenty

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letters, as yet uncatalogued, from O'Donnell to Lord Salisbury among the Salisbury papers held by Christ Church College Library, Oxford. Those written to Salisbury before 1886 are useful, but the bulk of them written after that date, when O'Donnell was and had been seriously ill, tend to be rambling and incoherent. One or two letters on Indian matters from O'Donnell to Lord Hartington, when the latter was Secretary of State for India, exist in a private collection in the possession of the eleventh Duke of Devonshire. Even taken together, however, these letters are so diverse that they contain little substantial information. Unfortunately, access could not be gained to the papers of Michael Davitt and Dadabhai Naoroji, both of which promise to be more fruitful. Professor Moody kindly provided his transcriptions of entries from Davitt's diary concerning an Indian nationalist invitation to preside over the Madras Congress 1894-95, but did not reveal whether the earlier papers, especially between 1880-1885, throw any light on Davitt's interest in India, or on his efforts to secure Naoroji an Irish parliamentary seat. The writer could not afford the time to consult the voluminous papers of Dadabhai Naoroji in Bombay, which may supply the answer, and fill in some of the gaps concerning the association of Irish Home Rulers with Indian nationalists, the readiness of Indians to do a deal with Davitt, O'Donnell, or Parnell, and the extent to which they imbibed the lessons of Irish political and social agitation.

O'Donnell's parliamentary and extra-parliamentary speeches, his letters to newspapers, the articles he contributed to various journals, and A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, therefore, form the basis of this study of his "imperial" philosophy and of his original approach to the Irish Question. Fortunately, O'Donnell was/

was an uninhibited writer both to the press and in his two-volume "History" of Home Rule politics. Unlike Parnell, who kept at a safe dist nce from the public a d whose inner thoughts on any subject must remain largely a matter of speculation, O'Donnell belonged to a rare class of politician, and not only explained his every move but was prepared to risk the consequences of openly criticising the policies of his party and the actions of his colleagues. The Freeman's Journal and the Nation in Ireland, the Times and the Spectator in England, contain in the form of letters to the editor a surprisingly full record of his position on every conceivable subject. However, A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party remains the most complete source of information, much of it, especially in the years 1873-1880, (is) detailed and first-hand. Provided that O'Donnell's extreme "jealousy" of Parnell and his tendency to magnify his own significance is kept in perspective, this work is perhaps the best and most helpful contemporary account of the Home Rule movement under Isaac Butt and of the subsequent accession and growing ascendancy of Parnell. Care, of course, must be taken not to confuse opinions which were held in 1910 as representing O'Donnell's actual position thirty years earlier. His stand on social questions, especially, hardened and became more conservative after he left politics in 1885. Again, his description of the origins and growth of an "intervention" policy is given a coherence that perhaps owes as much to hindsight as to clear-thinking. Even so, while some of O'Donnell's statements are often impossible to substantiate, the trustworthiness of those that can be proved adds to the general reliability of this source. Only on two occasions, in reference to the Morning Post 'brain-trust' and to the 'secret' inauguration of the "Indian Constitutional Reform Association" at the home

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of Ganendra Mohun Tagore, has the writer been entirely dependent on O'Donnell's narrative. For the most part, A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party has served as a guideline rather than as a gospel, and while referred to extensively has only been cited in conjunction with supporting evidence or in conformity with the logic of actual events.

As Irish manuscript material, apart from the sizeable Butt collection covering the period before 1879 and Redmond papers covering the period after 1886, is regrettably slight, heavy reliance has had to be placed on newspaper files for the day to day coverage of political events and for the articulation of various nationalist viewpoints. The most important of these were the Freeman's Journal and the Nation, both published in Dublin, and the Irish World of New York. For reports of Home Rule meetings, coverage of parliamentary debates, and comment on world and indeed empire events, the Freeman's Journal, whose editor from 1875 Edmund Dwyer Gray was also a prominent member of the party, proved most useful. In policy it steered, at least until the middle of 1880, a moderate nationalist course not committed to Butt but in general sympathising with his political programme. It later veered round under pressure to lend support to a more activist policy favoured by the Parnellites, although it was never really happy about the activities and agitation of the Land League. Its attitude to Indian problems could be broadly classified as humanitarian and enlightened. For a time, between August 1878 and September 1880, it came close to positively identifying itself with the "internationalist" views of both O'Donnells, advancing the merits at close alliance between Home Rulers and Indian nationalists. The Nation/

The Nation, a weekly journal edited by A. M. Sullivan from 1856 to 1877, and then by T. D. Sullivan, was committed at a very early stage to an obstructive parliamentary policy, and took a much more extreme line on political tactics, on land-reform, and on self-government. While it advocated O'Donnell's interventionist policy it seemed to look on imperial affairs from the narrow focus of Ireland's self-interest. By and large, "England's difficulty, Ireland's opportunity", O'Connell's old slogan, represented its attitude to Britain's foreign complications. Founded in 1870, Patrick Ford's Irish World, which had the largest circulation of any weekly in the United States and which, with fluctuations, was widely read in Ireland, was emphatically anti-English. A declared enemy of the British empire, the full weight of its propaganda was directed towards the destruction of the Union and of British power throughout the world. In effect, it was a vehicle not only for Ford's views about a universal crusade against landlordism, but also of Fenian attitudes towards the empire. No real study has been made by the writer of United Ireland, a left-wing Parnellite paper founded in 1881, or of Richard Pigott's Flag of Ireland and Irishman, both written from a popular pro-Fenian standpoint.

Fenian papers and Police and Crime Records in the State Paper Office, Dublin, are of special interest for the history of the Land League and National League. They contain, among other things, reports furnished by local District Inspectors of the Royal Irish Constabulary of the Land League meetings and speeches, which are helpful in estimating the popular awareness of political struggles elsewhere in the empire. Copies of correspondence from British Consular Agencies in America to the Foreign and Home Offices/

Offices also convey some idea of the organisation and subversive activity of the Clan na Gael seen through British eyes. In this respect, the F.O.S. papers in the Public Record Office, London, provide a more complete picture of what was being discussed and planned in Fenian circles, a useful emendation to the valuable John Devoy collection, used here in the published selection of the bulk of its material edited by William O'Brien and Desmond Ryan.

Biographies and memoirs of the period yielded very little, either about O'Donnell or about his eccentric views on the empire, although T. M. Healy in Letters and Leaders of my Day and T. P. O'Connor in Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian contribute some interesting 'asides'. Michael Davitt's The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland is essential reading for the land agitation, and has an important section on a scheme of democratic intervention for adoption by the Parnellite party in 1883. His impressions of India and his attitude to the empire are discussed in Leaves from a Prison Diary. Despite being an essential cog in the nationalist machine from 1873 to 1906, Alfred Webb strangely remains a very shadowy figure. However, the National Library of Ireland possesses three volumes of his press cuttings together with one or two draft letters [Ms 1745-7], which are relevant to his interest in Indian nationalism and to his tour of duty as President of the Madras Congress.

The secondary material on the period is considerable, but apart from L. P. Curtis's Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland, 1880-1892, and P. N. S. Mansergh's The Irish Question 1840-1921, does/

does not touch on the imperial implications of the Home Rule movement. Mary Cumpston's article, "Some Early Indian Nationalists and their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906" in English Historical Review (1961), is a possible starting-point and introduction to the whole subject of the Irish-Indian connection. On the internal organisation and development of the Home Rule party the writer is deeply indebted to the very detailed studies by Dr David Thornley and Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien. Both Isaac Butt and Home Rule and Parnell and his Party 1880-90 help to place O'Donnell's imperial and interventionist programmes within their proper Irish context.

B. Indian

In conjunction, the Northbrook, Temple, Lytton, Ripon, Hartington and Dufferin papers, deposited in the India Office Library, provide an extensive range of manuscript material on Indian administration, on aspects of Indian policy, on parliamentary debates on India, on political gossip in London and Calcutta. The letters between the Governors-General and the Secretaries of State, which are the fullest and tend to be at once discursive and frank, throw a good deal of light on the way official policy was arrived at. Letters from political correspondents in England, because they do not take background knowledge for granted, are particularly useful in describing the situation at Westminster. While the activities of the Irish Home Rule Party and the twists and turns of the Irish Question are not always a major talking point, they form a constant theme running through most of the correspondence. Lord Ripon, for example, was particularly interested in the Irish land agitation, partly because he had to frame new tenancy and/

and rent legislation for India. Lord Dufferin, the Ulster peer who was Governor-General at the time of the crisis over the first Home Rule Bill and of the formation of Congress, was struck by the concurrence of both events. His papers are remarkable for very pronounced views on nationalist agitation, Irish and Indian. The Charles James O'Donnell saga, his quarrel with the Bengal Government over several years, the nature of the complaints against him, is well documented and preserved in the Rijon collection.

Published Parliamentary papers, Indian Proceedings and India Office Departmental records, were of value for their official accounts of the Bengal famine of 1874, the remission of the cotton duties, the lowering of the age limit for I.C.S. candidates, the Vernacular Press Act, the Afghan War of 1878-80, and mining speculation in Mysore State. Most of the material for the specialist study of Indian Gaol Reform (Chapter Nine) is also derived from these sources. The Parliamentary Debates, which have been extensively used, touch on most of these issues, as well as conveying the degree of interest felt by the average M.P. in Indian grievances and the extent to which these stirred the political scene.

In the absence of readily accessible Indian private papers, it is difficult to talk confidently about "Indian nationalist" opinion, at least in reference to leading political figures. However, as in Ireland newspapers represented various sections of the politically conscious. The Bengali English-language press, largely, as the first to flourish, taking the lead in native journalism, was the most important, and its influence spread throughout/

throughout India. Calcutta was not only the administrative capital and seat of government, it also had the largest number of newspapers. Pride of place is usually accorded to the Hindoo Patriot, a weekly journal edited at that time by the highly respected Kristodas Pal. This was the first newspaper to openly acknowledge and court the services of the Irish Home Rule party and of Frank Hugh O'Donnell in particular. However, because it was closely allied with aristocratic and landowning interests, and was in fact the acknowledged organ of the British Indian Association, it took a fundamentally conservative position on social matters. After the death of Kristodas Pal in 1884 it gradually drifted away from the mainstream of nationalist life. On the other hand, the rival Bengalee, which under Surendranath Banerjea's editorship attempted to speak for the educated middle classes, took a more advanced line not only on land tenure and semindar-rijot relations, but also on constitutional agitation. Its awareness and knowledge of the Irish struggle for self-government was the most acute. The Indian Mirror, which became the only Indian-edited English-language daily in Northern India, fell somewhere between the two, not as socially conservative as the former nor as politically motivated as the latter, but responding with generosity and readiness to O'Donnell's 1883 initiative and to the call for national unity. The Mahratta, launched by B. G. Tilak in 1881 from Poona, presented the views of more extreme, perhaps less well-educated, nationalists. As nearly all the vernacular newspapers of the period are extinct it is difficult to arrange them into categories. The writer's use of them is exclusively based on confidential Governmental Reports, compiled weekly in the office of the Translator, and highly selective in the choice of items/

items presented.

Of the English-owned and edited newspapers, the Pioneer of Allahabad was the most influential, for a long time acting as the semi-official organ of the Indian Government itself. Surprisingly, together with the Bombay Gazette, it backed the protest of Charles James O'Donnell against the efforts of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden, to discipline him. Yet it was no friend of Home Rulers, and poured scorn on Irish efforts to educate Indians in the habits of united action and political organisation. The Civil and Military Gazette was founded at Lahore in 1877 as the "faithful and conscientious advocate of the true interests" of the services. The Englishman, which became the powerful spokesman of the planter class and of the India-domiciled European community, was the paper that led the Anglo-Indian revolt against the famous Ilbert Bill in 1883-84. Robert Knight's Statesman, which became the Statesman and Friend of India in 1877, was perhaps the only English journal to take a consistently pro-Indian line.

A great deal has been written on the growth of nationalism in India and on the origin and development of the congress movement, but apart from an isolated reference in Dr Anil Seal's admirable The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, and a few general comments in Dr S. R. Mehrotra's India and the Commonwealth about the Irish Question after 1885, all are silent about any Irish influence or contribution. Frank Hugh O'Donnell's name is as unfamiliar to Indian historians as it is ignored by Irish historians.

INTRODUCTION

It is hardly necessary to apologise for proposing a revision of ideas about Frank Hugh O'Donnell. Of all the men involved in Irish politics in the "plenitude of power" of the Home Rule party between 1873-1890, none is more obscure. While much is presumed so little is actually known about the Home Ruler whom Sir Henry Lucy, the parliamentary diarist, ranked as the most "brilliant" and "formidable" of the "insurgent body" which came to dominate Parliament with "new manners" and "strange characters", that some account is long overdue.[1] In 1924 Charles James O'Donnell wrote of his brother, that although he was "forgotten probably by the majority of Irishmen", his work remained and would live "long after Parnellism [was] forgotten."[2] This view was, however, unduly optimistic. Just as O'Donnell "slipped out of existence", so memory of his "work" was effectively erased.

Modern historiography of Home Rule has tended to confirm rather than confute the traditional caricature of him as a "crank", a Tory imperialist and a traitor. Terence de Vere White in The Road of Excess for example, if he produces an "attractive" biography of Isaac Butt,[3] snipes at O'Donnell as "a monocled and lord loving megalomaniac, vain to the verge of madness."[4] By and large, recent treatment of O'Donnell consists of casual asides which fall well short of substantial comment or worthwhile evaluation. David Thornley usefully describes O'Donnell's pretentious entry into politics in 1873, but without exploring his "attitude to imperial questions " somehow deduces that it "probably"

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1. H.W. Lucy, quoted in C.J. O'Donnell, The Lordship of the World, The British Empire, the United States and Germany, London 1924, third edition, p. 155.

2. Ibid., pp. 155, 164.

3. See D. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, London 1964, p. 9.

4. T. de Vere White, The Road of Excess, Dublin 1946, p. 324. See also T.N. Brown, Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890, New York 1966, p. 79; O'Donnell "possessed a conceit bordering on megalomania".

destroyed his chances of popular leadership.[1] The view of Michael MacDonagh that O'Donnell was "so full of crotchets" that he irritated his colleagues is thus reinforced.[2] The most open mind on O'Donnell is displayed by Conor Cruise O'Brien in his detailed study of the Parnellite system. Certainly he is prepared to acknowledge that O'Donnell was the "most imaginative" and "articulate" member of the activist contingent which infiltrated the House of Commons between 1874-1880. Moreover, the image Dr. O'Brien projects of O'Donnell is not so much that of a budding Beaconsfieldian but of a self-appointed guardian of the subject races within the British empire. Yet, while he touches on O'Donnell's advocacy of "constant well-informed interference" in English as well as imperial affairs, he shies away from assessing the "truth" of the benefits purportedly derived from this "positive development", namely the abolition of flogging in the British army and the formation of the Indian National Congress. Although this was outside the scope of his immediate research Dr. O'Brien nevertheless examined the reports of the first and second annual Indian Congresses for any reference to the Irish Home Rule movement. Except for an oblique point about "the religious antagonism of Protestants and Roman Catholics", there were none, and he evidently decided that this avenue of enquiry was unfruitful.[3] From an Indian focus, Mary Cumpston breaks new ground in an article

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1. Thornley, op.cit., p. 362/52n. Dr. Thornley seems to base this assessment on an intriguing letter from O'Donnell to Disraeli, 2 February 1879, which he is content to cite without commentary.

2. M. MacDonagh, The Home Rule Movement, Dublin 1920, p. 169.

3. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, Oxford 1968, pp. 22-3.

on the "parliamentary allies of India." She discovers the accession of several Home Rulers including O'Donnell to their ranks, and discusses two abortive schemes to introduce Indian Members of Parliament to Westminster via Irish seats.[1] Her narrative summarises and does not really look beyond that ignored for fifty years in A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, O'Donnell's egotistical, often malicious, if useful version of the events in which he had participated. Although she cites the opinion of Sir Richard Burn that Irish nationalist organisation was closely watched by Indian nationalists,[2] Dr. Cumpston draws no definite conclusion about an Irish sponsorship of an Indian "embryonic union".[3] Anil Seal, on the other hand, gives some credence to this idea, but his confusion of Davitt with O'Donnell as the author of a Congressional scheme continues the process of devaluation.[4]

Nowhere has there been a serious attempt to examine critically the nature of and philosophy behind O'Donnell's interest in the empire. In the past, this has either been treated as an aberration or considered unworthy of an Irish patriot. Where William O'Brien spoke of O'Donnell's "foreign policy", it was at his expense rather than to his credit. He recalled with amusement that O'Donnell had "once brought down some scores of dusky students of all races and creeds of Hindustan to the House of Commons to tender their solemn allegiance to Mr. Parnell--

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1. M. Cumpston, "Some early Indian Nationalists and their allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906", in English Historical Review, Vol. 76, 1961, pp. 279-297.

2. R. Burn in Cambridge History of the British Empire, Cambridge 1932, Vol. VI, p. 540,

3. Cumpston, op.cit. p. 284.

4. A. Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, Cambridge 1968, p. 258.

to the wonder of the policemen and the quidnuncs of the lobby."[1] Michael Davitt wrote favourably of O'Donnell's "fantastic" plan of "making the affairs and government of India an Irish concern", but at heart a visionary himself he was never blinkered by the goal of Home Rule.[2] That O'Donnell sought to harness to the Irish cause the spirit of nationalism in India and other dependencies as a means of accelerating the process of imperial devolution, does not appear to have been understood or appreciated. Discussing the objective of W.T. Cosgrave and other supporters of the Free State in accepting Dominion status for Ireland, D.W. Harkness in The Restless Dominion perhaps comes closest. The origin of their policy of obtaining "full and unrestricted sovereignty" through "the peaceful transformation of the British Empire," he traces back to that articulated by O'Donnell in 1882 and "pursued actively under Parnell" of making "the Home Rule Party the natural representatives and spokesmen of the unrepresented nationalities of the Empire."[3] That either O'Donnell or Parnell were proposing to invoke the spirit of Caesar is absurd. Instead of offering to prop up a sagging empire, they were threatening to undermine it further by extending the area of agitation. If Britain refused to recognise the principle of nationality, Ireland would call on anti-imperial feeling throughout the world to frustrate hegemony. "At the turn of the century", Dr. Harkness tentatively understates,

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1. W. O'Brien, Recollections, London 1905, p. 247.
2. M. Davitt, The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland, London 1906, p. 447.
3. See Chapter Nine, section three.

"Ireland was aware of the Empire, as the Empire was of Ireland."[1] That the interests of both were identical or equally served, Dr. Cumpston, however, rather doubts. The "cause" which prospered through Home Rulers taking up Indian grievances at Westminster, she implies, was not decolonisation but parliamentary obstruction.[2] Whether the Irish then considered nationality to be as sacred in Asia or Africa as it was in Europe has to be determined.

In following the fortunes of Frank Hugh O'Donnell as Home Ruler, the purpose of this thesis is not to write an apologia. It is to manifest the development of a humanitarian or internationalist strand in Irish nationalism, and to map the position occupied in Irish parliamentary thought by imperial affairs in general, though by Indian affairs in particular. At first glance that position would appear to have been negligible. Indeed, it is precisely for his "eccentric" theories of Irish involvement in the British empire, if also for a consuming jealousy of Parnell, that the reasons for O'Donnell's relative anonymity can be found. Certainly, where he is remembered by his contemporaries, it is not for constructive or loyal service in the cause of Home Rule. Except for his autobiographical "History", O'Donnell has left no substantial trace upon the memoirs, biographies and histories of Anglo-Irish politics. The most that can be pieced together from the many volumes of Irish reminiscences is an "identikit" if less than flesh and blood character. For Justin McCarthy, a one-time friend, O'Donnell warranted no mention. T.P. O'Connor, who knew most about O'Donnell's

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1. D.W. Harkness, The Restless Dominion, London 1969, pp. 13-14.
2. Cumpston, op.cit., pp. 281, 286.

early life, recalled nothing about his political career--except failure. O'Donnell's name is conspicuously missing from his study of "The Parnell Movement" published in 1886, in essence an anthology of penportraits of leading Home Rule parliamentarians.[1] In his Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian published in 1929, O'Connor resorted to commenting on O'Donnell's unusual if somewhat flamboyant person:

> "Here again, was a figure from Balzac: one of the self-adventurers, like Lucien de Rubempré, who regarded life as a struggle between the world and his will to succeed... A great athlete with a powerful frame, he rather provoked criticism by the manner in which he pushed out his chest. His air of arrogance found its climax in a single eye-glass which he always wore, and which he handled with dexterity...".[2]

William O'Brien disposed of him in a sentence as a "hopelessly unclubbable colleague," whose "idiosyncracy" had "grown to a disease".[3] That most prickly and calculating of Parnellites, Timothy Healy, never spare in his sarcasm, coined the sobriquet that has stood ever since as O'Donnell's epitaph, 'Crank Hugh O'Donnell".[4]

Unfortunately, the fascination O'Donnell felt for foreign and imperial affairs was misunderstood and made him for Fenians in America and extremists at home unsafe as a nationalist. In 1878 with Isaac Butt he voted against the majority of his own party for the Conservative policy of resisting Russian ambitions in the Mediterranian. Butt did not recover from the furore which enveloped him. O'Donnell

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1. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, London 1886.
2. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian, London 1929, Vol. 1, p. 63.
3. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 247.
4. Ibid., p. 247n.

survived but never succeeded in cleansing himself completely of the taint of "imperialism".[1] Like Gandhi he was always having to explain himself and was seldom understood.[2] A sincere nationalist had to prove his credentials by implacable opposition to English interests. Equally, he had to be sound on the land question. O'Donnell failed this test as well. Not only was he excluded from the Land League, but he was outspoken in his condemnation of its methods and objectives. While he advocated agrarian reform he baulked at agrarian revolution. Finally, and most damaging to his reputation, was his enmity towards Parnell. Outdistanced in the race to succeed Isaac Butt as leader of the Home Rule party, he repudiated the victory of his rival. If he could not lead he would not follow. In the Gladstonian Parliament of 1880-1885 he refused to be bound either by party discipline or by party decision. "There is no one to dispute with Mr. O'Donnell", commented Sir Henry Lucy, "his pre-eminent capacity for differing from everyone, more particularly his own colleagues".[3] Independence, however, was one thing, faction and spitefulness were quite another. If O'Donnell always maintained that there was "patriotism in other halls than Avondale", he failed to convince Irishmen that he was its repository.[4] Instead, the worst motive, that of discrediting Parnell, was ascribed to his rebelliousness. His stand on the Bradlaugh affair, for example, was seen as an attempt to bring Parnell into head-on conflict with the Roman Catholic

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1. See D. Ryan, The Fenian Chief, Dublin 1967, pp. 358-9.

2. See Chapter Four, section one.

3. H.W. Lucy, A Diary of Two Parliaments: The Gladstone Parliament 1880-1885, London 1886, p. 98.

4. O'Donnell quoted in J. Abels, The Parnell Tragedy, London 1966, p. 105.

hierarchy.[1] Although he withdrew from Irish public life with the disappearance of his constituency in the Redistribution Scheme of 1885, dispirited and "deadly" ill,[2] he did not drop out of the public view. On two further occasions O'Donnell fell into disrepute compounding the suspicion of his mal-intent.

In 1888, believing himself to be included in the indictment of "Parnellism and Crime" made by the Times, he sued its senior owner John Walter for libel. As no one apparently could understand "a litigation which seemed at first freakish and only calculated to arouse banter", the story soon went round that O'Donnell had been "put up" to it by an "undisclosed principal". "To bring a libel action against the Times *requires means*", Healy wrote, "and O'Donnell had none".[3] Besides, the absence of what was presumed to consitute reasonable grounds for interference strengthened the conjecture. As Healy put it, "the intrusion of the 'Derby Dog' in the great race at Epsom would have been more appropriate."[4] The conspiracy theory, if it was based on a few facts, could point to several unusual features. First, the Counsel appearing for the Times was none other than the Attorney-General, Sir Richard Webster, the leading law officer for the Government. Second, O'Donnell declined, it is presumed "refused",[5] to take the stand at the appropriate moment in spite of a clear warning

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1. See Chapter Seven, section one.
2. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 160.
3. T.M. Healy, Letters and Leaders of My Day, London 1928, Vol. 1. pp. 273, 279.
4. Ibid., p. 273.
5. H. Harrison, Parnell, Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Garvin, London, 1938, p. 163.

from the Lord Chief Justice that his chances of a favourable outcome might thereby be prejudiced. In fact, his failure to testify played into the hands of the enemies of the Irish cause. While the defence could logically move that the plaintiff be nonsuited, Sir Richard Webster instead chose to turn the proceedings into an anti-Parnellite rally. Not only did he reiterate with impunity the Times' charges against Parnell, but he reinforced them with "new and terrible forgeries",[1] directly incriminating him with murder. The Times' campaign was thus "exhumed and revivified".[2] In firing off his solitary rifle, all O'Donnell had succeeded in doing was to usher in a "general engagement".[3] That this had been his real purpose all along seemed to provide the key to the "mystery",[4] and gained rapid currency.

What became the popular verdict has tended to remain the historical imputation. Ironically, therefore, O'Donnell has secured a niche in Irish history as the man whose "absurd", "farcical", legal action precipitated the Parnell Special Commission.[5] All too frequently he is remembered for little else. The one notice he receives in F.S.L. Lyon's Ireland since the Famine, for example, is in this context.[6]

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1. J.L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, London 1933, Vol.II p. 385.

2. Harrison, op.cit., p. 163.

3. T.D. Sullivan, Recollections of Troubled Times in Irish Politics, London 1905, p. 251.

4. See M. Brown, The Politics of Irish Literature, London 1972, p. 328.

5. Times, 9 July 1888.

6. F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, London 1971, p. 185.

Joan Haslip in her biography of Parnell goes so far as to link O'Donnell as partner in crime with Philip Callan and to see him as in the pay of Edward Caulfield Houston, the Secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union--an organisation opposed to Irish nationalism. "All their fertile imaginations", she writes, "were put at the disposal of Mr. Houston's well-filled purse."[1] The latest book covering the period, Malcolm Brown's The Politics of Irish Literature, revamps the suggestion of J.L. Garvin[2] that Joseph Chamberlain was the "Machiavelli" behind the lawsuit. In the absence of "conclusive evidence" to this effect, however, he falls back on Healy's kindest explanation, that O'Donnell was "off his nut".[3] Only Desmond Ryan in The Fenian Chief has paused to consider that O'Donnell has been unfairly judged.[4] O'Donnell's *side* of the story, which puts an equally plausible construction on the events in dispute, has been rejected, where it has attracted attention, as "decidedly unhelpful".[5]

The most damning fiction, at least, still adhering to the O'Donnell v Walter case is that the Home Rule party was not consulted at any time and had nothing to do with it. J. Abels, for

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1. J. Haslip, Parnell A Biography, London 1936, pp. 335-340. See also A. Robbins, Parnell the Last Five Years, London 1926, pp. 52, 70.

2. Garvin, op.cit., pp. 384 ff.

3. M. Brown, op.cit., pp. 328. See Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 99.

4. Ryan, op.cit., p. 358. The biographical sketches were written by Mr. O.D. Edwards.

5. M. Brown, op.cit., p. 328.

example, implies that O'Donnell's suit for damages appeared out of the blue.[1] Even T.D. Sullivan, who had no hesitation in concluding that O'Donnell's conduct was in "no sense or degree" "dishonest or dishonourable", maintained that O'Donnell "took no counsel with Parnellite leaders".[2] In fact, however, leading Parnellites were given ample warning to prepare for the trial if not to influence its course.[3] Parnell and Davitt not only discussed the case several times with Raphiale Biale, O'Donnell's solicitor, but were allowed perhaps to preside over its direction in crucial aspects.[4] O'Donnell's fatal although reluctant absence from the witness box was prescribed by Davitt and other "solicitous" Irishmen,[5] among whom was Sir Charles Russell, the "Attorney-General of the Land League". It was Russell, although according to O'Donnell never engaged by him,[6] who persuaded O'Donnell's Junior Counsel A.H. Ruegg[7] that the "only wise course" was to keep his client from giving evidence until after "the Times had shown its hand".[8] That Russell had offered this advice without O'Donnell's knowledge,[9] as he later explained, "solely with a view" to what he conceived to be

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1. Abels, op.cit., p. 281.
2. T.D. Sullivan, op.cit., pp. 251, 253.
3. A writ for libel was taken out against the Times as early as 14 July 1887 and proceedings instituted in November. See Special Commission 1888; Pleadings and Proceedings in the Trial O'Donnell v Walter, London 1888. See also J. Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, London 1904, Vol. III, p. 393.
4. R.A. Biale's notes of an interview which he had with Parnell on 13 April 1888 and mention of another interview in May 1888, in O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 249. Biale confirmed his dealings with Parnell in a letter to the Times, 9 July 1888.
5. This was admitted by Davitt in a speech at Glasgow on 8 July 1888. See Times, 9 July, 1888.
6. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 225.
7. O'Donnell did not enga e a Senior Counsel.
8. See page 11a.
9. See page 11a.

8. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 249. See also the letter O'Donnell published in the Times, 9 July 1888, asserting that his Counsel had been led to adopt the above plan "by the influence, professional repute, and repeated entreaties of two gentlemen of the first rank of the Bar...and both trusted and distinguished members of the Gladstone Party." The Times identified Russell as one of the eminent authorities referred to, and looked forward with confidence, in the event unrealised, to his formal contradiction.

9. O'Donnell, ibid., p. 248. According to O'Donnell, he learnt from A.H. Ruegg that Russell had actually sent for him to discuss the case (p. 249).

O'Donnell's "best interest", is at least open to question.[1] At the time Russell held a "general retainer" from the Times, which he did not formally relinquish until 16 July 1888.[2] His advice, contrary to the warnings of the Chief Justice, was a direct cause of O'Donnell's public humiliation. In summing up, Lord Chief Justice Coleridge censured O'Donnell for exposing Parnell to the vilest imputations and then depriving him of the opportunity to disprove them. That the action had been instituted for ulterior purposes was broadly hinted at.[3]

O'Donnell was perhaps entitled to feel that he had been "stabbed by a blow in the dark."[4] Why, when the whole of Ireland and most of Britain subsequently rang with accusations that he was a hireling and an interloper, did not his multitude of "volunteer advisers" step forward to clear him? Possibly, it was felt that O'Donnell was the author of his own misfortune; possibly the ruse of enticing the Times, "the employer of forgers and salaried liars", to overply its defence, innocently backfired on O'Donnell. If Davitt was moved in Glasgow to pity an "injured and beaten man", and claimed responsibility for misdirecting O'Donnell, he still insisted that Parnell had known nothing of this interference.[5] Whatever the explanation for such shielding, Parnell's wounded virtue was upheld at the expense of perpetuating the notion of O'Donnell's collusion.

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1. Russell to O'Donnell, 21 January 1890, in O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 226: "Any opinion I expressed to your Counsel, I expressed in good faith, and with no indirect motive. I should myself have opened your case in the mode your Counsel did as the best for your interests. I might, indeed, had I been in the case, have yielded to the pressure of the Lord Chief Justice's observations, and contrary to my own judgment, put you in the Box, but it must be obvious to you that, had that course been pursued, the result would in no way have been altered".
2. See R.B. O'Brien, The Life of Lord Russell of Killowen, London 1901, pp. 211-13.
3. Special Commission 1888; O'Donnell v. Walter, op.cit.
4. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 250.
5. See page 12a.

5. See Report of Davitt's Glasgow speech in Times, 9 July 1888. Perhaps, as Davitt said, they had clung with childlike faith to the concept of British justice, even though they had been warned that the prospect of an impartial hearing would be minimal. Morley, op.cit., p. 393. A less categorical statement was put out on Parnell's behalf, that except "for a very short interval", he had "consistently declined to give, or to hold any communication either with Mr. O'Donnell or his solicitor." Times, 10 July 1888.

O'Donnell impaired his image further in 1910 when he published A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Nationalists were then under the spell of "messianism" and in no mood to be told that for years "they had been taken in so hugely."[1] Not only was Ireland frequently compared with Israel, but Parnell had been invested with the status of a prophet by his followers and sanctified as the source and symbol of Irish independence by a generation of Irish writers.[2] Little wonder, therefore, that when O'Donnell proceeded to lay bare the Parnell "legend", his "History" should be condemned as an unseemly, blasphemous tract. For, far from being immortalised as the "Irish Moses" who had led his people "out of bondage"[3] and who had brought them "within sight of the Promised Land",[4] Parnell was crudely belittled as: "the rusticated undergraduate", "the first class parrot", "the ungrateful apprentice", the "runaway errand boy". Conversely, O'Donnell stood magnified as:

i. The inventor of an obstructive policy;

ii. the directing brain of the activists in Butt's time;

iii. a great reformer and humanitarian;

iv. the parliamentary tribune of unrepresented nationalists within the empire;

v. the founder of an Indian national movement.

A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party secured O'Donnell considerable notoriety but scant recognition. It neither scotched the Parnellite

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1. Davitt to O'Donnell 1884, quoted in O'Donnell, History i, p. 373.

2. See H. Howarth, The Irish Writers 1880-1940, London 1958, Chapter I.

3. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 467. See also "L'ombra di Parnell" by James Joyce discussed in Howarth, op.cit., pp. 292-3.

4. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, ii, p. 367.

cult nor enhanced his own claims for reappraisal. On the contrary he died without reprieve. To the Irish Independent he had been in the current idiom "a sort of Ishmaelite of Politics,"[1] to the Freeman's Journal a "Stormy Petrel", erratic always, increasingly unreliable even on national issues, and vicious upon many subjects.[2] For a brief moment, T.P. O'Connor perhaps allowed sentiment to overcome his hostility, and in the Daily Telegraph of November 6 1916 ranked him as "undoubtedly a great parliamentary figure" in knowledge and versatility far beyond Parnell.[3] In 1929 he corrected the record in his "gossipy" and "haphazard" volume of revision.[4]

It would appear that from as early as 1880, O'Donnell had been subjected to some form of voluntary censorship. In that year Healy had been of the opinion that it was "unwise" to recognise O'Donnell in the press. He was a "blister" and ould become a "nuisance."[5] T.P. O'Connor had evidently thought it unwise to reproduce even the qualified tribute which he had paid O'Donnell in his obituary notice. O'Donnell's claims of political significance were discounted not by outright refutation but more effectively and completely by careful omission. Obstruction, for example, was

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1. Irish Independent, 4 November 1916.
2. Freeman's Journal, 6 November 1916.
3. Daily Telegraph, 6 November 1916.
4. See F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon, London 1968, p. 479.
5. Healy, Letters and Leaders, 1, p. 96.

the policy which Joseph Biggar "began" and Parnell "improved and intensified".[1] T.D. Sullivan acknowledged O'Donnell as a patentee, but in 1905 well before O'Donnell's name was permanently associated with the odium of disfavour.[2] Instead, Biggar, the "grotesque" butcher from Belfast and a chronic speaker, has gone down in folk-lore as the "imp" who by endless talking subtly brought Westminster to its knees. The most usually conceded was that O'Donnell supplied material "now and then" to Parnell, "who was ignorant of any politics outside Ireland".[3] Nor had O'Donnell's other boasted attributes emerged into the light of day. If the Irish Independent allowed that he had been "a champion of out of the way causes", it was not intended as a compliment.[4] Invariably classified as a rebel, he was remembered as little better than a destructive agent in Irish politics. That the most compact and candid assessment of O'Donnell's career remained T.P. O'Connor's soon forgotten valediction tells its own story. In place of the slightly ridiculous Balzacian character,[5] was a "brilliant" and "resourceful" debater who fed the "less inventive and less stored minds" of Parnell and Biggar, and who masterminded the siege of the House of Commons. It was O'Donnell who planned the alliance with the advocates of Boer independence in 1877, it was his "fertile mind" that "first saw in the agitation for the abolition of

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1. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, i. p. 31.
2. T.D. Sullivan, op.cit., p. 197.
3. T.P. O'Connor, op.cit. p. 70.
4. Irish Independent, 4 November, 1916.
5. See below p. 6.

flogging in the Army not merely a great reform, but a means of prolonging discussion of the Mutiny Bill practically over a whole wasted and disastrous session". On the subject of O'Donnell's much vaunted "imperialist" predilections, O'Connor did not succumb to the popular interpretation. That the Irish party should make itself the "spokesman" of the discontented races in the empire was referred to as his "magnificent conception", not a "crankish" theory. O'Connor even countenanced the possibility that in stimulating the political aspirations of various Indian nationalists and in "bringing together a very representative and powerful conference of Indian magnates", O'Donnell might have been the spiritual father of the Congress party.[1]

What part then did O'Donnell play in the regeneration of Ireland? Were his ideas, especially those concerning the empire, utterly rejected by his fellow politicians, largely as his brother suggested because they were in advance of his time?[2] If his old adversary the Times can be believed, he is reserved "a place in the parliamentary history of the nationalist movement" alongside "Parnell, Biggar, A.M. Sullivan, Justin McCarthy, and O'Connor Power."[3] With them, he was instrumental in effecting the transition of the Home Rule movement from a moderate to an activist phase. Yet unlike Parnell he was never in a position to direct policy; and unlike

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1. Daily Telegraph, 6 November 1916.
2. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 156.
3. Times, 6 November, 1916.

Biggar and McCarthy he could not be set aside as an exemplary party man. Even if he showed some of the attributes of O'Connor Power and A.M. Sullivan, he had neither the Fenian roots of the former, nor the elder-statesman qualities of the latter. If he could be singled out for anything it was, on the basis of his own catalogue of greatness,[1] for an exceptional humanitarian and international sense.

It has been considered that "internationalism"[2] perished in the ideological confrontation between Daniel O'Connell and Young Ireland.[3] Certainly O'Connell's creed of nationalism, which was essentially constitutional, was rejected by Young Ireland on the grounds that it was counterfeit and counter-productive. To their mind it was vulnerable to anglicising influences and vague about Irish separation.[4] Secondly, it seemed to deny that "supreme loyalty" was owed to the nation state.[5] For O'Connell the demands of nationalism did not override considerations of universal liberty; if anything the reverse. In the 1840s, because he supported the abolitionists in America, he refused impressive financial backing from those who defended slavery. National justification in effect rested less on the claim to political independence than on the fulfilment of moral purpose. The leaders of Young Ireland,

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1. See below p. 13.

2. The term is the writer's.

3. O.D. Edwards, "Ireland", in Celtic Nationalism, London 1968, pp. 113-4.

4. While O'Connell advocated the repeal of the Union he did not want to sever the British connection. "Ireland was ready to amalgamate with the entire empire", he pronounced in 1837, provided there was a "perfect equality of rights, laws, and liberties". O'Connell quoted in R.B. McDowell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland, 1801-1846, London 1952, p. 170; Pilot, 1 November, 1837.

5. See Hans Kohn, Nationalism, its Meaning and History, New York 1935, p. 9.

Smith O'Brien, Fintan Lalor and John Mitchel, neither accepted O'Connell's pragmatic utilitarian approach to Irish freedom, nor sympathised with his desire to put "the Irish struggle on a footing with struggles of the oppressed in other lands."[1] They later took their stands on very different ground, preached the language of revolution and proclaimed the supremacy of the Celtic culture.[2] The nationalism enuciated by a man like John Mitchel, was "self-centred" uncompromising, and chauvinist. Not only was it immune from philanthropic and egalitarian concerns, but it was buttressed with racist overtones. As a fervent defender of slavery and disciple of "Carlylean" racism, Mitchel insisted that the obligation Ireland owed was to itself alone. The "Rights of Man" did not pertain necessarily to the whole world.[3] In his Jail Journal Mitchel therefore denounced the O'Connellite doctrine of moral agitation as "the most astounding organon of public swindling since first man bethought him of obtaining money under false pretences".[4]

"Armed revolution" was with "mass agitation" and "parliamentary pressure" one of the "three main ways" in which Irish nationalism expressed itself politically right

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1. McDowell, op.cit., pp. 126-7; Edwards, op.cit., pp. 106, 113.

2. See Lyons, Ireland, pp. 93-101.

3. Edwards, op.cit., pp. 124-128.

4. John Mitchel, Jail Journal, edited by Arthur Griffith, Dublin 1913, p. 141. See also McDowell, op.cit., pp. 253-4. The Journal of Young Ireland, the Nation, demanded on 13 June 1846, "nationality, not Noodle or Doodle".

up to the creation of the Free State in 1922.[1] "Physical force" was dogmatically taken up by Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood as a desperate resort. John Mitchel's racial concepts also lived on to be enshrined in the works and teachings of Arthur Griffith.[2] The founder of Sinn Féin (translated as "Ourselves Alone") had no patience for sentimental ideals of national duty. "The right of the Irish to political independence", he laid down, "never was, is not, and never can be dependent upon the admission of equal right in all other peoples":

> "...it is independent oftheories of government and doctrines of philanthropy and Universalism. He who holds Ireland a nation and all means lawful to restore her the full and free exercise of national liberties thereby no more commits himself to the theory that black equals white, that kingship is immoral, or that society has a duty to reform its enemies than he commits himself to the belief that sunshine is extractable from cucumbers."[3]

The slightly ambivalent attitudes of nationalists to African subjugation during the "Scramble" possibly owed something to Mitchel.[4] Indeed, Irishmen bitterly resented English suggestions that they might be equated or compared with native tribes and "Hottentots" as naturally subject races.[5] Their protestations of superiority, however, probably represented as much a defensive reaction as an expression of anti-African sentiment. Again, in supporting the

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1. Lyons, Ireland, p. 101.
2. Edwards, op.cit., pp.124-33.
3. Griffith quoted in Edwards, ibid., pp. 127-8.
4. Ibid, pp. 125-6.
5. See speech by Lord Salisbury delivered at St. James Hall, 15 May 1886, in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury, London 1931, Vol. III, p. 302.

Boers, the Irish might have revealed a disregard for the fate of the African majority, although it is as likely that they in common with many English Liberals innocently regarded this as a side-issue. In either case it is difficult to categorise the Irish viewpoint as overtly racist.

On the other hand, it is alleged by Owen Dudley Edwards that O'Donnell's "universal sense"--perhaps even his liberalism--was extinguished in the collapse of "Repeal" and was "not to be transmitted to future Irish nationalists". "In departing from O'Donnell's simple faith in the dictates of human aspirations for freedom throughout the world", he writes, "Irish nationalism has been the poorer", and "too prone to hunger after the benefits of the oppressors". He sees Mitchel's "self-absorption" as receiving far greater attention. Not that a "Herrenvolk cult" therefore became part of "official state doctrine". Racist notions were always held in check on the "nationalist periphery", though not, if Edwards is correct, by "forces, ideas and men" that took their inspiration from O'Connell.[1]

It is hoped to show on the contrary that "internationalism" if temporarily dormant was by no means dead. Just as Parnell and Davitt understood the value of social factors as a means of advancing the nationalist cause, so O'Donnell appreciated the ability of humanitarian and universal issues to reinforce its strength and enrich its inspiration. By the 1870s, nationalists were no longer able to cling to cultural and political isolation as the pathway

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1. Edwards, op.cit., pp. 113-4, 133.

to salvation. They had to face the fact that the context in which the Irish Question was debated had altered subtly over the intervening years. In one sense, the legacy of the Famine and the migration of an "unending exodus of a permanently antogonised population" especially to the United States, and to a lesser extent to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, elevated the condition of Ireland to the level of an international question.[1] Not least because they were able to furnish the sinews of war beyond the reach of retaliation, the Irish of the diaspora brought a wider angle of vision to the process of overthrowing British rule in Ireland. Their commitment was to ultimate separation based on democratic institutions and the eradication of landlordism. Moreover, in attacking imperialism they applied the principle of self-determination not only to their homeland but to the occupied empire at large. This awareness of Ireland's position in the imperial framework must also have been enhanced by the return of a large number of Irish, both officers and privates, who had served with the army in India and other such territories. In another sense, however much Irish leaders affected to regard Home Rule as a domestic issue, English statesmen, Liberals as well as Conservatives, debated it as a threat to imperial integrity. Michael Davitt observed that Englishmen had been schooled in the faith that the very existence of the British empire depended on the maintenance of a single Parliament for Great Britain and Ireland.[2] Joseph Chamberlain, for example, when Gladstone was converted to Home Rule, chose to secede from the Liberal party rather than "sacrifice the unity of the Empire

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1. Lyons, Ireland, p. 4.

2. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 499.

to the precipitate impatience of an old man".[1] His scheme of an Irish Local Government Board was intended to obviate the need of an Irish exodus from Westminster.[2]

If the Indian Dadabhai Naoroji expressed incredulity that the empire was seen to hang on the thread of Irish will,[3] he underestimated the pervasive influence of a Victorian "domino theory". This held that Irish nationalism contained "the seeds of imperial decay", and if unchecked would stimulate the forces of separation in every part of the empire.[4] Ireland was never described as "the brightest jewel of the imperial crown", but it was believed to be the keystone of it. Remove it and its loss would disturb the delicate balance of mutual trust and minimal force that bound the empire to Britain. With impeccable logic it was argued that if the forces of nationalism and revolution were allowed to triumph close to the "epicenter" of the imperial system itself where British power was concentrated, they must triumph in the far flung empire where British power was fragmented. In the words of Lord Salisbury the granting of Home Rule in any form "would be an act of political bankruptcy, an avowal that we were unable to satisfy even the most sacred obligations, and that all claims to protect or govern anyone beyond our narrow island were at an end."[5] Appeasement would not stem the tide of nationalism. As far as he was concerned, the only visible issue lay in "a courageous maintenance of the rights of the

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1. Chamberlain to Dilke, 3 May 1886, Dilke Papers, Add.Ms . 43888.
2. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 90 f.
3. R.P. Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji The Grand Old Man of India, London 1939, p. 242.
4. See L.P. Curtis, Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland, Princeton 1963, pp. 427-432.
5. Lord Salisbury, "Disintegration", in Quarterly Review, Vol. 156, October 1883, p. 594.

Empire and an impatient struggle with the resistance, however stubborn it may be, however long it may last, against which those rights must be vindicated".[1] It was genuinely feared by both the Left and Right that if Irish aspirations were met the empire would disintegrate "step by step", as if set off by a chain reaction. South Africa would demand Home Rule at once and India would not be far behind. A Radical like Henry Fawcett, who was reverently known as the "Friend of India", and who was considered friendly to Ireland, urged the Liberal party to remain out of office "till its youngest member had grown grey with age", rather than be intimidated into voting for Home Rule.[2] Ashmead-Bartlett spoke with feeling of the "Frankenstein" roused in Ireland and about to overwhelm them.[3] Even Gladstone was prepared to admit that Irish Home Rule might have imperial repercussions, but only if frustrated. He argued astutely that if "local patriotism" was satisfied in time, "Imperial patriotism" could be salvaged.[4]

If from America Patrick Ford lectured nationalists on these cosmic dimensions of the Irish problem, Frank Hugh O'Donnell's recipe of accommodation was the more realistic. Internationalism as expressed in the proselytising columns of the Irish World was a frothy mixture of service to humanity and global terrorism. In its

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1. Salisbury op.cit., p. 593.
2. Hansard, Vol. 233, 24 April 1877, Cols. 1804-5.
3. Hansard, Vol. 283, 22 August 1883, Cols. 1682-3.
4. Hansard, Vol. 304, 8 April 1886, Col. 1082.

most volatile form it synchronised Irish insurrection with a strategy of guerilla warfare against the British empire. Internationalism as envisaged by O'Donnell was a more practical and might be a more potent solvent of empire. In a period when foreign policy was directed towards the acquisition of ever new territories, he impressed on Irish politicians the service that might be rendered to democracy and to nationalism by making the conduct of imperial affairs a party question. "As the only compact representation of unprivileged classes and subject nations in the British Empire",[1] Home Rulers possessed a potential significance which far outweighed their numerical strength in Parliament. Symbolically, Ireland by resisting successive British attempts at pacification was cast in the role of rebellious colony, and Home Rulers converted into pioneers of social and imperial change. As such they were merely passive agents of reform. For O'Donnell it was in their power to become the active pacemakers and catalysts of a less oligarchic system based on free rather than subordinate association. He understood much better than the British that Irish nationalism was not a disease that could be cured by alternate doses of coercion or conciliation, but was as much an aspect of British culture itself as a reaction against British domination. Ireland therefore was a prototype of national revolt, if not the actual model for other colonies in Africa and Asia attempting to break out of the imperial straight-jacket. O'Donnell's attempt to forge an alliance with Indians was not only recognition that they were fellow-travellers and India was the counterpart of Ireland, but formed an indispensable part of his policy to facilitate the transition of both countries from dependency to nationhood. India's response

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1. E. Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, London 1951, p. 137.

suggests that many of the main patterns and lessons of nationalist reaction to British colonial administration were formed in Ireland.

This thesis, then, is a study of O'Donnell and his place in the Home Rule movement from the particular standpoint of his efforts to stimulate an Irish parliamentary interest in Indian affairs; a crucial standpoint from the point of view of his career, and a fundamental one in terms of its general significance for the Irish cause. The immediate objectives are to restore O'Donnell to the political context of Irish nationalism; to investigate his views about Ireland's role at Westminster in supervising the affairs of the empire where they concerned the lives and future of unrepresented peoples; and to ascertain their relevance to the Home Rule programme and the extent of their adoption into it. Such a study, however, cannot be kept on a single plane. It calls for consideration of a number of inter-related themes, which require to be disentangled but are not always conveniently treated in isolation from one another. The influence of the Irish World, for example, in directing Irish attention to the existence of the British empire, and the practical need to win support from the Clan na Gael for nationalist policies, were important factors affecting the readiness of Home Rulers to be guided by O'Donnell. So also was the degree to which Indian political leaders were prepared to co-operate with an often discredited Home Rule party and to be influenced by the experience, tactics, and ideals of the Irish nationalist movement.

The general election of February 1874 overthrew Gladstone's first Government and brought the Irish Home Rule party to Parliament. In Ireland, the orthodox "Whigs"[1] who had monopolised the constituencies in the Gladstonian honeymoon of 1868 had been routed, and a majority of all Irish Members of Parliament returned described themselves as Home Rulers or subscribed in varying measure to the Home Rule programme. Fifty-nine seats were claimed for Home Rule by the Nation,[2] an estimation which greatly distorted the actual and potential power of the party. On the surface, it looked as if most elements of moderation and stability in Irish politics had been swept away in the landslide. The Times saw Isaac Butt and John Martin as archetypes of a group of "determined agitators" and "impractical fanatics" who had captured the Irish hustings on "the absurd resuscitation of repeal."[3] However, such misrepresentation was commonplace in the uncertain atmosphere of an electoral campaign.

The English press was rather inclined to underrate if not to deride the Home Rule victory. Before polling day, the Times considered the excitement in Ireland aroused by federalism for the most part "frothy" and "unsubstantial", which would soon subside and leave no practical result behind. It predicted that Irish representatives would be not much better nor worse than before, not much more creditable

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1. According to the Pall Mall Gazette the term "Whig" was a convenient synonym for a "Gladstonian Liberal". Pall Mall Gazette, 2 February 1874.

2. Nation, 14 February 1874; R.B. O'Brien, The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, third edition, London 1899, Vol. I. p. 68.

3. Times, 31 January 1874.

CHAPTER ONE

Isaac Butt and Moderate Home Rule

to their own country, nor more dangerous to the Imperial Government. Provided Butt could rely upon the allegiance of all the Home Rule members, not only to the phrase but also to the policy of pressing the federal claim upon reluctant Governments, then, it admitted, there might be ground for apprehension that the tactics of Frederick Lucas would be repeated with more success. However, it was discounted that Home Rule in its present form and with its probable representatives could be a serious danger either to the empire or to the parliamentary prospects of the Liberal party. The Times was badly astray on the last count and had to revise its opinion on the first a few years later. After the election, the press was no less scornful about the likely parliamentary influence of the Home Rule party at Westminister, or about the talents of the new members.[1] Yet it is apparent that many English newspapers were not enamoured by the prospect of an Irish party once again armed with a mandate, no matter how tentatively, to procure the dissolution of the Legislative Union of 1801. The Spectator, for example, seemed to take excessive comfort from the O'Donoghue's victory in Tralee over his Home Rule opponents, and from John Mitchell's "utter" defeat at Cork, as symptoms of a very qualified success for Home Rule.[2] The Pall Mall Gazette was convinced that Irish nationalism meant mischief, and would cause as much trouble as it could. The "compact array" of ultramontane politicians which it purported to see in the Irish party, was an element in politics which inspired in it "equal aversion and alarm."[3] The Times was also prepared to concede that the Irish party could become a thorn at least

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1. Times, 9 February, 18 March 1874.
2. Spectator, 14 February 1874.
3. Pall Mall Gazette, 2 February 1874.

in the discussion of Irish business in the House: "They (Home Rulers) were able to make almost any amount of demonstration they pleased, whenever there were elements of disaffection to be gathered together."[1]

In India, as was to become usual following an election, the results were scrutinised with interest and forecasts of future British policy towards India made on the basis of them. The return of Disraeli and the Conservative party did not suggest any liberalisation of policy towards India, nor any concessions to Indian nationalism. Indeed the reverse seemed more probable. The outlook was gloomy. The general movement in Britain against Liberalism had hit the Radicals hardest, from whose ranks the "friends of India" tended to be drawn. In particular, the defeat of Henry Fawcett at Brighton, comparable to the defeat of John Bright in 1857, was received with genuine sadness and dismay in India, and in England. The Spectator thought that only the India House would exult in the loss for no other Member of Parliament dared search into its interior. It lamented that there was literally not one man of experience left to criticize the conduct of the Indian Government for the few remaining Anglo-Indians appeared to have been expelled: "The loss of Mr. Fawcett will cost us millions yet, and is due simply to caprice".[2] Fawcett was rightly regarded as India's parliamentary representative,[3] conscientiously protecting the rights of India as he protected the rights of the underprivileged in Britain. He was the only Member of Parliament to make an issue of the Bengal famine during the entire electoral campaign.[4]

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1. Times, 18 March 1874.
2. Spectator, 7 February 1874.
3. Times, 10 February 1874; Spectator, 7 March 1874.
4. Times, 5 February, 19 March 1874; Pall Mall Gazette, 11 February 1874; Spectator, 31 January, 7 February 1874.

On the eve of the election a special appeal was made to his constituents by Indian speakers on his behalf, and when unseated a fund totalling £400 was raised in India to pay for the expense of another contest.[1] Hope was partially restored in India when Hackney took Fawcett as its candidate in March, after Sir Charles Reed the sitting Member, stood down when his victory was invalidated.[2]

The appearance of an Irish Home Rule party was noted with interest by some Indian papers. That nationalism appeared to have succeeded in Ireland, when Liberalism had been overthrown in Britain, was seen as possible compensation. Though the unflattering articles of the Times on Home Rule received circulation, the Indian press tended to reserve judgement. Its policy was to wait and see, for there was understandable confusion as to the interpretation of Home Rule. As one newspaper phrased it:

> "At present no one knows exactly what Home Rule means, for the simple reason that it means nothing."[3]

The doubt was soon dispelled by Kristodas Pal,[4] editor of the influential and prestigious Hindoo Patriot and under whom "native journalism developed into a power". In a leading article headed "Home Rule for India", he urged that nationalists adopt the Irish slogan themselves and direct their attention "to the introduction of constitutional government for India" with which most British colonies

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1. L. Stephen, Life of Henry Fawcett, London 1885, p. 385. The £400 was transmitted to England too late to help finance his campaign for Hackney a month later, but was used to defray his costs in the 1880 Elections.

2. Times, 19 March 1874.

3. Indian Public Opinion and Punjab Times, 10 March 1874, quoted in Hindoo Patriot. See also Indian Spectator, January 1974, p. 4.

4. See N.N. Ghose, Kristo Das Pal, Calcutta 1887 and G.P. Pillai, Representative Indians, London 1897, pp. 49-56.

had been blessed. The "Home Rule" principle he wanted extended to India was the recognition that representation went "hand in hand" with taxation.[1]

In short the Irish success promoted an air of expectation. At a time when Indian nationalists were beginning to appreciate the urgent need for an organised base of support in Parliament, the Home Rule party made a propitious entry into a Tory House of Commons. The emergence of a third party without the authority of the Conservative Government or the complementary right to succession of the Liberal Opposition, seemed to promise a ready body of criticism and a possible friend of Indian nationalist development. The Indian Public Opinion averred with appreciable hyberbole that if the Home Rule party would serve as a political "mendicity society" it would be the most valuable political reform of the age.[2]

The fifty-nine Home Rulers who took their seats in the new Parliament partially justified the exaggerations of the Times but not the expectations of the Indian Public Opinion. The majority, as the Times foresaw, were not passionately committed to Home Rule. It believed that Home Rulers would relieve their consciences and discharge their duty to their constituents by "voting for some abstract motion in favour of federalism" but otherwise would give a steady support for the Liberals or the Conservatives on other issues as before.[3] Few indeed were "determined agitators" and still fewer intercessors of

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1. H.P. Ghose, The Newspaper in India, Calcutta 1952, p. 33. See also H. and U. Mukherjee, The Growth of Nationalism in India 1857-1905, Calcutta 1957, p. 46. Hindoo Patriot, 24 August 1874.

2. Indian Public Opinion and Punjab Times, 10 March 1874.

3. Times, 31 January 1874.

the order hoped for by India. Most were loosely pledged to plead for justice for Ireland but they were not necessarily prepared to accept the brief of humanitarian and nationalist sponsors to plead for justice in other countries. Not since the "Repeal" days of Daniel O'Connell had there been an Irish parliamentary party with a mind and a will of its own on questions unrelated to Ireland. There had been several inferior imitations, but the notorious willingness of succeeding generations of Irish Members of Parliament to trade votes for preferment and places made a mockery of any concept of independent action. John Pope Hennessy was perhaps typical of the Irish parliamentarian who took an interest in foreign and imperial affairs. He was an ardent advocate of the cause of Poland, yet during his brief tenure in Parliament proclaimed himself an open follower of Disraeli, and generally supported the Conservatives in party divisions. In 1865 he resigned his seat to join the Colonial Service, in which he gained rapid promotion, to become, first, Governor of Hong Kong, then of Mauritius.[1] His main contributions to philanthropy and his championship of the interests of native races, were performed as an interested civilian and not as a disinterested politician.

It was only when the Irish formed themselves into an unaligned party in Parliament that they made any separate or concerted stand on imperial politics. This was true of the independent Irish party[2] in the middle 1850's led by George Henry Moore and Frederick Lucas, which at its zenith in 1852 commanded a strength of forty-eight members,

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1. J. McCarthy, Reminiscences, London 1899, Vol. II, p. 150.

2. See J.H. Whyte, The Independent Irish Party 1850-9, London 1958.

gradually reducing to twelve in 1858 prior to its break-up.[1] For many years the Irish Liberals exerted little influence at Westminster, being too closely associated with the Liberal party on English and imperial questions. To counteract this impotence Moore devised a policy which in its essentials resembled the theory of obstruction practised by Parnell and Biggar in the early years of the Home Rule movement. At a time when the political balance between the two major parties was delicately poised, he appreciated that a sudden transfer of support could bring about a Government defeat and precipitate a Cabinet crisis. If this should happen often enough, and if the administration of the British empire was to be carried on at all, he believed that either the Liberals or the Conservatives would be forced to conciliate Ireland.[2] A beginning was made with the "Irish Brigade" in 1851 on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, when a group of Irish Liberals detached themselves from the Liberal party, sat apart on the Opposition benches, and held meetings of their own.[3] Following the general election of 1852 in which Lucas was returned for Meath, some forty-eight Members variously pledged themselves to retain a policy of independence towards all English Governments until Irish grievances were redressed.[4] The "Independents", or those who adhered to the pledge, continued to sit as an opposition, although they did not always vote as one. In fact besides the Irish Land question, there were few subjects on which the party opposed the Government with any frequency.

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1. Whyte, op.cit., p. 143.
2. M.G. Moore, An Irish Gentleman: George Henry Moore, London 1913, pp. 174-175.
3. Whyte, op.cit., pp. 21-24.
4. Whyte, ibid., pp. 82-91.

On matters of foreign and military policy, however, it usually did so. The party voted for successive motions of censure on the conduct on the Crimean War in 1855 and 1856, and supported Cobden in 1957 in defeating the Administration on his motion concerning the treatment of China.[1] Significantly, it would appear that the outstanding advocates of independent opposition were interested in imperial affairs for other than tactical reasons. In 1853 for example, the Irish were strongly represented in the Indian Reform Society, formed specifically to influence the Government of India Bill when the charter of the East India Company came up for renewal but also generally to investigate the nature of Indian administration. Largely financed from India, the Society revealed a readiness to work with and on behalf of Indians and performed a valuable function as a "propaganda agency" to stimulate interest in India. At the height of its membership the Society listed thirty-nine Members of Parliament, of whom eight were Irish.[2] The most important "Independents", T. Kennedy (Louth), F. Lucas (Meath), and G.H. Moore (Mayo Co.), were all members. Lucas, a Quaker who had been converted to Roman Catholicism, was possibly drawn into the movement by John Bright[3] one of its leading personalities and a near relation. Acknowledged by John Dickinson, one of the founders, to be the "backbone" of the Reform Society, Bright swelled its ranks by introducing at one time or another thirty Members of Parliament.[4] The "Independents" were always

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1. Whyte, op.cit., p. 145.

2. G. Bowyer*, Lt. Col. J. Caulfield, J. Fitzgerald, F. French*, T. Kennedy*, F. Lucas*, J. Magon, G.H. Moore*; the five with asterisks were members of the Independent party. See J.L. Sturgis, John Bright and the Empire, London 1969, pp. 54-62.

3. Bright became Chairman of the Society in April 1855. Sturgis, op.cit., p. 31.

4. Ibid., p. 32.

sympathetic to the Radicals, voting for their proposals in Parliament, and the Indian Reform Society was strictly a Radical enterprise.

There was an Irish philanthropic school of thought, but it was essentially an extra parliamentary phenomenon, the creation of Richard Davis Webb and Richard Allen, both Dublin Quakers. They were the centre of a general movement for reform which sought the amelioration of anything "that caught their moral eye".[1]

> "Slavery, temperance, British India, anti-opium, anti-capital punishment, anti-corn law, mesmerism, cold water cure--everything was taken up".[2]

According to the biographer of Richard Allen, they were called by a jocose newspaper editor "Anti-everythingians"[3], but they had little contact and little influence with Irish politicians, until the coalescence of the two strains in the person of Alfred Webb. A foundation member of the Home Rule movement, Webb toiled for many years behind the scenes, as treasurer of first the Irish Home Rule League under Butt and then of the Irish National League under Parnell. His energies were primarily devoted to organisation and to economy, although his interests covered a wider range of competence. He was a regular correspondent to the press, and his strong observations on the progress of Home Rule and on the duties of Home Rulers courted respect. Despite his official position he was not inhibited from voicing serious doubts about the "looseness of organisation" and the revolutionary

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1. McCarthy, op.cit. p. 154.

2. J.M. Hernon Jr., Celts, Catholics and Copperheads, Ohio State University 1968, p. 60.

3. H.M. Wigham, A Christian Philanthropist of Dublin: A Memoir of Richard Allen, London 1856, pp. 13-14.

impulse of the land movement,[1] and offered to resign as treasurer in 1883 to make way for a person more in accord with the general sense of the League.[2] His interest in the empire developed as he came to analyse the merits and demerits of federalism and separation, and before 1890 there were glimpses of that concern for the welfare of subject nationalities that characterised his later life.[3] Always an advocate of "moral force" over "physical force" as the one weapon that remained to minorities[4], he believed that Ireland because of her unique experience could play an essential role in the protection of weaker races within the empire.[5] For his humanitarian outlook, Webb no doubt owed much to the influence of his father, and certainly to the "liberal and philanthropic traditions" of the Society of Friends[6], though he departed from them on their opposition to Irish self-government.[7] In 1890 he emerged from relative obscurity to take a seat in Parliament as Member for West Waterford. At once he formed a liaison with Sir Joseph Pease and was co-director of a concerted campaign to eradicate the Indian opium trade with China.[8] The Irish

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1. A. Webb to R.B. Webb, 4 June 1881, Webb Papers, Ms1745. See also A. Dunlop, Fifty Years of Irish Journalism, Dublin 1911, p. 124.
2. Webb to Parnell, 19 May 1883, Webb Papers, Ms 1745. This letter appears in draft form.
3. Webb in Freeman's Journal, 29 March 1880.
4. Webb in Freeman's Journal, 21 October 1878.
5. Webb in Freeman's Journal, 26 December 1885.
6. Webb in British Friend, May 1898.
7. See Petition from Society of Friends to House of Commons 1893, Society of Friends Papers, PB. 21(98), Dublin.
8. Hansard, 4th series, Vol. 14, 30 June 1890, Col. 601.

Society of Friends had long been hostile to this trade and had conveyed petitions to Parliament through Pease.[1] In December 1894 he was invited to preside over the tenth Indian National Congress as President, the pinnacle of his career,[2] and he became the third Briton to hold that post.[3] On his return to England he left politics, for which he felt himself unsuited, and because he was insufficiently at ease in the House to give utterance to the "thoughts and feelings" that "seethed through and possessed" him. He felt convinced that he exercised greater influence in Ireland by letters and intercourse than he did by unrewarding Committee work, having " much more to do with eminent people".[4] The problems of India impinged on Webb's time more and more during his semi-retirement and held only second place to Home Rule in his list of priorities. Sympathetic to the aims of Indian nationalists, he did much to arouse interest in India and till his death in 1906 tirelessly promoted the cause of political reform and the gradual transfer of power.[5]

Ideologically and institutionally the Home Rule party of 1874 was not geared to undertake an independent or interventionist role in parliamentary affairs. It represented an artificial blend of nationalism and conservatism that was essentially inert. If the inalienable right of Ireland to be restored her Parliament was insisted

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1. See J.W. Pease to H. Wigham, 3 May 1886, Society of Friends Papers, Dublin.

2. See Webb to Secretaries of the 13th Indian National Congress, Webb Papers, Ms 1747.

3. George Yule was President of the Allahabad Congress 1888 and Sir William Wedderburn President of the Bombay Congress 1889.

4. Webb to McCarthy, 10 August 1894, Webb Papers, Ms 1746.

5. See Conclusion.

upon so was the inalienable right of the Irish aristocracy to be restored their House of Lords. One historian has gone so far as to say that the founding of the Home Rule movement in 1870 was "an attempt to secure Irish political leadership to the land lords and the upper middle class, and to keep the dangers of English democracy away from the shores of Ireland".[1] Isaac Butt may have been the defender of Fenian convicts and the leading advocate of moderate tenant-right, but he began political life as an Irish Tory and never renounced his conservative principles or lost his distaste for revolution. Certainly he was of the opinion that "there [was] no peop'e on earth less disposed to democracy than the Irish,"[2] and believed that in time a "separate Irish Parliament" might constitute a "Conservative element in the British Constitution". The Irish Home Rule League which he founded appealed to a section of Irish landlords as a way of protecting their ascendancy and maintaining their political power. While the view concerning the aristocratic and conservative nature of Butt's Home Rule party is traditional, and has recently been criticised for its overstatement,[3] it is nevertheless true that conservatism was reconciled to Home Rule. The price paid for that reconciliation was an ambiguous pledge to support Home Rule, and the total absence of electoral machinery to enforce the pledge.[4] There was some basis in fact for the "nostalgia of

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1. Strauss, op.cit. p. 155.
2. I. Butt, Irish Federalism, Dublin 1874, p. 39, quoted in Ibid.
3. D. Thornley, Isaac Butt, pp. 209-211.
4. Ibid. pp. 138-175.

Frank Hugh O'Donnell in later years for the aristocratic golden age of Butt".[1] While the landowning element was considerably down on 1868, the ballot had a leavening not a catastrophic effect. It was merchants, financiers, and professional men who benefitted from their relative decline, the career politicians not the tenant farmers or shopkeepers. They constituted 58 per cent of the Home Rule representation. Yet 23 land owners[2] whom O'Donnell describes as "the fine flower of the Carlton and the Reform"[3] were returned as Home Rule Members of Parliament, and they naturally tended to be the least active and least progressive group in the party.

Home Rule was a very effective election cry, but it failed to cement an effective or an independent party. Liberal time-servers and carpet-baggers were elected on no firmer basis than that they had expediently incanted the saving words on the platforms. As Sir George Bowyer wrote to Disraeli in November 1877:

> "I knew that unless I accepted the shibbolet (sic) of Home Rule I must retire forever from public life. And many of my colleagues feel the same."[4]

David Thornley has estimated that of the 59 Home Rulers elected to Parliament, only 20 were of "theoretically proven loyalty."[5] There had been no formal Home Rule party before the elections; Home Rulers had fought them as individuals rather than as members of a party. Butt had intended that the organisation and constitution of the party

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 90-91, 467.

2. Dr. Thornley divides the 59 Home Rulers into three categories:

	Number	Percentage Returned
(i) Landowners	23	39%
(ii) Middle class	34	57.6%
(iii) Lower class	2	3.4%

Thornley, op.cit., p. 207.

3. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 91.

4. Bowyer to Disraeli, 6 Nov. 1877, Disraeli Mss. quoted in Thornley, op.cit., p. 196.

5. Thornley, ibid.

was to be attempted only after the results were known. On 3 March 1874, 46 Home Rulers responded to a circular inviting them to concert tactics for the approaching session of the new Parliament. A number of resolutions were passed which stressed the importance of united action and which authorised the creation of a loose executive to co-ordinate the Home Rule effort. The most important were proposed by Butt:

> "That in the opinion of this conference the time has arrived when the Irish members who have been elected to represent the national demand for Home Rule ought to form a separate and distinct party in the House of Commons, united on the principle of obtaining self-government for Ireland as defined in the resolutions of the conference held in Dublin last November.
>
> That, while our future action must depend upon the course of events, and the occasions that may arise it is essential to the due discharge of our duties to our constituents and the country that we should collectively and individually hold ourselves aloof from and independent of all party combinations whether of the Ministerialists or of the Opposition".[1]

The result was a victory for continued informality and the logical consequence of the principle of free parliamentary action affirmed at the first Home Rule Conference the preceding November. It was irrational and optimistic to expect elected Members of Parliament to accept a pledge which they had forcefully rejected as prospective candidates.[2] Butt was chosen leader of the party, whips were appointed, and a fortnightly Home-Rule dinner was arranged, but these were more the ornamental trappings of an as yet occasional pressure-group than of a fully-pledged party. As with the former,

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1. Times, 4 March 1874.

2. This was an amendment proposed by Michael Cahill, seconded by Joseph Biggar, which sought to obtain written pledges from Home Rule candidates to abide by majority decisions, to vote as a unit, and to act independently of English parties. The amendment was rejected. Thornley, op.cit. pp. 164-166.

membership was both scattered and indistinct in the House. Home Rulers with conservative proclivities such as Sir George Bowyer and King Harman sat on the Government benches and habitually took the Government whip, while traditional Liberals sat above the gangway on the opposite side. The only compact and recognisable Irish group was the rump of twenty strong formed by Butt and his more activist recruits, who took up residence below the gangway on the Opposition benches, a position later acknowledged as the "Irish Quarter". Even they had connections with the Liberal party, described themselves in Dod's Parliamentary Companion as "Liberals in favour of the system called Home Rule for Ireland,"[1] and in straight party clashes between Government and Opposition, several were known to receive the Liberal whip.[2] In effect, therefore, the resolution on uniformity and independence meant voting for an annual Home Rule motion but otherwise according to individual inclination and former habit. Dr. O'Leary, for example, though a nationalist was a fervent supporter of Tory policy abroad, and was to be found consistently in the Conservative lobby in support of Disraeli's proceedings in Turkey, Cyprus, Afghanistan and India.[3] The unenfranchised empire could expect little help from the large majority of "nominal"[4] Home Rulers who knew little about the eastern dependencies and perhaps cared less.

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1. See also M. MacDonagh, op.cit., p. 56.

2. S. Gwynn and G.M. Tuckwell, The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, London 1917, Vol. 1, p. 223.

3. T.M. Healy, Letters and Leaders, 1, p. 38.

4. See Lord Eversley, Gladstone and Ireland, London 1912, p. 64.

There was nothing intrinsic to the Home Rule programme itself that demanded that Home Rulers take an interest in or act as a unit on non-Irish questions in Parliament. That membership in the movement did not involve conversion to a prescribed political code of behaviour or the expression of prescribed political opinions had been axiomatic all along. Article five of the Home Government Association, the general tenor of which was conceded at the Conference, presented persistent backsliders and absentees with a ready charter of absolution.[1] Home Rule proclaimed the political philosophy of self-determination, but the birth of a phrase did not cause the death of a traditional frame of mind. As far as the early leaders of the Home Rule movement were concerned, Home Rule had no relevance outside the Irish political context. While Home Rulers affirmed the inalienable right of self-government for Ireland, they did not specifically affirm that right for the unenfranchised empire.

The attitude stamped by Isaac Butt during the first Home Rule Conference at the Rotunda was critical in this regard and symptomatic of a large body of Irish opinion at the meeting. Butt held that separation or simple repeal would be hopeless and injurious. "The true solution", he affirmed, "was the federation of the Empire on the basis of self-governed nations."[2] There is no doubt that Butt's federal proposals involved more than simply an Anglo-Irish settlement, and one historian has stated that they looked ahead to an entire system of imperial devolution.[3]

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1. Article five is printed in R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 67.
2. Isaac Butt quoted in O'Donnell, History, i, p. 47.
3. Thornley, op. cit. p. 99.

> "...although my immediate concern is only with Ireland, I do not suppose that if Irishmen obtain the separate management of Irish affairs it is at all likely that Englishmen or Scotchmen would consent to the management of their domestic concerns by a Parliament in which Irish members still had a voice. Whether England or Scotland would still desire to have the internal affairs of Great Britain managed by one common Parliament is a matter entirely for themselves to decide."[1]

Yet, as with the programmes of "Imperial Federation"[2] at this time and especially later, it was certain that Butt alone did not have the prescience to include the coloured colonies and dependencies in his scheme of devolution. Ireland sought an arrangement such as the old white dominions, Canada and Australia, had achieved. Britain's imperial prerogatives would in no way be affected:

> "The federal arrangement which I contemplate is one which would preserve the Imperial Parliament in its present form. It would leave to that Parliament all its present control over everything that affected the Imperial crown--its dominions, its colonies, and its dependencies--over the foreign relations of the Empire, and all questions of peace and war."[3]

There was no trace here of any notion of universal liberty, and Butt made explicit assurances at the Rotunda that Irishmen did not desire the disintegration of the empire. It could be claimed that Butt anticipated the furore which was to greet his Home Rule proposals in Parliament, and gave this assurance to draw the venom from expected English attacks. In fact, Disraeli on 2 July 1874 made the typical response to the Home Rule challenge. "If we do not cleanse the parliamentary bosom of this 'perilous stuff'--we shall bring about the

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1. Isaac Butt, Home Government for Ireland, Irish Federalism: its Meaning, its Objects and its Hopes, Dublin 1874, 4th edition, p. 16.

2. See J.E. Tyler, The Struggle for Imperial Unity 1868-1895, London 1938, Ch. 1.

3. Butt, op.cit. p. 33.

distintegration of the Kingdom and the destruction of the Empire."[1] In 1 81 Sir Wilfred Lawson marvelled that the "five syllabled word", "disintegration", always "fetched" John Bull and seemed to suffice for relevant argument.[2] It is more probable that Butt saw Irish Home Rule as a unique phenomenon, conditioned by the special relationship between Britain and Ireland, and therefore unlikely to incite emulation in the empire at large. Indeed, a liberated Ireland would pull its weight as an imperial partner.[3]

Butt opened the Rotunda Conference on 18 November with a long and detailed speech in which he reaffirmed his federalist interpretation of Home Rule, and argued in favour of its unanimous acceptance. The empire figured impressively in the justification of his scheme, though in a manner reminiscent more of colonial oppressor than of a leading advocate of the constitutional parliamentary tradition. Ireland, he held, was entitled to her blood money:

> "The United Kingdom of which Ireland is now a part, has vast foreign and colonial possessions. Many of these possessions have been acquired during the period of our disastrous partnership of seventy years. Heaven knows we have paid dearly enough for them. We are entitled to our share in them. They cannot be apportioned between the two countries. It is only under a federal arrangement that we can have any share in that which we have so dearly bought. Remember that simple repeal would hand over all the colonies and foreign possessions of the British Crown to the uncontrolled management of the British Parliament, a parliament in which Ireland would have no voice."[4]

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1. Hansard, Vol. 220, 2 July 1874, Col. 963.
2. Nation, 10 December 1881.
3. Butt, op.cit., p. 29.
4. Irish Home Rule League, Proceedings of the Home Rule Conference, Dublin 1874, p. 27.

Imperialism was an important plank on which Butt built his federalism. The extended empire, with the opportunities it offered of employment in the Civil Service and the army was the pawn and prize between federalism which he wanted, and separation which he abhorred. In Butt's opinion, the importance of this view of the question could not be exaggerated. The greatest empire that Europe had ever seen had been won since the union of 1801, the attainment of which "Irish valour" had largely contributed and "Irish treasure" partly financed.[1] India, perhaps because Butt's son was attached to the Indian Civil Service,[2] received particular treatment in this panegyric of an Irish imperial heritage:

> "Since the Union an English commercial company has surrendered India to the Crown--not of England--but of the United Kingdom. In the terrible contest for the maintenance of English power, for English existence in the Indian continent, Irish blood was poured out, and Irish bravery and Irish intellect kept India for that Crown."[3]

In short, India belonged to Ireland as much as it did to England.[4] In this sense, Home Rule meant Ireland for the Irish but also the rest of theempire into the bargain. Butt carried the Conference with him and the 7th Resolution was passed unanimously:

> "That in the opinion of this Conference, a Federal arrangement based upon these principles, would consolidate the strength and maintain the integrity of the Empire, and add to the dignity and power of the Imperial Crown."[5]

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1. Proceedings, p. 27.
2. Nation, 1 February 1879.
3. Proceedings, p. 28.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 127. The resolution was put by Mitchel Henry M.P. and seconded by W.J. O'Neill Daunt.

Although Butt's federal interpretation of Home Rule was accepted, his views of an Irish involvement in the maintenance and growth of the empire did not necessarily receive a stamp of approval. On this point many of the delegates had strong reservations.

The Conference was dominated by a patrician oligarchy associated with the movement since its inception, but had also attracted more popular elements which from the first were notable for their energy and advanced sympathies. The expansion of the Home Rule movement into England, which drew its support from the immigrant labouring Irish in the industrial towns, returned a brand of nationalism more broadly based and less concerned with appearances. Although John Ferguson's declaration that the "people's day had come" was premature, already the trend was towards more popular participation. The advanced men at the Conference promised their neutrality, though they were uninspired by Butt's Home Rule programme. Old repealers of the type of W.J. O'Neill Daunt[1] and John Martin, the leaders of the English contingent such as John Ferguson and John Barry, and a new genre of Fenians represented by Joseph Biggar and John O'Connor Power, for the moment held their peace. To them the empire was not a cause for "wonderment" and respect but rather the embodiment of Irish misgovernment and the symbol of English tyranny. Nevertheless, Butt's attempt to obtain a perfect equality of rights, laws, and liberties through amalgamation with the empire, and through "interim concessions"[2], was to be allowed a trial.

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1. See W.J. O'Neill Daunt, Eighty-Five Years of Irish History, 1801-1895, London 1896, 2 vols.

2. Thornley, op.cit., p. 166.

If given the choice O'Neill Daunt, the retired Secretary of the moribund Home Government Association, Martin and P.J. Smyth much preferred "Repeal" of an arrangement resembling Grattan's constitution of 1782. They acquiesced in federalism because it appeared to be more attainable,[1] and because it contained many of the benefits which "Repeal" could confer.[2] When Smyth announced his resignation from the Home Rule party in April 1874 and his intention to return to a spearatist path,[3] Daunt came to the rescue with a counter letter of regret. He reminded Smyth of the words he had spoken at the Conference that it was "an act of patriotic duty to go with the Federalists".[4] Yet Daunt himself had given a firm warning that his support for federalism, and he spoke for others like him, was conditional on substantial and immediate results. He promised that if, on the other hand, the system of "nominal incorporation with England" was prolonged, which was "merely a mask for the provincial servitude and robbery of Ireland", the words "British Empire" would be rendered hateful to Ireland and the British connection would become disgusting to Irishmen.[5]

> "You make the words British Empire words of evil omen to our country. The Union is, in fact, a disintegrating measure. It renders the English connection a galling and a disastrous chain instead of a fair and honourable alliance."[6]

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1. O'Neill Daunt, op.cit., p. 194.
2. Times, 11 May 1874.
3. Nation, 24 April 1874.
4. Times, op.cit.
5. Proceedings, op.cit., pp. 132-133.
6. Ibid., p. 133.

"Real dismemberment" consisted in the "alienation of the people" in a "system" which made "nearly every Irish emigrant all over the globe an enemy of England".[1] Daunt was certainly no admirer of the British or their empire, but his warning accurately predicted the growth of an anti-imperialist development in the nationalist movement. He realised that the factor of union gave Ireland a not incongruous stake in either the preservation or the destruction of the empire:

> "It [the Union] gives Ireland a certain interest in the overthrow of the Empire on the same principle that prisoners in the hold of a slaveship would welcome shipwreck as affording them a desperate chance of escaping from their bondage".[2]

If federalism offered the empire the co-operation and the partnership of Irishmen, its rejection guaranteed their non-co-operation and the progression to separatism. The frame of mind was aptly expressed by William O'Brien: "In 1902 and in 1870, the message to England, 'Friends, if you will let us; Rebels, if you will drive us.'"[3] The Home Rule peace offering exposed a Janus-face. On England's response to it wavered Ireland's reaction to the empire and her loyalty to the Union. The anti-imperialism of the Parnellites, in contrast to the imperialism of Home Rulers like Butt, can partly be understood if this basic principle is conceded.

The weakness of Butt's position was that he depended utterly on the good will of the politicians he was attempting to influence. His policy was one of conciliation and iteration, of convincing the

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1. O'Neill Daunt, "Ireland under the Legislative Union", in Contemporary Review, Vol. 41, June 1882, p. 924.

2. Proceedings, op.cit., p. 133.

3. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 95.

House of Commons by reasoned and persistent argument that the duties of Irish government could safely be devolved on Irish gentlemen. The battle for the English mind was to be waged on a broad front of Irish grievances by impeccable manners and by the persuasive powers of human reason:

> "What they could do was this: they could, by their presence, proclaim the solemn protest of Ireland against the system under which it is governed; they could place their views fairly and distinctly before the British House of Commons, and leave to them the responsibility of rejecting the demands of the Irish people; they could destroy misrepresentation by making a statement of what Ireland really seeks; and, above all-and he was sure they would do her a most important service--they could expose the system of coercive oppression, and unconstitutional tyranny, by which England alone maintained her present system of government. By that means the Irish members could exert an important influence on public opinion. Beyond that they could do nothing--beyond that everything rested with the people."[1]

For Butt, there was no other way. He did not possess an arsenal of alternative tactics. Obstruction and belligerency had been ruled out and a refurbished version of O'Connell's concept of "moral force",[2] upheld against them. Butt refused to be party to what he termed a system of "indiscriminate voting against every ministry upon every occasion that could turn them out." "To bind himself to such a pledge would destroy every particle of moral influence which any motion of his would have in the House of Commons." "He would not submit his future conduct to the absolute control of any tribunal, on earth, except his own conscience, and that higher tribunal, his responsibility to God."[3]

In O'Connell's hands the concept of "moral force" was fashioned into a positive instrument of intervention on the side of humanity and suffering everywhere. He was a fervent anti-slavery man, pressed

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1. Nation, 11 April 1874.
2. See R.B. McDonell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland 1801-1846, London 1952. A. MacIntyre, The Liberator, London 1965.
3. Butt quoted in Thornley, op.cit., pp. 167-8.

for the abolition of flogging in the army, for the removal of Jewish disabilities, and supported Government policy in India "whenever it tended to prescribe the diffusion of Christianity, and the establishment of a solid basis for independence".[1] The work of the British India Society found in him a keen spectator and supporter, and on several occasions he raised selected questions in Parliament for the Society, on behalf of the Indians. He even prodded the Society into wakefulness when he thought them falling asleep.[2] Edward Pease, a leading abolitionist of the opium trade and a frequent correspondent of the radical Quaker school in Dublin, rejoiced that the poor natives of India had such a friend in O'Connell whom he described as "that ever wakeful friend of the oppressed."[3]

The implementation of Butt's concept of "moral influence" in Parliament was much less productive, and embodied decidedly negative qualities. In the first place, Butt was anxious that the case for home government should not be jeopardized by unfavourably affecting the disposition of Englishmen to give it a just hearing. The avoidance of contentious issues and a scrupulous adherence to a policy of safety was consequently called for. In the second place, considerable stress was given to the view that the Home Rule movement ought not to be dissipated by the splintering effect of Irish Members of Parliament pursuing parliamentary interests of their own. Both these factors tended to reinforce the traditional Irish

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1. MacIntyre, op.cit. p. 127.

2. E. Pease to R. Allen, 1 March 1840, Society of Friends Papers, Dublin, Post 5B/26.

3. W.J. Fitzgerald (ed.), Correspondence of D. O'Connell, The Liberator, London 1833, Vol. II, p. 216.

reluctance to intervene in imperial and British affairs. English politicians regarded both these areas as outside the ordinary competence of Irishmen and upheld unspecified laws of trespass. Whatever sympathy Butt personally may have felt for the grievances of Indians and Africans which from time to time came to his notice, his political predilections did not allow him to act on their behalf.

However, the rump of genuine nationalists which Butt theoretically directed in Parliament from his seat below the Opposition gangway, included a group of activists who eschewed the language of persuasion before a tribunal which they did not believe to be impartial. They acknowledged Butt's authority, while they refused to be bound by his policy, at least when it appeared to make little headway. His goal of a liberated Ireland they shared, but not his regard for protocol nor his inflexible approach to tactics. Basically, the emphases of their nationalism were different. The conception of an imperial partnership and of an Anglo-Irish solution to self-government was fundamental to Butt's nationalism. That of the activists was compounded of their experience of parliamentary frustration and of their deliberate assertion of an Irish as distinct from a British character. In terms of political behaviour the distinction was crucial; it marked the difference between conciliation and obstruction, of obeying the rules of political disputation as set by Englishmen, or of exploiting them in a manner that was never intended. This conflict revealed itself especially on imperial questions and was to prove a constant source of weakness and disagreement in the Irish party. Butt by inclination was a paternalist and sympathised with, if he usually abstained from voting for, the imperial enterprises of the Government. The majority of Home Rulers, however,

tended to support Gladstone, while the activists were hostile to both parties. Butt lacked the moral courage and the decisiveness to discipline his more rebellious followers, a task made difficult by his frequent absences from Parliament. When he did determine on strong action, it was much too late. In one sense, the adverse decision in 1873 on the rule of majority decision was fortuitous for the activists. Ironically they were enabled to pursue an aggressive policy, because the principle of "free parliamentary action" was upheld. Had the decision been reversed and majority decisions enforced, the preponderance of "nominal" Home Rulers might have told emphatically against them and perhaps snuffed out their experiment.

The activists tended to look on the empire and on the Union with less respect than Butt. Yet the concept of "moral influence" survived and was redefined and redirected by the spiritual heirs of O'Connell. The old talk about enjoying the fruits of empire came to seem inappropriate in a struggle for Irish independence, and a new dialogue of responsibility and concern for the welfare of dependent peoples, if not also for the parallel development of other colonies into dominions, was substituted. This change in attitude was gradual but it accelerated towards the end of Butt's political career, and possibly in reaction to the continued intransigence of the Government to the Home Rule demand. To a degree then, the growth of anti-imperialism was motivated as much by a change of political circumstances as by a change of heart. Consequently it is possible to see the parliamentary response of the active Home Rulers to imperial questions as divergent. On the one hand as envisaged by O'Neill Daunt the response could be antagonistic, obstructive, and negative. On the other

hand as translated by A.M. Sullivan, Frank Hugh O'Donnell and Justin McCarthy, it could be philanthropic, constructive and reforming. It was this dichotomy that sometimes caused the policy of intervention to be confused with obstruction, and the motives of the one to be associated with the motives of the other. In some respects the policies were similar; both were methods designed to intimidate the Government into conceding Home Rule, but the former by appealing to world opinion and by mobilising support from within the empire, the latter by exasperation and by holding Parliament to ransom. Henry Grattan's prophecy that the union presented Ireland with the opportunity to take "revenge for all her wrongs" was about to be fulfilled. Ireland, he said, "will send into England, and into the bosom of her Parliament, and the very heart of her constitution, a hundred of the greatest rascals that can be found anywhere."[1] If initially she only sent a tenth of that number they nonetheless contrived to bring about near paralysis.

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1. Quoted by Lord Advocate Jeffrey in Lord John Russell (ed.), Memoirs, Journals and Correspondence of Thomas Moore, London 1854, Vol. VI, pp. 183-4.

CHAPTER TWO

The Emergence of an Active Group 1874-1877

I A Policy of Intervention

II Recruitment

III The First Instalment

1. A Policy of Intervention

The origin of the policy of intervention[1] in imperial and British affairs is vague. An interventionist policy was possibly floated in activist circles prior to the general election of 1874, when future political tactics were being discussed on a hypothetical basis. However, it is generally assumed that it took definite shape in response to the disappointing and barren parliamentary record of the Home Rule party in the first two years of its existence. The crushing rejection of Butt's modest Home Rule motion in June 1874, calling on the House to resolve itself into Committee to consider the Parliamentary relations between Great Britain and Ireland[2], signalled a mushrooming of demands for greater activity to be displayed by the party. During this debate and indeed throughout the session, the organisation of the party showed itself to be desultory, discipline was loose and genuine commitment lacking. Eight Irish Members in fact who were believed to have pledged themselves to support a Home Rule motion voted against it.[3] The motion was negatived with almost contemptuous formality by 458 votes to 61,[4] and few English Members were prepared to treat Home Rule as a realistic proposal or to even give it a fair hearing.[5]

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1. The term is O'Donnell's and will be used in preference to that of "obstruction", with which it differs in emphasis if not always in method.
2. Hansard, Vol. 220, 30 June 1874, Cols. 700-765.
3. Thornley, op.cit., p. 234.
4. Hansard, op.cit.
5. Only ten English Members supported the motion.

Apart from some minor success on a motion to revive the Irish fishing industry, and on the Municipal Privileges (Ireland) Bill, the Home Rule party had nothing to show for its efforts. However limited Irish expectations were, they were unlikely to have been fulfilled.

The first suggestion of an active policy is usually attributed by Home Rulers to J.P. Ronayne, Member for Cork, and a respected and advanced nationalist.[1] At a meeting of the Home Rule League in February 1879, Parnell recalled for the consideration of those assembled, the advice of Ronayne to participate in the discussion on English business.[2] Certainly Ronayne was one of the first Home Rulers to criticise the hollowness of the parliamentary fight conducted by Butt and to recommend a change of tactics. R. O'Brien records the advice he frequently urged on the party:

> "We will never make any impression on the House until we interfere in English business. At present Englishmen manage their own affairs in their own way without any interference from us. Then, when we want to get our business through, they stop us. We ought to show them that two can play at this game of obstruction. Let us interfere in English legislation; let us show them that if we are not strong enough to get our work done, we are strong enough to prevent them from getting theirs."[3]

Ronayne, always retiring and shy, was himself unwilling to put his ideas into practice, though he coached Joseph Biggar and the younger men of the party in the techniques of the new policy. However, with the possible exceptions of Major P. O'Gorman,[4] Captain J. Nolan, K. O'Clery

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1. W.O'Brien, Recollections, pp. 143-144; Healy, Letters and Leaders, 1, p. 39; O'Connor, Memoirs, i, p. 261; R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 93-4.
2. Times, 5 February 1879; O'Donnell, History, i, p. 161.
3. Ronayne quoted in R. B. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 93.
4. H.W. Lucy, A Diary of Two Parliaments: The Disraeli Parliament 1874-1880, London 1885, pp. 15, 38. O'Gorman declared that his maxim was "on all occasions to vote against the introduction of Englishmen to Ireland".

and A.M. Sullivan,[1] Biggar was the only Home Ruler until 1876 to respond with any deliberate purpose. The intervention which Ronayne formulated and Biggar applied, placed its sole emphasis on retaliation, and there was no suggestion that it would be other than obstructive or of nuisance value. The strategy was straight forward; if Englishmen could block Irish Bills, then Irishmen could also block English Bills. Imperial affairs were apparently not included in their scheme and in 1874 only Bills which has relevance to Ireland--the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill and the Intoxicating Liquors (Ireland) No. 2 Bill--were deliberately impeded. Apart from the Indian famine, there were no obvious foreign or imperial crises on the horizon, and Biggar if he could manipulate the procedures of the House of Commons with effect, lacked the basic knowledge and expertise to intervene purposefully in what was for him an unfamiliar field. It is extremely doubtful whether the Ronayne-Biggar formula of intervention conceived imperial questions to be of any practical value to the cause of Home Rule.

F.H. O'Donnell claimed the authorship of a formula of intervention which did. Unfortunately his "History", not always an impartial or accurate chronicle, is the only source for its origin. Nevertheless, the sequence of the events which are described and which have additional authorities, tends to verify his account. Basically, O'Donnell affirmed the position that a policy of imperial intervention, pre-dating the disillusionment of 1874, was blueprinted by a triad of Irish journalists, of which he was one, employed by

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1. All four Home Rulers joined Biggar in opposing the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill, although Sullivan showed his disapproval of continual divisions by walking out of the House during the committee stage. Lucy, op.cit., p. 35; Hansard, Vol. 221, 25 July 1874, Cols. 713-746; 27 July 1874, Cols. 987-1027.

the Morning Post. Although the three were leader writers of the paper, a consistent enemy of Irish autonomy,[1] they were not associated with the policy of its proprietor Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk, or with the views expressed in its columns in praise of Disraeli, high Toryism and imperialism. The Morning Post was carelessly edited at the time, which allowed for considerable latitude in the bias of their articles.[2] The three Irishmen, Sheridan Knowles,[3] the leader writer on parliamentary affairs, J. Baker Greene,[4] the leader writer on general affairs, and F.H. O'Donnell, the leader writer on foreign affairs, at various times used the paper as a vehicle for views with which it was generally unsympathetic. According to O'Donnell, the Morning Post had been for many years, in about everything except the profits, an Irish nationalist possession.[5] Like most Irishmen they were concerned and troubled with the administration of Dublin Castle or with the government of Ireland, "good, bad, or indifferent, by anybody but the Irish nation". The Home Rule movement created by Butt in 1870 found them interested spectators, but their intimate experience of English indifference to the consideration of Irish affairs at

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1. Wilfred Hindle, The Morning Post 1772-1937, Portrait of a Newspaper, London, 1937, p. 232.

2. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, i, p. 69.

3. For biographical material see J.S. Crone, Concise Dictionary of Irish Biography, Dublin 1937; D.N.B., London 1909, Vol. XI, p. 302; Times 30 January 1832; Athenaeum, 4 February 1832, p. 156.

4. See O'Donnell, History, i, p. 175.

5. See H.R. Fox Bourne, English Newspapers: Chapters in the History of Journalism, London 1887, Vol. II, p. 345. T.H.S. Escott, Masters of English Journalism: A Study of Personal Forces, London 1911, p. 190.

Westminster, left them few illusions about the outcome of Butt's "essay at conciliation".[1] In O'Donnell's case that experience was recent for he had joined the staff of the Morning Post in 1871. He was also connected with the Spectator, the Examiner and the Tablet, probably as a free-lance journalist. However, if at first he was the pupil of Greene and Knowles, he became the leading philosopher of the school they represented.

O'Donnell recalled that after his arrival in London, he was frequently a guest at the houses of M. Charles Gavard of the French embassy, and of Dr. Max Schlesinger, the London correspondent of the Neue Freie Presse of Vienna. He was greatly disturbed by the ignorance of his French acquaintances "upon the very existence of Nationalist aspirations or a nationality in Ireland." It was at the evenings of Dr. Schlesigner that the condition of Ireland was sometimes discussed. O'Donnell heard Irish Members of Parliament described as "kaelber" - calves - and he listened intently to "corrosive commentaries on the helplessness of Irish representation". These criticisms prompted him to "meditate on the general contempt for passive endurance and the general respect for nations which helped themselves." O'Donnell brought his "resentment" and his "meditations" to his two colleagues and together they arrived at a solution, that paralleled in its obstructive aspects the policy of Ronayne and Biggar. Sheridan Knowles suggested that ministries impervious to argument might be more sensitive to inconvenience. They saw that in the arithmetic of parliamentary government, there lay the possibilities of effective

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 175 ff.

intervention. The English Constitution was confused and its Government was overburdened,

> "...stodged with business it cannot perform; with a party system which turns out every ministry just when it had had barely time to learn its ABC; with Bills on top of estimates, and motions on top of Bills; with foreign affairs, and colonial affairs, and Irish affairs, and Indian affairs, and even Scottish affairs, all wanting to drive abreast through Temple Bar...".

Parliament, which claimed responsibility for some four hundred million people, was unequal to the increasing number of demands made upon its time. It was in session for only six months of the year, worked barely six hours a day and seldom after midnight. Its machinery of rules and regulations which governed the passage of legislation was outmoded, debate was unlimited, and the calendar crammed full. Only the willingness of the Opposition to co-operate within such a system had so far postponed reform. "Surely", wrote O'Donnell, "that academy of Laputa could be put out of joint, if there was a man to try". It was settled that O'Donnell, youthful and self-confident, should attempt the task. Baker Greene subsequently presented himself as candidate for an Irish parliamentary seat, but "repelled and nauseated by the empty bluster of Dublin nationalism", left the fight to O'Donnell.[1]

The National Home Rule Conference of 1873 was considered a suitable occasion to launch a "pilot or pioneer balloon", and an ideal opportunity for "testing opinions and perhaps of testing brains and det rmination". It was arranged that O'Donnell attend the Conference on behalf of the Morning Post to report its proceedings and on 19 November, the second day of discussion, he presented the idea. "Home Rule", he argued, "would move forward

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 176-9.

when Irish Members of Parliament interfered in English affairs just as long as English Members interfered in Irish affairs." It has recently been written that O'Donnell "antagonised" many at the Conference "by his outspoken reverence for the imperialist tradition".[1] It was true that O'Donnell openly supported Butt's programme of a federal partnership in the empire. Yet as the official summary of his speech revealed, he said little about the desirability of maintaining an Irish imperial presence; he said much more about English reactions to the alternative of separatism should federalism be rejected:

> "The ordinary Englishman could not understand the proposition coming from Irishmen to give up their share in the government of this vast Empire. To the logical common sense mind of the average British citizen such a proposition and such an attitude would be simply incredible. The earnestness, solidity, and sense with which the movement had been conducted up to the present had given the English people fully to understand that Ireland would never be satisfied with a vestry in Dublin."[2]

Had O'Donnell caused resentment because of these statements which were equivocally imperialist, Butt could scarcely have escaped the opprobrium. However, the latter emerged from this Conference with his reputation enhanced and his federal proposals accepted in principle; the former, if he was noticed at all, emerged as the expositor of radical and unacceptable theories. If O'Donnell repelled the majority of Home Rulers it was by the advocacy of a system of parliamentary intervention in the affairs of England,

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1. Thornley, op.cit., p. 190.

2. Irish Home Rule League, Proceedings, op.cit., pp. 104-5.

the purpose of his mission. There is no reason to suspect that this was not fulfilled. It was therefore likely that his pleading was received as unfavourably as Biggar's case for written pledges[1] and for the same reasons. Butt had not considered the time ripe to "lay down by hard and fast lines any plan" to which they should expect Home Rulers to adhere:

> "If he were asked to pledge himself to vote on every occasion against every ministry which did not make Home Rule a cabinet question, he would not accept a seat in Parliament on condition of accepting such a pledge".

To be bound in this way, he had objected, would be to "destroy every particle of moral influence which any action of his would have in the House of Commons".[2] Similarly, on the third day of the Conference, Mitchell Henry cautioned O'Donnell that giving votes in matters affecting the interests of Englishmen and of which they had not the remotest idea, was an immoral system".[3]

It is not clear from the official version of his speech in the report of the Conference precisely what O'Donnell had recommended. He was represented as saying that "the withdrawal of a hundred members from continual interference in English affairs would be the greatest benefit to the English nation".[4] In short, that on the grounds of convenience, he had advanced federal Home Rule

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1. Thornley, op.cit., pp. 164-166.
2. Butt quoted in ibid, p. 167.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 180.
4. Proceeding, op.cit., p. 105.

for the consideration of Englishmen rather than a scheme of parliamentary intervention for the consideration of Home Rulers. O'Donnell pointed out in correction that there had never been "continual interference in English affairs" and that his use of such a phrase, "completely unprecedented in Irish speeches", was a recommendation of future policy, not a description of former practice.[1] At any rate, the vagueness of the official transcription of O'Donnell's speech would indicate that he failed not only to persuade, but also to convey to the Conference an accurate impression of the counsels of his Morning Post colleagues. In private conversation O'Donnell might have been more lucid and explicit. He claimed that a score of influential Irishmen to whom he outlined his "counsel of perfection" -- A.M. Sullivan, J.P. Ronayne and Sir John Gray in particular were named -- showed themselves agreeably impressed.[2]

But first, in order to drive the "English chancellor to distraction",[3] O'Donnell had to secure a parliamentary seat. This fitted well with his ambition. As a student at Queen's College, Galway, he had "dabbled" in the "noisy politics" of nationalism,[4] and had early set his sights on a parliamentary career. In January 1874 he stood for Galway county as an advocate of Home Rule and denominational education,[5] recommended by Isaac Butt[6] and armed

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 180.
2. Ibid., p. 182.
3. Ibid., p. 178.
4. Times, 24 May 1874.
5. Freeman's Journal, 30 January 1874.
6. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 96.

with a "congé d' élire" from the Archibishop of Westminster, Cardinal Manning. Before polling day, the walls of the constituency were posted with this highly commendatory letter. O'Donnell's reputation at the time possibly depended on his secure religious rather than his doubtful political views. He was considered a "pet" of Cardinal's Manning and Cullen,[1] an ultramontane in his relationship with the Catholic Church and an apostle of Catholic education in Ireland.[2] Nevertheless, Manning's testimonial made particular reference to O'Donnell's knowledge of foreign politics, and to his journalistic connections, as special qualifications for Parliament:

> "Your knowledge of Ireland and of foreign politics especially of the Prussian persecution as well as my knowledge of the important relations you have formed in London, all unite in making me desire to see you in the House of Commons".3

O'Donnell maintained that his friendship with Manning was lifelong[4] and there is evidence to suggest that he was an informant of the Archbishop's over a number of years. It was through O'Donnell that news of Bismarck's religious persecution in Germany and the first copy of the Falck laws reached Manning.[5] A fluent linguist, O'Donnell covered Bismarck's political and military manoeuvres

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1. Hamilton to Corry, 4 May 1874, Disraeli Mss, quoted in Thornley op.cit., p. 191. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 266. "I had been intimately acquainted for many years with Cardinal Cullen--always lunching or dining with His Eminence, on passing through Dublin, in the dingy mansion in Eccles Street."

2. Nation, 17 July, 1880.

3. Freeman's Journal, 31 January 1874.

4. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 494.

5. S. Leslie, Henry Edward Manning His Life and Labours, London 1921, p. 241.

after the Franco-Prussian war, and in 1873-4 penned a series of leading articles on the German situation.[1] On another quite famous occasion, Manning exerted influence through O'Donnell to turn the Irish vote against Charles Bradlaugh.[2] The Times was possibly near the mark when it awarded O'Donnell the title of being the indirect representative of the English Catholic hierachy.[3] O'Donnell was given two chances at securing Galway. On the official polling day he was unsuccessful, but stood again when one of the re-elected Members, Viscount St. Lawrence, was elevated to the House of Lords on the death of his father the Earl of Howth. With the combined backing of Church, Cardinals and Cousinhood,[4] he was returned on his second attempt with a comfortable majority.[5]

When Parliament assembled in April, the threatened Bengal famine was the first topic that invited discussion,[6] and provided the raw material for O'Donnell's maiden speech. For several months the press had conducted a long campaign to convince the public and the British Government of the seriousness of the problem. Echoing the rather alarmist views of its Indian correspondent, Dr. George

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1. Spectator, 14 March; 4, 11 April 1874. The Articles are unsigned, but the Catholic sympathies expressed in them point to O'Donnell. See O'Donnell, History, i, p. 177.

2. Leslie, op.cit., p. 318. See also Chapter Seven, section one, p. 154 ff.

3. Times, 27 April 1874.

4. O'Donnell claimed that on his mother's side, he was related to some 400 electors in Galway. This was disputed by the Times which believed his connection with the constituency to be slight, and by the Dublin Evening Mail which proclaimed his ancestry to be Scottish. See O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 95; Times, 25 May 1874; Freeman's Journal, 19 April 1873.

5. Times, 23 March 1874. O'Donnell received 579 votes; Joyce 358 votes.

6. For a detailed discussion of the measures taken by the Government of India to counteract the famine see E.C.Moulton, Lord Northbrook's Indian Administration 1872-1876, London 1963. Information will also be drawn from Official Correspondence on the famine, Parliamentary Papers, 1874, Vol. L.

Smith, the Times had from the earliest reports of impending scarcity taken a moralistic and crusading line. The Spectator also devoted considerable space to the subject, and appalled by the general apathy shown by English politicians during the elections, pressed for an immediate debate in Parliament. In its opinion the famine was about the most important topic with which political thought could then deal.[1] Despite the promise by the Government of India of unequalled initiative and unprecedented measures of alleviation,[2] neither journal was prepared to accept their sufficiency. On the question of whether to continue exporting grain and rice in a period of shortage, the Indian Government had declared against any derangement of trade and placed its faith in laissez-faire principles. The Viceroy had overruled Sir George Campbell,[3] the lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who had advised t at the "export of rice from India to foreign countries should be stopped" temporarily.[4] Northbrook argued that such a drastic remedy would inflict serious permanent harm on Bengal's overseas trade and weaken the power of the country to meet any future period of scarcity.[5] As a Liberal free-trader, he much preferred to meet

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1. Spectator, 14 February 1874.

2. Desp. No. A of 1873, Viceroy to Sec. of State, 7 November, in Parl. P., 1874, Vol. L, C 955, pp. 5-7.

3. Desp. No. 9 of 1873, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 30 October, in ibid., p. 3.

4. L-Governor of Bengal to Viceroy, 22 October 1873, referred to in ibid., C 933, para. 2, p. 3.

5. Viceroy's Minute on non-prohibition of the export of grain, January 1874, referred to in ibid., p. 54.

the deficiency by the less disruptive solution of obtaining requisite supplies of food by direct or indirect purchase.[1] The Spectator did not share the confidence which it imagined Northbrook had, that the famine could be met "by public works and a subscription".[2] Likewise, the Indian press demanded stronger action, and the British Indian Association registered a firm appeal to stop all exports of food.[3] Adding momentum to the agitation, the Times spearheaded a vigorous opposition to this aspect of the Viceroy's policy.[4]

Hitherto, Indian Governments had been inclined to regard famines as inevitable. Now, for the first time, they were confronted with a new humanitarian attitude which was appalled by the prospect of excessive loss of life and determined that a tragedy of the magnitude that had occurred in Orissa in 1866 should not happen again. Indeed, the force of opinion in England proved overwhelming. Certainly, Indian officials "were subjected to a severe strain" and "began to feel that they would be impeached if any failure were to occur".[5] While the Cabinet supported Northbrook, it was anxious that he should purchase rice at once, in India, Burma, and Siam. Its information suggested that ordinary trade could not be relied on to take any of this rice to Behar and Bengal.[6] On 1 December 1873 the Secretary of

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1. Desp. no. 9 of 1873, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 30 October, op.cit.
2. Spectator, 28 March 1874
3. See Parliamentary Papers, C 933, p. 54.
4. Times, 27 November 1873.
5. See R. Temple, India in 1880, London 1880, p. 331; Men and Events of my Time in India, London 1882, p. 397. See also F.H. Skrine, Life of Sir William Wilson Hunter, London 1901, pp. 225-6.
6. Telegram, Sec. of State to Viceroy, 27 November 1873, in op.cit. C 954, p. 5.

State, the Duke of Argyll, instructed Northbrook to calculate estimates of supply on the basis of the largest possible deficiency.[1] Although he was not persuaded to interfere with the export trade, the Viceroy was periodically prevailed upon to increase his purchases of grain. In all, 480,000 tons of rice were imported into Bengal, an amount which as it transpired greatly exceeded both estimated and actual requirements. By the beginning of April the Times was at least prepared to acknowledge that Northbrook's efforts were more than adequate to palliate the distress.[2]

Yet O'Donnell who had swallowed wholesale the alarmist interpretations of both the Times and the Spectator, caught what he believed to be the scent of a bureaucratic scandal. Like the Spectator he was convinced that the Indian Government had for "several perhaps vital months" met an "inevitable danger in an inadequate way".[3] In his estimation, Northbrook had miscalculated the extent of the "disaster", and had rejected many of Sir George Campbell's propositions, which were subsequently conceded as essential. The publication of a Blue-book containing the abstracts of a selection of correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State, provided O'Donnell with the opportunity to raise the issue. On 21 April he moved a motion, seconded by Captain Nolan, calling on the Government to insure that in the case of "Abstracts" and "Summaries", the name of the editor should be appended for the

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1. Desp. Revenue No. 20, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 1 December 1873, in op.cit. 933, p. 51.

2. Times, 2 April, 1874.

3. Spectator, 4 April, 1874.

information of Parliament. The gravamen of his charge was that the selected correspondence was not the impartial summary it ought to have been, but that it was "what he might call in brief a Northbrook Pamphlet". The differences between the Viceroy and his Lieutenant-Governor, he pointed out, had been minimised and distorted and there were indications of an "animus" in the publication. Northbrook, whose policy "had been wholly abandoned", was in the Abstract portrayed as the originator of all measures considered necessary for the relief of the famine.[1] "The official scissors had eviscerated" Campbell's alternative policy and all that remained of it was "half a page of halting summary".[2] In reply the Under-Secretary of State for India was less than convincing. Sir George Hamilton retorted that O'Donnell was under a complete misapprehension that the Abstract had not been signed and he appealed to the private virtue of officials. Sir Henry Anderson, a "most distinguished public servant", had undertaken the task of compilation and had signed his name near the close.[3] In fact, Anderson's signature seemed to cover only an isolated appendix of export figures and was a return from his own department.[4] The motion was duly negatived, though in O'Donnell's judgment "officialism suffered a heavy exposure".[5]

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1. Hansard, Vol. 218, 21 April 1874, Cols. 933-38.
2. O'Donnell, History, 1, pp. 104-5.
3. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 939.
4. See Parl. P., op.cit., p. 50.
5. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 105.

O'Donnell's injection of controversy into the question of the Bengal famine was calculated. In the first place, he hoped to attract Irish attention by demonstrating that nationalists could find links with India in their own experience. Schooled in the history and the mythology of the Irish famine of 1846-7, he was at once struck by certain superficial similarities with the situation in Bengal:

> "I had a vivid impression of the criminal folly of the British Government in 1846 and 1847 in permitting the export of the rich Irish harvests of corn, while millions of the people were starving through the failure of the potato crop, which was their habitual food. As they could not get potatoes, they should have got bread. Nobody need starve".[1]

The "Manchester Economists" had decided otherwise in Ireland, and on the surface it looked as if their theories had also predominated in India.[2] Torn between the consideration of saving life and securing economy and trade, they had seemingly chosen the latter.[3] In the second place, O'Donnell desired widespread publicity. As Fawcett was absent, he assumed the responsibility of manufacturing a parliamentary discussion on the subject, which had been suggested by the Spectator,[4] and of reassuring that journal that there was still one man of experience and courage in the new Parliament to check the proceedings of the Indian Government. The relationship between O'Donnell and the Spectator at this time was warm. If he was

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 105.
2. Ibid.
3. According to Dr. Moulton, Northbrook put the object of saving life first. Moulton, op.cit., p. 92.
4. Spectator, 7, 14 February 1874.

unlikely to agree with its editorial policy on Home Rule, O'Donnell found its views on foreign questions more palatable and occasionally wrote leading articles for it about European matters. As for the Spectator, it was most impressed with the Member for Galway. Analysing the election results in early February, it referred to the "odd accident" of O'Donnell having been selected "on his brains alone". It could think of no other candidate who had depended for his success on his intellectual qualifications.[1]

It is evident that not only did O'Donnell rely almost exclusively on the channels of information provided by the Times and the Spectator, but that he also followed their line of argument. While he inferred that he had early formed important connections with native India,[2] it is doubtful that as a virtually unknown Irish politician he was contacted by any nationalist body. On the other hand, he was for a time the London correspondent of the Bombay Gazette, but is not definite about when he was employed in this capacity.[3] The Times had strongly supported the "timely vigilance" of Sir George Campbell, and the articles of Dr. George Smith were invariably critical of Northbrook's "rose-coloured view" of the problem.[4] Smith held that the Government of India was underestimating the danger and that its early relief measures were insufficient.[5]

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1. Spectator, 7 February, 1874.
2. O'Donnell, History, i. p. 104.
3. Ibid., ii, p. 423.
4. Times, 24 November; 23, 29 December 1873; 3 January; 3, 10 February; 2 March 1874.
5. Friend of India, 21 November 1873.

> "I may tell you that one of the highest authorities on the subject now gravely declares to me that experience shows that all Government has hitherto done to be evil, so long as exports are not stopped, for alike in the markets and carrying food to the markets, Government has simply competed with private trade, and has, up to this week, almost paralysed it".[1]

The Spectator similarly acted as an apologist of Sir George Campbell, though it took the position that he was "wrong-headed" on the question of exports.[2] When the Blue-book of summarised correspondence was presented to Parliament, it declared that an Abstract "worse, or more carelessly edited [had] not recently come under its notice".[3] The Pall Mall Gazette was also disturbed by the dangerous and increasing practice of official editing.[4] It was therefore not surprising or perhaps unexpected that O'Donnell's maiden speech was rewarded with favourable publication in the papers whose views he had in many respects paralleled. The Times fully reported the debate.[5] The Spectator vindicated his criticisms of the Abstract, but thought his speech a "little injured by discursiveness".[6] The Pall Mall Gazette considered his motion "well-needed and well-timed":

> "We cordially adopt and endorse almost every word in Mr. O'Donnell's speech, much of which is substantially identical with our previous remarks."[7]

That O'Donnell's speech was also well-received in India, came more as an additional bonus than as the object of any premeditated plan.

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1. Times, 10 February 1874.
2. Spectator, 25 April 1874.
3. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 933.
4. Pall Mall Gazette, 22 April 1874.
5. Times, 22 April 1874.
6. Spectator, op.cit.
7. Pall Mall Gazette, op.cit.

When reports of the debate reached Calcutta, the Friend of India owned by Dr. George Smith, paid a warm tribute to O'Donnell:

> "India cannot be too grateful to Mr. O'Donnell the Member for Galway for the attention which he is devoting to it in Parliament and for the knowledge which he shows of Eastern subjects. As a journalist he has already distinguished himself by doing justice to Indian questions. His attempt --of course vain--to secure the publication of the famine discussions of the Council of the former Secretary of State, was courageous.[1] His speech on the officially edited Abstract Famine despatches, was as courteous as it was spirited and he carried his point."[2]

A short biographical note on O'Donnell was appended in the same issue. That a new Member of Parliament should take an interest in Indian administration other than to parrot the official line, was obviously regarded as deserving notice.

The publicity saw O'Donnell buoyant. He felt that his first parliamentary skirmish had revealed the capability of Irish intervention in non-Irish affairs. "I enjoyed the priority, and my whole policy profited by the apposite illustration".[3] Even Hamilton was impressed by the "clever young ultramontane".[4] The reactions of the Irish press to his speech, however, were varied. The Freeman's Journal was complimentary. It had long given sympathetic coverage to the Indian famine situation and had led the appeal for generosity on the inauguration of a public subscription.[5] The Irishman, owned

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1. Hansard, Vol. 218, 17 April 1874, Col. 711.
2. Friend of India, 22 May, 1874.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 105.
4. Hamilton to Corry, 4 May 1874, Disraeli Mss, quoted in Thornley, op.cit., p. 191.
5. Freeman's Journal, 26 February 1874.

by Richard Pigott and representing the views of orthodox Fenians and perhaps of nationalists like John Mitchel, was unimpressed and failed to see the value of O'Donnell's "flying to Hindustan to obtain material for an interrogation".[1] It was nowhere suggested that O'Donnell had conducted a demonstration for the benefit of the Home Rule party, to illustrate the effectiveness or the range of a policy of intervention. Probably not even O'Donnell himself had yet arrived at the "apposite" conclusions which he was later to rationalise into appropriate canons of intervention:

> First, that Irishmen were better qualified than Englishmen to postulate cures for imperial disorders.
> Second, that Home Rulers were the natural representatives in Parliament of the unenfranchised empire.
> Third, that because Home Rule or self-determination was a universal goal, nationalists in Ireland and nationalists in the empire should form an alliance to achieve this.

The first application of his policy, however, because it "became quite an event in India",[2] encouraged O'Donnell to extend the range of inquiry:

> "If Irish intervention could reach India, why not South Africa? Why not the Civil Service as well as the Indian Viceroyalty? Why not the Diplomatic Service Act as well as the Merchant Shipping Acts? It only wanted knowledge, courage, and skill."

The comment was perhaps typically retrospective for he was less concerned here with the welfare of starving Bengalis than with energising the Home Rule movement:

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1. See Times, 27 April 1874.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 105.

> "All that [his famine speech], besides, was an example of Irish intervention in the most important affairs of the Empire...I was vitally interested in the advocacy of this policy."[1]

Nevertheless, O'Donnell's speech was an important barometer of his imperial philosophy. The assumptions he expressed in criticism of British administration in India predicted a new perspective in Irish attitudes towards the empire. His criticisms were essentially drawn from Irish tradition. History, he believed was repeating itself. The British were perpetrating the same errors of judgment in their response to the Bengal famine, as they had committed thirty years earlier in Ireland. These suspicions were not confined to the Irish. The Duke of Argyll was hard pressed to reassure the Lords that the public works schemes introduced by Northbrook to the distressed areas in Behar were not to be confused with the public works schemes introduced to Ireland in 1847-48, which were singularly ineffective.[2] Like Hamilton he had to uphold the old maxim , "men not measures", to disarm the criticism of the Government of India's relief policy. Officials , in other words, should be given a vote of confidence in spite of their measures. O'Donnell firmly believed , and the more active members came to follow his lead, that Irish misgovernment was mirrored wherever the British raised their standard of civilisation on conquered races. Such thinking ran in channels contrary to that of the less advanced Home Rulers, and conflicted with the Buttite notion that British misrule in Ireland was a unique phenomenon requiring a unique solution.

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 105.

2. Hansard, op.cit., 24 April 1874, Cols. 1067-72.

The development of these ideas, at least under the direct guidance of O'Donnell, suffered an abrupt setback in May. An election petition was filed against O'Donnell by his aggrieved opponent Joyce,[1] and he was unseated for "personally organising intimidation". The election was voided on three counts. First, that the Trades Guilds had demonstrated for O'Donnell on the morning of the election; second, that the Catholic clergy had interfered with the voters; and third, that placards calling on electors to vote for "Joyce and Keogh" were distributed on O'Donnell's authority—the implication being that Joyce was the apologist of Judge Keogh's infamous judgment of 1872 in which Captain Nolan had been unseated. It was alleged that the Bishop of Galway, Dr. McEvilly, found guilty by Keogh of "corrupt practices" in that election and still laid under political disabilities, had exercised undue influence in O'Donnell's.[2] This was relied upon as tainting the return,[3] although it was acknowledged by the presiding judge that the Bishop was not guilty of any chargeable misdemeanor. O'Donnell claimed that the charges against him of resorting to "threats and mob violence" were "mere lies". Both the resident magistrate and the county inspector of constabulary gave evidence of the orderly conduct of the election, and "not a single witness even complained of having been threatened or impeded."[4]

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1. Joyce suspiciously fled from the new contest.
2. Hansard, Vol. 220, 19 June 1874, Col. 162.
3. Freeman's Journal, 6 November 1916. See also Times, 23, 24 May 1874.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 96.

Yet O'Donnell's appeal was turned down by Mr. Justice Lawson, whom A.M. Sullivan accused of being a political appointee of the Crown and notoriously favoured by emoluments and honours.[1]

The expenses of the election petition on top of the contested election crippled O'Donnell financially and he was declared a bankrupt in July 1875.[2] Never a wealthy man he was thus unable to contemplate returning to Parliament until he had recouped his losses.[3] While the bankruptcy was annulled some months later exile was of a much longer duration.

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1. See Hansard, Vol. 218, 7 May 1874, Cols. 1884-1902. The Galway decision to unseat O'Donnell gave impetus to an agitation to review the Parliamentary Election Act of 1868 and other Acts bearing on corrupt elections. Under mounting pressure, especially from the Irish, the Government appointed a Select Committee on 9 March 1875 to study the problem and to put forward recommendations for improvement. It advised that Electoral Tribunals in future should consist of two judges, and that no candidate could be unseated unless the verdict against him was unanimous. The Report of the Select Committee can be found in Parl. P., 1875, Vol. VIII,C 225.

2. Freeman's Journal, 20 July 1875.

3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 124.

II. Recruitment

O'Donnell looked back philosophically on what must have been a shattering experience. The deposition, he wrote, advanced his career by throwing him "into extra-parliamentary work and preparation". So as to help his policy on a future day, he turned his attention to the organisation of nationalist forces outside of Ireland, joining the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, and working his way back into national prominence through its offices. Not only was he thus able to gain an important basic knowledge of local politics in England, but he was given time to cultivate new friendships and to form new alliances.[1]

Of these the most formative was with his younger brother Charles James O'Donnell, who had taken a post in the Indian Civil Service on 14 October 1872. It was because of this family connection that F.H. O'Donnell was initially disposed to direct his attention to India and to questions concerning its administration. In time, the Home Ruler in Parliament and the official in India were to establish a formidable partnership, which compared more than favourably with that between Sir David Wedderburn (Haddington Burghs) and his brother William Wedderburn of the Bombay Civil Service. Sir David Wedderburn, born in Bombay, was an inveterate traveller with first hand knowledge of India, which he visited in 1864-5 and 1877-8.[2]

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 97.

2. See E.H. Percival, Life of Sir David Wedderburn, London 1884.

Convinced that England's duty towards India was to fit her people for self-government, he was a leading advocate in the press and in Parliament that India should be developed without delay on the principle of popular representation,[1] and governed in the spirit of English liberty and civilisation.[2] Like Wedderburn, with whom he was often to collaborate, O'Donnell also became vitally interested in the problem of Indian representation;[3] unlike him, he never visited India, although in 1883 rumours of an invitation from Indian nationalists to do so caused a minor panic in Government circles.[4] Clearly, therefore, O'Donnell came to rely heavily on his brother for inside information. The Government of India was obviously embarrassed by their joint inquiry, notably into the impoverishment of the Behar peasantry[5] and the appalling conditions prevailing in native gaols.[6] As a result, C.J. O'Donnell rapidly gained the reputation, at least among his fellow civilians in India, of being a dangerous and irreconciliable Irishman, "L'enfant terrible of the I.C.S."[7]

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1. See Address by Sir David Wedderburn to the Bombay branch of the East India Association on 15 March 1877, reported in Bombay Gazette, 17, 19 March 1877; Pengalee, 14 April 1877; Hindoo Patriot, 19 March 1877. See also "Popular Representation in India", a paper read before the E.I.A. in March 1880 in Journal of the East India Association 1880.

2. See "Modern Imperialism in India", a paper read before the E.I.A. in June 1879 in Ibid.

3. See Chapter Ten especially.

4. Kimberley to Ripon, 11 October 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 524.

5. See Chapters Seven and Eight.

6. See Chapter Nine.

7. Pioneer, 1 March 1882.

Strangely enough, it was with respect to the Bengal famine that the O'Donnells first joined forces, though in 1876 fully two years after F.H. O'Donnell's initial interest in the subject. In 1874 O'Donnell was a convinced "faminist", vocal in the agitation for radical measures. In 1876 he was associated with the publication of a pamphlet which denied that a serious scarcity of food had ever existed and which accused the Indian Government of gross wastage. This was the notorious and anonymous "Black Pamphlet" dedicated to Henry Fawcett and published jointly in Calcutta and London.[1] Not that O'Donnell's sharp about turn necessarily signified his defection to the opposite camp of famine "sceptics". Rather, it was an attempt to put pressure on the Government to lay down a definite system of relief procedure. He now subscribed to a widely held view that the initial indecision of Lord Northbrook had led to the lavish expenditure of six and half million pounds,[2] when a much smaller sum would have been sufficient had prompt action been taken. Sir Richard Temple himself admitted that expenditure had been heavy and relief liberally afforded.[3] Indeed, when the emergency ended the Government was left with 100,000 tons of unsaleable rice.[4] There had been little loss of life and it was estimated that no one had died from starvation.[4] Officially, it was reported in 1880 that the Government's extravagence in meeting a famine of "unusual brevity" and of "no exceptional severity" had "exceeded the necessities of the case."[5]

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, The Black Pamphlet of Calcutta, The Famine of 1874, London 1876.

2. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, Part I, in Parl. P., 1880, Vol. LII, C 2591, p. 32.

3. Temple, India in 1880, p. 333.

4. Famine Report, op.cit., p. 16.

5. See Temple, Men and Events, p. 405.

The Black Pamphlet accused the Bengal Government of incompetence. The famine was actually described as a "mock affair", the result of a "faminist panic" which had convulsed the Government and only been allayed by converting enormous regions into the scene of a "vast picnic".[1] The Bengal Secretariat Report released in 1876, and on which the pamphlet was allegedly based, "inevitably" led the authors to one conclusion: "the relief measures were errors of the most egregious description".[2] £4,271,750 alone had been wasted on supplies of rice.[3] The pamphlet therefore concluded with a strongly worded appeal to all classes of society in India and England to demand a Royal Commission on famines. England had to consider the point whether she could claim to be fulfilling her duty to India by "leaving its finances a prey even to ignorance":

> "It is true that the apathy of the English people and of the English Peers and Commons in matters of purely Indian interest is a subject of constant complaint, yet we hope, in this instance they will not refuse to interfere and to break the long chain of disasters which, disguised under the name of visitations of Providence, have been really the results of bad government or ignorance, when they were not the outcome of a vain and ill-regulated ambition...".[4]

In retrospect, Sir Ashley Eden, himself the object of criticism by C.J. O'Donnell in 1880, saw The Black Pamphlet as the product of "vindictiveness" and "perversity". He believed that this "grossly libellous work" was an act of retaliation against his predecessor for

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, The Black Pamphlet, pp. v, vi.
2. Ibid., p. 78.
3. Ibid., p. 36.
4. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

constantly finding fault with the Irishman.[1] Certainly, major blame was directed at Temple,[2] but it was generally understood that he had worked on the assumption that "money was literally of no account."[3] Except for the Friend of India and the Indian Economist unable in good conscience to do other than compliment the Government, the Anglo-Indian press similarly accused Temple of extravagance and of over-reacting to a mere scarcity.[4] In short, The Black Pamphlet was really the culmination of a wave of critical inquiry into the unprecedented expenditure, that had begun as soon as the threat of famine receded.[5]

The first significant ally and friend whom O'Donnell counted in the Home Rule party itself was one of its best known members, Alexander Martin Sullivan, the author of t e historical best-seller "New Ireland". While Sullivan was also new to Parliament in 1874 he was a man with a "national record", having as a Young Irelander been linked with the "Bantry band" and in 1863 sentenced to six months for seditious libel on the Government for an article on the "Manchester Martyrs". More important, he commanded a position of undoubted influence and some power in Irish constitutional politics,

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1. Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 592. It would appear that C.J. O'Donnell was particularly well placed to pass judgment. In February 1875 he had been appointed Assistant to the Director-General of Statistics, a position he held until May 1876 when the Secretariat Report was completed.
2. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 7-9, 36.
3. Skrine, op.cit., p. 229.
4. Moulton, op.cit., pp. 115-6
5. The Government did revise its policy, but perhaps not in a way that the friends of India would approve. During the much more serious crisis of 1877-78 in which several million Indians perished, it affirmed the principle that it would spare no effort "to save the population of the distressed districts from starvation". But it held that the "task of saving life, irrespective of cost, was one which was beyond their power to undertake." The rule of action suggested by history was "to provide efficient assistance" without "incurring disastrous expenditure". Famine Report, op.cit. p. 17.

having assisted Butt to launch the Home Government Association in 1870 and as editor and proprietor of the Nation, a weekly journal later pledged to a policy of uncompromising nationalism and of advanced parliamentary action.[1] O'Donnell claimed that he was "intimate" with Sullivan from the first hour of his "participation in any kind of political work whatever". Sullivan was another who had urged O'Donnell to attend the Home Rule Conference of 1873, and stood by him "all through the crisis" of the "foul" Galway judgment.[2] "A debater who under inspiring conditions rose to be an orator",[3] he was able to supplement and strengthen the protest of genuine if narrow and ineffectual patriotism. Certainly Sullivan saw the value of spreading knowledge to India[4] and believed the problem of Home Rule could find "contributions towards its solution on the banks of the Ganges" as well as of the Liffey.[5] He thought it a matter of regret that Irish politicians paid too little heed to the condition of India, which though geographically distant was in "all other respects most intimate and near". As at Dublin there was a "Castle" at Calcutta[6] where national insurrection wanted but the "opportunity to burst into victorious flame."[7] "In everything which was done in

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1. For biographical material on Sullivan see C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 20 2N; D.N.B., Vol. XIX, Oxford 1959-65, pp157-9; Times, 18 October 1884.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 130.
3. McCarthy, Reminiscences, pp. 387-91.
4. Nation, 30 January 1875.
5. Ibid., 2 January 1875.
6. Ibid., 10 April 1875.
7. Ibid., 2 January 1875.

Parliament by Mr. A.M. Sullivan," O'Donnell wrote, "we see the same purpose to combine an immediate object with a general scope and effect ... He shared entirely my conviction that Irish patriotism should combine itself with as many good causes and righteous demands as possible, in order to oppose a mighty confederation of the wronged against the leagued iniquities which oppressed us all."[1]

With this purpose perhaps, Sullivan gave the Government several agitated moments with respect to the contentious deposition of the Gaekwar of Baroda, Malhar Rao, in April 1875.[2] In the sense that it could be held to contravene Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 guaranteeing the territorial possessions of the Indian princes, British interference in the affairs of an Indian State whatever the cause was always liable to arouse protests. In this case the manner of Malhar Rao's removal was open to grave objections. Having temporarily suspended the Gaekwar pending an investigation into his responsibility for an attempt to poison the British Resident Colonel Phayre, the Viceroy and Council decided not to restore him on the doubtful basis of a divided report. While the three English members of the Commission of Inquiry set up to verify the charge considered his guilt established, the three Indian members returned a verdict of not proven. As a result, not only was there a public outcry in Britain against the action of

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 130.

2. A detailed account of the Baroda affair can be found in Moulton, op.cit., Ch. V. The Annual Register, 1875, pp. 87-92 also provides useful background information.

the Government of India, described by the Times as "probably the greatest and most mischievous blunder" that had "discredited [their] Indian policy since the Mutiny", but the Indian press was unanimously hostile.[1] The Secretary of State Lord Salisbury made matters worse by subsequently instructing the Viceroy that in no circumstances was he to depose Malhar Rao for criminal behaviour but only on the grounds of maladministration.[2] This laid Northbrook open to fresh accusations of inconsistency[3] and breach of faith.[4] It was in these circumstances that Sullivan gave notice of a motion to call the Indian Government to account for the Baroda proceedings and asked for official papers to be released.[5]

Salisbury had heard that Sullivan was working in concert with Sir William Harcourt who was also believed to be preparing "a ferocious speech upon the subject".[6] That a parliamentary attack never materialised was not because as Hamilton boasted "the Irishman" failed to come "up to the scratch".[7] Rather, when the Blue-books were produced in early June British opinion was largely satisfied that "substantial justice" had been done even if "technical sequences were not duly observed".[8] Baroda was not to be annexed, nor was its

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1. Times, 3 April 1875.
2. See Telegram Salisbury to Northbrook, 15 April 1875, quoted in Moulton, op.cit., pp. 162-3.
3. Hindoo Patriot, 26 April 1875.
4. Annual Register, 1875, p. 92.
5. Hansard, Vol. 223, 12 April 1875, Cols. 717-8.
6. Salisbury to Northbrook, 14 May 1875, Salisbury Papers, C/2.
7. Lord George Hamilton, Parliamentary Reminiscences and Reflections 1868-1885, London 1916, p. 85.
8. Annual Register, op.cit. p. 92.

administration to be moulded along rigid British lines. Instead a Maratha statesman Sir Madhava Rao was given discretion to reform it as he saw fit.

Behind the seenes O'Donnell continued to urge Home Rulers to persevere. Despite the "almost unlimited record of atrocities" in Baroda to justify the Government's "illogical action",[1] politically conscious Indians bitterly resented Northbrook's meddling and "continued to regard the deposition as a high-handed act."[2] A "fortuitous introduction" in Paris to Dadabhai Naoroji had brought O'Donnell "into connexion with a whole group of active and intelligent Parsis and Mahrattas" who were very disturbed by the whole affair .[3] As Diwan of Baroda from 1873-74 appointed specifically to put its administration in order, Naoroji was able to supply first hand knowledge about how his efforts had been impeded by the unhelpful attitude of Colonel Phayre and his superiors in Bombay.[4] O'Donnell had also met Ganendra Mohun Tagore[5], a wealthy Bengali barrister living in

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1. Hamilton, op.cit., p. 85.
2. Moulton, op.cit., p. 172.
3. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 423.
4. See R.P. Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji The Grand Old Man of India, London 1939, Chs. XIII, XIV.
5. Ganendra Mohan [Jnanendramohan] Tagore was the son of Prasannacoomar Tagore, one of the major figures in the social and cultural life of Bengal in the 1830s and 1840s. Like most of the leading members of the Tagore family, Prasannacoomar was a pillar of the Brahmo Samaj, He was also a founder member of the Gaudiya Samaj, which assumed the task of improving the vernacular literature and of combating the proselytising activities of Christian missionaries. First as a businessman and then as a lawyer he became one of the richest men in Bengal. Ganendra Mohun Tagore, by being converted to Christianity in July 1851 and marrying the daughter of the Rev. Krishnamohun Banerjea, a leading Derozian, was disinherited by his father--an event leading to the famous will case involving the whole complex issue of inheritance for disinherited converts. This information was kindly given to me by Mr. Premen Addy of London.

   The case, which went from the Calcutta High Court to the Privy Council, was finally decided in favour of Jotindra Mohan Tagore in July 1872. Jotindra Mohan was allowed to enjoy the properties during his lifetime, but after his death these were to settle on the children of Ganendra Mohan. A full account of the case ("Tagore vs Tagore") can be found in the Bengal Law Reports 1869.

London[1], at whose house in 1865 the London Indian Society had been founded.[2] At a later date Tagore was to figure prominently as his accomplice in the work of nationalist union.[3]

Sullivan was persuaded to press on. In almost every feature of the "perfidious dethronement"[4] he recognised "a simple repetition of what had taken place in Ireland".[5] As in a Dublin "State trial" there had appeared an "unscrupulous gang of self-contradicting rascals".[6] In early June he therefore renewed his motion though fully aware that the House, because of the state of its orderbook, would refuse to give him facilities to debate it.[7] Salisbury remarked to Northbrook that it was only natural that when the matter had long ceased to attract any attention, "the man who [had] preached disloyalty to the English Crown should be dissatisfied".[8] While Disraeli predictably prevaricated about surrendering any Government time, Sullivan warned that "neither India nor the friends of India had said the last word on the 'atrocious usurpation' in Baroda."[9]

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1. According to O'Donnell Tagore secured a "splendid income of £40,000 or £50,000 a year". O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 426.
2. Sadhona Bonnerjee, Life of W.C. Bonnerjee First President of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta 1944, p. 17.
3. See Chapter Ten, section two.
4. Nation, 15 May 1875.
5. Ibid., 10 April 1875.
6. Ibid., 20 March 1875.
7. Times, 22, 25 June 1875.
8. Salisbury to Northbrook, 18 June 1875, Salisbury Papers, C/2.
9. Nation, 19 June 1875.

Outside Parliament, he, O'Donnell, O'Connor Power, Ronayne and Tagore had taken the first tentative steps to establish an Indian Home Rule Association. The "Constitutional Society of India" which they jointly promoted gave as its raison d'être the "carrying out of practical measures of Indian reform", the uniting of "upright politicians of all parties", and the development of "habits of co-operation, self-reliance and self-control" among nationalists. It also sought to acquaint Members of Parliament about matters pertaining to India and to encourage their collaboration in the work of "advocating the public interests and welfare" of the Indian people generally. In its comprehensiveness and ambition the Society outstripped in theory the only other body to have some claim to be national, the East India Association. Its membership was to consist not only of Indian statesmen, but scholars, representatives of the propertied, mercantile and professional classes, and Indian princes in "feudatory alliance with the British Crown". Clearly Sullivan, O'Donnell and their fellow sponsors in proposing to bring together the "natural leaders" of the masses and not merely the educated elite, intended to forge the widest bonds of nationality and to set up a society which could genuinely speak for India as a whole. In order to assimilate India for political purposes the headquarters of the movement was to be centred in London to where information and funds would flow from a network of local branches in the chief Indian towns.[1] Whatever the reason, however, whether because of its origin or its Irish inspiration, no sustained efforts appear to have been made to carry out the scheme. Baroda was not the issue on which to test Indian nationalist resolve, nor the time to attempt to make inroads into parochial organisation. Indian

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 14 June 1875; Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 17 June 1875 quoted in B.B. Majumdar, Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature 1818-1917, Calcutta 1965, p. 102.

politicians were hardly willing to settle their differences let alone consent to be orchestrated by some distant executive in Britain probably to be run by students. The Hindoo Patriot was not alone in considering its youthful countrymen ill-fitted for the task of elucidating Indian questions to the British public: "either they exaggerate[d] too much or they understate[d] too much". Rather than that they should talk "fiction, rhodomontade or sickly sentimentality", it suggested that they should confine their ambitions to their "legitimate pursuits".[1]

Home Rule support had not amounted to much either. If O'Donnell was certain that the Irish would back a "fighting policy" at least as soon as they saw it work, his solicitations on behalf of a "vigorous participation in the protection of Indian native interests" had only gained him the nickname of "Baroda". In 1375, the bulk of the party was simply not interested in taking independent action of any kind. Moderates "refused to face the criticism of English opinion" on matters which they held would be counterbalanced by no rising of Irish opinion in their favour.[2] O'Connor Power and Biggar protested alone against the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, the former by walking out of the House when the vote was taken,[3] the latter by speaking at a large demonstration in Hyde Park.[4] On a subject which according to

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 9 November 1874.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 190.
3. Hansard, Vol. 225, 15 July 1875, Cols.1514-15.
4. Freeman's Journal, 16, 19 July 1875.

the Flag of Ireland Home Rulers should have spoken in earnest and against the "excursion" to a man, the majority stayed at home.[1] At the annual meeting of the Home Rule League in Dublin on 5 January 1876 Sullivan recommended that the empire should look to the leaders of the Irish people assembled there "to save it from the awful perils which might menace it", but seems to have drawn no response.[2] Not even Butt when he saw the need for energetic argument at Westminster could hope to bestir the party on English and imperial legislation. On a proposal that repelled him--to confer on Queen Victoria the title Empress of India--he was unable to dispel the "great deal of indecision" in the party or convert it to the principle of open opposition.[3] As a compromise he decided to abstain on the third reading of the Bill.[4] Eighteen[5] Home Rulers complied with his wishes, but twenty-three[6] remained to vote with the Liberals and three[7] with the Government.[8]

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1. Flag of Ireland, 24 July 1875. This was another of Pigott's newspapers,

2. Times, 7 Feburary 1876.

3. Nolan to Butt, 15 March (1876?), Butt Papers, Ms 8702. (As Butt told the House of Commons: "sometimes he was permitted to speak for others on questions which those who acted with him thought unimportant; but this was not one of these questions." Hansard, Vol. 229, 11 May 1876, Col. 417).

4. See Thornley, op.cit., p. 279.

5. Biggar, Brady, Brooks, Callan, Collins, Ennis, Fay, Kirk, Lewis, McKenna, O'Clery, O'Shaughnessy, O'Sullivan, Parnell, O'Connor Power, R. Power, Sullivan, Ward.

6. Blennerhassett, Conyngham, Dease, Downing, Dunbar, Errington, Martin, Meldon, Montagu, Moore, Murphy, P. O'Brien, O'Byrne, O'Callaghan, O'Conor Don, D.M. O'Conor, O'Keefe, O'Loghlen, O'Reilly, Nolan, W.A. Redmond, Stacpoole, Sherlock.

7. Bowyer, Morris, O'Gorman.

8. Hansard, Vol. 229, 11 May 1876, Cols. 370-474.

Perhaps as Mitchel Henry suggested, India supplied too many openings for Irishmen for even them to be indifferent to it.[1]

By 1876, however, a much broader section of the Home Rule movement was persuaded that Butt's methods were futile. After three barren sessions in a row the patience of moderates and activists alike had evaporated. Gradualism and conciliation had brought no positive return and worse had been accompanied by persistent absenteeism, a minimal devotion to duty, and a cycle of spiritless debate and monotonous defeat. Of the dozen or more Irish Bills introduced by Home Rulers that year, all were slaughtered except one empowering Irish municipalities to bestow the freedom of their towns upon distinguished citizens. Nationalists began seriously to consider new approaches. On 31 June P.J. Smyth, as he had threatened on several occasions previously, reaffirmed his faith in the old formula of "Repeal" and complete separation.[2] The Irishman recommended the extreme step of immediate and total withdrawal from Westminster.[3] Even the Times thought Home Rulers must do more than they had so far managed, unless they were prepared to tolerate the ridicule to which their name was beginning to render them liable.[4] According to R.B. O'Brien they were then "looked upon as a collection of foolish but harmless 'gentlemen from Ireland'".[5] In a series of articles the Nation, which

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1. Henry to Butt, n.d. (1876?), Butt Papers, Ms 8704.
2. Hansard, Vol. 230, 30 June 1876, Cols. 751-67; Times, 1 July 1876.
3. See Times, 11 July 1876.
4. Ibid.
5. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, 1, p. 41.

under A.M. Sullivan's editorship had been somewhat circumspect, advocated a policy of "systematic obstruction" as the one way to overcome the indifference of the House of Commons. T.D. Sullivan, who assumed full control of the paper in November when his brother moved to London having qualified for the English bar,[1] reminded Irishmen that English legislation was very much at their mercy; they could "block it, stop it, and turn it into a mass of inextricable confusion" if they chose. As England was "involved in a maze of delicate diplomatic negotiations with foreign powers", Home Rulers by rendering "the discontent of their country formidable to the Minister" could demonstrate that they had no community of interest with England. In such a way might Irish grievances be more effectively ventilated.[2]

A "sudden and unprecedented revolution" in the presentation of Irish discontent was planned in the recess,[3] by Joseph Biggar, Charles Stewart Parnell and O'Donnell. At 8 Serjeant's Inn, O'Donnell's London residence, this triumvirate "framed and finished" an active policy of interference and intervention in the affairs of Great Britain and the dominions overseas. Its "sum and total" was embodied in a "Code of Maxims" which was drafted by O'Donnell to serve as a guide for the "perfect" Home Ruler. The most salient of these were:

i. "Voluntarily to submit no serious Irish affairs to the legislation of a foreign assembly with no right to legislate for Ireland;

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1. Freeman's Journal, 16 November 1876.

2. Nation quoted in Ibid., 8, 15 July 1876; Times, 10 July 1876.

3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 173.

ii. to remember, as an Irish deputy, that your only enemy is the English Government, but not the English nation; especially if the English nation can be made, consciously or unconsciously, your ally against the English Government;

iii. to remember that you are an Imperial member of Parliament in spite of the protest of your Irish nation, and that, therefore, your membership of the Imperial Parliament is to be used exclusively for the vindication of Irish nationality or for the defence of all nations which are oppressed by the English Government;

iv. to remember that the Government time in the House of Commons is essential to the exercise of the functions of the Government; therefore you are to work always, if possible, in Government time, and to help all members of Parliament who propose to occupy Government time;

v. to remember that the Empire consists of 400,000,000 people, all but 500,000 of whom have no conscious interest in the maintenance of any portion of its system or administration;

vi. to remember that nationality is sacred in Asia and Africa as in Ireland;

vii. to remember to punish wrong, to expose injustice, to aid right, to remove pain, poverty, and suffering, not only because you ought, but because you do honour, and may do service, to Ireland;

viii. to remember that there are international questions as well as parliamentary or popular ones, and that it was not only Grattan and the Volunteers, but Washington and the Americans who created an English difficulty, which was Ireland's opportunity."[1]

The message that was to underlie their application was clear. England had "no rights whatever over Ireland", but Ireland, "pending justice", had "entire rights whatever over England and throughout the Empire". In the empire itself other nations had "rights as sacred as the English or the Irish".[2] O'Donnell wrote that it was to be the business of Irish representatives "to develop the national idea" and "to increase the national power".[3] Every part of this policy had two

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 136-8.

2. Ibid., p. 196.

3. Ibid.,pp. 155-6.

issues, the one Home Rulers suggested, and the one which ensued from the Government "going its own wilful way". If the English would not listen to reason they might respond to rumpus; if they would not restore the Irish Parliament, they should not have full control of theirs; if they jibbed at the "lesser arrangement" of federal union they would be confronted, as Smyth had shown, with "the demand for the greater purpose"; if they spurned Irish reforms in the treatment of other nationalities, essentially loyal political associations would be "transformed" into aggressive nationalist bodies.[1] Personally, O'Donnell was keen to retain and extend Ireland's part in the "common Empire" but his federalism was not dogmatic. Should the "opponents" of Home Rule refuse to budge, then they "might lump it"; O'Donnell was quite prepared to go along with the extremists if he had to. The Irish colours had been nailed to the mast and he was not going to lower them for an English flag.[2]

O'Donnell did not pretend that either Biggar or Parnell "thoroughly entered into, or deeply sympathised" with all the principles outlined. In fact he felt that Parnell probably did not and doubted whether he had much use for "large views" on "the future of India and the elevation of the British masses".[3] Parnell who had entered Parliament for Meath in April 1875 was hardly noted for his intelligence or knowledge. In the words of his biographer he "was ignorant of public affairs", "read no books", and up to the end of 1876 "continued undistinguished and almost unnoticed".[4] Biggar, on the other hand, while he had seized

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 201.

2. Ibid., p. 156.

3. Ibid., p. 189.

4. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 85, 93. See also Haslip, op.cit., p. 55. "Parnell was grateful for O'Donnell's friendship, and, in the days when he was still learning the methods of obstruction, the journalist's smooth, subtle mind devised tactics which the rugged, blundering Biggar would never have thought of".

every opportunity for "outraging English opinion", by laboriously wading through Blue-books or by clearing the public gallery of distinguished even royal visitors, was less effective than offensive.[1] Yet O'Donnell believed that in them he had found the "absolutely indispensable" allies to launch the "venture" and to give the "example".[2] If he was inclined to overstate his professorial role in coaching them, unquestionably both responded to his campaign of political education. Parnell, whom O'Donnell had first met in 1874 and "likedat once",[3] was intensely proud of his race and had an enduring dislike of Englishmen. For a man who thought that the "only way to treat an Englishman" was to "stand up to him",[4] O'Donnell's policy had obvious attractions. R.B. O'Brien makes the significant statement that Parnell at this time was not "ashamed to ask for information" and showed himself to be "an apt pupil".[5] Equally Biggar detested the government of Ireland by England and was completely fearless. As a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood he had come "to the British Parliament practically to see how much mischief he could do to the British Empire".[6]

At the annual convention of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain on 21-22 August held imposingly for the first time in Dublin, Biggar, Parnell and O'Donnell secured the necessary base in the nationalist movement from which to proceed with their plan.[7] Not only was

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1. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 89-90.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p.192.
3. Ibid., p. 107.
4. Parnell quoted in Lyons, Ireland, p. 148.
5. R.B. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 85.
6. Ibid., p. 81.
7. Freeman's Journal, 19, 23 August 1876; Times, 22, 23 August 1876.

the Confederation won over to an active policy, but all three were elected Vice-Presidents. This gave them the balance of power within the Executive Council. Moreover, O'Donnell succeeded John Barry as Honorary Secretary, the "key position",[1] which enabled him "to exercise a very extensive influence". As "chief organising authority" throughout England and Scotland he was in a position to command attention for his views which now carried the stamp of an important office.[2] Certainly he could issue directives in the name of the Confederation which remained valid unless overruled by the Executive Council.[3]

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1. Thornley, op.cit., p. 294.

2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 126.

3. Ibid., p. 162. See for example, Nation, 7 October 1876; Times, 27 February, 26 April 1877.

III The First Instalment

T.P. O'Connor's view, that Parnell and Biggar "drifted into" the policy of "obstruction" rather than pursued it "in accordance with a definite plan originally thought out", was incorrect.[1] The campaign which they opened in Parliament, after the Home Rule party had showed little disposition to mend its ways at the pre-sessional conference in early February,[2] bore the stamp of coherency and premeditation. Straight away they openly declared war on the House of Commons by giving notice of opposition to every important English and Scottish Bill on the table. At a stroke "a large part of British legislation" was "effectively blocked" for the remainder of the session, because of the rule that only unopposed business could be taken after 12.30 a.m.[3] Nor was the challenge once thrown down a hollow one . From 14 February Parnell and Biggar proceeded to work havoc with the Government's schedule "constantly obstructing, constantly seeking to turn everything upside down with tantalising politeness and provoking tenacity".[4] The strategy they applied was simple but effective. Dubbed as "Biggar's Four Gospels" it ran as follows:

> "i. To work in Government time.
>
> ii. To aid anybody to spend Government time.
>
> iii. Whenever you see a Bill, block it.
>
> iv. Whenever you see a Raw, rub it".[5]

Historians have tended to take their cue from this summary of parliamentary science and to conclude that the primary function of

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1. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 261.
2. Nation, 3 February 1877.
3. Thornley, op.cit., p. 305.
4. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 108.
5. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 188.

intervention or "obstruction" was tactical. Dr. Cumpston, for example, portrays Home Rulers "wedding" a cause such as India's to Irish grievances in a "mariage de convenance" for parliamentary purposes. "The condition of India under British rule" she writes, was a "Raw" they "delighted to rub".[1] Tactical considerations were undeniably important. Obviously those who favoured belligerency appreciated the need to win popular acclaim and were conscious of playing to an extremist gallery at home and abroad. Again, it could be held that they were protecting their flank from raking fire in selecting English and imperial questions for their assault. Moderate elements, if they proposed disciplinary action, were thus compelled to strike at their cherished principle of independence on all but Home Rule itself.[2] As has been shown, however, Parnell's and Biggar's brief "compendium of tactics", or as Edmund Dwyer Gray called it "The Soldier's Pocket-book", formed only part of a much more complex and sophisticated policy.[3] It was no coincidence that the issues selected by activists for special treatment were those on which on moral grounds the most strenuous opposition could be justified. That "the obstruction for obstruction's sake did not arouse the ill-feeling in Parliament that the well-founded opposition to old abuses provoked" was not as "strange" as Terence de Vere White imagined.[4] The English were less likely to appreciate the shattering of their repose for legitimate cause by Irishmen who were expected to be seen but not heard. As T.P. O'Connor observed intervention was always known to its "enemies" as "obstruction", to its "friends" as the "active policy".[5]

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1. Cumpston, op.cit., pp. 281-2, 286, 297.
2. See Letter of O'Connor Power to Freeman's Journal, 16 April 1877.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 188.
4. T. de Vere White, op.cit., p. 324.
5. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 243.

In objecting to nocturnal law making, in talking out Bills in which they had no interest and in moving repeated motions of adjournment for trifling reasons, there could be no doubt that Parnell and Biggar were "cold-bloodedly obstructive". On the committee stage of the Army Estimates, for example, the former impeded progress on the ground that his criticisms were not being listened to with proper attention. Similarly on the Valuation Bill he accused the Government of forcing too many Bills upon the House.[1] Yet when they took up the cause of Prison reform or the contentious subject of military discipline and the penal power of courts martial, their attitude was courteous, business-like and orderly. O'Donnell believed that Parnell was perfectly genuine in wanting "to improve a state of things which badly required improvement" and he took great care to catch English votes.[2] As one of his colleagues confirmed: "Parnell excelled us all in obstructing as if he were really acting in the interests of the British Legislators."[3] That he drew his amendments with "so much skill"[4] and sound reasoning was due in no small measure to O'Donnell's "tutoring" behind the scenes.[5] Sheridan Knowles' "immense" parliamentary experience was employed to compile "a short guide to the places of interest" in the Prisons Bill and this was placed at Parnell's disposal. Even Butt was later forced to admit the "truth" that obstruction had "nothing on earth to do with the amendments" and that on this occasion the rebels "conducted themselves most properly".[6]

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1. Thornley, op.cit., p. 306.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 189.
3. Quoted in R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 107.
4. Ibid., p. 103.
5. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 207-209. This is also suggested in Abels, op.cit., p. 53.
6. Butt to Callan, 16 September 1877, Butt Papers, Vol. II, Ms 831.

If the first efforts of Parnell and Biggar were quietly applauded by the nationalist press, it was soon clear that intervention had failed to make significant headway in the party as a whole. Any hopes that Butt might be converted were soon effectively dashed. Having broken int the Commons in the early hours of 13 April to publicly reprove Parnell for his conduct on the Mutiny Bill,[1] he made confrontation inevitable by publishing in the Freeman's Journal of 26 May letters he had privately written to Biggar and Parnell outlining his objections to their tactics and urging them to desist. In both, "obstruction" was described as a "device" to which a minority "ought not to resort", and blamed for destroying the influence of the Irish party in Parliament and for ruining the chances for passage of Irish measures. Butt also repudiated Parnell's interpretation of the party pledge in reserving for himself "full individual liberty of action upon all matters affecting England and the Empire at large".[2] To limit the pledge to Irish affairs was to "reduce" it, he argued, to an "absurdity":

> "In all matters that can so affect the Parliamentary position of the Home Rule cause we have solemnly bound ourselves to avoid setting up any private opinion of our own, to defer to the judgment of our colleagues, and to sustain and support each other in the course that may be deemed best calculated to promote the great object we have in view."[3]

Parnell retorted that he should have been "only too pleased" to have followed Butt, had he led "in anything but inactivity and absence from the House". Unrepentant and unmoved he justified his initiative on Butt's lack of leadership. He had shown the country that they

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1. Hansard, Vol. 233, 12 April 1877, Col. 1049. See also Freeman's Journal, 14 April 1877, which carried an editorial on the incident.
2. See Parnell's letter to Butt, 14 April, in Freeman's Journal, 17 April 1877.
3. Freeman's Journal, 26 May 1877; Times, 2 June 1877. This correspondence includes letters from Butt to Biggar on 29 March, from Butt to Parnell on 21 April, and from Parnell to Butt on 14 April, 24 May 1877.

had "a power which they knew little of" and which could be used for "the enforcement of their just claims". Yet for this he had been denounced:

> I intended to do nothing more than show that if two members can do so much, hampered and restricted as they must be in their choice of methods by the very fact of their being only two, how vast and powerful might be the influence of a powerful party of sixty, not necessarily adopting one line of action, but at least attending to their duty and disregarding the 'feeling of the House' when that feeling is wrong and opposed to the interests of Ireland."[1]

Perhaps in deference to Butt's feelings, perhaps because they were beginning to feel the strain of single-handed combat and of attempting to "open up a new battery against the enemy every day", Parnell and Biggar took a break from obstruction in the early summer. Parnell always disliked public speaking and Biggar was "never known even to guess at the geography of Europe, Asia, or Africa outside of St. Stephen's apartment",[2] However, there was never any real hope of a lasting compromise. In May Edmund Dwyer Gray, editor and proprietor of the Freeman's Journal, was recruited to the activist wing for Tipperary. O'Donnell who "was also in the field"[3] had withdrawn on that condition.[4] In one of his election addresses, Gray stated that he "did not know whether the cause of Ireland might prosper because of the European complications", but it was important at such a time that "Ireland should be represented by a united band acting together as one man" and not "thwarted" by the curse of "miserable disunion".[5] A month later O'Donnell himself secured Dungarvan with the endorsement of the Home Rule Confederation and with

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1. Freeman's Journal, 28 May 1877.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 174.
3. Times, 30 April, 2 May 1877.
4. See Freeman's Journal, 12 May; Nation, 5 May 1877; Thornley, op.cit., p, 328 69n:
5. Times, 2 May, 1877.

the personal backing of Parnell and Biggar.[1] They had urged him to show them in person "how to practice" what he had "preached" and with this purpose had lent him £400 to pay off his outstanding debts.[2]

Looking about him "deliberately", O'Donnell came to the conclusion that the South Africa Bill, introduced to Parliament on 13 April, might afford "admirable ground" for the type of "appeal to Irish sentiment" which the activists had long contemplated, and for "ulterior developments" which were to show themselves within a few years.[3] In the first place, he saw that Home Rule resistance to a Bill sanctioning for whatever reason[4] the annexation of the Transvaal Republic, would have important implications in Ireland and outside as a declaration of Home Rule policy towards imperialism. Ostensibly the Bill provided the machinery for a confederation of the South African colonies and states upon the general lines of the Canadian federal system.[5] But

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1. Times, 21, 25, 26 June 1877. See also O'Donnell, History, i, p. 172.

2. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 202-206. In evidence, O'Donnell prints bank statements of his repayments to Biggar and Parnell over several years.

3. Ibid., p. 212.

4. It was feared that the imminent defeat by Cetewayo's Zulus of the Transvaal, which was on the verge of bankruptcy and unable to defend itself, might expand into a general Bantu uprising. As this would threaten the security of the rest of South Africa Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the special British commissioner, decided that nothing but a complete declaration of British sovereignty would suffice to avert the danger and save the Boers. See Cambridge History of the British Empire, Cambridge 1936, Vol. VIII, Ch. XVIII. On the other hand Manfred Nathan maintains that the British annexation "was an act of sheer brigandage", that it "violated international law", and that it had not "even the merit of plausibility". M. Nathan, Paul Kruger: His Life and Times, 5th edition, Durban 1946, p. 119.

5. Official documents relating to the annexation of the Transvaal can be found in Parl. P., Vol. LX, 1877, c 1776, c 1814, c 1815. See also A.F. Hattersley, "The Annexation of the Transvaal 1877" in History, Vol. 21, 1936-37, pp. 41-47; and C.J. Uys, In the Era of Shepstone, London 1933.

as the Annual Register remarked, it was not easy to regard the measure without feelings of misgivings for it utterly disregarded the expressed wishes, at all events, of the Government of a "free Dutch colony".[1] Certainly the Volksraad was unwilling to surrender its independence at any price and in May Vice-President Paul Kruger and Attorney-General Dr. E.J.P. Jorissen headed a deputation of protest to London. Interviewed at the Colonial Office on 5 July they were frankly told by Lord Carnarvon that the incorporation of their country with other British territories was irrevocable and that it would be idle to enter upon further discussion.[2] To O'Donnell therefore, it seemed fitting that Home Rulers should lend their support in Parliament to aspirations which they themselves upheld against Britain. To have denied or ignored their validity would have been to parallel if not to condone a typically British response to similar Irish appeals for independence and justice. In the second place, if renewed intervention passed its most comprehensive test to date with flying colours its position in Irish politics would be assured. Butt would be forced either to reconsider his hostility to this policy or engage in a decisive trial of strength with the activists. Following so closely upon his published exchange with Parnell and Biggar, a more total gesture of defiance could scarcely be construed.

As T.P. O'Connor recorded it was on this Bill that "the long pent-up storm burst forth with tempestuous violence"[3]. Indeed, the

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1. Annual Register, 1877, p. 76, 77-83.

2. Ibid., p. 80; Nathan, op.cit., p. 127. See also Hansard, Vol. 235, 9 July 1877, Col. 978.

3. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 272.

crisis had all the appearances of deliberate preparation. On the second reading of the Bill on 9 July the Government expected little trouble from the House of Commons and got none. It secured a meagre though favourable division of 81 votes to 19 and expressed itself satisfied with the result.[1] There was no indication that the committee stages would meet with greater difficulty. In the interval, however, O'Donnell offered the Transvaal delegates his services and in four meetings with Kruger and Jorissen[2] claimed to have arranged and discussed every step in opposition to the measure where it regularised and confirmed the seizure of their country.[3] In undertaking to expose and to criticise the South Africa Bill to the last line he was backed by six others--Parnell, Biggar, Dwyer Gray, Kirk, Nolan and O'Connor-Power. Not that they had themselves any connection with the Boers, beyond a deep irritation at the manner of annexation; but they were prepared in this matter to be directed by O'Donnell and placed much reliance on his knowledge of the issues at stake.[4] It has been suggested that the appropriation on 23 July of most of the private business, including Irish measures, to make way for the Bill "fanned Irish hostility" and set them on the path of sabotage.[5] Parnell, it is true, warned the Government that it could not expect the Irish

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1. Hansard, Vol. 235, 24 July 1877, Col. 1744.

2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 217-8. See Dr. Jorissen's acknowledging letter of 17 July accepting O'Donnell's offer of assistance and arranging a suitable time to call on him.

3. Ibid., p. 216. See also Hansard, op.cit. 25 July, Col. 1837.

4. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 109, and Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 27 December 1877, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832. On Clause 3, for example, O'Connor Power appealed to the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, James Lowther, or to O'Donnell for information to enable Members to vote intelligently on it. Hansard, Vol. 236, 30 July 1877, Col. 188.

5. Thornley, op.cit., p. 310; M. Brown, op.cit., p. 245.

people any longer to submit to an entire deprivation of legislation and predicted that results would not be commensurate with the sacrifice of private time.[1] While Government action undoubtedly strengthened activist resolve to subject those measures given precedence to "as calm, as independent, and as deliberate criticism as if Hon. Members were not in a hurry to repair to the shooting grounds throughout the country", notice of their intention had already been given.[2] Armed with information supplied by correspondents in Amsterdam and from the Dutch Transvaal Committee,[3] O'Donnell had earlier placed seventy amendments on the Paper which if passed would render the South Africa Bill a dead letter.[4] As the Pall Mall Gazette surmised, he had "sounded his warhoop".[5]

The storm broke on 25 July after the seven Home Rulers had demonstrated their intention of using the forms of the House to the utmost. Speaking on a motion of O'Donnell's to report progress, Parnell was heard to say amid confusion that "as an Irishman, coming from a country which had experienced to the fullest extent the results of English interference in its affairs and the consequences of English cruelty and tyranny, he felt a special satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect of this Bill." These words precipitated an unsuccessful attempt by Sir Stafford Northcote,

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1. Hansard, Vol. 235, 23 July 1877, Cols.1671-1673.
2. Ibid., Col. 1682.
3. Ibid., 24 July, Col. 1771.
4. Ibid., Col. 1790.
5. Pall Mall Gazette, 24 July 1877.

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to have Parnell suspended on a charge of contempt. Parnell calmly responded by prolonging debate until 5.45 a.m.[1] On 27 July new rules of procedure were adopted to prevent just such a repetition of these scenes of disorder, but failed in this objective.[2]

Next day, the Spectator headed its editorial on the proceedings as: "The Mutiny in the Commons". If the "young squire from Wicklow", the "Catholic littérateur with a curious knowledge of the less known foreign politics" and the "provision-merchant of Belfast" had not transformed the British empire into a confederation, it stated, they had at least accomplished something; they had "found out a weak place in its constitution". They had put "a grain of sand in the nation's eye and the nation wriggled".[3] With scarcely an exception English politicians and journalists portrayed the "obstructives" as the enemies of Parliament whose main aim was its disruption rather than the reform of perhaps ill-advised legislation.[4] No attempt was made to analyse the arguments they had raised against annexation and confederation. Yet their pleading was of a "rational" kind and their amendments were, according to T.P. O'Connor, "rarely open to the charge of irrelevancy or frivolity".[5] Like the Radical opponents of the measure, Leonard Courtney,[6] Sir Charles Dilke and Henry Fawcett, Parnell, Biggar and

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1. Hansard, Vol.235, 25 July 1877, Cols. 1787-1844.
2. Hansard, Vol. 236, 27 July 1877, Cols. 25-82.
3. Spectator, 28 July 1877.
4. Pall Mall Gazette, 26 July 1877.
5. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 269.
6. See C.P. Gooch, Life of Lord Courtney, London 1920, p.131 ff.

O'Donnell also reproached the Government for its last-minute rush to steamroller the Bill through the due processes of deliberation. Yet this did not palliate the charge of misconduct against them. To the Pall Mall Gazette they were still the apotheoses of everything "vindictive" and "fanatical".[1] The Times was convinced that the South Africa Bill was merely a convenient "stick" with which to beat Parliament,[2] and the Spectator believed that they were perversely motivated:

> "They have discovered that it is in the power of three individuals, if only gifted with good constitutions, complete insensitivity to opinion, and unlimited power of being bores, to arrest the action of the House of Commons, that is, of the machine which, in the long run controls the British Empire. Hating the Empire as now organised, they have used this discovery unscrupulously...".[3]

After a week of chaos in which only three clauses had been passed, the climax was reached on 31 July. Frustrated by this lack of progress, the Government decided to break the filibuster by refusing to adjourn until the opposition collapsed with exhaustion and allowed the Bill through. The Commons closed their ranks and prepared, according to the Times, for a "state of siege".[4] As argument had proved useless, physical force was resorted to; ministerial supporters were arranged into relays to relieve each other at regular intervals. As spokesman of the Liberal party Sir William Harcourt gave the Government his full blessing and urged them to carry the Bill as it stood:

> "I hope...that they [the Government] will show that the House of Commons has sufficient inherent vigour to deal with a small minority who endeavour to destroy its utility and usefulness".[5]

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1. Pall Mall Gazette, 28 July, 1 August 1877.
2. Times, 25 July 1877.
3. Spectator, 28 July 1877.
4. Times, 2 August, 1877.
5. Hansard, Vol. 236, 31 July 1877, Col. 232. That collusion existed between the front benches to put the Irish down is suggested in T. Wemyss Reid, Life of the Right Honourable William Edward Forster, London 1888, Vol. II, pp. 176-7.

Nor could the seven Home Rulers expect any help from their own party. At 3 a.m., after O'Donnell had threatened that if the Irish could not have "conciliation" they would have "retaliation",[1] Butt burst into the House and "trounced" him "with indignant vigour".[2] He repudiated the right of the Member for Dungarvan to speak on behalf of the Irish party, despite O'Donnell's protest that he spoke only for the "most advanced and disaffected portion" of it:

> "If I thought he [O'Donnell] represented the Irish party, and the Irish party represented my country--but it does not--I would retire from Irish politics as a vulgar brawl, in which no man could take part with advantage or honour to himself".

Those who acted contrary to their "pledges" were deemed no longer members of the party.[3] This was the strongest language that he had so far directed at the activists and indicated the parting of the ways. In a real sense he was appealing beyond Parliament to the Irish nation to back his censure.

For twenty-six hours the seven Home Rulers withstood the trial of physical endurance, making interminable speeches and dividing the House again and again. They moved the adjournment thirteen times in all, the majority against them never falling below seventy-five. At midday, however, on 1 August, Northcote threatened to mobilise "the resources of civilisation" and coerce the Irishmen into silence. O'Donnell, who had been watching for an opportunity to withdraw with honour, at once called a halt to their resistance, confident that they had stood firm to their "engagements".[4] Token opposition was

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 270.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 222.
3. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 270-1.
4. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 224.

offered to the remaining thirty-four clauses and at 2.10 p.m. in the afternoon the South Africa Bill was finally reported.

In signalling the abandonment of conciliation in Parliament and loyalty to the empire, the debate on the South Africa Bill was a turning point in the Home Rule movement. It was also the first concerted intrusion of Home Rulers "in the very arcana and central organisation of Empire".[1] Home Rulers had periodically distinguished themselves on non-Irish questions before, but only as p rt of a Radical forum of dissent. On this occasion the Irish spearheaded t e assault from start to finish. Courtney, Dilke, Fawcett and other Radicals, whose condemnation of the "forward policy" in the Transvaal was as vigorous, ultimately dissociated themselves from the "obstructives". Although they strongly deprecated the plan to wear down the Irish especially at a time when discussion had been "of a most important and business-like character,"[2] the small band of Radicals voting in the same lobby progressively dwindled from twenty-two to nought.[3] Indeed, the activists won few English friends in Parliament even among those who were ideologically closest to them. Sir Wilfred Lawson described the historic all-night sitting with distaste as merely "twenty-six hours of Irish twaddle".[4] Courtney "sat in a corner all night", waiting in vain for reason to descend, before presenting the many amendments for which he had conscientiously researched. Eventually, he gave up the

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 214.

2. Hansard, op.cit., Col.262.

3. G. Anderson, E. Ashley, J.W. Barclay, J. Barran, I.L. Bell, A. Brogden, Sir G. Campbell, J.J. Colman, L.H. Courtney, J. Cowen, Sir C. Dilke, L.L. Dillwyn, T. Earp, H. Fawcett, C. Harrison, E. Jenkins, Sir. W. Lawson, A. MacDonald, F.A. Millbank, C.J. Monk, E. Smith, P.A. Taylor.

4. Times, 25 August 1377.

struggle with not one of his "professional essays" delivered.[1] Fawcett sent off an angry letter to the Times denying any complicity with the Irish.[2] Their position was correctly summed up by O'Donnell when he referred to the Radicals as "accidental allies".[3] Of the twenty-one divisions called, no less than twenty were Irish-inspired, of which eighteen were solely Irish-endorsed. From their own ranks, the activists could count on a strength of numbers nearer twelve than seven. On 1 August the call went out to O'Gorman, Sullivan and O'Sullivan to return to Westminster as reinforcements; and R. Power and O'Shaughnessy could usually be relied upon for votes.[4]

Tactically speaking, O'Donnell admitted that "advertisement had something to do with [their] disagreeable proceedings".[5] The wide publicity given to the debates and vivid descriptions of Parliament helpless and unable to discipline a tiny minority of seven, was the type of notice they courted. The all night sitting was the culmination of a series of parliamentary skirmishes and an emphatic answer to the growing demand for a parliamentary show-down. The new terminology of "obstruction", "irritation", "retaliation" which issued from activist manifestoes and speeches had an instant appeal for popular Ireland. The work of Parnell's small following, Davitt wrote, gave intense satisfaction to the Irish people.[6] Certainly "the policy of retaliation" won John Dillon to the activist camp. He wrote in his diary on 1 August:

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1. Lucy, The Disraeli Parliament, p. 304.
2. Times, 3 August, 1877.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 233.
4. Lucy, op.cit., p. 301.
5. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 213.
6. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 109.

> "This day I mark as the beginning of a new era in the history of Erin. And I wish to have in my room the portraits of the three men who pointed out to Ireland her way to freedom-- Parnell, O'Connor Power, Biggar".[1]

The way for Dillon and others like him was to stop the British Parliament, to deny legislation to England if legislation was denied to Ireland.[2] The Nation, for example, stated with confidence that Ireland felt little concern about the South Africa Bill, but was greatly concerned to show Westminster that it was not free to transact business with ease, comfort and safety, while Ireland's *rightful demands* were trampled upon.[3]

O'Donnell strongly protested against this interpretation of activist goals. Parnell himself "never professed any such folly".[4] Both in the Commons and in the Times he steadfastly refused to have foisted upon him the label of "obstructive". Intervention, he insisted, was not obstruction but the constitutional right given to all Members of Parliament including the Irish to express an opinion on any measure. His interest in the Prisons Bill and the Mutiny Bill was purely reformative, and he had sought to amend the South Africa Bill because it dealt with a number of different peoples and "vital principles" which as an Irishman he had a "duty" to protect. His main purpose throughout had been to expose the same tendency as all English measures had for dealing with subject or inferior races, namely to oppress them and to sacrifice their interests to those of the dominant power. As his conduct in this had been always "in accordance with what was preached in the Sermon on the Mount", good having been returned for

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1. See Lyons, John Dillon a Biography, London 1968, p. 21.
2. O'Donnell, History, i,pp. 212-3.
3. Nation quoted in Times, 4 August 1877.
4. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 212.

evil, Parnell suspected that the real ground of resentment against him and his colleagues was more fundamental:

> "There is an unwritten law, hitherto acquiesced in by the Irish members, that no Irish may interfere in English and Imperial concerns--at any rate, if they do, their interference must be in homeopathic doses well covered up with sugar".[1]

To a degree, Home Rulers held out encouragement to nationalist groups throughout the empire involved in their own struggles with the British Government. Even if intervention was concerned primarily as "a means of focusing the attention of public opinion everywhere upon the cause, the case and the neglect of Ireland",[2] it was nonetheless true that the plight of the Boers had been broadcast in the House of Commons largely on account of Irish efforts. The Radicals might complain that Irish obstinacy could only damage Kruger's cause,[3] and the President of the Dutch Transvaal Committee might point out to O'Donnell that Irish members were not touching the question at all or defending the Transvaal for the sake of justice and international law.[4] Nevertheless, it was very much a case of bad publicity being preferable to no publicity. The Liberals disliked the annexation but were not yet ready to take a hard line against "Disraelian Imperialism". As O'Donnell judiciously put it, the activists were convinced that the "good cause of the Boers must be promoted by a good deal more than the Government's thanks for untroubled slumber".[5] The Irish contribution

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1. See Hansard, Vol. 236, 27 July, Cols. 54-7, 31 July 1877, Col. 275; and letter to Times, 30 July 1877.
2. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 108.
3. Pall Mall Gazette, 23 July 1877.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 245-6. On one occasion O'Donnell silenced his Dutch critics by sending them a speech of Courtney's and was warmly thanked for having a colleague who could really speak about the Transvaal.
5. Ibid., p. 233.

was, at any rate, apparently welcomed in the Veldts. When the Transvaal was restored to independence in 1883,[1] O'Donnell received an "ebony and silver casket" containing £100 sterling "minted in the name of Paul Kruger after his election to the Presidency". The casket bore the inscription: "In Memory of Kindness 1877-1881".[2] An aggressive Home Rule party disposed, for whatever motive, to give publicity to imperial debates and issues which normally excited little interest, merited courtship, not neutrality.

If Parnell and O'Donnell were scarcely depicted as "public benefactors" in England, they were soon regarded as "philanthropists" in India and Africa.[3] In addition to using up Government time, they had demonstrated three overriding principles with properties other than purely tactical:

> i. "The use of [Irish] membership of the Imperial Parliament for purposes entirely independent of English Imperial rule.
>
> ii. The support of an oppressed nationality.
>
> iii. The intervention in an international affair big with international possibilities."[4]

The first two linked the concept of anti-imperialism with the concept of Irish nationality. Membership of Parliament could be used to defend the rights of subject peoples or to protest against the march of British dominion, as well as to fight for Irish self-government. No one imagined for a moment that the Irish showing on the South Africa Bill was an isolated phenomenon. On 27 July, Lord George Hamilton wrote to Salisbury in some consternation that unless the Cabinet allowed

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1. See D.M. Schreuder, Gladstone and Kruger, London/Toronto 1969, pp. 469-476.
2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 69.
3. Ibid., i, p. 233; T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 277.
4. Ibid., p. 220.

him to "bring on" the East Indian Loan Bill, raising five million pounds on the London market, the "obstructives" could "block" it for a month.[1] On 28 July having talked through a long discussion on South Africa, Parnell and O'Donnell indeed turned their attention to India, but did not, as was anticipated, put down a barrage of amendments. Instead, O'Donnell calmly protested that Britain would never get to the root of Indian difficulties by confining herself to the multiplication table. Wasteful expenditure would continue as long as India was unrepresented in Parliament and as long as her affairs were administered by Britain.[2] Parnell agreed. He dismissed as fallacious the assurance that Indians as an "inferior race" enormously benefited by English rule; they, like the Irish, would have been a great deal better off had they been left alone.[3] One solution suggested was to send Indian delegates to the House of Commons. In O'Donnell's opinion, there was a "large, influential, and cultivated class" eminently fitted to sit there.

Building on the assumption that the case of Ireland was only the "instance close at hand of evils rampant from Cork to Cairo and Calcutta", the activists clothed their intervention in terms of experience and humanitarian duty.[4] Irish nationality was invoked as sufficient licence, when one was needed, to launch them into a critical examination of Government measures affecting the interests of "weaker" races. Parnell, whose knowledge of international affairs was not extensive enough to allow him to discourse freely on imperial questions, had frequent recourse to draw on Ireland's experience under British rule in order to highlight

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1. Hamilton to Salisbury, 27 July 1877, Salisbury Papers, C/2.
2. Hansard, Vol. 235, 5 July, Cols. 849-50; Vol. 236, 28 July 1877, Cols. 126-7; Lucy, The Disraeli Parliament, p. 306.
3. Ibid., 23 July 1877, Cols. 129-130.
4. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 471.

the injustice done to Boer, Bantu or Indian. With him such comparison was instinctive rather than calculated and did not indicate a lack of sincerity.

With respect to the third principle, the negotiations with the Boers suggested to O'Donnell that the use of Irish membership, "entirely independent of English Imperial rule", could form the basis of an alliance between Home Rulers and unrepresented nationalists in the empire. O'Donnell believed that this would be not only feasible but of potential benefit to the Home Rule movement. In any such alliance Ireland would be singled out as the natural leader, her prestige would grow accordingly, and her counsels would be accredited with much greater weight. It was here that Parnell and Biggar probably parted company with O'Donnell. Their dislike of England, in Parnell's case pronounced,[1] made them willing anti-imperialists but not necessarily committed internationalists. John Bright considered that Parnell's "main object [was] to break up the United Kingdom".[2] Parnell was essentially a pragmatist, not a political scientist; his imprimatur for ambitious schemes hung ultimately on the criterion of their utility to Home Rule. Yet it was in this period, between the decline of Butt and the ascendancy of Parnell, that the internationalist features of activism were most prominently displayed and generally applauded in Ireland and especially in India.

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1. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 41, 98. "Parnell hated England before he entered the House of Commons; and his hatred was intensified by his parliamentary career."

2. Bright to Gladstone, 4 October 1881, quoted in J.L. Hammond, Gladstone and the Irish Nation, London 1938, p. 247.

Chapter III

The Battle for Public Opinion

I Victory Deferred

II Jostling for Position

III Indian Overtures

I. Victory deferred

The seven activists found themselves somewhat unexpectedly the heroes of the hour in Ireland. "We hardly realised that our scheme would quite result in such an unsurpassable victory for the new policy", wrote O'Donnell.[1] The Freeman's Journal described the all-night sitting as "a gallant assertion of the right of Irishmen to interfere in Imperial affairs".[2] However, although Gray had himself participated in the contest, complete endorsement, at least for the unseemly side of intervention, was witheld. The Nation, on the other hand, had no reservations. Referring with feelings of satisfaction to the "splendid fight", it gave an unqualified "Go Ahead".[3] Commenting on this reception, the Pall Mall Gazette wrote that it might be said that Mr. Butt had been forgotten already and that at no distant date they might expect to see him exercising as little influence as the O'Donoghue.[4]

As the "chief acrobat" of "grand obstruction", O'Donnell was feted at a special dinner in recognition of his "eminent services to the national cause" by the North London Home Rule Association.[5] Parnell, Biggar and O'Connor Power were also invited as guests of honour, although the former did not attend the function.[6] In the estimation of his immediate colleagues, O'Donnell never stood higher. On 1 August, T.M. Healy wrote to his brother Maurice that:

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 212.
2. See Letter of the O'Donoghue to Freeman's Journal, 25 August 1877.
3. Times, 4 August 1877.
4. Pall Mall Gazette, 3 August 1877,
5. Warder, 7 August 1877.
6. Times, 3 August 1877.

> "the struggle in the House of Commons on the South African Bill should make Dungarvan proud of O'Donnell".[1]

The Nation was even prepared to defend O'Donnell against Butt's denunciation of him in Parliament which it considered ill-timed and ill-intentioned.[2] Two weeks later, Parnell and Biggar were similarly treated to a public demonstration, which was according to R.B. O'Brien, "practically got up by the Fenians".[3] Led by cheering crowds down Sackville Street they were forced to speak to them from the balcony of their hotel.[4] If ordinary Irishmen were not conversant with all the implications of activist opposition to the South Africa Bill, they applauded the "flouting" of the House of Commons, the "harassment" of the Government, and the "defiance" of English public opinion.[5]

Despite the popular acclaim for Parnell, O'Donnell and Biggar, the policy of intervention was still anathema to Butt. The move to reprimand them in Parliament had obviously backfired, but on 6 August, he attempted to get the Home Rule party to reinforce his verdict.[6] McCarthy Downing proposed a resolution drafted by Butt,[7] condemning the proceedings of the activists as "reprehensible", and "calculated" in their "character and result" to be "disastrous to the Home Rule Cause". The motion never came to a vote and the meeting broke up in disorder.[8] William Shaw deprecated "any sweeping condemnation

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1. T.M. Healy to Maurice Healy, 1 August 1877, in Letters and Leaders, 1, p. 53.
2. Times, 4 August 1877.
3. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, 1, p. 142.
4. Nation, 25 August 1877.
5. R.B. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 136.
6. Times, 7 August 1877.
7. See L.J. McCaffrey, "Irish Federalism in the 1870s: A Study in Conservative Nationalism", in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1962, p. 41.
8. Pall Mall Gazette, 7 August 1877.

of members who acted with bona fides", especially for their conduct on non-Irish questions. Richard O'Shaughnessy, Butt's colleague for Limerick, took up a similar position. He "did not altogether agree with the whole of the obstruction policy", but he believed there were many points on which the "obstructionists" ought to have been sustained by larger numbers. Even moderate Home Rulers were coming to realise that a more active policy was necessary though on Irish rather than imperial questions. J. A. Galbraith, Honorary Secretary of the Home Rule League, wrote to W.J. O'Neill Daunt on 13 August, that "obstruction" in his opinion "was not only justifiable but imperatively called for on all such Irish questions as [came] from time to time before the House, in which the liberties the material interests or the strong feelings of the Irish people, as expressed by their representatives, [were] concerned". "Obstruction" as practised on the South Africa Bill, however, did not apparently fall into this category:

> "as for the policy of putting a stop to all business of the Empire by a factious opposition to Bills in which we have no concern...I cannot see how such a line of action can bring anything but discredit on our representatives...".[1]

Daunt's reaction was identical. He also preferred "obstruction" to the "milk and water policy" of Butt, but "obstruction" wisely used, not the kind of "impish malignancy of Biggar" or "interminable speeches".[2] The concentration on non-Irish issues made little sense to many Home Rulers and was the aspect of the interventionist policy most vulnerable to criticism.

It was on this ground that the O'Donoghue who had also repudiated the activists in Parliament[3] and been repudiated in turn by them,[4]

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1. Galbraith to O'Neill Daunt, 18 August 1877, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832.
2. O'Neill Daunt to Henry, 5 September 1877, Ibid.,
3. Hansard, Vol. 235, 23 July 1877, Col. 1685.
4. Ibid., Col. 1736; Times, 3 August 1877. O'Donnell described the O'Donoghue as a "representative of no principle, of no party and of no policy".

strongly attacked obstruction in a letter to the Freeman's Journal. His interpretation of their motives in "eternally talking about matters of which they knew nothing and in which they could have no special interest", followed the English line. Intervention was a deliberate attempt to worry and insult the House of Commons, by uselessly occupying time, and preventing the transaction of crucial business. He could not have been greater surprised, he wrote, to hear Parnell emphatically declare that the sole object of all their talk, was the "reform of Imperial legislation", which had no connection whatever with Irish politics either directly or indirectly:

> "This I could not have believed had it no been solemnly asserted by the principal performer in the great attempt to reform Imperial legislation... Mr. Parnell gave us to understand that his conduct and that of his party of three was the result of an irrepressible desire to save the people of some distant lands from the incompetency of Her Majesty's Government. A philanthropy that knows no distinction of colour, or feature, or hirsute decoration moved Mr. Parnell and his little party to try and do all that legislation can do to promote human happiness".

The O'Donoghue was transparently sceptical that "philanthropy was the beginning, the middle and the end of all the 'rumpus'". He recalled that he could not help laughing when confronted with one of Parnell's "most vital amendments", which would have conferred the parliamentary franchise upon every "Hottentot who, being just out of his teens was of sound mind and unblemished character".[1] His attitude to non-European races was probably typical of many "whig" Home Rulers. The British notion of a world role as a civilising agent found them ready subscribers; although the Boers could hardly be described as Hottentots. The O'Donoghue wanted to know whether it was just that he be deprived

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1. Freeman's Journal, 25 August 1877.

of his seat for Tralee for voting against Parnell's "small party" on this amendment. That question was answered in the 1880 general elections, when he swam with the current and proclaimed himself a Parnellite.[1]

The Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, which had its annual convention at Liverpool on 27-28 August, took a totally different view of Parnell's activities during the late session. With Butt as President in the chair, Parnell proposed a resolution calling for "liberty of action" on English and imperial questions, "upon which the party may not previously have agreed to act as a party". When the resolution was decisively carried, Butt left for London. The Confederation which had always been to the left of the movement in Ireland, threw its entire weight behind the active party. On 28 August, Butt who had expected to be re-elected President for the coming year, was not even nominated. Instead, the post went unanimously to Parnell. It was a rebuff capable of one interpretation only.[2]

The unity of the party was in tatters, although Richard O'Shaughnessy a former whip believed there was still hope of salvage provided Butt took the initiative. On 31 August he wrote to the "failing lion":

> "In my opinion the game is more in your hands than ever. The obstructives will give you an active policy and provided you keep them at work the country will be satisfied and you can guide them as your judgment dictates".

He advised general acceptance of the policy of intervention as a necessary step towards reconciliation. Prejudice had to be broken down, and a more flexible approach substituted:

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1. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit. p. 2.

2. Freeman's Journal, 28, 29 August 1877.

> "Our votes and proceedings on non-Irish questions will become of vital importance, and although I don't expect Home Rule to be won by throwing our swords into the scale, beyond all doubt our activity, restrained within the limits of common sense, will bring us victories useful, nay necessary, for the main purpose."[1]

O'Donnell also attempted to patch up the differences between Butt and the active party. Whatever his reason, O'Donnell had attempted to forestall the supplanting of Butt by the Confederation, and despite the warning that he appeared "to be screening the Whigs" announced that he would resign as Honorary Secretary.[2] Perhaps he was chagrined by Parnell's dramatic rise to prominence, and hurt that Parnell had been preferred to him as President. Certainly he referred to Butt's deposition as "that ingrate crime".[3] In a letter to the Times he indicated that the Home Rule leader was not as hostile to obstructive tactics as was commonly believed, and that in some circumstances he was well disposed "to take up" an "obstructive attitude". O'Donnell concluded that Butt was "a very pronounced thorough-going and systematic" obstructive, indeed, who had frequently encouraged his followers "by the hope of a coming day" when Irish Members of Parliament would have the power to unseat ministries at will and to deadlock legislation until such time as Home Rule was granted.[4]

Butt spurned the letter as "an infernal lie"[5], and despite appeals from friends to treat with the activists, insisted on restating his old position in a categorical manifesto:

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1. O'Shaughnessy to Butt, 31 August 1877, Butt Papers, Ms 8699.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 241-3.
3. Ibid., p. 249.
4. Times, 4 September 1877.
5. Butt to Callan, 3, 4, 6 September 1877, Butt Papers, Vol. II, Ms 331.

> "If I understand rightly, the course of conduct or 'policy' recommended for our adoption is that the Home Rule members should take part in the discussion of all English and Imperial measures in such a way as to impede and inconvenience the general progress of the House."

He refused as before to be party to such an undertaking and repeated that obstruction would be fatal to Irish interests in Parliament. It would alienate a large and increasing class of English and Scottish Members who in general gave their support to Irish questions and would turn world opinion against the Home Rule cause.[1] Privately, he asked Philip Callan to ferret out anything that could damage the reputations of Parnell and O'Donnell. Was it true that the atheist Charles Bradlaugh had appeared on the same platform in Glasgow with Parnell?--an affirmative answer "would finish" the active party in Ireland. The point could also be stressed that O'Donnell was a graduate not of the Catholic university but of one of the godless Queen's Colleges.[2] O'Shaughnessy's worst fears were realised; Butt had put himself into the hands of men "that would mar the wisest policy in the world by their vulgar intemperance."[3] He preferred to keep company with "laggards" and "trimmers" rather than with his "most earnest followers".[4]

Butt's letter provoked replies from Mitchel Henry and O'Donnell. The former declared that he was no advocate of "pigheaded" obstruction, but that he was "in favour of vigour and reality" in Irish proceedings in the House of Commons. Parnell and his friends were formidable because they could not be bought by office or by personal flattery. While moderation would not achieve results, some of Parnell's work showed that aggression could.[5]

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1. Times, 7 September 1877.
2. Butt to Callan 11, 12, 21 September, Butt Papers, Vol. II, Ms 831.
3. O'Shaughnessy to Butt, 31 August 1877, op.cit., Ms 8699.
4. See Times, 22 September 1877.
5. Freeman's Journal, 11 September 1877.

O'Donnell, who had gone out on a limb in the hope of personally converting Butt, was forced to retrieve lost ground. He attacked the Home Rule leader unsparingly, decrying his criticisms as "extraordinary misconceptions" and as the product of his persistent absenteeism, his neglect of Irish affairs, and his lack of contact with the Irish people. Parnell was praised for having turned a "disgraceful" Prisons Bill into a "humane" one, and he himself had amended with some success the "scandalous" South Africa Bill, considering the "shameful isolation in which they were left":

> "I struck twenty-six frivolous or injurious clauses out of the original draft. I carried the insertion of special words, providing the regular consultation of the South African legislature previous to any Confederation. I procured the concession of another clause which provides for the annual assembly of the confederated Parliament, and thus removes the affairs of the South African Colonies from the dictatorship of the Colonial Office within twelve months at worst from the passing of the Confederation. Finally...I succeeded in doing that which I was especially entreated by the delegates and friends of the Transvaal to strive for, namely--to secure that the Transvaal should not be brought under the military despotism of Natal, but should either enjoy its own autonomy or be annexed to the kindred semi-Dutch Colony of Cape Town".

O'Donnell characterised Butt's repudiation of intervention as "dwarfing and distorting" a question of "public and natural rights not less clear than those that underlay the partition of Poland or the violation of the Irish constitution". It was definitely not through any merit of the Home Rule leader, if "anxious conclusions upon the consistency of those Irish patriots who [declared] against British oppression in Ireland, and [could] be the admirers and apologists of British oppression abroad," had not been drawn, at least by the English.[1]

During this crisis in the party, the activists began to receive significant support from the Irish World, at this time regarded as

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1. Freeman's Journal, 22 September 1877.

the mouthpiece of the American Clan na Gael. The American Fenians and especially the proprietor of the Irish World, Patrick Ford,[1] deprecated most parliamentary action, and any solution to the Irish Question inferior to complete separation. Ford felt assured "that Ireland could never rise to the true dignity of her nationhood" through federalism and that the Irish people would ultimately be dissatisfied with that arrangement.[2] Nevertheless, Parnell was much preferred to Butt as the leader of the Irish Parliamentary party, for he at least could be more relied upon because of his known hatred of England. Butt's pronouncements concerning Irish participation in the British Empire rendered him on the other hand a doubtful collaborator.[3] The Irish World passionately desired the destruction of the British empire and openly intrigued against it. Yet the preference for the more active and aggressive man was based on factors other than the pragmatic one of increasing England's difficulties of imperial administration. This was doubtless important, but not the only consideration. Patrick Ford, if also an advocate of "Irish terrorism", was a fervent apostle of "universal humanitarianism",[4] and preached to the Irish through his editorials both the responsibilities and the morals of nationalism. In 1876, the ambivalence of Irish attitudes towards the British connection and various statements of unashamed reverence for the empire, provoked him to fulminate against the "criminal"

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1. See Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. VI, London (1929-1958), p. 518.

2. Ford to Butt, 6 January 1875, Butt Papers, Ms 10, 415.

3. Irish World, 12 August 1876.

4. See. T.N. Brown, op.cit., p. XVI, and T.W. Moody, "Irish-American Nationalism" in Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 15, 1966-7, pp. 438-445.

inconsistency of the Home Rule case. He was particularly pained by Butt's frequent assurances[1] in Parliament that an essential part of his duty was to consider how far he could gratify the spirit of nationality without endangering the empire. Butt's call to Irish members to abstain from voting on the Indian Titles Act seemed to demonstrate in practical terms what this assurance meant.[2] To Ford, nationality was absolute everywhere and at all times. It could not be compromised, for reasons which he spelled out:

> "If the people of Ireland have a right to their country, the people of India have as just a claim to theirs; if it is wrong to plunder the Irish, it is also wrong to plunder the Hindoos; but if, on the other hand, it is justifiable in Irishmen to go forth to rob and enslave the Hindoos, the Ashantees, and other peoples, then, we say, it is justifiable in Danes and Normans and Saxons to rob and enslave the Irish".[3]

He ended this outburst with the significant motto: "Liberty not Power, Nationality not Empire", which was to do long service as a statement of Irish-American attitudes towards British imperialism.

Despite the rather crude anti-English feeling which percolated his editorials, Patrick Ford did much to sweep away the traces of racism in Irish attitudes towards the coloured races of the British empire. Next to Ireland and the United States, India received the greatest publicity in the columns of the Irish World. Indians were referred to as "fellow subjects",[4] their sufferings were traced to a common source, "English misgovernment",[5] and their hatred of England was reported to

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1. Hansard, Vol. 230, 30 June 1876, Col. 748.
2. Ibid., Vol. 229, 11 May 1876, Cols. 417 - 421.
3. Irish World, 12 August 1877.
4. Ibid., 17 March 1877.
5. Ibid., 2 June 1877.

be as intense as Ireland's.[1] Like O'Donnell, Ford propounded that the pattern of English misgovernment was of a repetitious nature. As with Ireland before it, India was subjected to the same grievances: the Irish land system [was] for example in full operation in India, resulting in British-made famines.[2] In 1877 famine distress in Southern India sparked the conditioned comparison:

> "As in Ireland, so in India. Ireland and India--what a similarity between their destinies. And both their destinies brought about by the robber oligarchy of Great Britain. Even the casual observer notes the likeness...here is the identical "mark of the beast"--the beast of the British oligarchy--left alike on the face of the helpless Hindoo in 1877 as t'was left alike on the face of the Irish people in the horror of thirty years ago."3

It was postulated on the basis of this shared experience and bitter hatred that Ireland and India had a joint interest to foment rebellion.

The concept of Indians as brown Irishmen, as discontented and as revolutionary-minded as themselves, was a fundamental of Irish-American strategy. It was inconceivable that Indian nationalists did not passionately hate England or hanker after the destruction of the empire. Michael Davitt who was greatly influenced by Patrick Ford reflected this point of view. He considered the notion that British rule was greatly admired in India, or that the Hindoo was decidedly loyal to the Crown, sedulously artificial:

> "It is altogether impossible to imagine a more complete delusion. Any student of revolutionary symptoms knows perfectly well that the overthrow of British rule in India is only a question of time. India is seething with discontent."4

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1. Irish World, 13 June 1877.
2. Ibid., 17 March 1877.
3. Ibid., 25 August 1877.
4. M. Davitt, Leaves from a Prison Diary, Vol. II, London 1885, p. 155.

Even though India was not on the point of rebellion, "war, famine, and the vagaries of administration had made the country very restive." Several observers in 1879 were convinced "that there was imminent danger of a terrible outbreak".[1]

A discontented and disloyal India formed an integral part in Fenian schemes to destroy the empire. It was believed that a "little shake", perhaps an Irish-American one, was all that was needed to quickly topple British India and so bring the whole structure of empire "with all its wings and battlements", crashing to the ground.[2] In response to an anonymous letter in the Irish World of 4 September 1875, a "skirmishing fund" was established to carry on a guerilla warfare against it.[3] With the international situation charged with conflict, it was confidently assumed that sooner or later England would be involved in a war, in Europe or in Asia, that could prelude an armed uprising in Ireland. The crisis in the east, which suggested that Russia and Britain would soon come to blows, was closely watched by the revolutionary Council of the Clan na Gael.[4] Dr. William Carroll, Chairman of the Clan Executive, was of the firm opinion that England's "jig was up" if Bismarck saw how Prussia could gain by permitting Russia to proceed towards India.[5] "If that wonderful man [said] Russia [might] go to Hindoostan, it [would] soon be all over with the newly made 'Empress' of that unfortunate Empire". Carroll wanted to recruit

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1. See Sir W. Wedderburn, Allan Octarian Hume, London 1913, p. 80.

2. Irish World, 25 August 1877.

3. T.N. Brown, op.cit., pp. 69-73. See also W. O'Brien and Desmond Ryan (ed), Devoy's Post Bag 1871-1880, Vol. I, Dublin 1948, p. 141. Initially under the patronage of Ford, the fund was administered by the Clan in 1877.

4. Devoy's Post Bag, p. 207 ff.

5. Carroll to Devoy, 8 June, in Ibid., p. 178.

5,000 to 10,000 men who could be mobilised and ready to set off to Ireland at a moment's notice. In November 1876, a Clan delegation presented the Russian Minister in Washington, M. Shisken, with a memorial "on the discontent in Ireland, her capacity for war, her eagerness for it."[1] Its purpose was to indicate that "in case the Northern Bear should decide to crush 'Her Majesty's Government'" a spontaneous revolution in Ireland might be counted on. The plan came to nothing. The Russian Minister was convinced neither that war between Russia and England was imminent, nor that a strong nationalist feeling hostile to the British connection existed in Ireland.[2] Subterranean activity of this kind on the whole produced little tangible effect. It is doubtful whether the British took these Fenian stirrings seriously, but they at least took the trouble to be informed.[3] When India was involved in war with Afghanistan two years later, the British Government was more sensitive to reports of Indian disaffection and to Irish-American propaganda..

Thus in so far as it had been directed against British imperial ambitions, in Ireland and South Africa, the activity of the small activist group in 1877 went some way towards thawing Irish-American hostility towards parliamentarianism. J.J. O'Kelly, at one time foreign correspondent of the New York Herald and a Parnellite Home Rule candidate in 1880, met Parnell and Biggar in Paris and was most impressed by them. To John Devoy, a close friend and one of the leaders of the Clan na Gael, he attempted to sell the idea of an alliance between

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1. Carroll to P. Mahon, 12 June 1876, in Devoy's Post Bag, p. 182.

2. See T.N. Brown, op.cit., pp. 65-68; Devoy's Post Bag, p. 209.

3. See letter to Foreign Secretary, 12 January 1878, Fenian Papers 1858-1883, A Files 1877-1883, Box No. 4, A 506½, S.P.O. See also Desp. (copy) G. Crump to Sir E. Thornton, 9 January 1876, ibid., A 508, S.P.O. The acting British Consul at Philadelphia wrote: "My informant adheres to his assertion that every possible preparation is being made for a sudden uprising of Fenianism in Ireland and that the present complications of England in the Eastern Question have added unusual zeal to all Fenian movements."

revolutionary and parliamentary nationalists. O'Kelly believed that "with the right kind of support" behind him and "with a band of real nationalists in the House of Commons", Parnell would "so remould Irish public opinion as to clear away many of the stumbling blocks in the way of progressive action".[1] Concerning the attitude that ought to be adopted towards the activists, O'Kelly wrote to Devoy on 21 August:[2]

> "If the right class of men could be elected to fill vacancies occurring, so as to strengthen the advanced group, it would be well. I have always tried to convince you of the great moral effect of having Ireland represented by men like Parnell, O'Donnell and Biggar even if they were not prepared to advance one step further and I hope recent events have convinced you of the correctness of my views. There are many advantages to be gained even at Westminster by a really bold and independent Irish representation and I hope the American-Irish will extend help and encouragement to Parnell and his co-workers."

Devoy's reaction is not recorded, but the Irish World, impressed by the fight against the South Africa Bill, was encouraging. O'Donnell in particular drew special praise and was upheld as the archetype of an Irish patriot.

> "He is not a mere man of talent and application, he is a genius, and just such a genius Ireland needs, and as Ireland would value if only he comes out from the cobwebs and takes part in the open field".

In the likelihood that neither O'Donnell nor his party would take the revolutionary path and boycott Westminster, a correspondent of the Irish World, possibly Dr. Carroll himself, ventured to suggest a parliamentary programme which "revolutionists" would support in the coming session and which would help reconcile the three national sections of the Irish people. The Home Rulers were instructed to make "three grand efforts":

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1. O'Kelly to Devoy, 5 August 1877, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 267-8.

2. O'Kelly to Devoy, 21 August 1877, in ibid., p. 270.

> "The first, on the day that Parliament reopens, should be an amendment to the Address;
> The second, should be a resolution in favour of Home Rule;
> The third, should be a Bill repealing en masse all the obnoxious statutes made for Ireland in the past."

Having performed this triple duty, they were to occupy the remainder of their time obstructing "obnoxious" legislation for Ireland, and discussing "Imperial questions" especially those relating to India, the army, and foreign affairs. Theamendment to the Address was to take the form of a double censure against "misgovernment in Ireland" and "misgovernment in India". The writer considered it "politic to link" together the "victims of British misrule", and to emphasize "the incapacity and unfitness" of the Irish Chief Secretary, Sir M. Hicks Beach, and of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Salisbury; the one was to be singled out "for his total ignorance of Ireland", the other "for his failure to avert a second Indian famine".[1] In both countries there was a "backlog of hatred" building up to engulf the British:

> "The millions who fill famine graves in Ireland and India have not died in vain. There must come a day when they will possess the living millions with a fury before which the British Empire will go down in ruin commensurate with its unparalleled iniquities."[2]

The "Whigs" were genuinely alarmed by such signs of American support for the activists. J.A. Galbraith wrote to Butt of a "settled plan to break up the Home Rule Party" which he believed was inspired from America.[3] This fear was not untypical of several rumours floating around connecting the activists with extremist plots. The acting British Consul at Philadelphia cabled London in all seriousness that

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1. Irish World, 29 September 1877.
2. Ibid., 22 September 1877.
3. Galbraith to Butt, 9 September 1877, Butt Papers, Ms 8699.

the "obstructionists", Joseph Biggar, Parnell and O'Connor Power were in league with the leaders of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.[1] Throughout September and early October, Parnell, O'Donnell and O'Connor Power did in fact preach "the patriotic doctrine of obstruction" to gatherings of Irish in Great Britain and Ireland,[2] in an attempt to convert the Fenians to the necessity of vigorous parliamentary action.[3] "Harping on blood and fire", Parnell was careful to couch their parliamentary policy in the suggested manner. At a meeting in Belfast on 27 September he described it as one of independent and strenuous opposition to the Government of the day all along the line in detail upon every question; this was to take the form of a comprehensive intervention ranging from estimates and pensions to colonial, particularly Indian administration:

> "...They should look into Indian questions, and try to put a stop to Indian famines; they should look into the Indian question which now takes but an hour, or if the consequence of these things not being done at all, then it would not be their fault... they did not conquer India; they did not colonise the colonies; they did not bring about the union with Scotland."[4]

Parnell's insistence that active Home Rulers could not be held responsible for British colonisation, should they not succeed overnight in dissolving the empire, was primarily for American consumption.

He had a different story for those moderates who like Mitchel Henry desired to narrow the breach between Butt and himself on the basis of a more "determined" policy in Parliament. Henry who had "a

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1. Desp. (copy) G. Crump to Sir E. Thornton, 9 January 1878, op.cit.
2. See Times, 8 September 1877.
3. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 149-50.
4. Weekly Freeman, 6 October 1877.

very high opinion" of Parnell, at least up to the time of the "New Departure", disliked the vintage frolics of 1877, and felt that Parnell had been led "astray" by O'Donnell, a very "dangerous man, because eaten up with vanity". In an interview with Henry in December, Parnell played down his obvious reliance on O'Donnell's advice reassuring him that he was quite "alive" to the "errors" they had committed last session. He added that O'Donnell was also convinced that he had acted unwisely on the South Africa Bill. This was perhaps fabrication but it served Parnell's purpose to allay Henry's fear that Irish strength would in future be "frittered away" instead of being "reserved for fights on Irish Questions."[1] The price of wooing the moderates was just such an undertaking of restraint.

The long-awaited national Home Rule conference on 14-15 January 1878, however, resolved nothing and resulted in stalemate. If Butt progressively lost ground in popularity to the activists during the recess, he retained sufficient authority to prevent them from overrunning the League in Ireland as they had done the Confederation in Great Britain. What chance they had of dictating to the conference was effectively lost when a move to secure equal representation for English as well as Irish Home Rulers was blocked.[2] Equally Butt was in no position to bring the activists to heel. He went through the motions of condemning the policy of intervention without demanding disciplinary action. Butt had no objection to Irish members taking part in the discussions of English and imperial affairs--he had even held that they did not take part often enough and that the Irish should do something for the sufferers of wrong

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1. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 27 December 1877, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832.

2. See Thornley, op.cit., pp. 340-2.

throughout the empire--but he was convinced that intervention was still primarily a manifestation of an Irish policy pure and simple:

> "What I object to, what I hold to be fatal to the dignity and usefulness of the Irish party, and to the good name of Ireland throughout the world, is obviously making our intervention in matters of English and Imperial concern merely a manifestation of a certain Irish policy without regard to the matter in hand and the interests involved."[1]

In effect no decision was taken on the parliamentary policy for the coming year. J.G. MacCarthy was voted out of order when he raised the matter.[2]

Yet as the Dublin correspondent of the Times reported, the impression existed in Ireland that ultimate victory rested with Parnell and that Butt had virtually "capitulated". If he remained leader of the party, he did not possess the confidence of a large section of it and his control was no more than nominal. For the first time, the activists did not ask Butt to lead them in intervention but merely desired that he stop denouncing them; "a notable change of attitude" thought T.D. Sullivan,[3] In return they would abandon the campaign to force the League and the party to follow their example, while they retained the right of unimpaired initiative themselves. A resolution proposed by Charles Fay left the door open for every variety of "individual action", unless a united course had been positively agreed upon by the party beforehand. Parnell accepted the peace formula with the quiet confidence of a protagonist assured of ultimate victory:

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1. Quoted in O'Donnell, History, i, p. 260.

2. The conference is reported in the Freeman's Journal, 15,16 January; Times, 15, 16 January 1878.

3. T.D. Sullivan to O'Neill Daunt, 31 December 1877, Hickey Papers, quoted in Thornley, op.cit., p. 343.

> "If I refrain from asking the country today by the voice of this conference to adopt any particular line of action or any particular policy, or to put any definite issue in reference to it before this conference, I do so solely because I am young and I can wait".

"The cracks", however, had barely been "papered over". As the Times recognised, the status-quo was more fragile than firm and was likely to disintegrate especially on "Imperial Questions".[1] Indeed a foretaste of dissension on the burning issue of the day, the Balkan crisis, was given by John Dillon. Inspired by the hope that Britain might be drawn into the Russo-Turkish war, he urged that Irish members be bound by the conference to walk out of the House of Commons as a body prior to any division on the subject being taken. It was their duty to demonstrate that Ireland, while deprived of self-government, disclaimed "all sympathy with England in her dealings with foreign powers".[2] Butt objected strongly to such a course which he held would sound "the death-knell" of the Home Rule party, for it affirmed that Ireland had no common interest with England. The bellicose motion of the young firebrand was thus rejected. Instead the conference accepted a compromise solution of Parnell's that the party should consult with a view to effect united action on the Eastern Question whenever a definite issue arose. In the event it was this mildly-worded proposal that helped destroy Butt as a political force in Ireland, and conclusively left Parnell as his heir-apparent.[3]

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1. Times, 16 January 1878.

2. Ibid., 9, 16 January 1878; See also F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon A Biography, London 1968, pp. 24-25.

3. See Chapter Four, Section one.

II Jostling for Position

While Mitchel Henry could not "tolerate the word obstruction", he had no illusions about the new session; "if anything is to be done it will be done by the Obstructives and by nobody else", he confided to O'Neill Daunt on 27 December 1877.[1] Butt's steadfast refusal to meet the activists even half-way effectively drained the vestiges of influence remaining to the Home Rule party as a political entity. To make matters worse a recurrence of ill-health forced Butt to neglect his parliamentary duties still further and kept him away from Westminster for long spells. Without his guiding hand the least committed members quickly fell back on old habits. Even his most loyal followers felt cast adrift and were soon floundering with indecision. As before the resilience of Irish nationalism was represented by a faction.

Yet, in comparison with the resolute demonstration of July 1877, the activist wing itself seemed strangely reticent and short of enthusiasm. It has been noted that its early performances were "perfunctory and half-hearted". Malcolm Brown suggests that Parnell had "moved on from parliamentary vendetta" to "the search for a mechanism to tap the power of Irish militancy". So he "bided his time" and "spent most of his energy" in a "courtship dance with the Fenians",[2] who he believed were "the men to drive the ship...".[3] However, this is true more of 1879 and the latter than the earlier part of 1878. Dr. Thornley advances another explanation that after Parnell had resolved to shelve "the issue of parliamentary policy until the next general election", he "could

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1. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 27 December 1877, op.cit.
2. M. Brown, op.cit., p. 243.
3. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 117.

gain little profit from pressing on to an open breach with the party".[1] Comfortably outnumbered, the activists conceded the hopelessness of trying to convert an unsympatheic and lethargic majority. As Parnell lamented to a friend: "anyone will be better than the miserable duffers most of these Home Rulers are. The Irish party consists not only of do-nothings but know-nothings".[2] On the other hand, Parnell would hardly be deterred from renewed factiousness by the prospect of isolation and disapproving frowns. A more effective disincentive perhaps was the fear of Butt resigning for good, as in April he seemed set on doing.[3] The Times believed that he would have nothing to do with the management of the party, "unless some irregular and disorderly members of it reformed their conduct".[4] Butt's letter of retirement threw the party into confusion for it was feared that such a blow would "shiver to atoms the fragile fabric of Home Rule".[5] Parnell might have been reluctant to provoke an abdication crisis in whichhe could not guarantee ultimate victory for himself. Such a factor for the relative calm no one seems to have taken into account.

Historians of the period are too ready to assume that Parnell's succession, as the only logical and credible replacement for Butt, was pre-ordained. On the contrary, the issue in the spring and summer of 1878 was far from settled. Indeed, William Shaw was widely

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1. Thornley, op.cit., p. 349.
2. Parnell quoted in Abels, op.cit., p. 62.
3. Times, 11, 12, 13, 17, 22, 29 April 1878.
4. Ibid., 15 April 1878.
5. Ibid., 17 April 1878.

tipped to take over the helm should Butt prove obdurate.[1] Until Parnell had secured a power base in the country at large and obtained the neutrality if not the confidence of extreme nationalist elements, he was in no position to rally the party to his standard. He did not have American blessing which was crucial; the Clan na Gael was still undecided whether to support financially a parliamentary movement. Thus if Parnell was unquestionably the front runner, he was not the only contender for American recognition or aspirant for Butt's title. From activist ranks, Alexander Sullivan, O'Connor Power and O'Donnell all gave early promise of rivalry and in the art of public speaking and formal debate outshone Parnell.

Parnell had least to fear from Sullivan, who despite his history, was disliked by the Fenians and distrusted by Home Rulers, activists as well as moderates. He never really committed himself to either side, going part of the way with the former and severing his connections with the latter. As his brother remembered, Sullivan "generally voted with the obstructionists, and never against them", but "thought the game was being played too fast, and that they would surely find themselves checkmated ere long".[2] O'Connor Power already had the advantage of a Fenian background and walked the delicate line between constitutionalism and physical force. In addition, coming from a poor family himself, he could claim to have a much closer understanding of the common people than Parnell ever could. Yet his efforts "to anticipate the New Departure" only aroused "antipathy" amongst his old Fenian colleagues and towards the end of 1877 he was expelled, with Biggar

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1. Times, 15 April 1878.

2. T.D. Sullivan, op.cit., p. 182. See also D.N.B, Vol. XIX, p. 158.

and John Barry, from the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood for refusing to "withdraw from parliamentary life".[1]

Of the three, O'Donnell combined ambition and ability in the most enterprising fashion. He was the acknowledged "genius" who had led his tiny force so spectacularly in defence of the Boers against the might of the English Parliament.[2] When the American Irish applauded him as a rising star, it was little handicap that the moderates detested him as an opinionated upstart who imagined his "career" [would] be like Disraeli's".[3] Not every one disputed this parallel. In an account of the "obstructionists", a correspondent to a "Liverpool paper" devoted less space to Parnell than to O'Donnell, whom he described as "the young Disraeli, conceited, eccentric, brilliant-a future premier perhaps". Terence de Vere White finds it "quite ridiculous" that O'Donnell should have been rated "so highly".[4] Yet Parnell's followers did not underestimate his challenge. The story is told by O'Donnell himself that just before the January conference Matthew Harris, "an active agitator of the popular sort", warned him not to become a nuisance by prostituting his own claims:

> "Mr. O'Donnell, we hear that you want to be leader—well, if you do, you cannot; that is all. We have chosen the next leader. We are a nation of Catholics, and we want a Protestant. It looks well. We are a nation of peasants, and we want a landlord to head us. It looks well. You are neither a Protestant nor a landlord. Parnell is both."[5]

While O'Donnell did not fulfil these desired qualifications, he was according to John Denvir "then in the odour of sanctity".[6] Although

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1. Thornley, op.cit. p. 290.
2. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 109. See Irish World, 29 September 1877.
3. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 23 April 1878, MacDonagh Papers, Ms 11, 446.
4. See de Vere White, op.cit., p. 347.
5. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 256.
6. J. Denvir, The Irish in Britain, London 1892, p. 274.

he was still "loyal" to Parnell,[1] he was unwilling to "abet"the candidature of a man whom he considered his pupil and inferior. The symptoms of rupture between the two leading activists had already been diagnosed by some onlookers and were not unwelcome. Edmund Dwyer Gray, for one, saw eventual confrontation opening up the opportunity for a third party to intervene as peacemaker and to become an alternative focus of allegiance.

The whole-hearted application of a policy that was less associated with his name than O'Donnell's might have little to recommend it to Parnell in these circumstances. Besides, although O'Donnell might proclaim his "individuality" and intention by signing his name to twelve notices of motion on subjects "ranging from Dunkeld Bridge to the administration of India",[2] Parliament was totally absorbed by the Turkish situation. The immediate problem, therefore, was to decide what attitude the Home Rule party should take on the burning question of the hour. When European eyes were on Westminster, it was imperative that the Irish should be seen to act as a body rather than as a collection of disparate groups. O'Donnell's brand of instruction was unlikely to serve the purpose of unity, for not only had the conference resolution on consultation to be observed, but moderate scruples about interference in imperial affairs had also to be reconciled.

In the event a policy of strict neutrality was decided upon at a party meeting on 31 January, although not unanimously. Seventeen Home

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1. J. Denvir, op.cit., p. 275.
2. Thornley, op.cit., p. 347.

Rulers carried Sullivan's proposal that they should "decline by vote or otherwise to identify" with either the Liberals or the Conservatives; three held out for "individual liberty"; and eight left the room refusing to vote.[1] The choice was not a simple one between taking sides with the Turks or the Russians, but was entangled with religious and nationalist considerations. Indeed, it had become evident in 1876 over the "Bulgarian atrocities" agitation begun by Gladstone that there were wide differences of approach. On the one hand, orthodox Catholic opinion felt obliged to follow the declared policy of the Vatican which was "virulently anti-Russian".[2] Embittered by Czarist oppression of Catholic Poland, the Pope had long assailed as schismatic oriental forms of Christianity and had likened Alexander II to anti-Christ in seeking the headship of the Russian church.[3] On the other hand, nationalists were emotionally drawn to espouse the cause of Slav nationality and to denounce the Turks as "blackguards" and "ruffians".[4] They were disinclined to view Alexander's appeal to the patriotism of the Bulgars as fraudulent. Speaking at a United States Independence Day rally in Dublin on 4 July 1876, Parnell had summed up advanced feeling by declaring that the Irish would never support Muslims against Christians in the East.[5] Issue had been avoided then by carefully taking the line that Englishmen were hypocrits to

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1. Times, 1 February 1878. Twenty-eight Home Rulers attended the adjourned meeting: Biggar, Blennerhassett, Collins, Conyngham, Dease, Mc.Downing, Dunbar, Errington, Gray, King Harman, Henry, Kirk, Lewis, McKenna, Moore, Nolan, O'Beirne, O'Byrne, O'Clery, D.M. O'Conor, O'Donnell, O'Gorman, O'Connor Power, R. Power, Redmond, Sheil, Sullivan, Ward.

2. R.T. Shannon, Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation 1876, London 1963, pp. 27, 80. See also Freeman's Journal, 20 September 1876.

3. Times, 4 February 1878.

4. Ibid., 11 September 1876.

5. Freeman's Journal, 5 July 1876.

moralise about Turkish oppression in view of England's own record of "brutality" in Ireland.[1]

If anything the divergence in Irish attitudes had hardened rather than narrowed in 1878. Very few saw the problem as clearly as P.J. Smyth, that the real choice was "not Russian versus Turkish rule, but liberty and slavery, life or death for Christian peoples". War on the Turkish side as he saw it would be a war against nationality.[2] The Nation, for example, recalling O'Connell's motto that "England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity", was concerned more with furthering Ireland's interest. "The demand for self-government", it advised, might or might not be served "by getting England into the Straits of the Dardanelles, but it would hardly be accomplished until she [was] put into straits of some kind".[3] It later sang a paean of "the holy war" and looked forward to the day when "'neath Russia's glorious banner", the conquering legions would be sent by God to India "her rule to overthrow".[4] Parnell also regarded the prospect of violent collision between England and Russia with satisfaction.[5] According to T.P. O'Connor, Parnell and his two sisters were part of the mob which "came with stones in their pockets to smash Gladstone's windows."[6] However, as the Dublin correspondent of the Times explained, the "large mass of the populace" could not forget

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1. Times, 23 September 1876.
2. Hansard, Vol. 237, 1 February 1878, Col.870.
3. Nation quoted in Times, 4 February 1878.
4. *Ibid.*, *19 February* 1878.
5. Hansard, op.cit., 11 February 1878, Col.1441.
6. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, i, p. 8.

that "while professing to be the liberator of Turkish Christians", Russia had crushed "with an iron heel the nationality of other Christians" who had far stronger claims upon their sympathy.[1] Thus there were many Home Rulers who looked on the Russian advance with misgiving. O'Donnell, in particular, rejected the view that "the government of the Czar was influenced by humanitarian motives", and that Alexander II was a "member of the Society of Friends". Had he been free to do so he would have "earnestly" co-operated with the Government in frustrating Russian ambitions, which he believed were directed not to the liberation of Balkan Christians from the Turkish yoke, but to the seizure of the British empire.[2]

Much the same kind of formula as in 1876 was adopted. O'Donnell talked about the discrepancy between the precept and practice of England in matters of international morality, and drew the attention of the House to the methods of warfare pursued by British troops on defenceless tribes in South Africa and the frontier provinces of India.[3] Indeed, until the embargo on individual action was lifted on 8 February,[4] the majority of Home Rulers refused to be drawn into the party conflict.[5] Sullivan, Meldon and Parnell declared with one voice that the Government could not expect Irish support unless the Dublin Parliament was restored and interim concessions granted in the meantime.[6] Even the application of Butt's "moral influence" tended to the same end of bartering concessions

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1. Times, 4 February 1878.

2. Hansard, op.cit., 8 February 1878, Cols. 1332-1335; see Times, 13 August 1878.

3. Ibid., 17 January 1878, Cols. 200-203; Vol. 238, 18 March 1878, Cols. 1511-14.

4. Times 9 February 1878.

5. On the motion to go into Committee, five Home Rulers--Bowyer, Browne, King Harman, Montagu, O'Leary--voted with the Government and four Home Rulers--Fay, Henry, D.M. O'Conor, The O'Conor Don--voted with the Opposition.

6. Hansard, Vol. 237, 17 January 1878, Cols. 144-151; 18 January, 159-62, 194-8.

for Irish "loyalty", although more blatantly. Writing to the Chief Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, on 11 February he stressed the dangers of an England divided against herself and suggested that "a full and frank concession of religious education" would do "most for imperial interests".[1] Much to Gladstone's disgust the Irish party was no more willing "to march shoulder to shoulder" with him "in the cause of freedom." At Oxford he bemoaned the "unsatisfactory" condition of Ireland's representation, when her members refused to "stretch forth the hand to cure oppression a hundred fold deeper and crimes a hundred fold blacker than any from which their country ever suffered".[2] He had evidently forgotten, if Home Rulers had not, that he had led the Liberals out of the House on the traditional Irish amendment to the Address.[3] As Sullivan reminded him, Home Rulers were not going to express their confidence "in the generalship of the front Opposition Bench", or "march into battle" behind leaders who might "desert" them at "the critical moment of action". Instead, as they alone were "in a position to hold the balance impartially between Turkey and Russia", they would prove it by abstaining. Sullivan assured Gladstone that the Irish party had the deepest sympathy with the Christian population of the East, but that "it could not give its gratitude to a power [Russia] which, in its own dominions, was an enslaver."[4]

The appearance of unity was achieved on the Eastern Question, but the active Home Rulers found the price a heavy one. Inspite of the almost casual slaughter of Irish Bills, there was a total relaxation of effort among the rest of the party. By 11 March the limits of toleration were

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1. Butt to Beach, 11 February 1878, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832.
2. Times, 31 January 1878.
3. Nation, 26 January 1878.
4. Hansard, op.cit., 8 February 1878, Cols. 1409-1412.

reached and at a special conference, Parnell, O'Donnell and O'Connor Power passed a resolution censuring "most strongly" the "unpatriotic absenteeism" of Home Rulers in "recent important divisions".[1] The "Quadrilateral" as Henry called them--namely Biggar, Parnell, O'Donnell and O'Connor Power[2]--patched up their "fraternal bond" and threw off the deadweight imposed by peace and quiet.

On 25 March they kept the House sitting all night on the Mutiny Bill, refusing to allow the Government to devolve it safely into the "private hands" of a select committee and beyond the reach of parliamentary amendment.[3] The first and the most concerted attack they made arose over the exemption of the Indian native army from the provisions of the Bill. O'Donnell argued that the House of Commons, with its respect for "constitutional rights and the liberty of the subject", was a much better judge of the rights of native soldiers than either the Viceroy or the Government of India. If Indian military matters came under the supervision of Parliament, "there would be no more of [those] frightful butcheries and blowing away from canon" which had alienated the population from military rule.[4] Parnell and Biggar supported O'Donnell's case, but the moderates who had not apparently been briefed beforehand were livid. Mitchel Henry described O'Donnell's objections as "crude" and "unreasonable"[5] and Major O'Beirne, who had served in the Oudh campaign of 1858-9[6], dismissed them as "a mere piece of obstruction".

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1. Times, 12 March 1873.
2. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 23 April 1873, op.cit.
3. Hansard, Vol. 233, 25 March 1873 Col.1973.
4. Ibid., Cols.1985-87.
5. Ibid., Col.1991.
6. See Dod's Parliamentary Companion, 1873.

Considering himself qualified to speak on Indian affairs, Henry stated that India was held by conquest, not consent, and therefore required to be dealt with differently.[1] Parnell retorted that the same argument could apply equally well to Ireland which was as much a conquered country as India.[2] Even Major Nolan was noticeably torn between his allegiance as a serving military officer and as an "Obstructive" nationalist; he solved his dilemma by keeping well in the background. When O'Donnell divided the House he was overwhelmed by 137 votes to 9, as many Home Rulers opposing as supporting the activist amendment.[3]

The Committee stage spilled over into two more days with the "Quadrilateral" proposing a series of reforms relating to courts-martial, flogging, solitary confinement and treatment of prisoners. As on the South Africa Bill the activists were left for the most part to fight on alone, abandoned by the moderates when the going got tough. On clause 16, for example, Mitchel Henry, who was temporary chairman, announced that he "had dissociated himself" from the active group because of their "unreasonable proposals" and had voted with the Government.[4] He was promptly denounced by Parnell and O'Donnell for betraying his own principles and for advocating a doctrine of trust only suitable for an "evening tea-party".[5] Henry's ultimate disillusionment with activism stemmed from this debate and his complete alienation from Parnell was only a question of time. Dismayed by the reappearance of "idle and childish" tactics which he thought had been shelved for good, he wrote despairingly to O'Neill Daunt:

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 1990.
2. Ibid., Col. 1990; Nation, 30 March 1878.
3. Home Rulers against: Bowyer, Collins, Errington, French, Henry, O'Beirne*, O'Conor Don. Home Rulers for: Biggar, Fay, O'Gorman, O'Sullivan, Parnell, R. Power. Tellers: O'Donnell, O'Connor Power, *O'Beirne generally voted with the activists, however.
4. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 2011, 2022-3. When it appeared, however, that the Government had made up its mind to pass the Bill "verbatim et literatim", Henry subsequently dispensed his vote to whatever side he considered to be fair.

> "Perpetual speeches, wrangles, and unreasonable motions, often made without any thought at all, and often based on the most ridiculous notions and without a knowledge of facts, are simply discrediting us absolutely".[1]

As he saw it the worst offender was O'Donnell, a man "without principle of any kind", who said the "most insulting things" and let his words "fall in drops libre distillation". The worst part of it was that he again "pulled the strings of Parnell" but would have "no consultation with anyone". The episode over Lord Leitrim was he thought "characteristic". All of a sudden O'Donnell and Parnell, without advising the party, had referred to outrages "moral and mental" that had been committed by Leitrim as "if it was all proved and beyond controversy".[2] Henry's explanation for the resurgence of bull-headed obstruction was that whether "consciously" or "unconsciously", Biggar, Parnell, O'Donnell and O'Connor Power were the "instruments" of the Fenians. The party had been unable to hold Home Rule meetings in either Dublin or the large cities because Butt could no longer "secure" Fenian "forbearance".[3]

While O'Donnell claimed that activist exertions, especially Parnell's,[4] were "a great monument of diligence" and "humanitarianism of the best kind",[5] he also admitted that there was other "very serious work in progress".[6] That a further demonstration of Irish parliamentary capability coincided with a secret visit to Ireland and London by Dr. Carroll,[7] had

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1. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 15 June 1878, Butt Papers, Vol. III, fs 832.
2. Hansard, Vol. 239, 12 April 1878, Cols. 1259-63.
3. See Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 23 April 1878, op.cit.
4. Parnell, who excelled everyone by making one hundred and sixty speeches, was included in the select committee appointed on 11 April to consider the reform of the Mutiny and Mutiny Marine Acts.
5. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 262.
6. Ibid., p. 267.
7. See Desp. (copy) Secret No. 9, Crump to Thornton, 10 January 1878, Enclosure No. I in Desp. Secret No. 9, Thornton to Derby, 14 January 1878, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1706, 1878.

something to do with the laying of foundations of "co-operation between Irish forces on both sides of the Atlantic" that "had been expected for a long time".[1] Significantly, Carroll had thought that obstruction was at the "end of its tether" and that its only chance for life was in "knocking up a d--d fuss generally". Even then he doubted its value without military support:

> "Possibly it is something to call the world's attention to Ireland but will the world think better of her good sense when this whole fuss ends in talk and nothing more".[2]

Parnell in fact met Carroll in Ireland and declared himself in favour of absolute independence, receiving in turn the promise of friendly support in all that was done towards such an end.[3] Later, as spokesmen of the parliamentary forces, Parnell and O'Donnell were invited to a joint conference with Dr. Carroll and John O'Leary of the Irish Republican Brotherhood representing the revolutionary organisations of America and Ireland. The meeting took place at the Surrey Hotel in the Strand but did not resolve outstanding differences.[4] According to John Devoy, Parnell was "quite willing to come to an understanding with Carroll", but that a disagreement between O'Kelly and O'Leary over O'Connor Power prevented any formal arrangement.[5] O'Donnell, who was deputed by Parnell to explain how the "active policy of parliamentarianism" and the "policy of insurrection" - "the voice and the sword" - could

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 262.
2. Carroll to Devoy, 16 November 1877, in Devoy's Post Bag, i, pp. 279-82.
3. See Carroll to Devoy, 24 July 1906, ibid., p. 298.
4. Accounts of the meeting can be found in O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 270-285 and R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 159-160.
5. J. Devoy, Recollections of an Irish Rebel, New York 1929, p. 283.

co-operate effectively, also maintained that he failed to convince the Fenian delegates. O'Leary, who did most of the talking for the other side, was unimpressed by the argument that while they were waiting for the right conditions for armed uprising, much could be done to make Ireland "more prosperous, more free, more Nationalist, more ready for anything which might turn up". "So long as Ireland was governed at London--would it not be better", O'Donnell had asked, "to have representatives who would speak like Irishmen, rather than have ministerial hacks and flatterers?":

> "If they [Home Rulers] could associate the name of Ireland with help to the suffering and overworked among the English people, would they not be aiding the cause of their country by making her name popular among the masses? Were they not bound to do all in their power to redress the wrongs of subjugated countries who had no other voices to speak for them? Did they cease to be Nationalists by defending India?"

But the Fenian was "uncompromising".[1] In answer to O'Donnell's appeal that if he were an "Edmund Burke" he would "defend the oppressed Indians and make things unpleasant for Warren Hastings", he retorted that if the Indians gave the English "just a touch of Brian Boru" that "would be better than any Edmund Burke in or out of Parliament".[2] If the "chasm" remained "too wide to be over leaped",[3] Carroll reported back to Patrick Mahon that it was pleasant to be able to inform him that Parnell, O'Donnell and Biggar expressed "themselves at the firm's service for anything they [could] do in their line."[4]

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1. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 160.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 273-5.
3. R.B. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 160.
4. Carroll to Mahon, 30 March 1878, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 324-5.

O'Donnell had further consultations with Carroll alone and was asked to supply a memorandum of the proposals he had made at the meeting. He produced a "hand-printed document" set out under fourteen heads and entitled "What Nationalists Could Do". Especially relevant to the policy of intervention were the third and fourteenth proposals:

> "3. Federal Home Rule has this vast advantage over mere repeal or separation, that it promoted the unity and co-operation between the Irish in Ireland and the Irish in the British Dominions outside of Ireland...who could often help one another by vote and influence.
>
> 14. Always to remember that, beside the ordinary considerations of human and divine justice, India has sacred claims to Irish sympathy, because it was Irish soldiers, Irish regiments, and often Irish generals and statesmen who deprived India of her native government and independence."

The latter was a significant variation of Butt's 1873 theme about Irish claims on India. The emphasis was away from the materialistic rights of Ireland stressed at the Home Rule Conference, more towards an obligation of atonement for wrong/s committed. As Irishmen in the past had helped deprive India of her independence it was just that they now did all in their power to restore it. O'Donnell believed wrongly that Dr. Carroll neither accepted any of the principles outlined nor showed any interest in the document;[1] "very possibly, when he noted as much as he thought worth any notice, he made a summary for his report, and cast away a paper which contained so many views which he was not accustomed to admire".[2] Although he had various reservations about the value of constitutional action, Carroll in fact considered that O'Donnell should be given all possible encouragement and was

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1. Carroll to Devoy, 14 August 1878, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 343-5.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 275-8.

prepared to make arrangements for him to come to America on a lecture tour. He wrote to Devoy on 20 July 1878 in favour of the idea:

> "He has done so many good things that we should sustain him in every way in our power, and hereafter set ourselves right through the paper, where he has set us in a wrong light. He will be able to do work of great importance in India of which more when I see you."[1]

Obviously, O'Donnell had let Carroll into the secret of his more intimate plans of educating Indian nationalists and of forming an alliance for mutual benefit. Yet it is extremely doubtful whether the American possessed any of the humanitarian qualities with which Patrick Ford clothed his detestation of the British empire. The good work he conceived from O'Donnell's intervention in Indian affairs was probably calculated in terms of the mischief it could cause the Raj. O'Donnell was most impressed by the "white-hot intensity of his hatred of England". Having a "fierce longing for revenge", "his feeling towards England resembled nothing so much as the feeling of a Russian Nihilist towards the Government of the Tsar".[2]

As Sir Edward Thornton informed Derby, the Fenians were showing a good deal of activity and would "avail themselves of the opportunity to strike a blow" preferably in Ireland, though they would be willing "to do mischief elsewhere", should Great Britain "unhappily be involved in war".[3]

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1. Carroll to Devoy, 20 July 1878, Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 334-6.

2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 275, 279; for a description of Carroll, who was apparently a native of Co. Derry, see Desp. Secret No. 15, Thornton to Derby, 21 January 1878, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1706, 1878.

3. Desp. Secret No. 62, Thornton to Derby, 5 March 1878, ibid.

III Indian Overtures

In India, the parliamentary activities of O'Donnell and Parnell were taken at face value by the nationalist English language press. Ever since the struggle on the South Africa Bill, the Home Rule party had gained the reputation for philanthropic enterprise, confirmed rather than contradicted by subsequent intervention. O'Donnell found that the agitation excited by the 26 hours debate "extended in widening circles":

> "It certainly was a sustained attack upon a great administrative act of the Imperial Government, and it was an attack by men who, as a race, were excluded from the Imperial Government, and who now showed to other races, similarly outlawed, that even the peaceful resources of nationalist resentment were far from being exhausted."[1]

Many doors were now opened to him by Indian nationalist sympathisers, who regarded the South African debate as an historic breakthrough. O'Donnell recorded that Carlo Biale, a retired Calcutta Merchant with mercantile connections in Bengal, subsequently invited him to gatherings where he found many Indians who were "extraordinarily impressed by the long and unsparing criticism in Parliament of a Government measure of such importance." It was there that he had first met Genendra Mohun Tagore, a keen supporter of nationalist development, whom he considered in many ways to be a "brown-skinned O'Brien". Tagore had closely observed the Irish defence of the Transvaal and urged O'Donnell to repeat the recipe with respect to Indian questions.[2]

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 215.

2. Ibid., p. 215; ii, p. 427.

O'Donnell obliged at every opportunity and his increased movement in Indian circles was reflected by a burgeoning inquiry into all manner of Indian grievances. In 1877 O'Donnell's sole intrusion into Indian affairs was on the Indian Loan Bill. In 1878 he asked nine miscellaneous questions, supported three resolutions of which one was his own, proposed one motion, and contributed to several debates in which India was involved, whether directly or indirectly.

The Hindoo Patriot of Calcutta, the leading native journal and recognised organ of the British Indian Association,[1] also drew inspiration and comfort from the Irish performance on the South Africa, the Prisons and the Mutiny Bills. Thoroughly disillusioned by the failure of the "great Conservative and Liberal Parties" to take up Indian questions, except "by fits and starts", and doubtful whether solitary Members, like Fawcett, could command any following, it reached out for help to the party which it described as "a force to contend with in the House of Commons":

> "We feel a national interest in the prospects of the Irish party. Frank, generous and tender-hearted, the Irish may lend a sympathising heart to the dumb millions of India... if the Irish party as a party make India one of their battle cries there will be some hope. They now number about 65 members, and if they muster in force on an Indian debate, it means a house of 130 members, and if a house of 130 members decides on Indian questions intelligently and honestly we must bow to its decision".[2]

This new-found faith in the Home Rule party was founded on an understandable miscalculation of its homogeneous strength. The Patriot was hardly in a position to know the real alignment in Irish politics. Just as Home Rulers did not hold "the balance of power" in Parliament, so the activists were not a representative cross-section of party opinion.

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1. See Seal, op.cit., p. 204.
2. Hindoo Patriot, 17 December 1877.

Yet for several years the Patriot upheld the fiction that they were. Its appeals to Home Rulers to include India in their "programme of parliamentary campaign" largely stemmed from a very high regard for O'Donnell.[1] Probably as an index of his parliamentary activity and because of his undisputed command of Irish attacks on imperial issues, the Hindoo Patriot persistently looked on O'Donnell as the leader of the Home Rule movement.[2] The years under both the Gladstone and Disraeli administrations were dismissed as entirely barren of concession to national demands and the Patriot felt there was nothing to lose from seeking Irish patronage. However, it went to some pains to prove the party's "respectability" and to discount reports of its low status at Westminster.[3]

To O'Donnell the article in which these views were expressed was sweet vindication indeed, and he forwarded it together with an explanatory letter to the Nation. At a time when the party was divided and inactive, he saw the article as "highly calculated to remind the Irish people of the position and influence" that was in the "reach of a vigilant and united Home Rule party". The numerical mistakes he dismissed as "trifling errors" that should not deflect attention from the main purpose. The Hindoo Patriot had made a definite proposal of a nationalist alliance, which he trusted would engage the "serious attention of every Irish patriot".[4] Such a concept was, as has been

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 27 December 1877.
2. Ibid., 11, 18 February; 16 March; 29 April; 10 June 1878.
3. See for example, G.W.E. Russell, Sir Wilfred Lawson, A Memoir, London 1909, p. 153.
4. Nation, 23 March 1878.

seen, the third canon of O'Donnell's interventionist programme. In fact the first move came not from Home Rulers but from the Indians themselves and was probably provoked by the Indian Vernacular Press Act. Certainly a definite approach to sound out Home Rulers about the prospect of close co-operation was made by an Indian delegation, shortly after O'Donnell and Sullivan had protested against the inequality embodied in the new Press law.

The Act had been rushed through the Viceroy's Legislative Council in a single sitting with less than the normal formalities.[1] Lord Lytton had for some time been disquieted by an "ominous restlessness among the Indian population", which he believed was related to distorted reports of the unhappy state of the Eastern crisis and to the "seditions and libellous language" of the vernacular press.[2] In justifying the need for the Bill, he referred to a selection of extracts from the native language press which welcomed war with Russia, and which portrayed English arms as being driven out of India *without* so much as a fight.[3] With the advance of Russian troops towards the Afghanistan frontier, his concern for the security of the empire was understandable.[4] Nevertheless, an Act which empowered a magistrate to take a bond from any vernacular publisher as a surety against violent articles, and which exempted the English language press from its provisions, seemed at best a panic measure unlikely to be accepted. The anomaly in the law was bound to arouse comment and

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1. This was introduced by Sir A. Arbuthnot on 13 March as Act IX of 1878. A full account of the episode can be found in Lady Betty Balfour, Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, London 1899, pp. 502-523.

2. Annual Register, 1878, p. 254.

3. Balfour, op.cit. p. 513. See Parl.P., Vol. LVII, 1878, C. 2040, pp.24-25.

4. See Lytton to Mallet, 15 March ; Lytton to Queen Victoria, 21 March; Lytton to Cranbrook, 10 June 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 518/3.

criticism in India, if not eventually in Parliament itself. Lord Salisbury, however, did not anticipate serious opposition to the measure and he trusted that Lytton's diagnosis relating to the loss of faith in British power was the correct one. If the Viceroy might expect "a certain amount of snivelling from the doctrinaires of Radicalism" he need not worry unduly, for their preaching did not go for much.[1] In the event both men underestimated the abhorrence which Irish nationalists had of censorship.

Perhaps to resurrect old scores, the activists at once accused the Indian Government of despotism. Even as the English papers carried the first reports of the new Act,[2] A.M. Sullivan asked the Under-Secretary for India for an explanation[3] and O'Donnell in an early motion of censure tried to establish the practical supremacy of Parliament over the discretion of an irresponsible Council. He moved:

> "That legislation for our Indian-fellow subjects subversive of fundamental principles of the British Constitution should not be adopted without this House being previously consulted upon the urgent necessity of such a course".

O'Donnell was at his most incisive. Not even in the worst governed portions of Europe at anytime that century, he said, was there anything to rival "that engine for the suppression of opinion" just set up in India. Attacking the Act at its weakest point, he protested against the "slur" cast upon the native languages and the "embargo" laid upon native thought by specially penalising the vernacular journals. No possible good could possibly come from a gagged press,

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1. Salisbury to Lytton, 15 March 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/3.

2. Times, 18 March 1878.

3. Hansard, Vol. 238, 19 March 1878, Col. 1592.

"a safety-valve of Indian thought". O'Donnell predicted that the House should not be surprised therefore if it found out that they had been "slumbering on the edge of a pent-up volcano".[1]

The Liberals regarded the Irish attack as premature and attempted to head it off. While Gladstone expressed pain at the announcement of an Indian Press law, he begged Home Rulers not to prosecute an inquiry until the relevant papers had been received from the Government of India.[2] His plea for restraint was reiterated by Henry Fawcett.[3] Both intimated that the Liberal party would launch their own assault on the Act, once official papers were available to them. Keyes O'Clery, who would seldom be put off for any one, ignored the appeal. He recalled that the "Star Chamber Government in India" which had motivated Liberal expressions of regret, had in fact been experienced in Ireland under the Treason Felony Act of 1848. This discussion would consequently be read in Ireland with great interest for it showed the position that India was fast arriving at, as an empire under the British constitution.[4] O'Donnell, however, agreed to withdraw his motion though on the explicit understanding that the Liberals would throw their entire weight against the Act, if the Viceroy's explanations proved unsatisfactory.

Irish intervention thus set off an avalanche of inquiry in both Britain and India. With optimistic understatement, Lord Salisbury

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols.1596-1600.
2. Ibid., Cols.1600-1603.
3. Ibid., Cols.1605
4. Ibid., Cols.1605-6.

wrote to Lytton on 22 March that the Press law had created a "little consternation" among critics of the Indian Government, especially since the last fortnight had been a period of lull in the Eastern Question.[1] The lull was further punctuated by the untimely denial of the Bombay Town Hall by Sir Richard Temple for the purpose of a protest meeting against a recent license tax on trades and industries.[2] The English-language press, nationalist as well as Anglo-Indian, soundly criticised this decision, the Bengalee calling it an example of "arbitrary power unparalleled in these days of constitutional government".[3] News of the incident was reported in the Times on 14, 19 March and questioned about in the House of 2 April, again by O'Donnell. Lord George Hamilton's refusal to comment on the report until he had received either communication from the Government of India or formal complaints from the injured parties, was received with grave dissatisfaction.[4] Colonel O.T. Burne, formerly Private Secretary of Lord Lytton and at the time Political Secretary at the India Office, wired the Viceroy from London that the affair had made "a mountain out of a molehill" but had had quite an effect. Indeed it further exacerbated the growing disquiet over the Vernacular Press Act. Burne confirmed that Temple, "a great ass in some things", had by his action "stirred up the people against the Press Bill":

> "All was, as I telegraphed, going on as smoothly as possible. Now one agitation succeeds another, and is exaggerated by evil disposed persons including Gladstone."[5]

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1. Salisbury to Lytton, 22 March 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/3.

2. The meeting, eventually held in other premises, was attended by both Indian and English commercial leaders of Bombay.

3. Bengalee, 2 March 1878.

4. Hansard, Vol. 239, 2 April 1878, Cols.415-6.

5. Burne to Lytton, 28 March 1878, Lytton Papers, Eur. E. 218, 517/5.

The Nation seized on the incident as another typical example of the way the English "showed the utmost distrust in their Indian allies".[1]

Britain was launched into a "condition of India" controversy, in which dispute raged over whether the Act was necessitated by an India, unhappy, unprosperous, and discontented,or by the reverse.[2] In Ireland, the Nation, whose new proprietor T.D. Sullivan shared many of the humanitarian sympathies of his brother, analysed the measure in some detail. It concluded that the manner in which the Indian Press law had been enacted by the Viceroy's Council at Calcutta, was a facsimile of the mode of passing Coercion Acts and Habeas Corpus Suspension Acts for Ireland in the British Parliament. The real explanation for the "seditious" nature of the native press was not difficult to find. As India became educated it was only "natural" and "proper" that it should grow increasingly "intolerant of English rule". "An intelligent and educated people [could] never be satisfied with a condition of slavery".[3] The Nation concurred with the view that the interests "of the dumb millions of India" were "practically identical" with the interests of the Irish people. It reassured Indians that though denied parliamentary representation they could still look to Irish Members of Parliament for help and sympathy.[4] This was a promising and emphatic reply to the appeal of the Hindoo Patriot published in its columns the week before.

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1. Nation, 13 April 1878.
2. See Extract from Examiner in Supplement, Bengalee, 4 May 1878. The Liberals organised a series of protest meetings for late April and early May.
3. Nation, 23 March 1878.
4. Ibid., 30 March 1878.

Such then was the immediate background to the Indian approach to O'Donnell. Encouraged by the Reuter report of the debate that O'Donnell had initiated, a Committee of the Calcutta Indian Association decided to call a general meeting to memorialise Parliament against the Act.[1] The Committee expressed confidence that "despotic measures" would find no support in the "House of Representatives of a free people". If Gladstone, Bright and Fawcett, were named specifically as the ideal sponsors for their petition,[2] it was O'Donnell and Sullivan who were contacted in London by a Committee of "eighty influential Indian gentlemen", formed solely for the purpose of bringing Indian grievances against the Press Act to Parliament. Both were invited to attend a meeting on the subject so that they might lay the views of the Committee before the House.[3] From the report of the London correspondent of the Nation, other Home Rulers were also contacted by Indian delegates, although O'Donnell remained the obvious and most accessible channel for their entreaties. These preliminary contacts were a prelude to a wider dialogue between Indian nationalists and the activist party on a variety of questions affecting India in Parliament.

At the end of March, the Executive Council of the British Indian Association entered into direct communication with O'Donnell on the possibility of a reciprocal alliance between Indian nationalists and Home Rulers. In a letter posted from Calcutta on 27 March, and printed verbatim in A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the

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1. For the attitude and response of Indians to the Press Act see Somnath Roy, "Reprecussions of the Vernacular Press Act, 1878", in Journal of Indian History, Vol. 45, 1967, pp. 735-48.

2. Bengalee, 23 March 1878.

3. Nation, 30 March 1878.

Council praised O'Donnell for the "lively interest" he was taking in Indian affairs, and appealed to the Irish party to lend India its concerted support in Parliament:

> "The party with which you [O'Donnell] are connected, and which is ready to espouse any just cause and to advocate well-founded grievances in Parliament for the removal thereof, may do much in furtherance of the Indian cause, if it will have the goodness to accord its sympathy and support to the people of this country who are wholly unrepresented in Parliament, and who cannot hope to obtain a hearing in it without the help of those whom Providence has placed in a position to help their fellow-men and their fellow-subjects".[1]

This communication, signed by prominent nationalist dignitaries, including the Maharaja Jotendro Mohun Tagore, member of the Viceroy's Council, and Kristodas Pal, was no more specific than the original approach by the Hindoo Patriot. Nevertheless, O'Donnell was convinced that it was intended to lay the foundations of just such an alliance as he fondly envisaged. Indeed, he was further briefed about proposals of a precise nature, as to how "Providence" had placed Home Rulers "in a position to help their fellow-men". On condition that Ireland elected Indian representatives to speak for India in the House of Commons, he claimed that he was empowered to offer the Irish Party "the political and pecuniary support of a great Indian movement" and its promise to endorse the Irish demand for Home Rule. The scheme was narrowed down in detail to the selection of four Indians, "men of university attainments and considerable powers of oratory", chosen in India for Irish constituencies, to double as Home Rulers on all Irish questions and as Members for India backed by the Irish party on Indian affairs.[2]

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1. O'Donnell, History, II, pp. 429-30. It is also printed in Freeman's Journal, 13 August 1878. The underlining is the writer's.

2. Ibid., p. 428; C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 22N3. Dr. O'Brien gives the date of these negotiations as 1874. Although O'Donnell tends to be vague about chronology, available evidence conclusively indicates that they took place in 1878.

The Hindoo Patriot hinted at these specific arrangements when it published the 30th March article of the Nation.[1] On the grounds of necessity, it defended India's association with and reliance on a party that was at odds with Westminster:

> "We have no representatives in Parliament, though Parliament is the ultimate arbiter of our destiny. As a nation we are dumb, and any Member of Parliament or any Parliamentary party who will lend a tongue to us, are entitled to our warmest gratitude. Mr. O'Donnell and his party have done this, and promise to do more, and we feel deeply grateful to them".[2]

The "complex problem of Irish politics" and "English antipathy against Ireland", it was stated, had nothing to do with Indians. The reference to the "promise" of O'Donnell and the Home Rule party to do more than "lend a tongue" to India suggested a commitment of substance. However, the project was still-born, because starved of sufficient Irish backing to justify continued negotiations. Issac Butt had "warmly approved the idea", but according to O'Donnell, dared not risk the hostility of English Conservative opinion. As was his style Butt had probably lulled O'Donnell into confusing jovial good humour with qualified concurrence. The "inevitable libation" that was offered signified nothing more than the avoidance of frankness.[3] Parnell, on the other hand, was candid and direct. He finally closed the door on the scheme, because he was not convinced that it could excite any interest in Ireland, or appeal to "the future founders of the Land League". O'Donnell had no alternative but to call off the project as impracticable. As he saw it, it was a missed opportunity

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1. See below p. 156.
2. Hindoo Patriot, 29 April 1378. The underlining is the writer's.
3. See Abels., op.cit., p. 63.

and he remembered sorrowfully that the "vision of the Eastern continent being led by the Western island remained a vision".[1]

Subsequently, O'Donnell decided to test Irish public opinion for himself and in May embarked on a lightning visit to Ireland and to his constituency, the first since his election in June 1877. At Dungarvan, before an enthusiastic and boisterous crowd, he outlined his interpretation of the principles that motivated the party of action in Parliament. He adumbrated three; the first involved the constant attendance in the House of Commons upon all Irish questions; the second, the attendance as nearly as possible upon all imperial questions; and the third, a special class of imperial question in which as "Irishmen" and "lovers of liberty", they were bound to interest themselves:

> "A class supplied by the grievances of those injured races and populations over whom England ruled with a rod of iron as hard as that with which the Tzar ruled Poland".(cheers)

He went on to refer to his "commission" to lay petitions before the Home Rule party from the "unfortunate, overtaxed, unrepresented, and the oppressed people of India" asking the party to help them in the redress of their grievances.[2] O'Donnell was obviously appealing to his constituents for proof against the decisions of Butt and Parnell. He soon realised that it was a fruitless gesture and that they were right. Ordinary people knew little about the principles of the active policy, and as yet cared less, so long as activism was seen as an effective attack on Parliament. Of the reception, the Nation described it in rapturous terms as taking "high rank among the

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 428-9.

2. Freeman's Journal, 6 May 1878.

political demonstrations for which Ireland had become remarkable";[1] and George Errington confided to Butt his disappointment at the way Dungarvan received O'Donnell.[2] O'Donnell had hoped for a popular vote of confidence which he received, but not the "vulgar brawl" which he also encountered. With distaste he described how the horses had been taken from his carriage and how he had been drawn through the streets "by human muscles much inferior to the equine power which they displaced." All this to the various accompaniment of "Hurrah!", "Keep them at it!", "Don't let them sleep a wink!", "Pull down their ould Parliament!". O'Donnell thought such business "hot and nasty" and was painfully aware that the applause was intended less for internationalism than for "obstruction", which was regarded then as the "marvellous panacea for Ireland's ills".[3] The voice of the crowd was all for continued heroics at Westminster.

The British Indian Association could not have been unduly surprised that Home Rulers had poured cold water on Indian parliamentary representation. If they had raised their sights high, they must have been aware of the many hurdles that stood in the way of acceptance. Not least amongst these was the built-in English fear, that stemmed from the Mutiny, of Indian political advancement. On the Irish side, the scheme was from the outset faced with almost insurmountable difficulties. The activists had few safe seats to surrender and the moderates had too many insecure seats to safeguard, even had both groups been amenable. This did not seem to deter the Hindoo Patriot, however, which continued to have nothing but unstinted praise for O'Donnell, and to shower him with tributes:

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1. Nation, 11 May 1878.
2. Errington to Butt, 10 May 1878, Butt Papers, Ms 8700.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 247, 256-7.

> "He takes up questions which other M.P.s hesitate to notice, and is thus the means of ventilating Indian grievances in the House. It was he who first questioned the Under Secretary of State about the Vernacular Press Act,[1] and drew forth Mr. Gladstone. His cry was taken up by the English Press, and has led the Secretary of State to practically undo the Act of the Government of India. He it is who keeps up a running fire upon the India Office regarding all manner of Indian questions, a sort of Joe Hume, and the effect of his microscopic criticisms cannot be but good. He it was who compelled the Under Secretary of State to acknowledge that the Government of India will not interfere with the armies of the native princes."[2]

The Patriot dismissed as unfounded the charge of the Civil and Military Gazette that it had been "deluded by Irish bray" and that the Home Rulers cared as much for India as for "Timbuctoo".[3] The Dungarvan demonstration was presented as evidence of Irish good faith and as conclusive proof that O'Donnell had successfully "educated his party" to share as "lively" an interest in Indian affairs as he himself displayed. Regarding the doubts cast about Irish sincerity, the Patriot turned a Nelsonian eye:

> "We judge men by their acts, and if we find from their acts that they are friendly to us, what business have we to inquire into their motives or what reasons have we to suppose that they are not activated by the best of motives."

As far as it was concerned, a "constitutional" party "led" by O'Donnell had "just claim to the support of all right-minded and impartial men".[4]

The readiness of this nationalist although conservative journal to stand by the Irish party in the face not only of Anglo-Indian

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1. Both the Bengalee and the Hindoo Patriot acknowledged that O'Donnell had been the first to raise a protest against this Act in Parliament.

2. Hindoo Patriot, 8 July 1878.

3. Civil and Military Gazette quoted in Ibid., 10 June 1878.

4. Ibid.

taunts but also of the more advanced Bengalee's caution, stemmed both from the special relationship with O'Donnell and from the imagined impotence of the Radicals. On the first point, O'Donnell talked affectionately of the editor, Kristodas Pal, as his "close adviser and confidant for many years".[1] The bond of friendship between the two men would explain inconsistencies in O'Donnell's defence of Indian interests. That he did not flinch from defending the prerogatives and rights of the Princes against British encroachment, out of character with his smearing criticism of the Irish aristocracy,[2] is partly explained by the aristocratic patrons of the Hindoo Patriot. This consideration was, as it turned out, a vital factor of O'Donnell's continued popularity with the journal. The Patriot, for example, was delighted by the successful agitation begun by O'Donnell[3] to force the Indian Government to return the fortress of Gwalior to the Maharaja Scindia;[4] it was much less complimentary when he failed to influence the Government over the visit of the infant Maharaja of Cooch Behar to Europe.[5] It was significant that when O'Donnell denounced Bengali landlordism in 1880[6] he was promptly discarded by the Patriot as its favourite parliamentary spokesman. Early Indian as Irish nationalists in the Home Rule party under Butt, comprised a large proportion of politically but not socially progressive landlords. However, another reason was that O'Donnell's sympathies were not confined to down-trodden peasants but were given to anyone in conflict with the British. On the second point, unlike the Bengalee, the Hindoo Patriot

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 431.
2. Consider, for example, his attack on the Marquis of Leitrim.
3. Hansard, Vol. 238, 21 March 1878, Col.1757.
4. Hindoo Patriot, 6 May 1878.
5. Ibid., 1 July 1878. When O'Donnell questioned the Under-Secretary for India, the Patriot's comment was that he "was evidently not well-instructed" and should have pursued a different line of inquiry.
6. See Chapter Six, section two.

did not put all its faith in the Liberals out of any traditional reliance. Its preference for O'Donnell over Fawcett, Dilke, Bright and Sir George Campbell was based on a count of parliamentary heads, if mistaken, that each could command. Thus in comparison with Fawcett and Campbell who "represented themselves" and had "no party to back them", O'Donnell was able to call on "seventy Home Rulers" in a division.[1] It was not without a tinge of regret that Campbell acknowledged that the Hindoo Patriot had replaced its "old hero" Henry Fawcett by the "Hon. Member for Dungarvan", whom he said, was described "as a very dazzling fellow indeed".[2]

As late as July, the Hindoo Patriot maintained the illusion of an all-powerful Irish contingent in Parliament, despite evidence in a number of divisions that the Home Rule vote fell substantially below the seventy mark. This was true of two resolutions of Fawcett in April condemning the increased salt duty in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies,[3] and again of a motion concerning the principle of sending Indian troops to Malta without first consulting Parliament.[4] In all three divisions the Irish contribution barely rose above twenty. Nevertheless, the

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 8 July 1878.

2. Hansard, Vol. 242, 23 July 1878, Col.75.

3. Hindoo Patriot, 13 May 1878; Hansard, Vol. 239, 2 April 1878, Cols.417-470.

4. Freeman's Journal, 25 May 1878; Hansard, Vol. 240, 20 May 1878, Cols.264-348; 362-438, 499-614. Twenty Home Rulers voted with the Liberals in opposition: Blennerhasset, Brooks, Collins, Conyngham, Delahunty, Mc.Downing, Errington, Henry, Meldon, Murphy, Nolan, Sir P.O'Brien, D.M. O'Conor, The O'Conor Don, O'Donnell, O'Shaughnessy, O'Sullivan, O'Connor Power, P.J. Smyth, Sullivan,

Hindoo Patriot instanced the "twenty-two"Home Rulers who voted with Fawcett in the first, as an example of the "substantial service" rendered by the Irish party to India.[1] By past standards this was an exceptionally large number, and was ironically more a credit to Fawcett's influence than to O'Donnell's. The Radical leader had appealed to Butt on 22 March to say a "few words" in support of his resolution against "the most objectionable measure of taxation that could possibly be devised" and promised to secure him the hour he would prefer for the debate.[2] Butt was still too unwell to attend Parliament himself, but he urged his followers to go along with Fawcett. This would explain the presence of less prominent Home Rulers who usually responded to Indian issues by retiring to the coffee room, but who on this occasion as on the Malta division could safely reconcile their intervention as obliging Butt and as helping the Liberal interest. If the Radicals for their part now regarded Home Rulers as natural allies against Conservative foreign policy, they much preferred the statesmanlike company of Butt than that of the less manageable though more sincere activists. Significantly, O'Donnell, Biggar, Parnell, Kirk, Gray and Richard Power were absent from one or both divisions, and the Irish were in effect silent passengers.

The Hindoo Patriot should not have taken any comfort from the Irish vote against the despatch of Indian troops to Malta, for another reason. It welcomed the expedition as having a "moral value of the highest importance" and praised rather than criticised Disraeli's decision:

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 13 May 1878. Bowyer, Browne, Conyngham, Dalway,* Dease, Delahanhy, Dunbar, Ennis, Errington, French, Meldon, A. Moore, Nolan, Sir P. O'Brien, O'Clery, O'Sullivan, O'Shaughnessy, Parnell, O'Connor Power, R. Power, Sheil, Stacpoole;*Dalway described himself as a "Liberal-Conservative".

2. Fawcett to Butt, 27 March 1878, Butt Papers, Ms 8700.

> "By inviting India to join England in a fellowship of arms we are disposed to think she has paid a compliment to her dependancy."[1]

Yet Irish opinion was unequivocally opposed to the deployment of Indian troops overseas, and to the intimidation of European audiences by such a display of military might. On 20 July, the Freeman's Journal talked about the unhealthy and unaccustomed climate which Indians would face in Malta, and thought it "unhandsome" that Indian soldiers, paid for by India, should occupy a position of "such disaster".[2] In Parliament O'Donnell announced his intention to resist what he termed the advance of "absolutionist principles".[3] Such discrepancies the Hindoo Patriot chose to ignore and upbraided only Gladstone for his more prominent article in the Nineteenth Century against Conservative policy.[4]

The attention of the Indian press was soon diverted to the Vernacular Press Act, which again became the centre of controversy. On 29 June, the long-awaited Blue-book, containing a copy of correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State relating to the Act, was published.[5] Included were the dissents of three members of the Indian Council, Sir E. Perry, Sir W. Muir, and Colonel Yule,[6] and an important note of Sir A. Hobhouse,[7] which the new Secretary of

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 1 July 1878. A select committee, appointed on 23 July to inquire into the cost of sending Indian troops to Malta, included two Home Rulers, Richard Power and Sir Patrick O'Brien.

2. Freeman's Journal, 20 July 1878.

3. Hansard, Vol. 240, 23 May 1878, Cols. 608-9.

4. Hindoo Patriot, 1 July 1878. See W.E. Gladstone, "Liberty in the East and West", in Nineteenth Century, Vol. III, 1878, pp. 1154-1174.

5. See Parl. P., 1878, Vol. LVII, C 2040.

6. Ibid., C 2077.

7. Ibid., C 2040, pp. 37-41.

State for India, Lord Cranbrook, reluctantly released. Extracts from the correspondence revealed that Government opinion had looked to the Irish Peace Preservation Act of 1870 for guidance, and that sections 30 to 32 had been imported into India and embodied in the Indian Press law.[1] Provisions regarding the deposit and forfeiture of security against seditious articles, the confiscation of plant and materials, and the powers of search, answered with some closeness to these sections. Section 33 of the Irish Act, which gave redress to Irish proprietors aggrieved by the action of the Government, to maintain a suit for damages on account of illegal seizure, was omitted in the final draft. This by-passed Hobhouse's objection that the degree of advantage to be gained by a new Press law would be made ineffective by that section.[2] In its operation then, the Vernacular Press Act was potentially more arbitrary than its Irish equivalent, which Sir E. Perry pointed out in his Minute of Dissent in Council on 30th May:

> "If the statute is good in itself, and is necessary for the maintenance of the public tranquillity, it would be ungenerous to Lord Lytton's Government to bring forward prominently objections to his manner of doing what is right. The statute proceeds on three main principles:-
>
> 1. Power to demand security from newspaper proprietors not to publish articles likely to excite disaffection.
> 2. Establishment of a censorship.
> 3. Power to seize newspaper plant, etc.etc., after warning.
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> The Act is thus assimilated to the procedure adopted by the two Napoleons in France, and it incorporates the very stringent provisions of the Irish Coercion Act of 1870,

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1. Desp. Legislative No.24, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 31 May 1877, op.cit., pp. 78-81.

2. Hobhouse's note on native newspapers, 10 August 1877, ibid., p. 38.

> a temporary measure, passed to meet a temporary evil, and dropped by the present Government in 1874. But the new India Act omits the remedies against any abuse of authority, which the Irish statute carefully provided. It must be admitted that no Imperial legislator could forge a more powerful weapon for extirpating an obnoxious Press".[1]

The publication of these extracts embarrassed the Government, and Cranbook rebuked Lytton for alluding to confidential information in public documents that might be read before Parliament.[2]

The Liberal party was mildly critical of the measure and secured a formal d bate. Gladstone, in fact, took a generous view of the motives that led the Government of India to construct a new Act, and merely proposed the safeguard that all proceedings executed under its terms be reported to the Secretary of State and relayed at intervals to Parliament.[3] Probably Cranbrook's instruction to Lord Lytton to suspend or abandon the contentious section of the Act dealing with the censorship of Vernacular proofs, robbed the Lib rals of their most damaging argument. Nor could much be done to exploit the strongest features of Irish coercion in the Act, for a Liberal Government had created them in 1870. Indeed, the most Gladstone could do was to express regret that the papers contained references to the Irish press as a sanction and an example for Indian legislation. He ventured to explain that the Irish Act was essentially temporary in character and was never intended to bring about a permanent change in the status of Irish newspapers. Edward Stanhope, the Under-Secretary of State, was

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1. Minute of Dissent of Sir E. Perry, op.cit., C 2077, pp. 2-3.
2. Cranbrook to Lytton, 25 June 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/3.
3. Hansard, Vol 242, 23 July 1878, Col. 48.

similarly handicapped. He wrote to Lytton that Gladstone had "laid himself a good deal open to observation by denying that his Irish Act afforded any precedent in the matter, but the necessity of avoiding an Irish row prevented its being taken full advantage of in Parliament".[1]

Home Rulers were also present in force but according to A.M. Sullivan failed to catch the Speaker's eye.[2] The House was thus spared vivid descriptions of the severity of the Irish Peace Preservation Act. Even O'Donnell was strangely subdued and his speech paled beside his amendment, that had condemned in no uncertain fashion Lord Lytton's attitude to the Indian press, and which had threatened such a lively debate.[3] Instead, he announced his intention to withdraw the implied censure on the Viceroy and was prepared to accept that the extraordinary measure before them had been framed for no other object than to promote the welfare of India.[4] He explained that what he really objected to was the "comprehensiveness" of the Act insofar as periodicals and other literature also fell within the scope of Section 10.[5] Stanhope noted with satisfaction that O'Donnell despite his "wild" resolution was not immoderate in language and that "no one speaker afterwards ever alluded to him or his resolution".[6] In fact, his amendment only excited procedural comment and was negated without a division.[7]

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1. Stanhope to Lytton, 26 July 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur.E. 218, 517/6.
2. Hansard, op.cit., Col.130.
3. Ibid., Col.67.
4. Ibid.; see also Times, 24 July 1878.
5. Hansard, op.cit., Cols.67-69.
6. Stanhope to Lytton, 26 July 1878, op.cit.
7. Hansard, op.cit., Col.130.

There are two explanations why O'Donnell decided to "cede" the fight to Gladstone[1]. The first is that he was prevailed upon by the Liberals not to undermine their motion, the principle of which he supported, by the introduction of any asperity to the discussion. The second is that he did not wish to embarrass the Indian Government at a time when he now believed its fears about Russian intentions justified. A few days later, his hostility towards Russian expansion in the Balkans and in Afghanistan proved stronger than his sense of self-preservation and his reluctance to alienate popular opinion in Ireland. Presumbably that decision was not arrived at spontaneously, but based on a long observation of the real dangers posed by Russian aggrandisement. It was his concern for India's future, in this case over the claims of party allegiance, that not only set him apart from his colleagues but also exposed the limits of his influence in Irish politics.

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1. See O'Donnell's reply to the vote of thanks of the British Indian Association, in Freeman's Journal, 20 May 1880.

Chapter IV

The Acid Test of Irish Nationalism 1878

I O'Donnell's Fall from Grace

II The New Departure Casts its Shadow

I. O'Donnell's Fall from Grace

The Eastern Question which had preoccupied Parliament throughout the year at the expense of nearly all other business, brought the session to a close with a full-dress debate, extending over four evenings from 29 July to 2 August. For Ireland and the Home Rule party, the debate proved a climacteric in which the leadership of Butt was finally discredited and the acceptable limits of Home Rule association with the empire defined. Both Isaac Butt and F.H. O'Donnell were brought face to face with the harsh realities of Irish politics. Each found to his cost that his views on the British empire were unacceptable to Irish nationalists in general; with the one his loyalty to Britain was considered tantamount to treason, with the other, his concept of Ireland leading the empire, if out of bondage, was open to all kinds of unfavourable interpretation. While the destruction of Butt as a political force and figure of affection was tragically completed, the separation of O'Donnell from Parnell became almost irreversible. It was significant that an issue of imperial policy should not only destroy the personal affection of the Irish for Butt, that the complete failure and eventual rejection of his Irish policy could not, but also place suspicion on the credentials of O'Donnell as a nationalist despite a record of unequalled and intelligent obstruction. O'Donnell found no reply to popular criticism and was saddled with a crippling reputation for untrustworthiness which put a blight on his whole "imperial" programme.

Ever since the beginning of the year the mood of the electorate, and of the press especially, had hardened. The Nation and the Irish World, with their teaching on English foreign entanglements from the standpoint of Irish opportunity, were determined to enforce a uniform pattern

of anti-imperialist behaviour. Even the Freeman's Journal, a firm supporter of moderation in the past, found little to say in favour of Butt's "excessive" loyalty to the Crown. The nationalism each purveyed could no longer muster any sympathy for Britain in her quest for European and imperial security. The Eastern debate set the seal on this approach, which characterised over the next seven years the interventionist attitude of the Home Rule party on the Afghanistan War, the Zulu and Transvaal difficulties, and the Egyptian uprising of Arabi Pasha.

When Beaconsfield and Salisbury returned in triumph from Berlin carrying an Anglo-Russian agreement on the delimitation of the new Balkan States and the Turkish empire, the Liberals made some half-hearted criticisms of the settlement. Hartington grudgingly acknowledged the extension of liberty and self-government to the new Slav states, but questioned the Government's failure to meet Greek claims and what he considered the "unnecessary" extension of Britain's "military liabilities" under the terms of the Anglo-Turkish Convention.[1] This guaranteed the future protection of Turkey in Asia from further Russian incursion. Hartington believed such a policy "insane", and held that if the security of India was to be given as the justification for this undertaking, the British navy in the Persian gulf was capable of resisting a Russian advance to the East. He predicted that the result of the Convention would be to give Russia an incalculable advantage should war break

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1. A concise discussion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement and of the parliamentary debate that followed can be found in R.W. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question, London 1935, Ch. XII.

out between the two powers; Britain was liable to "defend Asia Minor, not when she pleases, but when Russia pleases".[1] Successive Liberal speakers took up Hartington's charges and similarly attacked the pledge to defend Ottoman Turkey.

It might have been expected that the Home Rule party, as in February, would again steer a safe and neutral path. Indeed, as the first Home Ruler to speak, Major Nolan indicated the likely drift of Irish thinking, particularly when his loyalty to the British army was considered. While he expressed his approval of the cession of Cyprus and of the conduct of the Government at the Berlin Congress, he also took the line that the Anglo-Turkish Convention bound Britain "hand and foot to go to war on a future occasion".[2] His criticism of the Government admittedly was somewhat tame, but it did indicate a decided shift against Turkey and a growing admiration for the "liberating armies" of Russia. Tory warnings about the security of India being endangered seemed to be regarded as a diversion.

In this light, O'Donnell's intervention on the fourth night of the debate was hardly calculated to appeal to Irish nationalists, and in fact ran counter to revealed prejudice. Nolan's speech, the bias of the Dublin press, and past experience should all have acted as warning signs. It was no good reminding the House that it was from his pen that the first description of the Bulgarian insurrection had been

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1. Hansard, Vol. 242, 29 July 1878, Cols. 527-549.
2. Hansard, ibid., 1 August 1878, Cols. 917-8.

contributed to any English journal, three weeks before questions had been asked in Parliament.[1] Bowyer, Dunbar, King Harman, Lewis and Ward, though never dependable Home Rulers, had been severely reprimanded for voting with the Government at the beginning of the session on the supplementary estimates for the armed forces. Their sin lay chiefly in their support of a Conservative motion and in their subservience to the ministerial whip.[2] Nevertheless, O'Donnell recklessly threw his weight against the Liberals, if it could not be claimed directly behind the Government front bench. He announced that he could not give his vote for the foreign policy of the front Opposition for there was not a "rag" of foreign policy to be found there. There were many other things, he acknowledged--philanthropy, humanitarianism, generous denunciation of atrocities when committed upon the friends of Russia--but of a foreign policy they had not shown theslightest trace. He accused the Liberals of seeing and hearing as little as possible that tended to expose the character of the "Russian machinations, Russian provocations, and Russian conduct in the Turkish provinces", and of being too much influenced by the anti-Turkish agitation largely engendered by the exertions of Gladstone. "A disastrous contagion of the ideals of philanthropy and trust in Russian generosity", he stated, "had penetrated the ranks of the Opposition."[3] There is no doubt that O'Donnell was moved to adopt such a course because of a deep distrust of Russian expansion

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 2 August 1878, Col. 1036.
2. Thornley, op.cit., p. 361.
3. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 1036-1040.

especially in Asia. He harboured few illusions about the real nature of Russian administration in conquered territories, and cited a White-paper distributed among Members of Parliament a year previously in support of his allegations about Czarist brutality.[1] The paper contained a collection of official accounts from British consular agents in Warsaw and Odessa describing the Russian persecution of Polish "Uniates".[2] The reports were heavy with descriptions of torture, confiscation, pillage and exile as the normal methods of conversion to Russian "orthodoxy".[3]

Yet O'Donnell was on unstable ground when he tried to place his action within the framework of independent opposition:

> "He should support by his vote not so much the Government, for, in his opinion, they had committed only too many faults; not the Liberal and Conservative Party; but, as an Irishman, he was happy to support the National British Party on this question. As an Irishman who still believed in the union of Ireland and Britain, and who sincerely hoped that before long one would take as much pride as the other in the glory of the common Empire".[4]

Such an argument must have seemed little better than sophistry to flabbergasted Irishmen who were used to his stinging rebukes of Government and his familiar views about changing not conserving the empire. Indeed, O'Donnell realised the delicacy of his position: "To be always against the Government, right or wrong", he complained, "that was the fool's book of wisdom which no man should doubt or suffer to be

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1. Parl. P., 1877, Vol. LXXXIX, C 1715.

2. In this instance, Greek Catholics of Latin and Slavonic rite.

3. See for example, Desps., No. 2, Mansfield to Granville, 23 November 1872; No. 3, 29 January 1874; No. 21, Loftus to Derby, 5 July 1876. In Parl. P., op.cit.

4. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 1039.

doubted".[1] By any objective standard, his reference to the "National British Party" indicated the English Conservatives. He was to make the same point again under no less ambiguous circumstances.[2] On the question of Russia as against England, he refused to countenance the dictates of expediency advocated by the Nation and the Irish World:

> "He had often been compelled to speak, and would have to speak often again, in not too complimentary terms of the British Government; but it had never occurred to him, in any moment of hostility against any Government of the Realm, that any spot on earth could be improved by withdrawing it from the protection, from the authority, or even from the despotism, of the British Government, for the mere purpose of substituting the rule of Russia. The present question was Russia as against Britain in Asia, and on that question the most irreconciled Irishman, and the most captious Englishman, should unite in recognising that when the option was between Russia and England, it was exclusively England that should obtain their earnest and unfaltering support."[3]

His appeal was based upon an estimate of his influence over the party; in the event unjustified, though not it must be said unfounded. On imperial questions before, his direction had invariably been followed to the letter by his activist colleagues. Yet the choice on this occasion was not one between superior knowledge which O'Donnell claimed or the lack of it, but between a loyalty to Britain or a disloyalty to Ireland.

Looking back, it might be claimed that fate was unkind to O'Donnell. It was a distinct possibility that his outburst would have been ignored

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 292.

2. See Chapter 4, below p. 198. Yet see also O'Donnell to Salisbury 22 January 1894, Salisbury Papers, Special Correspondence. E. "You see I always consider you as the Chief of the only English National Party worth the permanent attention of an Irish Statesman."

3. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 1039-40.

as an isolated expression of eccentricity, as indeed it was by Sullivan.[1] However, it was followed an hour later by an unashamed panegyric of imperialism from Butt, which made toleration impossible. The Home Rule leader furiously attacked Hartington's motion and the crux of his argument, asserting that the possibility of a Russian acquisition of Constantinople was not merely a question bearing on the road to India, but involved much higher things:

> "I think England was losing her place in the estimation of foreign powers; and I think that was owing to our Ministers being under the influence of 'peace at any price', which, if carried into practise will generally end in war at any cost... . England has responsibilities already, created by her name, by what she has achieved, by the extent of the Empire she has founded, and by the colonies and commerce which she has established in every part of the globe. She cannot descend from her high position and let it be believed that she has ceased to be a living and moving power, while Russia works her wicked will upon the nations of the earth."[2]

For some time Butt had looked on the military intentions of both Germany and Russia with apprehension and had warned Sir Michael Hicks Beach in February that a vacillating and weak England could lead to their aggrandizement, to the reduction of England to a third-rate power, or to a war which would tax British resources to the utmost. His defence of the Government's Eastern policy can thus be seen as the fulfilment of his promise to Beach not to with hold the little support he could give to the ministry in resisting Russian aggression.[3]

Butt's speech caused considerable embarrassment in the Irish quarter. Even O'Clery felt compelled to clarify his position with respect to his leader's, and announced that as a member of the Home Rule party he was

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 1114-18. Sullivan did not allude to O'Donnell's speech at all.

2. Ibid., Cols. 1084-91.

3. Butt to Beach, 11 February 1878, op.cit.

not bound to act with either the Liberals or the Conservatives. This was a pertinent reminder to Butt of the parliamentary standards he had himself set in 1874. Irish Members of Parliament, O'Clery concluded, could have no interest in imperial affairs until the wrongs inflicted upon Ireland had been undone.[1] Alexander Sullivan, who could scarcely contain himself, was much more critical of Butt's role as an imperial sentinel, and delivered as crushing an indictment of Butt as the ailing Home Ruler had ever received in Parliament. "His voice", he said, "was all of Britain's greatness and Britain's glory; of Russia's acquisition and lust of territories. *Russia's lust of territory indeed! had he no word to say of* England's?". He fancied that the quotations Butt had drawn upon in describing Russia's annexations were a page from the history of British rule in India, or a passage from the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Butt, he held, had not faced the real substance and meaning of the question. There was in all this business the "gigantic issue of liberty and slavery for millions of the Christian race". Could he not have advocated liberty and independence as the solution of the Balkan problem? It was because of this insensitivity, Sullivan explained, that he now felt compelled to register his "first vote" on any matter relating to the Eastern Question.[2]

Sullivan's was the crucial interpretation of the issues involved, and one which O'Donnell with all his concentration on Russian motives, had been blinded to. Whatever he might say about Russian despotism, Russia had been the agent of liberty in the Balkans and had shown no obvious intention to create a permanent sphere of influence there.

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 1094-96.
2. Ibid., Col. 1115.

Hartington's motion was defeated by 338 votes to 195, well in excess of the normal working majority of 52; sixteen[1] Home Rulers, including O'Donnell, voting with the Government, ten Home Rulers[2] for the Opposition. Biggar, Parnell and O'Connor Power apparently walked out of the House.

In Ireland, a storm of abuse greeted the news of this division, which was primarily directed at Butt and O'Donnell for speaking and voting as they did. Both were accused of selling out to the enemy, of betraying the principles of their party, and of working towards its disintegration.[3] Butt in particular was singled out for execration. On the other hand, the fourteen Home Rulers who voted with them were not mentioned by name or even alluded to. The London correspondent of the Nation, Timothy Healy, wrote of the "spectacle of the leader of the Irish people presenting the incense of their approval at the shrine of the Jingo".[4] The Nation was genuinely puzzled why Butt should desert the Irish for the English or "Imperial" standpoint of the debate and talk such "rampant Britonism as would have beseemed the most thoroughbred Saxon in the whole assembly." The Irishman sarcastically announced the formation of a new party to be composed exclusively of Home Rulers who were to be known as the "Hibernian Jingoes".[5] At an unofficial executive meeting of the Home Rule Confederation an all but unanimous resolution condemning Butt's action was passed; O'Donnell was the only member to object. In his capacity as Honorary Secretary,

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1. Bowyer, Brooks, Butt, Dunbar, Errington, Lewis, Moore, Morris, O'Beirne, O'Byrne, O'Donnell, The O'Donoghue, O'Gorman, O'Leary, O'Shaughnessy, R. Power.

2. Blennerhassett, Collins, Delahanty, Henry, Meldon, Nolan, D.M. O'Conor, Sheil, Smyth, Sullivan.

3. Freeman's Journal, 5 August 1878.

4. Nation, 10 August 1878.

5. Times, 10 August 1878.

he protested against the censure as illegal, and in a letter to the Freeman's Journal[1] defended Butt's right of individual initiative.

At first O'Donnell showed a defiant face, believing that the incident afforded one of the indications of "the new and baser spirit which was being sown and fostered in Ireland". "The Land League was casting its shadow before". Because the Disraeli Government had expressed distrust of Russia, therefore any Home Ruler who expressed distrust of Russia had betrayed Ireland. O'Donnell was exasperated by this logic: "If the British Government became Catholics, all true Irishmen were to go over to Luther and Calvin". Is this, he asked, the degree of moral and intellectual capacity which was being encouraged?[2] Yet the issue was not going to be resolved by exposing flaws in the argument and the Freeman's Journal was quick to point out the moral. Major party divisions, it wrote, offered the Irish party its only hope to exert an influence at Westminster; its utter disintegration on these occasions reduced it to a nullity.[3] The most influential national daily had come round to the view that on questions of imperial importance united action was the hallmark of a national party--a legacy which O'Donnell himself had been instrumental in creating. Strictly speaking, the sixteen Home Rulers had not voted for the Conservatives but against the Liberal motion. In the final analysis the distinction was meaningless; they had voted in the same lobby as the Government and expressed confidence in its Balkan policy. In one branch of the Home Rule Confederation a speaker said of Butt that "he would not

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1. Freeman's Journal, 9 August 1878.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 291-3.
3. Freeman's Journal, 5 August 1878.

give the snuff of a farthing candlelight for all the nationality that existed in that man".[1] For the first time in the history of the Home Rule movement, nationalism was determined on the basis of imperial attitudes, and on this criterion Butt and O'Donnell had failed the acid test.

In the initial period of anger and recrimination, public opinion was prepared to give O'Donnell the benefit of the doubt. The Nation suggested that he was unhappily influenced by the knowledge that the leader of the party had decided to support the Government.[2] O'Donnell's defence of Butt and his denial that any "atom of responsibility" for his action could be traced to the views of his leader, however, effectively dissolved what goodwill there was towards him.[3] Subsequently, a letter to the Nation expressed the hope that neither Butt nor O'Donnell could be allowed again to sit for an Irish constituency.[4] A growing body of Irishmen were soon convinced that O'Donnell was nothing but a blatant "imperialist" and renegade.

Never a man to take any form of criticism lying down, particularly if he felt it to be unjust, O'Donnell published a long letter of defence in the Freeman's Journal of 13 August. This, and a further letter to the Nation on 24 August, provide an extremely valuable insight into his imperial philosophy; and will be quoted extensively. Beneath the rhetoric and the air of self-righteousness can be seen the skeleton format of his imperial programme for Ireland. To the Freeman's Journal he wrote:

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1. Nation, 17 August 1878.
2. Ibid., 11 August 1878.
3. Freeman's Journal, 13 August 1878.
4. Nation, 17 August 1878.

"Sir, the Home Rule Party is a National Party, and also an Imperial Party, in the highest meaning of the word. As such I entered its ranks. As such I maintained its rights and powers no later than the National Conference of January last. Need I add that the 'Imperialism' which a nation like Ireland should maintain, and the Empire she should claim to rule, is one in conformity with her own interests, and in conformity with the interests of human freedom*. I shall never readily believe that Ireland is likely to prepare for the resumption of her place among foreign and unconnected peoples by withdrawing herself from the care and contact of the vast assemblage of national and popular interests that lie to her hand within the great dominion, of which even now while still stunted in her development and crippled in her power, Ireland forms a governing part....

But if our interests as Catholics have been largely advanced by the action of England, our interests as practical politicans are advanced by every measure which preserves from the influence of Russia those vast regions, in which Ireland can exercise influence and win support*, only so long as they are maintained in the connection of the Empire of these Islands.[1] So long as the Viceroy of Queen Victoria sits on the throne of the Moguls, so long as the East is open to the intellectual and commercial activities of Irishmen, and so long may Irish politicians rely, and rely not in vain, upon the growing nationality and the grateful sympathy of two hundred and fifty millions of men...

Most certainly in maintaining the Empire I am concerned for Ireland above all*. A time indeed may come when Ireland, possessed of her national independence and enjoying her full share, political and commercial, in all the benefits of the common Empire, may resolve to go a step further and to oust the British people entirely from all co-partnership. In that hour the sanguine patriot may contemplate the armies and the navies of the Irish race arrayed upon a hundred fields and rallying from a hundred ports in order to establish the unchecked supremacy of the Irish Monarchy or the Irish Republic. There is no finality in politics. For the moment, however, I am content to work for the less magnificent, but more immediate objects of restoration of the Irish Parliament, the rooting of the Irish people in the Irish soil, and the full preservation of every share which Ireland at present enjoys in a single one of the Imperial advantages".[2]

O'Donnell expected the case to end there; he appended the letter from the Executive Council of the British Indian Association already referred to,[3] as illustrating some of the aspects of his "Imperial" policy for

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1. The underlining is O'Donnell's. *The underlining is the writer's.
2. Freeman's Journal, 13 August 1878.
3. See Chapter Three, Section three, p. 158.

Ireland, and as absolving him from the necessity of further explanation. He was to be disappointed. Although the Freeman's Journal seemed satisfied and closed its file on the Eastern debate, the Nation was unconsoled. It saw O'Donnell's defence as confirming its worst fears about his "dubious" imperialistic tendencies.[1] Indeed, as a document designed to cool the air of suspicion, the letter was an abysmal failure, a masterpiece of innuendo, misleading, ambiguous and provocative. In some respects, however, it represented only a stronger version of O'Donnell's federalist position. It was never his intention to gratuitously sacrifice the benefits of the British Constitution. But his references to an imperial Ireland, perhaps supplanting Britain from the empire, and of her armies and navies "arrayed upon a hundred fields and sallying from a hundred ports" must have seemed like disturbed utterances of a lunatic. O'Donnell unwisely did not elaborate on the imperial role which he envisaged for Ireland once having raised the allusion of an imperial future, although his remarks about a grateful India hardly indicated a relationship of English dimension. In the context of his introduction, O'Donnell defined "Imperialism" as one in conformity with Irish interests and with the interests of human freedom; he made the mistake of failing to show the extent of compatibility.

The result was foregone. O'Donnell's letter was interpreted in the worst possible light. Holding England and the empire to be synonymous evils, the Nation showed little sympathy for his interest in maintaining the latter. It took exception in the strongest terms to what O'Donnell intended as his strongest mitigation, the relationship with India:

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1. Nation, 17 August 1878.

> "And what is India but a piece of ill-got goods? How was it acquired? By means of the most infamous and accursed, by perjuries, by treacheries, by murders and wholesale massacres, by every species of human villainy. And by a continuance of the same acts has England maintained her hold upon the place. Her conscience is foul with the crimes committed in her acquisition of India, her hands are red with the blood of the Indian peoples. Can we believe that God will not take vengeance for these things? It seems as if His providence was even now working out the punishment of the wrong-doer. Ill got will be ill gone. England will yet have to spill rivers of blood in the endeavour to maintain her hold on India, and the endeavour will probably prove a failure after all. In this hideous business, Mr. O'Donnell would make Ireland a willing partner".[1]

This could almost have been a leaf taken from the pages of the Irish World and from the prose style of Patrick Ford; the notion that the subjugation of India or any other country by England was a sin against God which would be repaid in kind, had spread. The Nation, therefore, recoiled in horror from the suggestion of imperial partnership with England.

On 24 August, O'Donnell published a rebuttal in the Nation, which if still sententious, answered the need for directness and clarity. He exposed as fallacious and wanton the interpretation that his hostility to Russia was in effect an hostility to Ireland:

> "But, say you again, when Mr. O'Donnell professes his anxiety to save the Empire from the encroachment of Russia, that is as much as to say, 'In other words, let us aid the Government to avert Russian agrressions, and suppress Indian mutinies and stamp out rebellions whenever they occur! As if, forsooth, the defence of the Empire against a worse despotism than that of England is the same thing as taking the side of English despotism against Irish, Indian or Transvaal advocates of national freedom! Shame, sir, shame on such a perversion of the laws of honest controversy! And this to me, who to the best of my poor abilities have defended the rights of Indian labour and Indian thought, the violated liberties of South Africa, the insulted honour of the suffering peasantry of Donegal.

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1. Nation, 17 August 1878.

Just as he stood with the three hundred millions of the empire, including England, against the Cossacks, so he also stood with the three hundred millions, excluding England, against the despotism of England herself. If this was a despotism "far less inhuman than the despotism of Russia", it was he agreed the "just object of every patriot's opposition". He had called on Irishmen to join with the Indian people in removing "the injustice of English rule". Yet because he declined to believe that the presence of a Mouravieff at Delhi would improve the condition of either Ireland or India, he was accused of striving to make Ireland "a willing partner in the hideous business of the worst time of English barbarity":

> "'I eulogised' the British Government, you declare. Might you not have added 'as compared with Russia?' I read in the Polish correspondence of the 'Allgemeine Zeitung' a couple of days ago: 'The Russian authorities have just closed fourteen churches of the United Greeks of the Latin rite--Eastern Christians in communion with Rome--some on the plea of wanting repairs and some on the death of Parish Priests'. Many scores of Catholic Churches have been closed, or confiscated to the use of the Russian State Church, during the past couple of years. I dare say Archbishop Steins of Calcutta and the Catholic bishops of India will be wondrously edified by your anxiety to transfer the supervision of their native Catholic flocks to the gentlemen who take such an interest in the 'state of repair' of the ecclesiastical edifices of Poland".[1]

The strong emphasis in this letter, as in his parliamentary speeches, on the Russian persecution of orthodox Catholics, completes the picture of O'Donnell's motivation. Davitt came to believe that O'Donnell was the "tool of the Jesuits" and that it was they who had called upon him to make the "Imperial" speech.[2] A similar story was told apparently by Charles Bradlaugh that O'Donnell had acted as their spy at an international conference of socialists at Leipzig, in order to obtain socialist secrets and plans.[3] As a colourful and talented Irish journalist, with

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1. Nation, 24 August 1878.
2. Davitt to Devoy, 23 August 1879, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 453-4.
3. Ibid.

numerous European connections, speculation of this kind was common. He was reputed, for example, to have been born on the high seas somewhere near India, a rumour put about by Tim Healy. T.P. O'Connor also remembered that O'Donnell had presence and courted observation,[1] placing meticulous emphasis on his moustache, monocle and spats.[2] However, the evidence for the Jesuit theory is at best circumstantial. Though later a pronounced anti-clerical, O'Donnell's connections with the Catholic hierarchy were then very close. His brother wrote that Cardinal Manning regarded O'Donnell with affection until his death.[3] Again,O'Donnell recently had been chosen by a Catholic Congress sitting in Paris as its representative in England. The Congress was formed from societies founded to spread information on Catholic subjects, and to counteract the influence of irreligious literature. To this end Catholic leaders, especially on the Continent, had striven to create a popular and favourable press, and because of O'Donnell's journalistic position had enlisted his services. He was subsequently elected as its Vice-President.[4] The feeling of the Vatican against Russia has already been noted. In the end, however, it is probable that O'Donnell was influenced by a religious antipathy as much against Czarist Russia as against Muslim Turkey. A deeply felt concern for the safety of India tipped the scale against the former and strengthened his resolve to support Conservative policy in this instance.

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1. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, p. 68 ff.
2. Daily Telegraph, 6 November 1916.
3. C.J. O'Donnell, op. cit., 2nd edition, p. 170.
4. Nation quoted in Hindoo Patriot, 23 September 1878; see also Nation, 17 July 1880.

O'Donnell went onto explain his theories of an imperial alliance, geared not to the continuation of English domination, but to the attainment of national independence within the empire. In what was the most precise statement yet of his imperial views, he appealed for that thoughtful consideration and practical realism that had been missing from previous editorial comment on them:

> "Kindly condescend to think over the facts that the Empire is a reality, that in that Empire England with her twenty-seven millions is the dominant element, that Ireland with her five millions is bound to seek alliances and help among the three hundred millions on her own behalf as well as theirs, that, as the natural instinct of the hundreds of millions are in favour of the same national independence and liberty for which Ireland is striving, Ireland is marked out as the natural leader of the 'Imperial' majority in the struggle for life and freedom*, and that before expecting any substantial advantage to Irish interests from the extension of Muscovite tyranny, , it is worth the while of Irish patriots, if only for experiment, to adopt the role of directors and leaders of the great reform movement which includes Irish nationality as well as Indian.* I acknowledge that it is much easier to publish lofty denunciations and amusing cartoons than to set seriously to work at the duty of internal organisation and colonial and foreign alliance. I remain, however, unalterably convinced that the men who decline to use the sympathy of eight in ten of the population of the Empire in aid of the strife of five Irish millions against the twenty-seven English millions do not hold out much encouragement to practical patriots".[1]

A combination of subject nationalities within the empire, led by Ireland if necessary against England in the cause of national independence, was an ambitious scheme to say the least. Yet it was less far-fetched than the various intrigues of the American and Irish Fenians to destroy English power by insurrection or dynamite. Indeed, the initial flirtation of the Irish-Americans with O'Donnell can be traced to their desire for an anti-imperial pact against England. In most other respects they parted

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1. *The underlining is the writer's. Nation, 24 August 1878.

company and particularly in the use to which such an alliance could be put. The Fenians saw it as a prelude to the disintegration of the empire root and branch, O'Donnell as the first step towards the re-organization and reconstitution of the empire in a new form. Had there been an Indian national movement such as existed in Ireland, or even in India after 1885, more credence might have been given to O'Donnell's views. Unfortunately, when the party was prepared to listen, O'Donnell had drifted too far away from the "Parnellite" mainstream to exert lasting influence.

The Nation did not see the second letter any more than the first as either clarifying O'Donnell's position or of necessitating the reversal of its original judgment. Holding firmly to the position that Home Rulers should oppose England in all things and at all costs, it cautioned O'Donnell that no amount of special pleading would induce the Irish people to approve his late conduct. His persistence in defending his vote only worsened matters, for it implied a willingness to repeat the offence, opportunity arising. The "wisest" course of action, it wrote, would be to admit that he had made an "enormous mistake" and to promise that he would not so err again. The Nation then lectured O'Donnell on his duties as a representative of the Irish people. He was not elected to teach the "science of politics" to them, not to air "fantastic theories" of his own invention , not to support the English Government on questions vital to its prestige and power, not to strive for the preservation or the extension of the political fabric known as the "British Empire", but to give expression to the feelings and opinions of the Irish race, and to labour for the realisation of their national aspirations. It did not see his present attitudes as directed to that end. "National aspirations", it concluded, could best be served by "watching the play of English politics

solely with a view to the interests of Ireland". In other words, "to maintain an attitude of hostility towards every Government that refuse[d] to concede the national rights of his country, to confuse the councils of these people, to impede and hamper their action, to create embarrassments and perils for them, and to avail of their difficulties as so many opportunities for extorting from them in their time of trouble, concessions which in their day of pride and power they had insolently refused."[1]

If the critique of the Nation ultimately torpedoed O'Donnell's scheme, it will be left to another chapter to show that it had much to recommend it.[2] Moreover, the suspicion lingers that neither the Nation nor other influential leaders of public opinion fully comprehended the type of alliance that O'Donnell recommended. O'Donnell never envisaged "alliance" as a means of "extending" or "preserving" the empire, or as an instrument of suppression; rather the opposite. Certainly, Tim Healy[3] the London correspondent of the Nation and a sympathiser signing himself "M.K.",[4] believed that such a misapprehension existed. Healy argued that whether right or wrong, O'Donnell's imperial views were held with a desire to further the cause of Irish freedom, and he praised O'Donnell's honesty in presenting his case in the face of certain censure. His opinion that O'Donnell had unwittingly misled the public, by inadequate and incomplete explanation, rang true: "When a man is full of a subject himself he is apt in explaining it to credit others with more acquaintance with his special line of thought than they can possess".[5]

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1. Nation, 24 August 1878.
2. See Chapter Ten.
3. Nation, 14 September 1878.
4. Ibid., 28 September 1878.
5. Ibid., 14 September 1878.

The damage, nevertheless, had been done. O'Donnell was pilloried as an "Imperialist", a mistaken belief that was perpetuated by further controversial behaviour, and which eventually forced him out of Parliament, a broken man. To a degree the myth became fact as he was driven increasingly towards the right by the radicalism of the movement. Yet he was never an imperialist of the Disraeli school although frequently and unfairly denounced as a "Beaconsfieldian".[1] If his tastes and flamboyance in manners and dress reminded observers of the young Disraeli, the similiarities went no further. In all his writings and speeches there can be found admiration for the concept of empire but no respect for the "despotic" methods it frequently employed, nor support for the extension of its frontiers. There was never a more persistant critic of administrative injustice in South Africa, in India or in Egypt, nor more loyal advocate of Boer, Indian, or Egyptian nationalism, between the years 1877-1885. He had always held that England in the empire was a despot and that the "nations" of the empire had both a right and a duty to consider their own interests quite independently of England's.[2] In short, his "imperialism" was of an essentially progressive kind, which looked towards a confederation of independent if filial nations: "the Empire [could] be founded on the nations, and the nations fortified by the Empire".[3] In this enterprise, O'Donnell saw himself as the spiritual heir and true descendant of Henry Grattan of Edmund Burke and later of Isaac Butt; Fenians and followers of Parnell had deviated,not him.[4] It was only in his ambitious conception

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1. Irish World, 1 February 1879; O'Donnell, History, i, p. 293.
2. Nation, 24 August 1878.
3. O'Donnell, op.cit., ii, p. 472.
4. Ibid.

of a paternal Ireland giving the lead to fledgling states that he could be accused of imperialistic tendencies. Ireland rather than England was to be the hub of the new radiating empire. In effect moving towards an ideal of Commonwealth, O'Donnell might be considered as an early theorist of the Commonwealth idea. It was his misfortune, therefore, that this concept was politically in advance of its time.[1]

The effect of the controversy on O'Donnell's career was shattering. Those Nationalists in America and Ireland who had once seen him as a hopeful prospect denounced him with all the vigour they could muster. The leaders of the Clan na Gael felt themselves misled and betrayed by O'Donnell and demanded his scalp. On the receipt of the English mail Carroll wrote to Devoy of O'Donnell's "gem of a patriotic speech":

> "This is the self same gentleman who the first five minutes I ever was in his company informed me the object of his life was to destroy the British Empire, and who subsequently prepared a document[2] I now have in my possession...in which he asks for himself and other obstructionists the votes of our men, at the same time promising verbally that he would in this sphere do their work. Just now it pays better to do Paul Cullen's[3] and John Bull's—hence the speech".[4]

He called on Devoy to repudiate through an open letter to the Irishman, all American connections with O'Donnell, which would put their men on guard by "setting him squarely before the public in his true light." O'Donnell's attempt to act as spokesman for "irreconcilable Irishmen" Carroll now considered impertinent, and expressed the hope that the sooner and more completely Devoy could lay bare his hypocrisy the better—"Such friends are a thousand times worse than open enemies". Butt was also to be "finished off", but his brand of imperialism was considered less harmful

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 156.
2. See Chapter Three, section two, pp. 147-8.
3. See Chapter Four, section one, p. 186.
4. Carroll to Devoy, 14 August 1878, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 344-5.

than O'Donnell's, and his destruction of secondary importance. Significantly, the method of attack suggested, was to honour Parnell by way of contrast with O'Donnell--an indication of the latter's previous rank in Fenian estimation.[1] Michael Davitt gave the arrangement his blessing and promised that once convinced himself that the parliamentarians were insincere in their professed nationality, they would hear from him in the strongest "tones and terms".[2]

On the 24 August the Irish World opened the campaign: "Lord Beaconsfield", it wrote, "is not the artful dodger I take him to be if he has not provided in the future for this young, brilliant gentleman [O'Donnell] as Secretary of some commission which is to plant the St. George's Cross on the banks of the Tigres or Euphrates. The poor fishermen of Dungarvan have caught a young shark instead of an honest salmon".[3] O'Donnell was also confronted in Ireland with unnerving demonstrations of popular displeasure, and was continually interrupted by the cry, "why did you vote with the Government?"[4] At a Home Rule meeting in Belfast, both he and Biggar were given a torrid time and were jeered and hissed on the platform.[5] Davitt wrote to Devoy in late September that he would be "delighted with the Belfast fellows for the lesson they taught Sir Eye-Glass O'D."[6] As the guest of the Clan na Gael on a lecture tour in America towards the end of the year, Davitt took up the sword in the manner Carroll had suggested.[7] At Brooklyn on 13 October he was highly

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1. Carroll to Devoy, 14 August 1878, op.cit.
2. Carroll to Devoy, 19 August 1878, in ibid., pp. 345-6.
3. Irish World, 24 August 1878.
4. O'Donnell, History i, p. 292.
5. Nation, 14 September 1878.
6. Davitt to Devoy, n.d. in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 350-1
7. The tour opened in Philadelphia on 16 September and concluded at Boston in December.

critical of Butt's federal scheme and of the calibre of parliamentarian returned to Westminster, and warned that unless the "national" party took an active interest in securing the election of "honest" representatives, Ireland would continue to be misrepresented in Parliament and in the eyes of the world.[1] To Parnell and his followers he paid tribute as Home Rulers worthy of support, but was "unmerciful" on O'Donnell who had "so disgracefully betrayed the trust of the Irish people".[2]

There were few voices raised in O'Donnell's defence. J.J. O'Kelly and T.M. Healy were disposed to be "charitable", but Parnell who must have been closest to O'Donnell at the time and exposed to his opinions on most subjects, kept shrewdly and strategically silent.[3] O'Donnell remembered with some bitterness that he had never discovered that Parnell defended either "his chief or his comrade".[4] In India alone was O'Donnell's reputation and standing unimpaired and even initially enhanced by his speech. The Hindoo Patriot ran several columns on the Eastern debate, noted O'Donnell's contribution and leaning, and rushed to the wrong conclusions:

> "Like ourselves the Ministry seem to appreciate the value of the Irish contingent. They command a large number, some seventy or eighty strong, and on which ever side they may throw their weight they are sure to influence sensibly the balance of votes. Lord Beaconsfield had evidently been sensible of it, and not withstanding the alleged obstructiveness of the Irish members, his Lordship has succeeded in carrying them with him. He has given them an Intermediate Education Bill which they hardly expected to get, and they have rewarded him with their votes on the Eastern Question."[5]

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1. T.W. Moody, "The New Departure in Irish Politics 1878-1879", in H.A. Cronne, T.W. Moody, D.B. Quinn (ed.), Essays in British and Irish History in Honour of James Eadie Todd, London 1949, pp. 319-20.

2. Carroll to Devoy, 17 September 1878, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 354-5; Irish World, 26 October 1878.

3. Davitt to Devoy, 31 October 1878, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 366-7; Nation, 14 September 1878.

4. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 292.

5. Hindoo Patriot, 23 September 1878.

The Patriot's prognosis, with respect to the Intermediate Education Bill and the Eastern Question, was not far off the mark, at least so far as Butt was involved.[1] In another respect, while it showed that Indian reliance on the good will of parliamentary friends had not changed, it was a reliance of a different kind. The notion that the Irish party was prepared to exact reforms by selling out to the highest bidder, was seen not as a disqualification but as an added recommendation for close co-operation with Home Rulers. That the Liberal and Conservative parties were presumed to have vied for the support of the Irish contingent over the Eastern Question, not only enhanced the reputation of the Home Rule party but vindicated the faith placed in O'Donnell's friendship:

> "Now,may we ask whether the Indians alone should be censured if they ask for the support of Mr. O'Donnell and his compatriots? We have so few friends in England that we cannot feel too grateful to anyone, who may stretch forth the hand of friendly support and co-operation to us. Mr. O'Donnell may not be liked by Englishmen, but we see that his influence is acknowledged by both Conservatives and Liberals, and if he lends his aid to us from philanthropic motives should we not gratefully receive it?"[2]

Since the South Africa Bill in 1877,the fear that Irish methods of political agitation could be transplanted to India became a recurring theme of Anglo-Indian journalists. This was particularly true during the ascendancy of the Land League in Ireland. Thus, as soon as it became known that the Home Rule party was divided and O'Donnell discredited, the Civil and Military Gazette expressed considerable gratification. As the "faithful and conscientious advocate" of the vested interests of the

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1. See Chapter Three, section two, p. 141.
2. Hindoo Patriot, 23 September 1878.

civil and military services in India, "watching all that affected their interests for good or evil",[1] it regarded the Home Rulers as potentially dangerous friends of Indian nationalism. The Hindoo Patriot took the uncomforting news that all was not well in the Irish camp or with their new found advocate, with resolve to stay by O'Donnell in his hour of need. "It may soothe the Civil and Military Gazette", it wrote, "to know that we have not given up Mr. O'Donnell. He may be under a cloud owing to his unpopularity with the extreme Nationalist party of Ireland, but he seems to hold his ground in the estimation of his moderate and really patriotic countrymen".[2] It is difficult to estimate the effect which the revelation that O'Donnell was not the force in Irish politics previously imagined, had on Indian opinion. The Hindoo Patriot continued to write favourably of Irish parliamentarians, but the honeymoon was over, or was soon to be. The coming of land agitation to Ireland was to place a wedge between the Home Rule party and the type of nationalist spoken for by the Hindoo Patriot.

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1. Publication of official policy, 1 February 1873. See M. Burns, The Indian Press: A History of the Growth of Public Opinion in India, London 1940, p. 277.

2. Hindoo Patriot, 23 October 1878.

II The New Departure Casts its Shadow

When the smoke had cleared away, O'Donnell was left with a weakened policy of intervention, confined within the bounds erected by the Nation. His concern for the welfare of subject nationalities was deemed misplaced where it in anyway preserved English rule in favour of any other. Without this proviso O'Donnell's attitude was looked upon not only as bad politics but also as bad philanthropy. While there was broad agreement that the play of imperial politics could strengthen the Home Rule cause, there was serious disagreement on the nature of the involvment appropriate to the realisation of national aspirations. O'Donnell believed that nationhood could be achieved within the framework of the empire; non-parliamentary nationalists thought otherwise. Beyond doubt the acrimony that followed his attack on Russian policy in Asia Minor was a disastrous set-back to O'Donnell. It halted his political advancement and postponed further consideration of his formula for the attainment of Home Rule. From now on he would have to tread very warily indeed.

Until the elections of 1880, O'Donnell seemed to heed the warning that it was dangerous to antagonise the Fenians and sensible to run with his former friends, if not exactly in harness. He was one of the eight members of the Home Rule League who requisitioned the Hon. Secretaries to convene a general meeting of the League to consider ways to resuscitate the Home Rule movement.[1] There was of course no reason

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1. Times, 2 November 1878. The requisition, dated 21 October, was signed by Parnell, Biggar, O'Donnell, R. Power, O'Clery, A.M. Sullivan and O'Sullivan. The meeting was set down for 19 November but did not convene until the following January.

why he should not continue to press on the cause of activism. He had fallen into disrepute not because he had intervened in imperial affairs, but because he had disregarded the obstructionist code of ethics. He was as concerned to foster Indian or African interests after the furore as before it. On the publication of parliamentary notices of motion for 1879, the London correspondent of the Freeman's Journal observed with no surprise that O'Donnell was to be engaged in the "imperial task of setting the affairs of India in order", after which he was to attend to the landed proprietors in Ireland.[1] O'Donnell in fact did more. It is apparent that he went to some lengths to rehabilitate himself both in the eyes of the party and in the esteem of the country. Subsequently, he did not hesitate to justify intervention in terms that were readily appreciated--as an extension and expression of obstruction: "My suggestion for a larger policy, both in the Empire and the nation, commanded enthusiastic applause in Dublin, only so long as it could be mistaken for an obstructionist pretext to keep Mr. Speaker out of bed till the arrival of the milkman and the morning letters."[2] For the next year and a half O'Donnell aped the model nationalist in his parliamentary capacity, behaved as a good party man, and was conspicuous in his criticism of Government policy overseas. One can only conclude that he was still smarting from the rebuff to pride and the diminution of power, when he wrote to Disraeli on 2 February that he wished "in Imperial questions to secure the maximum of co-operation between Ireland and the

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1. Freeman's Journal, 19 August 1878.
2. O'Donnell, History i, pp. 3, 291.

English Conservatives" whom he could not but regard as "the English National Party".[1] How sincere this opinion was may be judged by his refusal a month later to tolerate the Government's decision to "pacify" the Zulus.

At the annual convention of the English Confederation on 21-22 October, held for the second successive year in Dublin, and against Butt's wishes, O'Donnell repented his "error" and reaffirmed his allegiance to the activist party. On the first day, Parnell was re-elected President unanimously, while O'Donnell announced his retirement from the Honorary Secretaryship. A public meeting was staged the next evening at the Rotunda, under the chairmanship of T.D. Sullivan, and three resolutions "calling upon the party to adopt an energetic policy, deploring the lethargy of the Home Rule Council and urging the return of supporters of the active policy at the general election", were submitted and passed.[2] According to the Dublin correspondent of the Times, nationalists were disturbed by the display of a placard urging them to absent themselves from the meeting as a protest against the appearance of men like O'Donnell and Butt on an Irish platform. It was the correspondent's guess that the placard was put about in the interests of Butt to keep people away. If so, it failed in this purpose for a crowd of over 3000 assembled.[3] O'Donnell, received with much applause and some hissing, then took the floor and proposed a vote of thanks to the chair. "Mr.

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1. O'Donnell to Disraeli, 2 February 1879, Disraeli Papers, quoted in Thornley, op.cit., p. 362 fn.

2. Thornley, op.cit., p. 370.

3. Times, 24, 28 October 1878.

T.D. Sullivan", he said, "had long deserved well of the Nationalists of Ireland, and in saying the Nationalists of Ireland he included the Nationalists of the world. (applause)". He continued in a similar vein:

> "Wherever the Irish race dwells the Nation has penetrated, and wherever the Nation has penetrated there is evidence of the good work done by T.D. Sullivan (applause).
> ...On the floor of the Rotunda the final appeal in favour of an active policy has been fought and won. (hear, hear, and a hiss). He had heard much better imitations of geese in Westminster."

As editor of the Nation, it was T.D. Sullivan who was ultimately responsible for the uncompromising editorials on O'Donnell's apologia, which more than anything had done the damage. Yet, in a formal recantation of unpopular views, he apologised for his "over-sensitivity" to the criticisms recently levelled at him.[1] This was a very contrite O'Donnell indeed.

The response of Isaac Butt, on the other hand, to the same virulent criticism of his parliamentary behaviour, presented a radical contrast of styles. Instead of either explaining or attempting to justify his action over the Eastern debate, he maintained a strict silence until November, when he published the first of four manifestoes addressed to the electors of Limerick, but intended for general consumption. These confirmed his previous attitude to obstruction and contained no trace of remorse.[2] Indeed, the gulf that separated Butt from the activists and from Irish public opinion was further demonstrated by

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1. Freeman's Journal, 23 October 1878.
2. Times, 9, 27 November 1878.

his still more extraordinary support for the Government's declaration of war against Afghanistan on 20 November.

Briefly, the war can be seen as an extension of the area of conflict between Russia and Britain concentrated in the Balkans, but from time to time spilling over in Central Asia.[1] As a counterpoise to the British policy of containment in the Balkans, and possibly with the aim of embroiling the Indian Government with Afghanistan prior to the Congress of Berlin in June 1878, a Russian envoy Stolietov with a column of troops was despatched to Kabul.[2] The Amir Shere Ali received the mission under protest but concluded a treaty of alliance. The Viceroy Lord Lytton took this as a snub to Britain[3] and gambling against a war with Russia,[4] insisted that the Amir not only receive a British mission as well, but also dismiss Stolietov as a prior condition. Having submitted to the terms of the agreement reached at the Berlin Congress, however, Russia recalled Stolietov and the Russian columns, only to learn that her orders not to make any settlement with the Amir had arrived too late.

At the same time Lytton decided that the circumstances were favorable for "effecting the permanent settlement of the Afghan question",[5]

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1. For an account of events leading to the Afghan war, see H.H. Dodwell, (ed.), The Cambridge History of India, Vol. VI, Cambridge 1932, Ch. XXIII; E. Thompson and G.T. Garrett, Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, London 1935, pp. 515-9; Annual Register, 1878, pp. 136-248. Official correspondence can be found in Parl.P., 1878-79, Vol. LVI, C. 2190. A more detailed analysis can be found in M.Cowling, "Lytton, the Cabinet and the Russians, August to September 1878", in English Historical Review, Vol. LXXVI, 1961, pp. 70-79.
2. Telegram, Viceroy to Sec. of State, 1 July 1878, in Parl.P., op.cit., p. 227.
3. Desp., Secret No. 49, Sec. of State to Viceroy, 18 November 1878, paras. 19-22, in ibid., p. 265.
4. Minute of Russian Mission, 4 September, in Thompson & Garrett, op.cit. p. 517.
5. Desp. Viceroy to Sec. of State, 17 August 1878, in A.E. Gathorne Hardy (ed), Gathorne Hardy First Earl of Cranbrook: A Memoir, Vol. II, London 1910, p. 88. Lytton believed that while Russia was "terribly weak", the British in India were "overwhelmingly strong".

and on 30 August despatched Sir Neville Chamberlain with instructions to exact strong terms.[1] Should a satisfactory treaty not be concluded, the mission was ordered to act without the Amir's consent and to take "necessary and material guarantees against further mischief".[2] As it ignored the feeling within the Cabinet to smooth over the Afghan troubles,[3] the mission must be considered provocative.[4] Always a distinct possibility from the outset, Chamberlain was intercepted at Ali Musjid in the Khyber Pass and forced to turn back.[5] Although annoyed that the Viceroy had forced its hand, the Cabinet reluctantly agreed to retaliatory action.[6] Accordingly on 2 November, Lytton sent an ultimatum to Shere Ali demanding an immediate apology and the cordial acceptance of a permanent British delegation.[7] The apology never came[8] and on 21 November British columns marched into Afghanistan meeting little resistance. As Shere Ali fled to Russian territory, negotiations were entered upon with his son and successor Yakub Khan. On 26 May 1879 he signed the treaty of Gandamak which placed the foreign affairs of Afghanistan under British control, established a Residency at Kabul,

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1. Desp. Viceroy to Sec. of St te, 3 August 1878, in Lady Betty Balfour, op.cit., pp. 255.
2. Neither Lytton nor Cranbrook kept the other fully informed of the steps they had taken, which resulted in a chronic confusion of instructions. See R. Blake, Disraeli, London 1966, pp. 660-1; Cowling, op.cit., pp. 65-8.
3. See Gathorne Hardy, op.cit., p. 100; Salisbury to Beaconsfield, 22 October 1878, in Lady Gwendolen Cecil, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 342,338-9.
4. Cowling's analysis is that Lytton did not wish to provoke war, but was genuinely convinced that Shere Ali would co-operate and that Chamberlain would be established at Kabul within a week. Cowling, op.cit., p. 70.
5. The Cambridge History of India, p. 418.
6. W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, Life of Disraeli, Vol. VI, London 1920, pp. 386-8; Cecil, op.cit., pp. 341-2.
7. Text of the Ultimatum, Telegram from Sec. of State, 30 October 1878, in Parl.P., op.cit., pp. 254-5.
8. Letter Shere Ali to Viceroy, 19 November 1878, in ibid., C 2401, pp.5-6.

and ceded to the Indian Government certain frontier districts near the Khyber Pass.[1]

In England these developments were viewed with growing anxiety and disfavour. A former Liberal Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, wrote a series of letters to the Times in October and November, presenting military, political and financial arguments why the policy of the Indian Government was unfounded and wrong.[2] With Lord Grey, he was the prime mover of the Afghan Committee, founded on 15 November for the purpose of preventing war by rousing public opinion, and of endeavouring to summon Parliament before hostilities broke out.[3] To this end, Grey drafted a memorial to the Prime Minister, sporting the signatures of many Liberals and two Home Rulers--Smyth and Gray[4]--while Lawrence, attempting at the eleventh hour to avert a war, pressed him to receive a deputation from the Committee.[5] Disraeli's reply was "saucy"[6] and "offensive",[7] but notices went out immediately informing Members that a special session of Parliament had been called for 5 December; by then of course too late.[8] At the Guildhall, the Prime Minister caused further alarm

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1. Desp. no. 136 of 1879, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 2 June 1879, in Parl.P., op.cit., C 2362.
2. Times, 2, 30, 31 October; 19, 20 November 1878.
3. Ibid., 18 November 1878.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 19 November 1878.
6. Northcote to Lady Northcote, 19 November 1878, in Monypenny and Buckle, op.cit., p. 394.
7. Granville to Gladstone, 20 November 1878, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss 44171, in A. Ramm (ed), The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville 1874-1886, Vol. I, Oxford 1962, p. 89.
8. The Government of India Act 1858 provided that if India was engaged in hostilities beyond her frontier involving expenses on her exchequer, Parliament had to be called within a three-month period.

when he referred to the desirability of establishing "a scientific frontier" beyond the Khyber Pass.[1] This provoked Gladstone to declare categorically that the war was unjust.[2] Writing to the Bedford Liberal Association, he defined the "rectification of frontiers" as a "diplomatic phrase" meaning the "annexation of territory",[3] and at Greenwich he denied that the discourtesy shown the British mission at Ali Musjid was sufficient grounds for a punitive invasion.[4] Spurning impartiality, the Annual Register passed judgment on the expedition as a "very wanton and wicked war", undertaken in pursuance of a "deliberately aggressive" policy, and "sedulously concealed" till it was too late to reverse it. The war, it concluded, deserved the "most emphatic condemnation".[5]

Predictably perhaps, public opinion ran even higher in Ireland against Lord Lytton and against the possibility of another "imperial war of acquisition". Like the Boers in 1877, the Afghans were pictured as noble patriots resisting the criminal advance of the British war machine into their native land. The Dublin correspondent of the Times reported that Shere Ali, "that bold Afghan chief", was a prime favourite with the national papers his side of the Irish sea.[6] As early as 23 October the Freeman's Journal, anticipating the course of events, referred to the Afghan war as "dangerous", "unjust" and "unwise".[7] Though as yet

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1. Gladstone to Granville, 18 November 1878, P.R.O. 30/29/29A, in Ramm, op.cit., pp. 88-9.
2. Times, 2 December 1878.
3. Ibid., 14 November 1878.
4. Ibid., 2 December 1878.
5. Annual Register, 1878, p. 194.
6. Times, 11 October 1878.
7. Freeman's Journal, 23 October 1878.

undeclared and still a month off, the war was confidently assumed as inevitable and spoken of as fact. That it was in the nature of English government to oppress and bully weaker nations, was a matter of conviction. The following day, the Freeman accused Lord Lytton of deliberately picking a quarrel with Shere Ali without the "slightest necessity". The Amir, it suggested, wanted nothing to do with either Russia or England, but simply desired "to rule in peace and independence the dominions he had inherited from his warrior sire."[1] Addressing his constituents in Mayo, O'Connor Power also had some harsh things to say about the hostilities and about England's treatment of Indians. He believed that the "outbreak of disaffection" that had required a Coercion Act against the native press told plainly of "the outraged feelings of the people of India".[2] Home Rulers were ceasing to question the assumption, presented with tireless repetition by the Irish World, that Indians were in a rebellious frame of mind and on the point of uprising.

At a time when party spirits were at their lowest, the imagination of Home Rulers was suddenly fired by the prospect of a special session of Parliament. The Nation enthused that there had never been an opportunity as splendid for Ireland to make an impact on world opinion. "Any proposal made upon such an occasion will be chronicled in the journals of every civilized race, will reach from the Palace of St. Stephen's to the ends of the earth."[3] Because England had set herself up as a tribunal of misgovernment elsewhere, it was hoped that the civilised world would reciprocate the compliment by similarly condemning English misgovernment in Ireland. The Nation therefore instructed Home Rulers not to let the

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1. Freeman's Journal, 24 October 1878.
2. Ibid., 28 October 1878.
3. Nation quoted in the Times, 27 November 1878.

opportunity presented by the war go begging, since it was in their power to prevent a single penny being voted for supply.[1] For the aging campaigner O'Neill Daunt, who had considered Butt's "glowing eulogisms on Imperialism and on the British Parliament" most impolitic,[2] the issue was equally straightforward. For an Irishman there could be no conflict with morality, but only satisfaction that England would shortly be overwhelmed with ruin. On 21 November, he made the following note in his journal:

> "...there is no doubt that her [England's] famous conduct to Ireland will have richly deserved it [ruin]. For individual suffering the Christian mind will doubtless have sympathy, but no Irishman could regret the break up of a political power whose deadly enmity to Ireland has been utterly manifested by centuries of aggressive crime, culminating in that worst crime of all the legislative union."[3]

Although this was an extreme view, it was shared probably by most nationalists. Daunt himself always believed in Butt's leadership, and though he disapproved of his recent pronouncements on the empire, he disapproved even more of the violent denunciations of him that appeared in the press.[4] Even moderate Home Rulers thought it desirable that the party should confer about tactics to avoid a repetition of the spectacle that had so discredited the movement in August.

A requisition, signed extensively by members of the Home Rule League, demanding a general meeting for 3 December to consider the Afghan war, was lodged with the Secretaries of the party. However, it could not override Butt's veto and the meeting was put off until the new year. In the second of his public letters to the electors of Limerick, Butt

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1. Nation, 30 November 1878.

2. O'Neill Daunt to Shaw, in Times, 14 October 1878; see Thornley, op.cit., p. 361.

3. Journal of W.J. O'Neill Daunt, 21 November 1878, Vol. III, Ms 3042.

4. O'Neill Daunt to Henry, 5 September 1878, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832; Nation, 21 December 1878.

expressed a determination to frustrate any proposals for a blanket opposition to the Government's war effort. The policy advocated by the activist school he considered "rash and ill-advised". How far, he asked, would any right-minded man be justified in taking the call of allegiance to the Queen and then in using his power as a Member of Parliament to baffle all her measures, confuse all her counsels, and disrupt the citadel of her power"?[1] He followed this by publicly writing on 30 November to M.F. Ward,[2] outlining a "wise and prudent" course of action for the Home Rule party to adopt in his absence for he did not intend to make the journey to Westminster. Parnell's suggestion of an amendment to the Address on the question of the Irish Franchise, he dismissed outright:

> "Such a course would fairly expose us to the suspicion of pressing the claims of Ireland not for the purpose of obtaining a recognition of them from Parliament, but either with the object of serving the interests of the party or of creating confusion in the councils of a nation at a time when to do so is to help the cause of its enemies".

Returning to a familiar theme he warned that the disposition of Englishmen to examine dispassionately the complaints of the Irish people would be marred by the policy of exasperation. This would assuredly happen if the suspicion were confirmed that under cover of the Irish demand for justice, there was the activating motive of hostility to the British Crown.[3] Clearly of his two selves, it was the British Citizen rather than the Irish Home Ruler which was predominant. At any time, the activist philosophy of intervention was painful to Butt; in a war situation he considered it treacherous and unscrupulous.

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1. Times, 27 November 1878.
2. Ward was one of the Secretaries of the party; Meldon was the other.
3. Times, 30 November; Freeman's Journal, 30 November 1878.

O'Donnell was equally concerned about the image of the party in opposing the war effort. On 28 November he suddenly called attention to a meeting of the Indian Association held at Calcutta in early September at which the Members of Parliament who had campaigned against the Vernacular Press Act were formally thanked.[1] O'Donnell edited the proceedings of this meeting to highlight the speech of S.N. Banerjea who praised the Irish Party as being actuated "purely through motives of Philanthropy". "India", he had promised, to a chorus of cheering, would never forget the services of the "Irish Philanthropists".[2] O'Donnell cited this tribute as reinforcement of his claim that on such questions of "national and international justice", it was right to "lay stress upon the real disinterestedness" of the Home Rule party. The cheers of the meeting attested that this view, "the only true appreciation of Irish action", was fully shared by India at large.[3] The letter served a triple purpose; in the first place it can be seen as a further attempt to redeem himself; in the second place it presented evidence to refute Butt's adverse verdict on intervention; and in the third place, on the eve of the special session of Parliament, it communicated an appeal to Home Rulers to keep philanthropy uppermost as the guiding principle of their hostility to the war.

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1. Freeman's Journal, 28 November; Nation, 30 November 1878.
2. Supplement, Bengalee, 14 September 1878.
3. Nation, 30 November 1878.

Yet it was Butt's letter to Ward that stole the limelight. The Annual Register recorded that "almost a panic" was caused among a section of Butt's parliamentary supporters, by "this further blow directed at the theory of obstruction."[1] The Freeman's Journal stigmatised Butt's policy as one of "self-effacement"[2] and the Nation wrote him off as no longer fit to lead the Irish national movement.[3] The activists were particularly severe; O'Donnell, Dillon and T.D. Sullivan all came down heavily against Butt's "Do-Nothing Day".[4] O'Donnell, who had so far defended Butt, refused to accompany him any longer. He had gone as far as any Irishman could realistically go in the defence of imperial interests. An Irishman, he explained, might legitimately prefer England to Russia, but to prefer the "United Kingdom" to Ireland could never be compatible with the principles of a national party. John Dillon was unsparing:

> "No honest Irish Nationalist can any longer continue to recognise Mr. Butt as leader. In the last letter he openly acknowledges that the interests of the British Empire are more to him than the sufferings of the unhappy people who have trusted him as leader only to be betrayed by him in the hour of trial. The only hope that remains now for the country is that Mr. Parnell and the active party will take an independent line of action, and openly denounce this monstrous piece of traitorism which is about to be enacted."[5]

Dillon was possibly carried away by the heat of the moment. In February 1879, he was less inclined to call Butt a traitor or a "person who would sell the cause".[6]

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1. Annual Register, 1878, p. 210.
2. Freeman's Journal, 30 November 1878; Times, 2 December 1878.
3. Nation, 7 December 1878.
4. Freeman's Journal, 2 December 1878.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, 5 February 1879.

Yet the move to adopt an Irish amendment had to be abandoned when insufficient Home Rulers of Parnell's persuasion attended an informal meeting of the party in London on 5 December.[1] A sizeable number chose to obey Butt's third call for inaction[2] and remained with him in Ireland.[3] Nor was there anything approaching complete unity on the issue of Afghanistan. In denouncing the war as a crime Lord Robert Montagu, as a typical back-slider in the past, was probably the exception.[4] Later as a convinced opponent of Parnellism, he preferred to leave the party rather than adopt the new creed.[5] O'Connor Power and A.M. Sullivan, on the other hand, intervened as custodians of liberty and justice in the empire. The former claimed that right on the basis of nationality and because he was an Irishman who preferred to stand by "Christian principles". "Ireland [was] often regarded as an integral part of the Empire", he maintained, though his first duty as a nationalist was "to assert" her "distinct nationality":

> "And why? Because, in ordinary times, Ireland is shut out from the observation of Europe, and her aspirations are judged by the caricatures given in the English Press. It is, therefore, when questions of an international character are before the House, that it becomes the duty of Irishmen to stand forward before Europe and declare that their first consideration is the nationality of their own country."

If the union between Ireland and England was the result of the "blackest crime ever perpetrated by one nation against another", O'Connor Power

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1. Times, 4 December 1878. See Parnell's letter to the Secretary of the Kerry Tenants' Defence Association informing him that unless twenty Home Rulers entered the struggle, it would be "imprudent" and possibly "injurious" to persist with the amendment.
2. Ibid., 3 December 1878.
3. Ibid., 2 December 1878.
4. In a speech of some length Montagu traced the origins of the war in impressive detail. Hansard, Vol. 243, 5 December 1878, Cols. 140-53.
5. Nation, 5 April 1879.

assured the House that the "imperialism" of Lord Beaconsfield was no less odious to the Irish people:

> "It has the same object in view--English aggrandisement; it adopts the same means of reaching its object--corruption and violence; it proceeds from the same arrogant, liberty-hating Tory party, and marches forward to the same dishonoured victory over bodies of brave patriots fallen in defence of their native land."

In the name of his constituents, therefore, he repudiated the war as a "base and cowardly aggression on an independent state". Ireland's sympathies were as always on the side of "struggling freemen in every oppressed land."[1]

Sullivan was much less of a parliamentary muckraker than O'Connor Power and was more accustomed to use the type of argument favoured by Radicals like Fawcett, Lawson and Richard. He abhorred imperial wars because of the resultant neglect of internal reforms at home. He also shared their views about imposing taxation on an unrepresented people. Moreover, despite the collapse of the Baroda lobby, Sullivan retained a very real interest in Indian problems. With O'Donnell he raised the question of the Vernacular Press Act in Parliament; with O'Donnell he was petitioned by an Indian delegation to lay their complaints against the Act before the House; with O'Donnell he acted as co-negotiator in presenting to the Home Rule party the scheme by which India might be represented at Westminster. It was through Indian eyes again that he viewed the war on the northern frontier and the Government's policy of "universal annexation" of "smaller powers". He knew of no greater crime that could be charged to a public ministry than that of making war on

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 164-6.

an uncivilised community without just cause. On the same pretence on which they had gone to Afghanistan, they might go to the North Pole. Was it worthy of Great Britain to charge the poor Indians for Lord Beaconsfield's "scientific frontier", he asked? Just as they struck the Amir rather than Russia, because he was weak and Russia was strong, so he believed they taxed the Indians rather than the English, because the former were unrepresented in Parliament and had no one to take their part. He for one was not prepared to stand by without protest while India was plunged into bankruptcy. Speaking as a representative of a country which had itself "felt the march of Great Britain's wonderful civilisation", his voice would be raised and his vote given to any group which made a struggle against an unjust war, and against the "public wrong" of imposing additional taxation on an unrepresented people.[1]

Subsequent Home Rule speakers seemed much less motivated by humanitarian considerations. McCarthy Downing,[2] O'Clery and Major Nolan concentrated more on the absence of reference to Irish grievances in the "Queen's Speech" as deserving their censure, than on the outbreak of war. The latter turned to Afghanistan almost as an afterthought.[3] O'Clery claimed that he would be false to his position if he said that the Irish people felt any interest in the struggle now entered upon. Beyond a regret for loss of life and a compulsion to participate in a wicked war,

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 166-9.
2. Ibid., Cols. 154-55.
3. Ibid., Cols. 169- 70.

Irishmen could take no further interest. The state of home affairs in Ireland was far more serious and worthy of a winter session than the Afghan business.[1] O'Connor Power, who fully anticipated this ineffectual response, published a letter the following day in the Freeman's Journal deploring the fact that the Address calling upon them to "sanction the blood-stained acts of the Royal Butchers" who invaded Afghanistan, was passing through the House without so much as a division representing the protest of the Irish nation. For "this disgrace" upon their country he held Butt chiefly responsible and promised to review at a later date[2] the steps taken by Butt "in his work of betrayal, leading up to the supreme treason of the present hour".[3]

This further attack on Butt was greeted with mixed feelings. The Freeman's Journal announced that it printed the letter with extreme pain, but left no doubt where it stood over the war.

> "We Irish must take great interest in the fight for an oppressed people seeing that the most glorious warrior that ever entered the lists to do battle for the rights of the Hindoo was our own Island's mighty son--Edmund Burke!"

It went on to describe the bad conditions of the Indian peasantry and to applaud the efforts of the "noble Mr. Fawcett" to help them.[4] C.H. Meldon entered a stronger protest on 9 December, first against the

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 171-2.

2. See O'Connor Power's letter of explanation to the Executive Committee of the Home Rule Confederation. Times, 19 December 1878. Since the night on which Butt denounced Parnell and Biggar for doing their "plain and simple duty" over the Mutiny Bill, he wrote, he had felt that it was "incumbent" upon him "to observe closely the dangerous course of the policy upon which he had then entered" and accordingly had watched Butt's conduct "with distrust and alarm, with pain and humiliation."

3. Freeman's Journal, 6 December; Times, 7 December 1878.

4. Ibid., 16 December 1878.

disgraceful language used in respect to "Her Majesty's" troops in Afghanistan, who in his opinion had added "fresh laurels" to those previously won by Irishmen in "the field of battle", and who had recently been led by a distinguished and gallant Irish general; and second against the "vile slander" of Butt. He felt confident that decisive and prompt action would be taken to vindicate themselves from the "gross insult" to them through their chosen leader.[1] Meldon's federalism like Butt's was entrenched in the belief of a dual interest in the empire, although four days later he voted against the Address. Ward also retaliated with a document in praise of Butt, but failed to secure many signatures. Bryan, Dease, Digby, Fay and O'Clery signed it, and Brady gave it his backing but Browne, Henry, Nolan, O'Sullivan and Sullivan were known to have refused.[2] On the other hand, the Executive of the Home Rule Confederation adopted a resolution in favour of O'Connor Power, referring to his letter as a "timely warning of the danger" in which the national cause had been placed by Butt, and thanking him for again asserting in the House of Commons, "the distinct Nationality of Ireland".[3]

On 12 December, Richard O'Shaughnessy confined his inquiry to Afghanistan and endeavoured to examine the question "strictly on its merits". He explained that he had voted for the Government last session when they had secured peace in Europe, but would not have done so had he known that they were preparing to launch a new war in the Far East. As for the consolation announced at an early stage of the session that the burden of

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1. Freeman's Journal, 9 December 1878.
2. See Thornley, op.cit., pp. 374-5; Times, 17 December 1878.
3. Times, 14 December 1878.

the war was to be thrust on India and on its "wretched people", he thought it a poor consolation for any "generous mind" and he rejected it in the name of the overtaxed and overburdened Indian population. He stated that he had always felt it the duty of Irish Members to make this protest, although some of his colleagues had grave doubts that by participating in non-Irish affairs, a sacrifice of influence would result. In answer to O'Clery, he argued that it was party "dissension" that prevented the full voice of Ireland being raised in defence of right and justice in other countries, but if that voice could be heard then it would be proclaimed against the terrible proceedings in the East. Thus, in conformity with the large majority of the Irish people, he promised to join with the Liberal party in voting against the war.[1] The intervention of O'Shaughnessy represented a significant change of heart. As a Home Ruler who had voted with Butt on the Eastern Question, and who was normally the most loyal of followers, he acted contrary to the known instructions of his leader, though not perhaps to his own inclinations.[2] He did not entertain the argument, to which Butt subscribed, that to refuse supplies was to fail to support the Government at a grave and critical moment.

A score of Home Rulers evidently held the same view. When the House was taken to a division twenty-four[3] Home Rulers voted with the Liberals

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 12 December 1878, Cols. 183-8.

2. O'Shaughnessy to Butt, 31 August 1877, Butt Papers, op.cit.

3. Blennerhassett, Brooks, Browne, Collins, Delahunty, Mc.Downing, Ennis, French, Gray, Henry, McKenna, Martin, Morris, Nolan, O'Beirne, Sir P. O'Brien, D.M. O'Conor, The O'Conor Don, O'Donnell, O'Gorman, O'Reilly, O'Shaughnessy, Sheil, Sullivan.

against the Address, and seven[1] with the Government for it.[2] O'Connor Power abstained as he had promised to do, as also did Parnell and Biggar, perhaps for the same reasons. The support of Bowyer, King Harman, Lewis and Ward for the Government was to be expected. Bowyer in fact felt that Britain was legitimately engaged in war, and had a right to exact such conditions as would secure the Indian frontier and prevent the recurrence of dangers.[3] Brady, Moore and O'Leary probably voted as they did out of respect for Butt. Brady in particular had been incensed by O'Connor Power's abuse of Butt, and Dr. W.H. O'Leary, as his physician had been a very close friend for many years.[4] Both Moore and O'Leary had followed Butt into the Conservative lobby on the Eastern Question. Although the party again revealed divisions on an issue of imperial importance, they were far less serious than those on 2 August. Five Home Rulers who had voted with the Government then, now voted against them.[5] At most, his appeal to Ward was translated into four votes although it is difficult to estimate how many members he influenced to remain at home. The feeling of Home Rulers against the war, was confirmed by the voting pattern on Fawcett's amendment not to charge the expenses of the expedition on India. Fourteen Home Rulers,[6] including Brady and O'Connor Power supported Fawcett, while only three[7] opposed him.[8]

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1. Bowyer, Brady, King Harman, O.Lewis, A.Moore, O'Leary, Ward.
2. Hansard, op.cit., 13 December 1878, Cols. 847-51.
3. Ibid., 16 December 1878, Cols. 909-12.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 243, 290; R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 178.
5. Brooks, O'Beirne, O'Donnell, O'Gorman, O'Shaughnessy.
6. Blennerhassett, Brady, Delahunty, Errington, Gray, O'Beirne, Sir P. O'Brien, O'Gorman, O'Reilly, O'Connor Power, Sheil, P.J. Smyth, Stacpoole, Sullivan.
7. Bowyer, King Harman, McKenna.
8. Hansard, op.cit., 17 December 1878, Cols. 1035-37.

Meanwhile, running parallel with both controversies over the Eastern Question and the Afghan War, was the development known as the "New Departure", a policy first mooted by Michael Davitt and John Devoy on a lecture campaign in America, and subsequently in Ireland in an open debate conducted through the Irish press. It is not intended to go into the origins of the "New Departure" which have been described in another work,[1] except to offer a caveat: the "New Departure" which materialized in 1879 with the emergence of the Land League under the presidency of Parnell was not the "New Departure" negotiated in 1878. The different versions that exist of what the "New Departure" constituted, reflect for the main part retrospective interpretations of what it became. Thus Parnell, cross-examined before the Special Commission in 1888, defined it as "a combination of the political with the agrarian movements".[2] Davitt saw it as a proposal to extreme men to openly participate in public movements in Ireland, "not in opposition to Mr. Parnell or moral force supporters, but with a view of bringing an advanced nationalist spirit and revolutionary purpose into Irish public life".[3] This was to be accomplished by linking the Land Question to that of Home Rule, and "by making the ownership of the soil the basis of the fight for self-government."[4] With the bitter memory of the Land League still fresh in 1910, O'Donnell dismissed the "New Departure" as "a design to revolutionise the Irish situation by a programme of extreme agrarianism".[5] O'Donnell held firm

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1. T.W. Moody, "The New Departure", op.cit., pp. 303-33.
2. Parnell quoted in ibid., p. 304.
3. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 125.
4. Ibid., pp. 121, 127.
5. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 295.

to the belief that the agrarian question jettisoned Home Rule as a foremost consideration of Irish patriots.[1] Yet it is probable that land was not envisaged as the crucial issue around which the "New Departure" in 1878 revolved, but one of several issues of equal weight.

This is suggested by the famous cablegram of John Devoy on 25 October which offered the active Parliamentary party the conditional support of the American movement. Prompted by a report of the annual conference of the Home Rule Confederation[2] that implied that the final rupture between Parnell and Butt had occurred, Devoy after consulting other Clan leaders[3] despatched the telegram to Charles J. Kickham, head of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, to be relayed to Parnell and "friends". First published in the New York Herald on 26 October and reprinted in the Freeman's Journal on 11 November, it read as follows:

> "Nationalists here will support you on the following conditions:
> First - Abandonment of the federal demand and substitution of a general declaration in favour of self-government.
> Second - Vigorous agitation of the land question on the basis of a peasant proprietary, while accepting concessions tending to abolish arbitrary eviction.
> Third - Exclusion of all sectarian issues from the platform.
> Fourth - Irish members to vote together on all Imperial and Home Rule questions, adopt an aggressive policy and energetically resist coercive legislation.
> Fifth - Advocacy of all struggling nationalities in the British Empire and elsewhere".[4]

Kickham apparently disliked the scheme and failed to hand on the cablegram to Parnell,[5] who, nevertheless, must have been familiar with its terms.

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 376.
2. See Chapter Four, Section one, p. 179-81.
3. The cablegram was signed by Dr. William Carroll, John J. Breslin, General F.F. Millen, John Devoy, and Patrick Mahon. Carroll, Breslin and Devoy were at this time trustees of the "Skirmishing Fund".
4. This is printed in Devoy's Post Bag, p. 370 ff, and in R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 168-9. The "New Departure" telegram was also intercepted on the authority of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a copy of which can be found in Fenian Papers 1858-1883, A Files 1877-1883, Box 4, A.550, S.P.O.
5. Kickham claimed that he did relay the cable to Parnell, but the latter denied this before the Special Commission.

The "New Departure" was later thoroughly debated in the Freeman's Journal and the Irishman. Devoy could scarcely have foreseen the economic crisis that in the course of 1879 "dwarfed in importance all immediate considerations",[1] but he did anticipate an imperial crisis that in his opinion was to render the destruction of the empire imminent. He concluded the exposition of his and Davitt's programme, in a detailed letter to the Freeman's Journal on 11 December, which represented the views of leading nationalists in America.[2] In the major portion of the letter,[3] in which the general case was put for the "adoption of a broad and comprehensive public policy which Nationalists and men of more moderate views could alike support without sacrifice of principle", Devoy prefaced an old lesson:

> "England's difficulty is only Ireland's opportunity, if Ireland knows how to use it. Self-reliance is a very necessary quality in a people desirous of winning their freedom, but a disarmed people can have little of it and Ireland cannot afford to disregard the opinion of continental powers whose interests clash with those of England".[4]

After defining the minimum points of agreement for any combination of parties in Ireland, as the "radical reform" of the Land system, the satisfactory conclusion of the Education question and the thorough reform of county government, Devoy returned to the same theme: He observed that the favourable circumstances that had held together "that vast agglomeration of hostile races and conflicting interests scattered over the world called

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1. T.W. Moody, "The New Departure", op.cit., p. 325.

2. Ibid., p. 325. Devoy submitted the draft letter to Davitt, Carroll Breslin, O'Kelly and others.

3. Freeman's Journal, ? December 1878. The letter is printed as Appendix A in P.H. Bagenal, The Irish Agitator in Parliament and on the Platform: A Complete History of Irish Politics for the Year 1879, Dublin 1880, p. 115 ff.

4. Bagenal, ibid., p. 118.

the British Empire", were fast disappearing. Constructed for commercial purposes alone, filled with "inflammable material within", and beset with "powerful and watchful enemies without", the empire, he said, could not stand a great strain. The "summit of its glory and its infamy" had been passed and was now in the descent that led "inevitably" to ruin. He appealed to Irishmen to be on their guard; it was their turn now and their watchwords should be: "Patience, prudence, courage and sleepless vigilance". The critical period was not far off:

> "Great events are coming upon us, and on the way we demean ourselves during the next few years will depend whether we are to play a considerable part in those events, and build up a nation, or sink in the ruins of one of the broken empires of the world.
>
> No one who looks at the present condition of the East, who considers the inevitable effects of the policy inaugurated by the present Government of England and the settled policy of Russia--no one who has any knowledge of the immense interests at stake--can seriously think that war on one of the largest scales ever witnessed can much longer be averted...it is time to ask shall Ireland have something to say about this expenditure of her vital *necessaries*, and if it is inevitable, can she find no better way to apply them? This is a question which Home Rulers as well as Nationalists will be called upon to answer some of these days, and now is the time to make up their minds."[1]

O'Donnell gave Devoy his full support, characterising this letter as "literally full of broad and statesman-like ideas", even after the Clan leader had explained that he did not propose to give up his principles about fighting or anything else.[2] Consistent with his early willingness to bargain with American Fenians, O'Donnell saw in the 1878 "New Depature" a realistic basis for agreement, whatever he might have thought of it at a later date.

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1. Bagenal, op.cit., pp. 130-1.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

Devoy's letter, if not the "New Departure" telegram as well, should be seen as much in the light of the Afghan War as in the shadow of the Land League. As T.N. Brown writes, self-government was still to be won "by physical force or the lack of it". In his estimation the authors of the telegram were "sponsoring" not a "peasant uprising but a political revolution".[1] Clearly Alfred Webb interpreted it this way as well. Writing to the New York Herald on 20 November, although he abominated the British policy of foreign domination over inferior races, he failed to see how the New Departure would solve Ireland's problem. The Fenian policy of "keeping up simmering discontent as a means of accomplishing [English] policy changes" would he feared rebound to the degradation of Ireland.[2] The "great events" which Devoy predicted, and for which he wished to prepare Ireland, were logically an Anglo-Russian confrontation arising out of the Afghan War. It is suggested by one historian that Devoy and Boyle O'Reilly had hoped to re-enact 1782, when England involved in war with France, and faced with armed Irish revolt, submitted to the demand for legislative independence. Their support of agitation for peasant proprietorship was thus a "strategem to arouse national enthusiasm" among "politically apathetic peasant masses" and to complete an alliance "with those Home Rule M.P.'s who had retained the confidence of the electorate".[3] In order that the American Fenians

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1. T.N. Brown, op.cit., p. 92.
2. This letter can be found in Webb Papers, Ms 1745.
3. L.J. Macaffrey, op.cit., p. 46.

could legitimately recommend policy to the masses, the alliance was a prerequisite. From this angle, the "New Departure" looks like the culmination of Irish-American intrigues against the British empire. It was, after all, Dr. Carroll's conversion to the belief that the obstructionists could be useful especially in the field of foreign politics, that marked the first practical thaw of the Clan na Gael towards parliamentary nationalism. The fourth and fifth heads of the "New Departure" telegram therefore take on a greater significance than hitherto accorded. The former was related to the disarray of the parliamentary party on the Eastern Question, a recurrent theme running through Davitt's American lectures, the latter was a principle of long standing conveyed through the columns of the Irish World. Devoy's reference to Irish opportunism and his call to heed the opinion of England's enemies were meaningful in this context. He appreciated as much as the Irish press that the special session of Parliament presented the party with a unique opportunity. The concluding section of his 11 December letter was clearly an open exhortation to obstruct the Government in its war effort, by holding up necessary supplies. Perhaps, in his imagination, the Russians would do the rest.

I Intervention After Butt:

The "New Departure" controversy, and the whole-sale disregard of his advice by a significant number of Home Rule members in the Afghan debate, convinced Isaac Butt that the so-called "dissension" "originated in a deep laid plan carried out by the paid agents of an American junta of traitors to destroy any party of constitutional action".[1] He reiterated to Mitchell Henry his view that no headway could be made for the Home Rule cause or an Irish party until those who managed both were severed from those who "identified themselves with treason".[2] Such a solution had recommended itself to him in October 1878 when he had first broached the idea of associating "moderate men together in an entirely new formation".[3] On both occasions Henry refused to countenance such a drastic step. Nevertheless, Butt could not be deterred from believing that some stand had to be made against "obstruction". In the event, it was the activists who jettisoned the "backwoodsmen" of the party, by simply ignoring them, or by making preparations to replace them. Less committed Home Rulers such as the O'Conor Don preferred to secede altogether from the party than to submit to any accommodation.[4]

At the much postponed meeting of the Irish Home Rule League in February, facing his followers for what proved to be the last time, Butt successfully blocked concessions to the activist wing.[5] A motion of

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1. Butt to Henry, 5 January 1879, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832.
2. Ibid.
3. Butt to Henry, 9 October 1878, Ibid.
4. Times, 18 April 1879. The O'Conor Don announced that he had regarded himself as being, for some time, separated from the Home Rule section of the House of Commons.
5. Times, 7, 15, 22, 27 January 1879.

T.D. Sullivan's reaffirming the 1873 resolution calling upon Irish Members to keep aloof from all private communications with English Members and English parties, Butt declared to be one of censure upon himself. Sullivan, in couching his appeal in terms obnoxious to Butt, was perhaps indiscreet. His exhortation that Ireland's only chance lay in making things uncomfortable for England by paralysing a legislature over-weighted with business, had a long history of rejection. Naturally Butt opposed independent action of this variety and he refused to be intimidated by a minority. He could not believe that either Ireland or the Irish cause suffered from his speech on the Government's Eastern policy. Despite Parnell's plea that the motion did not ask the party to endorse obstruction but sought rather to implement the advice of the late Joseph Ronayne to take an interest in English and imperial questions, a weaker amendment was substituted [1] in deference to Butt. This was carried by thirty-two votes to twenty-four. While no longer a political force, Butt commanded to the end sufficient votes to prevent official recognition of the active policy.

The election of party officials at City Hall, Dublin, on 11 February patently confirmed this.[2] Places were largely distributed among the supporters of Butt. Only fifteen Members of Parliament attended the meeting,[3] seven sent letters of apology,[4] while the leading activists

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1. This meeting is reported in the Times, 5 February 1879. See also Bagenal, op.cit., pp. 14-18. Twelve Members of Parliament voted for the amendment and five against it: For: Brooks, Browne, Butt, Callan, Delahunty, Fay, Henry, Lewis, McKenna, Martin, Maldon, Shaw. Against: Biggar, Ennis, Kirk, Parnell, O'Sullivan. See Thornley, op.cit., p. 376, n 106.

2. Times, 12 February 1879.

3. Butt, Brooks, Gray, Callan, Martin, Browne, Delahunty, Fay, Maldon, Nolan, O'Leary, Errington, French, McKenna, O'Clery.

4. Collins, Kirk, J.G. MacCarthy, D.M. O'Conor, O'Shaughnessy, Shaw, Sheil.

boycotted the proceedings. Major Nolan and Richard Power, both marginal activists, were reappointed Whips. Maldon remained one of the Hon. Secretaries and was joined by McKenna as a replacement for Ward. Thus on the Committee the activists were outnumbered by seven to two.[1] This result had been paralleled in the new Council of the Home Rule League. Parnell found himself half-way down the poll of fifty elected onto it, with Biggar one vote behind, and O'Sullivan and O'Connor Power scraping two of the last five places.[2] O'Donnell and A.M. Sullivan had not sought re-election. While the Times applauded the Council for having "left" them "out in the cold", the Government was somewhat perplexed by their absence.[3] However, in a letter the following day,[4] O'Donnell explained that he had not been defeated in the ballot but had earlier resigned from the League because he found the character of its policy "more impractical than ever" and its pledge of attachment to the principle of self-government totally inadequate.[5]

The death of Butt on 5 May did not fundamentally affect the balance of power one way or the other; for he had merely symbolised in recent months a determination by the right wing of the party to resist a Parnellite takeover.[6] Shaw's election as Chairman therefore had no significance,

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1. The Committee was: Butt, Brooks, Callan, Delahunty, Gray, Henry, O'Shaughnessy, Parnell, Shaw.

2. Times, 28 January 1879. Mitchel Henry and Butt topped the poll.

3. Northcote to Pope-Hennessy, 31 January 1879, Iddesleigh Papers, Add. Ms 50053.

4. Times, 31 January 1879.

5. Ibid., 1 February 1879.

6. Thornley, op.cit., p. 379.

and his term of office was calculated in months not years. Indeed, Parnell had voted not for Henry, who was known to favour an energetic policy, but for Butt's nominee Shaw "whom he knew he could oust".[1] The activists were obviously holding back until the general elections. O'Donnell and Sullivan, for example, "addicted" themselves to the organisation of Home Rulers in England, the latter inaugurating the London Home Rule Club to manipulate the Irish vote.[2] In October 1878 the Dublin correspondent of the Times acknowledged that whatever power or vitality the Home Rule cause possessed, it was located in London not Dublin:

> "There its leaders meet, its plans are laid, its policy unfolded, and its great battles fought. Irish nationalists now look to it for information and guidance as to what is coming next and what they are expected to do".[3]

Parnell received proof in April and July of 1879 that he could sweep the Irish electorate by the return in by-elections of Justin McCarthy for Longford and of Lysaght Finigan for Ennis.[4]

In his reminiscences, Justin McCarthy maintained that he did not enter the House of Commons as a political partisan of Parnell as opposed to Butt and positively declined to pledge himself to his parliamentary policy.[5] "I had been invited to stand by some of the leaders of the local nationalist party on the ground that I was not likely to go into extremes on the one side or the other".[6] This was partly confirmed by

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1. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 68.
2. Times, 31 January 1879.
3. Ibid., 14 October 1878.
4. Ennis was the test of Parnell's strength in the country. After the contest he was reported to have said: "If Ennis had been lost, I would have retired from public life, for it would have satisfied me that the priests were supreme in Irish politics". R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 191.
5. J. McCarthy, Reminiscences, Vol. II, London 1899, p. 89.
6. Quoted in C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 134.

Indian government.[1] Between 1865 and 1868 when it closed down, he was its editor-in-chief. He owed his elevation to John Bright, then on the board of directors and a close acquaintance.[2] F.W. Chesson, editor of the evening edition of the Star, and inspiration of the Aborigines Protection Society[3], was also known to him. Perhaps some significance could be drawn from the fact that Henry Fawcett, with whom he had been friendly for some time, was the first Englishman to welcome McCarthy to the House of Commons. On Fawcett's death, it was McCarthy who was deputed by the Home Rule party to pay the last tribute to the "Member for India", on behalf of Ireland.[4] In many ways McCarthy was an unusual accession to the Home Rule party. He came to Longford not as a proven nationalist but as a celebrity, the author of The History of our Times and a popular novelist. A man of cultivated tastes, reserved and unassuming, he lacked the roughness and aggression of many of his colleagues.[5] Unlike them, he harboured a profound respect for the constitution and the history of the House of Commons. The activities of the Parnellites which served to discredit it, "sometimes went very much against the grain". Always a reluctant obstructionist, he nevertheless kept "constantly on the watch for any opportunity of making an Irish presence felt".[6] On the other hand, intervention on issues involving the

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1. J.L. Sturgis, John Bright and the Empire, London 1969, pp. 59-60.

2. T.P. O'Connor, op.cit., p. 323.

3. See R.A. J. Walling (ed.), The Diaries of John Bright, London 1930, pp. 291, 291n2; D.N.B., op.cit., p. 351; Times, 7 April 1879.

4. J. McCarthy, Reminiscences, i, p. 331.

5. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, ii, p. 71.

6. J. McCarthy, op.cit., ii, pp. 227-8, 248-252. The story is told that when McCarthy led the seceders at the time of the split, Parnell described him as "a very nice old gentleman for a small tea party". O'Donnell, History, i, p. 294.

welfare of other nationalities under British rule he found not unpalatable but compelling. Like many English radicals and liberals with whom emotionally and intellectually he had affinity, he had no sympathy for imperial expansion and was disposed to join with the critics of empire. Yet its instant liquidation he would have rejected as a panacea either for the ills of Ireland or the misfortunes of India or Africa. McCarthy was cast more in the role of radical guardian than of Parnellite iconoclast. It might be suspected from his more cautious approach to imperial questions that he subscribed in part to theories of the British Isle's civilising mission in the world. While O'Donnell remained affiliated to the party, he received no firmer support than McCarthy's,[1] especially on Indian matters. As highly literate men and London journalists belonging to an earlier tradition of British newspapers than the expanding "gutter" press they shared many interests and were possibly for a time even firm friends. Certainly O'Donnell was a frequent caller on McCarthy's home at least until the death of Mrs. McCarthy.[2]

Lysaght Finigan was of a different stamp. He had no respect for the House of Commons as an institution and according to Tim Healy raised "the worrying of that House into a system."[3] Typical of a breed of Parnellite flag-bearer, he was bellicose, theatrical, with an apprenticeship that qualified him more for knight-errantry than for parliamentary service.

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1. McCarthy may have been referring to O'Donnell as the "man" who "urged" him to seek election to the House of Commons. [Reminiscences, p. 89]. For his part, certainly, O'Donnell claimed that it was he who introduced McCarthy to Parnell, and that both of them prevailed on Shaw to secure him a seat. O'Donnell, History, pp. 293-4.

2. See McCarthy's Diaries, 1874-1878; Mss 3690-8. The entries in the diaries, or more properly engagement books, were sparse after 1879 the year of his wife's death. But during 1878 and early 1879, O'Donnell's visits to the McCarthy home were numerous.

3. See Healy, Letters and Leaders, p. 96.

He had served in the French Foreign Legion, campaigned against the Germans in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, and doubled as war correspondent and war volunteer in an armed force of the friends of Rumanian and Serbian nationalism during the Balkan uprisings.[1] Maurice Healy remembered him on the threshold of his new career as a "free lance in politics, with a leaning towards lost causes or those supposed to be lost."[2] In Parliament he was a firm disciple of national independence for Ireland, for the Balkans, or for any rebellious colony that demanded it. Again O'Donnell took credit for introducing Finigan to the Home Rule movement when as Hon. Secretary of the Home Rule Confederation he secured for him an assistant secretaryship and post of travelling organiser.[3]

They had plenty to occupy them, for until the dissolution of Parliament in 1880 there was no scarcity of combustible issues. In the run up to the general elections Lord Beaconsfield's "imperialism" ran aground first in South Africa and later in Afghanistan, threatening to upset the Government with new waves of unpopularity. When his "forward policy" made more enemies than friends, Beaconsfield faced the inexorable logic of his early presumption to measure the success or failure of his Ministry by its record overseas. Northbrook wrote to Temple that he was quite happy on home questions to see the Tory Government remain in power, "but the management of Foreign affairs, and of Indian and Colonial affairs

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1. O'Donnell, History, 1, pp. 293-4.

2. Maurice Healy, The Old Munster Circuit: A Book of Memories and Traditions, London 1939, p. 14.

3. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 293.

during the last two years [had] been so bad in [his] opinion that [he] should be very glad of any cause which might lead to a change".[1] Catastrophe in the empire had swiftly spread disillusion throughout the country. In Ireland the untimely combination of the failure of the potato crop with falling prices of other staples exacerbated the climate of discontent, and raised the spectre of another full-scale famine. In the face of these contingencies intervention could not be contained.

On the recall of Parliament, the Government made a half-hearted attempt to limit the frequency of outbreak. New rules of procedure which the Irish regarded as directed primarily at them, were introduced on 17 February.[2] The first of six resolutions, which withdrew the power of private Members to raise general grievances as amendments on going into Committee of Supply on a Monday, attacked a privilege much valued.[3] Parnell observed that little obstruction had been caused in former sessions by notices of motion, and predicted that the resolution would not "materially facilitate the conduct of public business".[4] Indeed, according to F.A. Bagenal, Irish obstruction over the Army Disciplines and Regulations Bill later on "obtained absolute scientific perfection".[5] After three nights of debate the resolution passed with modifications. The remaining five resolutions were dropped for lack of time. It was a bad start for the

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1. Northbrook to Temple, 10 April 1879, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F.86, Vol.12C.

2. Annual Register, 1879. p. 34.

3. The Home Rule motion of 1876 had been put in this form. See Thornley, 'The Irish home rule party and parliamentary obstruction, 1874-1887", in Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 12, No. 45, March 1960, p. 52 N 60.

4. Hansard, Vol. 243, 17 February, Cols. 1374-5; 24 February 1879, Col. 1680.

5. Bagenal, op.cit., p. 55.

Government and aroused much bitterness. Throughout, Home Rulers displayed uncommon cohesiveness and put up a spirited rearguard action on 24 February. In eleven divisions, the Irish vote in opposition varied from 27 to 19.[1] The Times drew the conclusion that many members formerly loyal to Butt had been seduced by the hardcore "obstructionists", whose view, it was feared, would hold temporary predominance.[2] The Times did not perceive as did the Annual Register that the procedural changes might "fairly be called an Irish Question".[3]

Irish irritation over the Government's neglect of University reform might account for the impression of unity.[4] The incapacity of Butt, was also an important factor. Moderate Home Rulers, without declared rebellion or outright betrayal, found it easier to deal with the activists. It was felt that Shaw, a noted mediator,[5] would avoid the mistakes of Butt, and that his moderating influence could do much to heal the breach. As Chairman, it was supposed that he would at least treat the activists as useful "guerilleros", if he was unable to approve of all their proceedings or lead them at the head of a regular army.[6] Surprisingly, Shaw and a few moderates, who supported the movement to abolish flogging in the army,

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 27 February 1879, Cols. 1841-46.
2. Times, 25 February 1879.
3. Annual Register, 1874, p. 33.
4. See Butt to Northcote, 9 February 1879, Iddesleigh Papers, Add. Ms 50040.
5. See D.N.B. Vol. XVII, pp. 1387-8. According to his biographer, a reputation for prudence and judgment earned him the sobriquet "sensible Shaw".
6. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 287.

did not take fright when the Parnellites resorted to tactics that would normally have left them without help. However, positive moderate support could never be relied upon for long on non-Irish issues.

To all appearances Home Rulers closed ranks in deploring the pacification of the Zululand. The annihilation of a British force at Isandhlwana on 22 January, which came as "complete and almost as horrifying a surprise as the Indian Mutiny", occupied first place in ministerial statements when Parliament convened on 13 February.[1] Although debate was deprecated until full details had been received, the Government nevertheless asked for an immediate grant of £1,500,000. Parnell refused to hold his fire and argued that the vote would be used not to recover the military position alone but also to finance the complete invasion of the Zulu kingdom and the ultimate subversion of its people.[2] He was backed by Sullivan, Biggar, O'Shaughnessy and the unpopular Callan.[3] O'Donnell also spoke out next day against Government policy, which he characterised as one of "selfish aggrandisement" and "inhuman butchery of the native population". He drew the attention of the House to a report describing the destruction of a native kraal and the burning of 250 native huts.[4] On 3 March O'Donnell neatly turned discussion towards South Africa, in support of a motion prior to going into Supply on the army estimates. In a mood

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1. Annual Register 1879, pp. 13-15.

2. Hansard, op.cit., 27 February 1879, Cols. 1888-9.

3. Ibid., Cols. 1900-3, 1908, 1907-8, 1909. Callan apparently was overfound of the drink and many refused to sit anywhere near him.

4. Ibid., 28 February 1879, Cols. 2034-35.

of self-congratulation The Nation complimented Parnell, Sullivan and O'Donnell for their outspoken language on the Zulu situation, and the latter for expressing concern over Indian finances[1] and the state of the British army: "The pity is that the other members of the party have not each done as much".[2] When a formal debate was fixed for the end of March, however, thirty-two[3] Home Rulers followed Dilke into the Opposition lobby to register their approval for his motion demanding the recall of Sir Bartle Frere.[4] Although the Freeman's Journal claimed the division as a victory for independent action by a Home Rule party, it had some strong words to say about the "absenteeism", and the "little knot of Conservative Home Rulers" who could no longer be counted as members of the party.[5]

O'Connor Power and O'Donnell had wanted to substitute their own for Dilke's resolution because it did not correspond "with the enormity of the offence" and merely represented the views of the front Opposition.[6] Indeed Cranbrook admitted to Lytton that Bartle Frere was being treated "with exceptional tenderness" by the Liberals.[7] O'Connor Power therefore placed a more violent amendment on the Paper which expressed, he imagined, the "true feelings" of the Irish people. As he was persuaded to withdraw it to avoid confusion, the dedication of the vast majority of Home Rulers was not tested. Nevertheless, there were several indications of their

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1. See Chapter Five, section two, pp. 254-5.
2. Nation, 8 March 1879.
3. Biggar, Blennerhassett, Brady, Brooks, Colthurst, Collins, Conyngham, Deasy, Delahunty, Errington, Henry, McKenna, Martin, Meldon, Montagu, A. Moore, Murphy, Nolan, O'Beirne, O'Brien, O'Byrne, O'Clery, D.H. O'Conor, The O'Conor Don, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan, Parnell, Shaw, Sheil, Sherlock, Sullivan, Synan. French, Gray, O'Gorman, O'Shaughnessy were paired.
4. Hansard, Vol. 244, 27 March, Cols. 1865-1950; 28 March, Cols. 1991-2090; Vol. 245, 31 March 1879, Cols. 20-127.
5. Freeman's Journal, 1, 2 April 1879.
6. Hansard, op.cit., 31 March 1879, Cols. 69-72, 89-93.
7. Cranbrook to Lytton, 25 May 1879, Lytton Papers, MssEur. E. 218, 518/4.

lack of zeal. O'Donnell and Parnell, for example, were much more sensitive to the application of military force in South Africa than a moderate like Sir Patrick O'Brien. When he raised a familiar "hobby-horse" of his on 17 March by moving for the creation of an additional brigade of Irish Guards, he found his colleagues unimpressed. O'Donnell felt that in the present circumstances when that "distinctly anti-national Government"[1] ruled its dominions by directing "the ignorance of one portion of its subjects against the ignorance of the other portion", Ireland would be justified in rejecting such a "puny and paltry recognition of Irish nationality". O'Brien, an imperialist in Butt's mould, who held that the Irish were anxious to participate in all the beneficent influences connected with the empire,[2] was dismayed. He denounced O'Donnell's preaching to sacrifice "even a small interest of his country", as a kind of "bastard nationalism":

> "they were not there to talk about what was occurring in Zululand, in Afghanistan, or in the French Parliament".

Parnell also rejected any further inducement to Irishmen to enter the English army, when they were only sent abroad to carry out "cruel and unjust wars". Irishmen, he declared, were "fools" to enlist in regiments which were to be sent to Zululand.[3]

A case might be made out by cynics that the activists exploited the Zulu uprising primarily for propaganda purposes. It cannot be denied that intervention possessed some of the characteristics of sensationalism;

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1. See Chapter Four, section two, p. 198. Compare this statement with O'Donnell's letter to Disraeli describing the English Conservatives as forming the "English National Party".

2. Hansard, Vol. 237, 18 January 1878, Col. 176.

3. Ibid., Vol. 244, 17 March 1879, Cols. 1077-79, 1082-85, 1090-92.

incidents that discredited the Government were exposed, and frequent reference to Ireland's experience of "an aggressive imperialism" were made.[1] An American brief to delay the Government's war effort also cannot be ruled out entirely. J.J. O'Kelly, who had considered the attachment to the theory of armed Irish rebellion sentimental, had been trying to persuade the *Clan na Gael* to arm the Zulus instead as a step towards the creation of a confederation of the "Kaffir" tribes against England. He believed the operation organised by Irish agents from Portuguese territory could be financed for an outlay of 20,000 dollars. In his view an immediate movement in Ireland would result in crushing defeat, and he urged that their only chance of success lay in patiently *waiting* until England was engaged in a great war t' at would strain her resources to the utmost. If the war in South Africa could be protracted, then O'Kelly argued, the result might be felt in India particularly if the Afghan campaign was a long one:

> "In helping the Zulus we help the Afghans, and we help ourselves by promoting the long wished for 'opportunity'".

At the critical moment an Irish attack could be launched.[2] These proposals were evidently the subject of serious discussion by the trustees of the "Skirmishing Fund" on 9-10 March 1879, but were referred for reaction to the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland.[3] The United Brotherhood were soon to come around to the view that the election of one hundred or

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1. Hansard, Vol. 245, 31 March 1879, Col. 71.

2. O'Kelly to Davitt, 10 March 1879, in Devoy's Post Bag, i, pp. 408-11. This letter was sent instead to Devoy.

3. Ibid.; see also Carroll to Devoy, 11 March 1879, in ibid., pp. 412-14.

so Parnells to Westminster, although this would not itself liberate Ireland, would "have a wholesome effect on opinion, which might influence action abroad" and "bring public sentiment at home up to the fighting point".[1] O'Kelly subsequently wrote to Davitt to enlist his support, but on second thoughts entrusted the letter to John Devoy who was conversant with the general argument[2] and who had journeyed to Europe to win Fenian and Home Rule acceptance for the "New Departure". As O'Kelly was his closest friend, Devoy was probably sympathetic.[3] Doubtless to sound out the Russians again about the possibility of an invasion of Afghanistan[4] he had made arrangements to see the Russian Ambassador in Paris and even contemplated going to St. Petersburg itself. Dr. Carroll suggested that if the Russians were ready to co-operate, Devoy might throw in as an additional incentive the project of a combined African, Indian and Irish movement against England at the same time.[5]

Conceivably Parnell could have been aware of these Irish-American inclinations. O'Kelly himself was a very possible source of intelligence.. During his parliamentary career he was generally considered to be Parnell's chief adviser. "Be that as it may", Devoy recalled, "he was very close

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1. Enclosure I, Report of Executive Council of United Brotherhood, 8 August 1879, in Desp. Secret no. 103, Thornton to Salisbury, 29 March 1880, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1745.
2. O'Kelly to Devoy, 17 February 1879, in Devoy's Post Bag, pp. 392-3.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
4. See Enclosure I in Desp. Secret no. 90, Thornton to Salisbury, 8 April 1878, F.O. 5 Papers, Vol. 1706. Crump had been informed by the editor of the New York Herald that Carroll with two other members of the Revolutionary Directory had been detailed to St. Petersburg, where they were "well-received" and buoyed up "with prospects of succour in the event of an open rebellion in Ireland."
5. Carroll to Devoy, 11 March 1879, op.cit. Dr. Carroll refers to an introduction sent to the American Consulate in Paris that Devoy was to collect. This proved to be a letter of reference from Senator Conover to the Hon.E.W. Stoughton, the American Minister at St. Petersburg, which bears out that Devoy intended to visit the Russian capital.

to Parnell and in his confidence."[1] R.B. O'Brien confirmed that O'Kelly was the "one man" to whom Parnell "freely opened his mind--when indeed he opened it at all."[2] Again, Parnell twice conferred with Devoy at Boulogne in March 1879, and was offered the leadership of a combined national movement on the terms publicised in October 1878. He refused to commit himself, however, to any formal or binding arrangement, even if as Devoy claimed he was prepared to go half-way to meet them.[3] A vigorous parliamentary defence of Zulu independence, which might have exposed "to the world in an official and authoritative way the whole villainy of English rule", could have satisfied the requirements[4] of clauses four and five of the "New Departure" telegram.[5] However, the South African expedition was soon abandoned by the Clan na Gael because of the more pressing needs of Ireland herself. Dissatisfied by the lack of progress made in arming Ireland, and anxious to show some return for its money, the Clan instructed its roving provacateur General Millen to concert all efforts towards the formation of a revolutionary army.[6] Devoy therefore called off the trip to St. Petersburg,[7] but activist intervention, on the other hand, increased rather than abated.

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1. Devoy, Recollections, p. 344; see also T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, pp. 332-42.
2. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, ii, p. 513.
3. Devoy in Irish Freedom, Oct.-Dec. 1914, quoted in Devoy's Post Bag, i, p. 401. R.B. O'Brien, op.cit., pp. 176-7.
4. See Chapter Four, section two, p. 217.
5. Enclosure I, Report of the Executive Council of the United Brotherhood, 8 August 1879, op.cit.
6. See Instructions from Dr. Carroll to General Millen, Enclosure in Desp. (copy), Thornton to Granville, 26 April 1880, Fenian Papers 1858-83, A Files, Box No. 4, S.P.O.
7. Carroll to O'Leary, 23 April 1879, in Devoy's Post Bag, i, pp. 429-35.

The record of leading active Home Rulers prosecuting to the bitter end the hopeless championship of the Zulu,[1] should not be considered as an isolated demonstration of Irish perseverence or "perversity". The storm over the incorporation of the Transvaal in the South African Confederation, and the strong objection made to the military presence of Lord Roberts in Afghanistan, set earlier precedents. In fact, their persistent interrogation of the Colonial Secretary on points of detail about the Zulu situation clearly went beyond the call of tactical considerations. Recurring expression of abhorrence for "naked" aggression suggested a more intrinsic basis to their anti-imperialism and a genuine commitment to the sovereignty of any country, albeit uncivilised or defenceless. Parnell likened the "invasion" of Zululand by British soldiers to "the attacks of foreigners and strangers".[2] O'Connor Power believed that against an "unoffending people", such action "outraged the liberty of nations".[3] Sullivan compared Cetewayo's defence of his kingdom against an "English" army with Queen Elizabeth's repulse of the "Spanish Armada".[4] This thinking also underlay their opposition to British imperial policy in the Transvaal and Afghanistan. Yet their defence of Zulu independence revealed a further dimension--the total rejection of racialist apologies for annexation. There were no limits to aggression, O'Donnell warned the

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1. Total number of separate interventions by the activists were: O'Donnell - 12, Sullivan - 12, Parnell - 8, Biggar, McCarthy and O'Connor Power - 2 each.

2. Hansard, Vol. 243, 27 February 1879, Col. 1889.

3. Ibid., Vol. 245, 31 March 1879, Col. 69.

4. Ibid., Vol. 243, 27 February 1879, Cols. 1901-2.

House, if they resolved upon oppressing a race merely because its colour differed from their own.[1] On this theme O'Connor Power went further. If Britain wanted to be on good terms with South Africa, then blacks, he advised, must be treated as if they were a white population, and justice accorded them as to a civilised race. Sullivan refused absolutely to help extend an already swollen empire at the cost of the liberty of natives, however dark their skins might be. His sense of moral outrage, although the most pronounced, was typical: where slumbered the public morality of England, he enquired? His morality was not cribbed, cabined, and confined by geographical lines. He meted out to the savage the same measure of justice which he did to the civilised races.

Parnell's expression of resentment in November 1879 that Irishmen were being bracketed with savages in their treatment by a Conservative Government, was exceptional. His language was framed in the context of a political meeting at Co. Mayo and was by its nature an electoral exhortation to "reduce the pride of [that] haughty Government".[2] While he might not have got as worked up as Sullivan, O'Donnell and O'Connor Power about such issues, with the possible exception of flogging, he thought it right to support them on India or Africa provided they did not enter deeply into inter-party arrangements.[3] In the late 1870's the spectacle of Parnell, O'Donnell, Sullivan, O'Connor Power and Biggar lecturing Parliament and Home Rule audiences on the fellowship of man especially if coloured, and on the brotherhood of nationalism, produced a lasting impact on Ireland that should not be underestimated.

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1. Hansard, Vol. 245, 31 March 1879, Col. 89.
2. Times, 24 November 1879, see also Irish Police and Crimes Records, Reports of speeches at Irish Land League and Irish National League meetings, 1879-1885, Box No. 3, S.P.O.
3. See Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, p. 281.

II A Maelström of Critics

Towards the end of March, Cranbrook wrote to Lytton how curious it was that South Africa had drawn "all eyes and minds from India". "Unless something untoward should happen", the Viceroy "might work on quietly with little observation".[1] The Secretary of State was much less sanguine to Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay. "Parliament", he wrote on 18 March, "has its questioners upon all subjects and the critical position of money matters gives reason for enquiries. We certainly have fallen on hard times at home and in the East".[2] As a rule, Indian affairs caused little turbulence and aroused little enthusiasm in the House, but the frontier problem with Afghanistan, which seemed to defy lasting settlement, gave them a prominence and a hearing reserved for periods of crisis.[3] Northcote confessed to Beaconsfield on 9 January, that they could have met Parliament "at great advantage" had that "chapter" been closed; "but of course Russia sees that, and will keep the sore open if she can; and then it will tell heavily on our work, for we shall be pestered with interpellations and protests, and annexation debates, and questions as

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1. Cranbrook to Lytton, 23 March 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4.

2. Cranbrook to Temple, 18 March 1879, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F. 86, A17.

3. In 1860, John Bright described with sorrow how little India stirred the public interest of Britain: "Parliament cares about India little more than the Cabinet. The English people, too, are very slow, and very careless about everything that does not immediately affect them. They cannot be excited to any effort for India except under pressure of some great calamity, and when that calamity is removed they fall back into their usual state of apathy." John Bright quoted in J.T. Mills, John Bright 1811-1899, London 1893, p. 62.

to aid we are to give India".[1] In the periodical journals India received a full share of publicity. Henry Fawcett,[2] H.M. Hyndman,[3] and Florence Nightingale[4] wrote single-minded articles stressing the poverty and financial malaise of India, which cumulatively attracted considerable attention.[5] The native press naturally played up their findings as proof of the "Drain" theory. The Bengalee, for instance, felt the case of these "English thinkers" proven by "an array of figures and facts which [could not] be questioned or doubted".[6] The articles also figured prominently in Viceregal correspondence.[7] Sir John Strachey, the Indian Finance Minister felt called upon to issue a rejoinder to Hyndman the most outspoken critic.[8]

"At no time since 1857", commented the Times on 26 May, "have Indian questions attracted the same amount of public interest in this country. From one cause or another India has been thrust to the front." The Times dated this upsurge of interest from the famine in Southern India of 1877 when England "became awake to vast responsibilities she [had] undertaken in assuming the Government of India." It was happy to report that England's

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1. Northcote to Beaconsfield, 9 January 1879, Iddesleigh Papers, Add. Ms 50053.

2. H. Fawcett, "The Financial Condition of India", "The Proposed Loans to India", in Nineteenth Century, Vol. V., 1879, pp. 193-218, 872-907.

3. H.M. Hyndman, "The Bankruptcy of India", in ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 585-608; Vol. V, pp. 443-462.

4. F. Nightingale, "The People of India", in ibid., Vol. IV., pp. 193-221. See E.T. Cook, The Life of Florence Nightingale, 1862-1910, Vol. II, London 1913, p. 290; Cranbrook to Temple, 21 April 1879, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F. 86, A 17. Although a "recluse" and "open to influences" Florence Nightingale, admitted the Secretary, carried "great weight with many".

5. Hyndman's article, "The Bankruptcy of India", did much to set the topic of India's finances and future alight. Annual Register, 1879, p. 52.

6. Bengalee, 22 March 1879.

7. See for example, the letters on Fawcett: Cranbrook to Lytton, 10 February, 23 March 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4.

8. See John Morley, "Impoverishment of India not Proven", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. XXIV, 1878, pp. 867-81. The article was based on material supplied by Strachey. Hindoo Patriot, 14 April 1879.

"whole position" in India, the terms on which it was held and the national duties it implied, were "beginning to be felt and understood".[1] The explanation was more basic than the Times would allow. A party spirit, never absent though always denied, had crept more noticeably into debates. The situation had altered radically since Cranbrook reassured Lytton a year before that there was "no ground for apprehension that Indian questions [would] be looked at as the instruments of party". There were of course many Members with "very dangerous opinions", but they differed amongst themselves and did not "carry weight enough to overbear the power of Government", even if they worked in unison. On their "crotchets", they "would be opposed to any Government and any Government to them".[2] These critics of Indian Government were variously dismissed as "lewd fellows of the baser sort",[3] "snobs and blackguards",[4] "mischievous moral swindlers",[5] who had no following in the country. A Radical such as P. Rylands was considered by Cranbrook to have no redeeming qualities; his "ideas of a gentleman" making "his remarks unworthy of notice".[6]

It was the Afghan imbroglio which gave more of an edge to the Opposition as well as a rare degree of unity. British involvement in Afghanistan and the concomitant pressure on Indian finances were seized upon by Liberals generally, as the logical manifestation of Tory imperialism.

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1. Times, 26 May 1879.
2. Cranbrook to Lytton, 27 May 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/3.
3. Cranbrook to Lytton, 16 December 1878, ibid.
4. Burne to Lytton, 30 January 1879, ibid., 516/7.
5. Lytton to Cranbrook, 24 August 1879, ibid., 518/4.
6. Cranbrook to Lytton, 16 December 1878, op.cit.

The Viceroy himself was increasingly subjected to personal attack. As early as January 1879, Burne complained to Lytton that "party" seemed "to be the only thing left now in England".[1] Even if Hartington was more imperially minded and reluctant to give way to partisanship,[2] many Liberals including Gladstone, were prepared to weld India to their electoral platform against the Conservative party . "In the last year of a Parliament the hustings [were] in all minds".[3] Indian frontier policy and Indian finance, hitherto entrusted to a few experts, advanced into the region of topics of the first magnitude,[4] becoming interesting to a House of "meddlers". In high spirits, Florence Nightingale wrote to P.K. Sen that India was being discussed "very much as a home question".[5] By contrast, Cranbrook was vaguely disquieted that India should become the direct charge of English finance. His fear that every town would raise a Fawcett or a Rylands,[6] was a tacit admission that radical economics were popular politically.

While O'Donnell continued to speak out loudly on non-Irish issues, the Home Rule voice in such an excited climate was less distinctive than usual. The moderates with the odd exception such as Sir Patrick O'Brien, took little interest. Active Home Rulers tended to merge with a coalition of Radicals, prepared to suppress jealousies and disagreements[7] in order

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1. Burne to Lytton, 30 January 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/7.
2. Stanhope to Lytton, 21 May 1879, Ibid., 517/7.
3. Cranbrook to Temple, 25 October 1879, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F.86, A 17.
4. Annual Register, 1879, p. 52.
5. Nightingale to Sen, 20 June 1879, in P. Sen (ed)., Florence Nightingale's Indian Letters, 1878-1882, Calcutta 1937, pp. 16-17.
6. Cranbrook to Lytton, 10 February 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4.
7. See Wemyss Reid, Forster, II, p. 222; A.G.Gardiner, The Life of Sir William Harcourt (1827-1886), Vol. I, London 1923, p. 357.

to discredit the Beaconsfield Government. Although there is no evidence of a formal arrangement between Home Rulers and Radicals on a programme of parliamentary action, there were many indications of an informal dialogue between them on separate issues. Dilke and Chamberlain, for example, had sought to capture the Irish vote on the Zulu War, and though unable to make much of Parnell in "hammering" out a joint policy for Ireland,[1] succeeded in winning thirty votes and in persuading O'Connor Power to abandon his rival amendment. Further negotiations with Parnell, although without result, represented a definite attempt on the part of the Radicals to reach an understanding with the activists. Parnell, who refused to be drawn into any such alliance, was found to be an "irreconcilable" nationalist by Dilke. Nevertheless, there was in the Parliament of 1879 a degree of co-operation between active Home Rulers and Radicals missing in previous sessions and seldom matched in later years. In a letter to the Times on 27 December 1879, Sullivan wrote that it would be "uncandid" to pretend that Irish sympathies were not with the masses of the English people as represented in the House of Commons by such men as Cowen, Lawson, Burt, Mundella, Chamberlain, Jacob Bright, S. Morley, Plimsoll, Leatham and Dillwyn.[2] As the Times was quick to point out, however, the general elections were an important, probably the main factor in the courtship.[3] Mitchell Henry noted that the Radicals were particularly "cringing" in the new year.[4]

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1. R. Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, A Victorian Tragedy, London 1958, p. 109. Gwynn & Tuckwell, Dilke, pp. 281-2.

2. Times, 27 December 1879.

3. Extract from the Times printed in Freeman's Journal, 1 January 1880.

4. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 2 May 1880, Butt Papers, Vol. III, Ms 832.

Perhaps the most celebrated example of co-operation was the campaign to abolish flogging in the army, fought over the Army Disciplines and Regulations Bill, which dragged through twenty-three sittings and occasioned sixty-one divisions.[1] The activists, it will be recalled, had opposed corporal punishment and the "cat" without English help in 1877 and 1878. "Now they were supported by a crowd of English Radicals".[2] Initially the Irish stood back allowing the Radicals to make all the running. It was not until late June and early July, a critical period in the struggle, that they "put in their oar vigorously". The parliamentary system was then tested to breaking point.[3] The Irish fatally undermined the Government position by having the "cat" itself displayed to the House on 5 July. Two days later Colonel Stanley, the Minister in charge of the Bill, announced the abolition of flogging in all cases except when the alternative was death. The Whigs, who had been cool to the abolitionists throughout, backed down, and swung round in support of them.[4] On 15 July Hartington offered the abolitionists the concession of moving a resolution on behalf of the Liberal party condemning the retention of corporal punishment for all military offences, provided the Bill was allowed to pass through Committee;[5] this promise was fulfilled.[6] In the virtual surrender of the Government over flogging and in the dragooning of the Whigs, the Irish-Radical

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1. The Annual Register, 1879, pp. 55-66 gives a detailed narrative of the passage of the Bill through Parliament.
2. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 186.
3. Annual Register, 1879, pp. 60, 65.
4. Eversley, op.cit., p. 89.
5. Hansard, Vol. 248, 15 July 1879, Col.459. See also G.W.E. Russell, Lawson, p. 143.
6. Ibid., 17 July 1879, Cols. 634-641.

phalanx secured a notable victory, which was to have a particular relevance to India two years later.

Lord Cranbrook was convinced that the Irish had been put up to obstruction. "Some of the extreme Liberals", he wrote in disgust to Lytton, "are indeed the wirepullers of the Irish and exalt in the action the responsibility of which they will not openly share."[1] Almost certainly it was the other way round.[2] A dedicated core of Home Rulers sold the flogging issue to sympathetic Radicals,[3] buttressed the attack when debate flagged,[4] and remained firm when compromise was in the air.[5] Parnell, Sullivan and O'Donnell were members of a committee of management, which also included Burt, Cowen, Hopwood, MacDonald and Rylands, formed to co-ordinate and maintain the momentum of opposition to the Bill.[6] Chamberlain's accession to the abolitionists in mid June added strength to the agitation and won over many Liberal waverers. Sir Wilfred Lawson recorded that Chamberlain "aided and abetted" Parnell and the Irishmen brilliantly.[7] Jacob Bright, Courtney, Dilke, Dillwyn, Herschell, P. Taylor

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1. Cranbrook to Lytton, 1 July 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4.
2. Eversley, op.cit., p. 90.
3. This point is confirmed by Chamberlain when he complimented Parnell on 19 June, "for standing up alone against the system of flogging when [he himself], and other members had not felt the courage of [their] convictions". Hansard, Vol. 247, 19 June 1879, Col. 208.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 335. O'Donnell described his early contribution in the struggle as that of a "useful stopgap".
5. Chamberlain was prepared on 5 July to suspend opposition to the Bill on the understanding that the Government would make a satisfactory statement concerning the schedule on flogging offences. He appealed to Parnell to let the clauses go through, but the latter was objurate.
6. O'Donnell gives two versions of the "inner" history of the anti-flogging campaign. a) In the first, great stress is laid on the fact that Parnell was not privy to a small "secret" organising committee led by Alexander MacDonald, Cowen and O'Donnell inside Parliament, and by the Secretary of the London Trades Council outside. [O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 331-3]. b) The second, contained in a letter to Joseph Chamberlain written several years after the event, seems a more authoritative account. In this, Parnell Sullivan, Burt, Hopwood and Rylands are added to a much enlarged committee, although the reservations of the first concerning Parnell's initiative remain. [ii, p. 4.].
7. G.W.E. Russell, op.cit., pp. 143-4.

and W. Williams were others whose support was canvassed. In a sense the co-operation between Irish and Radical Members over flogging proved stronger than the claims of party. On 5 July Chamberlain threatened to unleash systematic obstruction in the event of flogging remaining on the Statute books, and denounced Hartington on 7 July for his lack of commitment as "lately the leader of the Opposition, now the leader of a section of the Opposition."[1] In Ireland, Gray sought a halt, a leading article in the Freeman's Journal urging Parnell and company to desist from their present tactics.[2] At once Parnell, Biggar and O'Donnell issued a joint communiqué regretting such encouragement to inactivity and citing as proof of "what might be achieved by united and energetic action",[3] Hartington's confession that the withdrawal of local legislation from an overweighted Parliament was a necessity.[4]

Frank Hugh O'Donnell claimed several lasting friendships to have developed from the flogging campaign. Cowen, for example, was set down as a "life-long" friend.[5] In fact, over the question of tenant-right, O'Donnell attempted to marry the Home Rule with the Radical interest. As Ireland began to withdraw behind the provincialism of a separate land agitation, he urged that England as a battlefield should not be forgotten or English allies ignored: "It is by British friends against British foes that the

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 5 July, Col. 1554; 7 July 1879, Col. 1807.
2. Freeman's Journal, 14 July 1879.
3. Ibid., 15 July 1879.
4. Hansard, Vol. 248, 14 July 1879, Col. 333.
5. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 361.

whole theory of any effective constitutional agitation counsels us to fortify ourselves".[1] At this time, as suggested by J.L. Garvin the biographer of Joseph Chamberlain, O'Donnell was full of sympathy not only for Young Ireland, but also for Young England.[2] One of the founders though not perhaps the originator of the Farmers' Alliance,[3] a movement designed to promote the interests of tenant farmers, O'Donnell foreshadowed in a letter to the Freeman's Journal on 17 March and later in the Agricultural newspaper, the Mark Lane Express,[4] a "natural combination" of Irish and English tenant-righters. By transporting the war into "the heart of the English counties and the strongholds of landlord power", thus breaking up the "solidity of the county vote", O'Donnell projected the toppling of the Tory Government and the return in the general elections of a united "Tenant-Right" party. He went to Parliament with the same appeal that

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1. Freeman's Journal, 14 April 1879.

2. J.L. Garvin, Chamberlain, II, pp. 384-5.

3. See O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 346-64. This section relies heavily on the evidence supplied by O'Donnell himself, but is partly confirmed by other sources. In attempting to show his early initiative, O'Donnell took the precaution of fully documenting his case, even down to the publication of a bill of receipt for the hire of rooms for the foundation conferences of 28 April and 11 June: "The matter is worth proving to the hilt." [i, p. 356]. The contemporary pamphleteer P.H. Bagenal substantiated that O'Donnell did indeed plant the seed of the Alliance. Bagenal, op.cit., pp. 38-40. But W.E. Bear, Secretary of the Alliance disputed O'Donnell's authorship of the scheme, and the two conducted an unseemly correspondence through the Times. What does emerge is that O'Donnell played an important while not the only part, in the foundation of a farmers' party. See Times, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21 April 1880.

4. The letter, addressed to the editor William Bear, and published in the Mark Lane Express on 7 April, is also printed in O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 352-5.

common sufferers "should co-operate against common opponents", and announced that at least a section of the Liberal party was prepared to go thoroughly and to the fullest extent into the demands and requirements of the farmers.[1] Shortly afterwards a provisional committee of the Farmers' Alliance, on which O'Donnell sat together with J.W. Barclay and David Wedderburn, was set up to draft a programme.[2] O'Donnell also explained the merits of the Alliance to Joseph Cowen and Joseph Chamberlain securing their "influential backing" and their "active participation".[3] In India, the Hindoo Patriot welcomed this "union of English and Irish Liberals". It was of no small credit to the Irish party, it wrote, that they should be in the van of agricultural reform in England.[4]

In the end, however, O'Donnell was unable to carry Ireland with him. Parnell disapproved of close friendships with English Members and it was his habit after 1880 if not before to vet all invitations to British tables. This restriction was a standing grievance with Healy and was probably strongly resented if ignored by O'Donnell. On the Farmers' Alliance O'Donnell made

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1. Freeman's Journal, 17 March 1879. See also O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 349-53. In his letter to the Mark Lane Express, O'Donnell envisaged the formation of a new party of "not less than a hundred and forty land reformers who [would] quickly rise to be the majority of the House...". As to the political objectives of the Alliance, William Bear later insisted that it was not a "political trick" nor a scheme to further the interests of the Liberal party: "Liberals came to the Alliance; it did not go to them." It was open to Conservative Members, but they chose to boycott it. See W.E. Bear, "The Revolt of the Counties", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. 27, May 1880, pp. 720-727.

2. The objects of the Alliance are listed in the Annual Register, 1879, p.87.

3. Times, 13 April 1880; O'Donnell, op.cit., i, pp. 361-2.

4. Hindoo Patriot, 2 June 1879.

the mistake of attempting to by-pass Parnell completely, taking into his confidence moderates such as Shaw, Colthurst, O'Shaughnessy, Blennerhassett and Martin who could neither command nor hope to influence the Irish tenant vote. Instead, as he bitterly remembered, the Irish "rushed headlong into the isolation of the Land League."[1] He was to suffer a still greater insult when after the elections he was shunned by his "political offspring."[2]

The accord between active Home Rulers and the Radical section of the Liberal party carried over on Indian questions. While not always in agreement about adequate measures for India, they tended to act together as a kind of watch-dog committee. In some cases the ties were closer. As a member of the Peace Society, Alexander Sullivan was an adherent of what in foreign politics was known as the "peace-at-any price" party; anti-imperialists who took the strongest exception to British interference in the affairs of other countries.[3] Dillwyn, Fry, Lawson, Palmer, J.W. Pease,[4] and Henry Richard[5] were prominent amongst its members. The latter were respectively President and Secretary. Their "Little Englandism" made them unsympathetic,even it would appear, to the continued presence of Britain in India. W.E. Forster recorded on 12 November that the Liberal party would have to contend against a strong desire to cut the cable and get rid of the dependency altogether.[6] As well, Pease,

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1. Times, 21 April 1880; O'Donnell, History, i, p. 357.
2. O'Donnell, ibid., pp. 361-4.
3. Times, 24 May, 29 December 1879.
4. D.N.B., 2nd Supplement, Vol. III, 1912, p. 90.
5. D.N.B., Vol. XVI, pp. 1094-1096.
6. Wemyss Reid, Forster, II, p. 217. Forster obviously had in mind the views of men like Henry Richard, who had posed the question in a pamphlet on the Afghan War, whether the policy of the empire was to be controlled and dictated by a handful of persons in the East. See H. Richard, The Afghan Question in Six Letters, London 1878, Letter II, p. 3.

Richard,[1] and Lawson[2] were opponents of the Opium trade and leaders of the movement for its suppression. Before Alfred Webb pooled the resources of the Irish and English abolition movements on his election to Parliament in 1892, the anti-opium lobby could usually rely on Home Rule sympathy. The so-called "labour members"--Burt, MacDonald, and Rylands--opponents of the "Cat" with Parnell, were opponents of "dictatorial bureaucracy" in India with O'Donnell. James Barclay and Charles Hopwood, although demonstrating no special interest in Indian matters, retained the friendship of O'Donnell and were mentioned by him as colleagues who could be trusted and who could be discreet. Both assisted O'Donnell in the preliminary meetings of an Indian National Association in 1883.[3] Sir David Wedderburn, whose views on representation for India were advanced even for a pronounced Radical, was acknowledged to be a friend of Ireland and of Home Rulers.[4] Unlike Fawcett, who was repelled by obstruction and could not stand Home Rule,[5] Wedderburn saw the problem in a manner which the Nation described as "at once creditable" and "unusual with a British Member of Parliament".[6]

Fawcett, on the other hand, was to fall out with Home Rulers on more than one occasion during the session, and clearly separated himself

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1. See H. Richard, "On the Application of Christianity to Politics": Address from the Chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, Annual Autumnal Meeting, 16 October 1877, London 1877.
2. D.N.B., 2nd. Supplement, Vol. II, 1912, pp. 428-431.
3. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 431. See Chapter Ten, section two.
4. Nation, 18 January 1879.
5. Times, 29 October 1879. See Fawcett's Address to his Constituents at Hackney. Stephen, op.cit., p. 412.
6. Nation, 29 November 1879.

from those Radicals who in Stanhope's opinion were "bidding for the Irish vote".[1] When it came to the Indian empire, Fawcett was more a "Whig" than a "Little Englander". He was as opposed to the further extension of the empire as he was to talk about British withdrawal from territories already held. By and large, Fawcett accepted conservative semantics that Home Rule meant the first step in the "disintegration of the empire". In the sense that Home Rulers were regarded as imperial enemies and not as imperial friends, their interest in the empire must have looked to him primarily destructive. Throughout 1879 Fawcett behaved more as a responsible statesman in line for higher office, than as an independent indifferent to it.

Home Rulers were less fussy in their choice of parliamentary allies. On 28 February, they did not refuse to vote for Fawcett's motion[2] asking for a Select Committee to inquire into the Government of India Act of 1858 and other Acts amending the same. Fawcett's purpose was to focus public attention on the financial difficulties of India.[3] Three main solutions each counting for a section of the vote were put forward for the alleviation of the widespread discontent in India. The first, Fawcett's, was to restore to the Indian Council a measure of control over finance and expenditure, much undermined since 1858. In his opinion the Executive had gained in strength at the

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1. Stanhope to Lytton, 20 June 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur.E. 218, 517/7.

2. See S.N. Singh, The Secretary of State for India and His Council, Delhi 1962, pp. 42 ff. Sixteen Home Rulers who voted for the Motion: Biggar, Brooks, Colthurst, French, Henry, McKenna, Nolan, Sir P. O'Brien, O'Byrne, O'Donnell, O'Gorman, Parnell, O'Connor Power, Shaw, Sullivan, Synan. See Times, 3 March 1879.

3. Times, 1 March 1879.

Council's expense. The result was that guarantees for economy and good administration were much weaker than in Company times. In fact India now faced bankruptcy. A professor of economic science, Fawcett tended to see India's major disorders as functionally economic and was blind to other perhaps equally important explanations. Although Fawcett did not win recognition as the 'Friend of India' simply because he was competent at figures, the role he assumed was more that of India's auditor than of her most honoured reformer. At any rate, Fawcett probably considered the functions of each to be identical. As he explained to Gladstone, his chief object since he had given his attention to the subject was to educate public opinion on the side of economy and not on the side of extravagance.[1] Like many Liberals, the prospect of India failing to pay her own way,[2] and acting as a burden on the English exchequer, filled him with horror. The solvency of government was his measure of *its worth;* frugal administration was equated with good administration, extravagant administration with bad administration. If Indian finances could not be put on a sound basis, "the sooner Britain wound up the concern the better". In other words, an unbalanced budget invalidated any claim to civilize India. Fawcett seemed much more concerned with bringing the Radical gospel of "peace", "retrenchment", though with less emphasis on "reform", to Indian Government, than in proposing political concessions to Indians.[3]

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1. Fawcett to Gladstone, 10 May 1879, Gladstone Papers, Add.Ms 44156.
2. Hansard, Vol. 246, 22 May 1879, Col. 1082.
3. Ibid., Vol. 243, 28 February 1879, Cols. 1975-85.

Also an advocate of retrenchment in the Indian economy, John Bright favoured a political solution; one which he had put forward in elaborate detail during the second reading of the Third India Bill on 24 June 1858.[1] His formula as on that occasion was still a scheme of decentralisation. Nothing done in England, he believed, would materially affect the question of finance. Until such time as India was separated into completely independent Governments, more intimately associated with the circumstances and the requirements of the people, there could never be a Government just to the character of England or to the population of India.[2] Bright's policy of separate states was conceived not as a gesture to nationalism although Indians might be better represented, but as a rational method of managing a vast and complex empire.[3]

It could be assumed with confidence that the third statement from India's "friends" came closest to Indian feeling. As O'Donnell maintained, he always acted as he believed a good Indian nationalist ought *to have acted.*[4] He therefore rejected Fawcett's economic propositions as "illusory", and went further than Bright politically in advocating the readjustment not of Government but of power. The widening gulf of misunderstanding and discontent separating India from Britain, he warned, could never be narrowed by stricter economy applied from London.

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1. Hansard, Vol. 151, 24 June 1858, Cols. 330-53. See also Sturgis, op.cit., pp. 45-50.

2. Ibid., Vol. 243, 28 February 1879, Cols. 2027-34.

3. Bright to Sturge, 16 August 1859, Sturge Papers, Add. Ms 43723, quoted in Sturgis, op.cit., p. 45.

4. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 429-431.

Indian representation alone could avert "catastrophe", and Indian politicians exercise the financial stringency sought. This remedy was typically Irish in the assumption that English agency by its very nature was the real cause of grievance. The growing disquiet throughout the country over the rising burden of taxation was merely its symptom. Although declining to speculate on the particular form representation should take, O'Donnell spoke of constitutional bodies which would reflect the drift of genuine native opinion in the House of Commons.[1] He always considered the drawing closer of links between Parliament and native India to be of cardinal importance. Yet as his views on Irish employment in the Indian Civil Service were to indicate, O'Donnell's notion of what constituted realistic reform at that time fell short of truly self-governing institutions.[2]

The Conservatives considered Fawcett's motion "mischievous",[3] and rejected it by the comfortable margin of 139 votes to 100. From an Irish viewpoint, it might be taken that the sixteen Home Rulers who voted were of nearly the same mind as O'Donnell. The fact that the Freeman's Journal also took the line that the reduction in Government spending announced by Stanhope in his budget statement on 22 May[4] by itself was no panacea, suggested a certain consistency in Irish thinking.

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 28 February 1879, Cols. 2019-21.
2. See Chapter Five, section three.
3. Cranbrook to Lytton, 26 February 1876, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4.
4. Hansard, Vol. 246, 22 May 1879, Cols. 1056-57.

In an editorial it characterised the budget, welcomed by Fawcett as virtually a vindication of his point of view,[1] as framed on lines dramatically antagonistic to what they should be were a policy of enlightenment and liberality adopted. It was made up from "grinding taxation" imposed on essentials like salt and vices like opium, and it fell with "crushing severity" on the very poorest classes, the privileged orders including officials escaping "scot free". "Justice" for the Freeman's Journal came in the form not of retrenchment but of an "income tax", and of the "entire remission" of the duty on salt.[2]

It was only over the issue of retaining a customs tariff on imported cotton goods from Lancashire that any pronounced disagreement in the Home Rule party came to the surface. For many years a five per cent duty had been imposed on certain grades of cotton goods despite considerable pressure from Lancashire to have it removed. An exploded doctrine, protection was by the 1870's disavowed by Conservatives as strongly as Liberals.[3] The Government of India defended the duty on financial grounds, asserting that it had little protective effect. Nevertheless, on 15 July 1875, partly to avoid a political crisis, Salisbury declared that India's customs laws were to be brought into

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1. Hansard, Vol. 246, 22 May 1879, Cols. 1071-72.
2. Freeman's Journal, 23 May 1879.
3. Lady Betty Balfour, op.cit., p. 476.

conformity with the principles of free trade accepted in England.[1] Eventually the controversy was resolved in favour of complete remission, providing the Indian revenues could bear the loss without the need to impose additional taxation.[2] On 10 July 1877 the House of Commons passed without division a resolution branding the cotton duties "protective" and "contrary to sound commercial policy". It insisted that they were to be repealed "without delay", the financial condition of India permitting.[3] In 1878 a start was made with the removal of the duty on coarse grades of cotton, but failed to satisfy the expectations of the cotton manufacturers. Believing the "impost" to be a "main cause" of general distress in their industry,[4] they redoubled their agitation. On 4 February 1879, having been besieged by a deputation from Manchester, Cranbrook appealed to Lytton for "some manifest sign of advance."[5] On the 13 March, despite the strain in the economy caused by the Afghan War and despite the "embarassing financial telegrams",[6] Lytton exempted from duty all cotton goods except those of the finest quality. The decision had to be taken by executive decree,

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1. Desp. Sep. Rev. no. 6, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 15 July 1875, in Parl.P., 1876, Vol. LVI, no. 56, pp. 3-4.

2. Desp. Sep. Rev. no. 9, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 31 May 1876, in ibid., C 1515, pp. 32-42.

3. Hansard, Vol. 235, 10 July 1877, Cols. 1085-1128.

4. Cranbrook to Lytton, 4 February 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4; Cranbrook to Temple, 5 November 1878, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F. 86, A 17.

5. Cranbrook to Lytton, 4 February 1879, op.cit.

6. Cranbrook to Lytton, 11 March 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/4. See extract from Government of India Financial Statement of 13 March 1879, enclosure no. 13, in Parl.P., 1878-79, Vol. LV, no. 241, p. 36, para. 193; "It certainly cannot now be asserted, in the face of the great and increasing loss occasioned by the fall in the value of silver in relation to gold, that the financial condition of India is satisfactory."

the majority of the Viceroy's Council resenting interference from Westminster into what was considered an Indian matter, and being of the opinion that even a "partial fulfilment" of the undertaking to repeal the duties was inopportune.[1] On 4th April Manchester again promoted a resolution calling for the immediate and complete abolition of the duty. This time, the financial condition of India was stated to be no satisfactory reason for postponement.[2]

The voices raised in opposition were few. Although a firm free trader himself, Fawcett contended as did the Times,[3] that the remission of the customs tariff could not be treated as an abstract question of political economy. India not only possessed no surplus, but had to face one of the heaviest deficits that ever perplexed a Finance Minister. He rightly cautioned that at a time when India sought loans to the value of seven million pounds, the House would be flying directly in the teeth of former pledges to India if revenues were sacrificed.[4] However, the rank and file of the Liberal party did not share his views, and in fact helped to defeat him by 242 votes to 38. Eight Home Rulers: Biggar, McKenna, Meldon, Sir P. O'Brien, D.M. O'Conor, O'Donnell, Parnell and Shaw voted with Fawcett. Seven Home Rulers: Bowyer, Deasy, Ennis, Errington, Henry, Nolan and O'Byrne, stood by Lancashire and for remission.

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1. See Dissenting opinions of Whitley Stokes, Rivers Thompson, Sir A. Arbuthnot, and Sir Andrew Clarke in Parl. P., op.cit., no. 188.

2. Hansard, Vol. 245, 4 April 1879, Cols. 375-436.

3. Times, 5 April 1879.

4. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 423-25.

For the minority the choice was not one between free trade and protection, but between the interests of England and the interests of India.[1] O'Donnell, for example, hated free trade "like poison" especially when it was unconditional and was at all times an advocate of "fair trade".[2] Yet their preference depended less on factors of economic philosophy, than on the constitutional principle of the legislative independence of India. In short, their vote represented a refusal to ratify the recent proceedings of Lord Lytton. Whatever might be put on record in the form of assurances to the contrary, the suspicion was widespread at least in India that the Government had acted for the sake of English politics.[3] Even in England the Spectator referred to the "recent breach of the Indian constitution".[4]

Indeed, it appeared that disproportional weight had been attached to the opinions of English cotton interests. Cranbrook himself was not unmindful that the "subject" might "materially" influence the elections in Lancashire "at present so much in our favour".[5] On 23 February he forwarded letters to Lytton which spoke of the loss of fourteen seats as inevitable

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1. Discussing the issue with Lytton on 20 April 1877, Salisbury laid down the principle that England was "much too democratically governed to forgo her own interests for the alleged interests of India". Salisbury to Lytton, 20 April 1877, Salisbury Papers, Letters to Lytton II, Vol. XI, Class D.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 4.

3. Headlines in the Indian press such as "India for Manchester", "Manchester triumphant", were fairly common. See Hindoo Patriot, 24 February, 14 April, 12 May 1879; Bengalee, 15 February, 15 March, 10 May 1879. See also Annual Register, 1879, pp. 253-4. "Hardly anyone in India", it said, "felt the burden of the duties, yet to fill up the gap in the revenue caused by their abolition it was necessary to maintain the most unpopular forms of direct taxation--the license tax and the agricultural cess"; and Point 6 of the Memorial of the British Indian Association to the Viceroy on 8 March,1879, Hindoo Patriot, 10 March 1879.

4. Spectator, 17 May 1879.

5. Cranbrook to Lytton, 4 February 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur.E. 218, 516/4.

unless the process of remission was accelerated.[1] The Viceroy's announcement of changes on 13 March, amounting to the loss of £200,000 for India, was much welcomed by the Secretary of State as likely to strengthen the hands of those who strangely were "not trying to work the subject for the hustings".[2] On the other hand, Indian opinion appeared to be discounted as "selfish" and discreditable. Certainly Lytton's ill-mannered handling of a deputation from the British Indian Association on 8 March did nothing to dispel doubts in that direction. Lytton treated the arguments of the deputation as an infringement of protocol, and refused to discuss with the "wealthiest classes" of Indian society "the principles or details of a policy" which had been "deliberately adopted and repeatedly proclaimed".[3] Privately, he looked on the zemindars, who constituted the British Indian Association, as "the most pampered, pretentious, disloyal set of rascals in India":

> "It does seem to me a monstrous impertinence on the part of these gentlemen, who owe their unacquired, and unmerited wealth, to the favour of the British Government; who have done with it nothing for the good of their fellow subjects; who contribute less than any other portion of the community to the requirements of the State, against whose administration they are ever ready to re-echo all the radical rubbish talked in England, whilst at the same time their effeminacy, and unpopularity, makes them specially dependent on its protection, - to come forward on such a question as this and publicly lecture the Government of India in the name of the people of India".[4]

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1. Cranbrook to Lytton, 23 February 1879, op.cit.

2. Cranbrook to Lytton, 14 April 1879, ibid.

3. See Hindoo Patriot, 10 March 1879, for the texts of the Memorial and Viceroy's reply.

4. Lytton to Cranbrook, 12 May 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 518/4.

If he was "driven" to impose fresh taxation, he would "endeavour to hit the Bengal Zemindars as hard" as he possibly could.[1] The Secretary of State applauded the Viceroy's plain language,[2] and concurred with Lytton's unflattering description of the zemindars. He was consoled that happily the Bengalis could "only charge" the weapons given them through education, "with small shot--which [did] not carry far."[3]

The Hindoo Patriot was dumbfounded. It had never been "the lot" of that paper to read such an "angry and undignified reply from the Head of the Indian Administration to a respectable and important public body".[4] The contrast between Cranbrook's "statesmanlike" reception of the Manchester deputation and Lytton's "harsh" and "ungrateful" response to the British Indian Association was duly noted.[5] The moral which the Indian press took from Lytton's "manifesto" was that "an embargo" had been placed "upon the right of petition". It therefore appealed to the"great British nation" *to say whether* the forced suppression of popular opinion was the best way "to win the affections of the people" and to "secure the attachment to the throne".[6]

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1. Lytton to Eden, 10 May 1879, *Lytton Papers*, Mss Eur. E. 218, 518/4.
2. Cranbrook to Lytton, 14 April 1879, ibid., 516/4.
3. Cranbrook to Lytton, 9 June 1879, ibid.
4. Hindoo Patriot, 10 March 1879.
5. Bengalee, 15 March 1879.
6. Hindoo Patriot, 24 March 1879.

On 23 March, Parliament answered in the affirmative. O'Donnell and Wedderburn, both of whom took the Indian view of the cotton dispute, sponsored a motion in the terms suggested by the Hindoo Patriot. This censured Lord Lytton for having "shown such unwise disrespect for the sentiments of a vast population, which [was] at the same time deprived of all constitutional representation". O'Donnell urged that consequently double care ought to be taken not to *discourage Indians* "from laying their complaints at the foot of the Throne". As another example of the way Indian criticism was treated, he referred to the suspension of the "Som Prakash" under the powers of the Vernacular Press Act. The Government put up an unconvincing defence relying on Lytton's address to the British Indian Association as conclusive proof that its memorial was full of "misrepresentations" and "imputations" against the motives of the Government of India.[1] The motion was negatived by 215 votes to 36, ten Home Rulers[2] and the familiar Radical bloc[3] voting with O'Donnell.

Unfortunately, Parliament had been in no mood to discuss these grievances on their merits. The motion interposed in the middle of the Indian Budget debate, and the general feeling had been to conclude discussion before the

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1. Hansard, Vol. 246, 23 May 1879, Cols. 1142-46.

2. Callan, Conyngham, Dease, Delahunty, Kirk, McCarthy, McKenna, D.M. O'Conor, Parnell, Sullivan. O'Donnell and Wedderburn acted as tellers.

3. G. Anderson, Barclay, Briggs, Burt, Chamberlain, Courtney, Dilke, Dillwyn, Edge, Gourley, Harrison, Lawson, Leith, A. MacDonald, McLaren, Plimsoll, Rylands, Simon, Wedderburn, W. Williams.

Whitsuntide recess. Worse, the suspicion gained currency that the Irish began "impromptu discussions" to push Sir George Campbell, who was to resume the Indian debate, well into the middle of the dinner hour. This was supposed to be in retaliation for his speech against the Irish University Bill.[1] Sir George Campbell, even though a foremost critic of Lytton's action as "a political dishonesty," [2] did in fact vote against O'Donnell's motion. And Fawcett, according to the London correspondent of the Bombay Gazette, "walked out of the House, by way of protest against the Irish tactics."[3] When the time came to vote, there was a rush of Conservatives to make O'Donnell's defeat the more devastating.[4]

O'Donnell wrote a letter of explanation to the Hindoo Patriot, and enclosed reports of the debate made up from the Times and the Standard. He admitted that had the Government afforded a suitable opportunity, about one hundred Members would have supported the censure, but he was forced either to raise the question then or not at all.[5] On the eve of the recess, and with no Irish business to discuss, many Home Rulers had returned to Ireland, who would have supported him had they been present. O'Donnell concluded the letter with a plea that "India had to be better organized before she [could] be more influential in Parliament." The Hindoo Patriot expressed slight disappointment that O'Donnell, owing to

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1. Times, 29 May 1879.
2. Hansard, Vol. 245, 4 April, Col. 428; 24 April, Cols, 983-4; 1 May 1879, Cols. 1495-96.
3. Extract from Bombay Gazette, in Bengalee, 28 June 1879.
4. Bengalee, 21 June 1879.
5. Hansard, Vol. 246, 23 May 1879, Col. 1146.

the pressure of business, had not been able to make "a full statement of the case", and had failed to quote in evidence the opinions of the Indian press. Nevertheless, it interpreted the debate as setting an important precedent and felt reassured that its "moral effects" would be felt "through the length and breadth" of India. For the very first time, "the attitude of the Viceroy and Governor General of India towards an Indian public body" had been called into question in the "Imperial Parliament". O'Donnell and "his Irish contingent on one side", it wrote, and Fawcett and Gladstone "with their following at some intervals on the other", deserved recognition as the protectors of the Indian people.[1] The Irish now had to share equal billing.

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 23 June 1879.

III A Conspiracy against the Youth of Ireland and India

On the political front, the most important and enduring irritant agitating educated Indians in 1879, was their virtual exclusion from the Covenanted Civil Service. Since 24 February 1876 when Lord Salisbury introduced new rules lowering the maximum age limit for the Civil Service competition from 21 to 19,[1] the door was effectively closed on Indians participating in the home competitions. At 19, it was found impossible to compete against British candidates in an examination based on their own educational system and already balanced heavily in their favour.[2] That this consideration did not escape Salisbury's notice has been suggested in two recent interpretations.[3] The Secretary of State was never an admirer of the competitive system, because theoretically it imposed no check on the recruitment of Indians. As he later confided to Lytton, he could "imagine no more terrible future for India than that of being governed by Competition Baboos".[4] On 24 March 1877, the Indian Association, "the voice and the *organ* of the middle classes",[5] set in motion a movement against these regulations.[6] Thereafter the demand for

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1. Desp. Public No. 19, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 24 February 1876, Parl. P., 1876, Vol. LV, C 1446, pp. 323-26.

2. Lord Ripon's Minute of 26 September 1883, paras. 7-8, in Parl. P., 1884-5, Vol. LVIII, C 4580, pp. 11-12. See also Lord Ripon's Minute of 10 September 1884, para. 24, in ibid., pp. 28-29.

3. H.L. Singh, Problems and Policies of the British in India 1885-1898, London 1963, pp. 26-29; Moulton, op.cit., pp. 78-85.

4. Salisbury to Lytton, 13 April 1877, Salisbury Papers, Letters to Lytton II, Vol. XI, Class D. There is no evidence, however, to show that the reduction of the age limit was designed expressly to exclude the Indian element from the competition.

5. S.N. Banerjea, A Nation in Making, London 1963, p. 38.

6. Bengalee, 31 March 1877; J.C. Bagal, History of the Indian Association 1876-1951, Calcutta, N.D. (1953?), p. 17 ff.

increased Indianisation and reform was a constant one. Surendranath Banerjea, later editor and proprietor of the Bengalee,[1] was deputed to unite the provinces upon a national platform of protest, on the basis of simultaneous examinations in Britain and India and the raising of the age limit to 22.[2] Between 1877-78, he stumped the country to that end, although his efforts outside Bengal did not meet with great success. Fundamentally, the agitation was conducted on a symbolic level for the benefit not only of the Viceroy and his Council, but also of the British public six thousand miles away.[3] An official agent was to be sent to London to organise support on the spot, and the appearance of a united India was intended to strengthen his hand. In 1878 the plan was temporarily suspended because of the "absorbing character of the Eastern Question".[4] But on 24 February 1879 a young lawyer, Lal Mohun Ghose,[5] was chosen as delegate to "agitate in England the Civil Service and other questions connected with the welfare of the country".[6] Armed with resolutions adopted at a public meeting on 27 March condemning the reduction of the cotton duties and an Indian liability for the cost of the Afghan war,[7] Ghose set sail for England in early April.[8]

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1. Banerjea, op.cit., p. 64.
2. Bengalee, 14 July 1877.
3. Seal, op.cit. p. 253.
4. Bengalee, 1 March 1879. On that occasion, Banerjea was asked to undertake the functions of delegate. Bengalee, 19 January 1878, Banerjea, op.cit., p. 48.
5. See By One Who Knows Him, Mr. Lal Mohun Ghose, B.M. 10606, p. 36.
6. Bengalee, 1 March 1879.
7. Ibid., 29 March 1879.
8. Ibid., 5 April 1879.

Whether or not O'Donnell was aware of this mission, he attempted on 21 April to pin the Government down on the principles which guided it on Indianisation. Lord Cranbrook, Salisbury's successor at the India Office, regarded a system of nomination as one way round the problem. On the other hand, Lytton favoured establishing a separate "native service"[1] only to be overruled on political grounds. The system of nominating Indians "of proved merit and ability" to the Covenanted Service, was seen to have the virtue of carrying out the Viceroy's main views, without directly altering the law and involving Parliament.[2] O'Donnell, however, proved awkward and interposed in the middle of Supply. He wanted to know whether this "system of patronage", which in Britain was considered "dangerous" for the public service and unlikely to enlist the best talents, was any more suitable for India. On the contrary, he thought that in India where there were even fewer safeguards against abuse and no effective channels of representation, nomination was surrounded by "vastly greater danger".[3] A Tory back-bencher and old Anglo-Indian, Christopher Beckett Denison, who according to Lucy had "once held rule in Bengal and the Punjab",[4] promptly repudiated O'Donnell's right to speak about India at all.[5] The latter replied

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1. Desp. Public No. 35, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 2 May 1878, para. 16, in Parl. P., 1878-1879, Vol. LV, C 2376, p. 15.

2. Desp. Public No. 125, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 7 November 1878, paras. 6-10, in ibid., pp. 19-21.

3. Hansard, Vol. 245, 21 April 1879, Cols. 721-24.

4. Lucy, The Disraeli Parliament, p. 376.

5. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 726.

that he ventured to give expression to the opinions of "the most deserving" of the native press, of the British Indian Association, and of similar bodies.[1] Yet it was most unlikely that O'Donnell received any mandate from the Indian Association to raise the subject before the arrival of Ghose, with formal messages from all parts of India. And for its part, the British Indian Association, although it contributed to the campaign in India, resented the initiative taken by the "infant" body,[2] and gave only token support to its proceedings.[3]

In truth, O'Donnell needed no prompting to draw attention to the amended regulations for examination to the Indian Civil Service. In previous sessions he had viewed the question solely as an Irish one. Salisbury's despatch of 1876, for example, he had viewed as the product of a "Government conspiracy", a dark plot hatched in the India Office to exclude Irishmen from the Service altogether.[4] Ostensibly, the main aim of the Government had been to improve the quality of the Civil Servant going out to India,[5] the number of successful university candidates having fallen off dramatically in recent years.[6] Thus the lowering of the age limit was intended to encourage candidates to attend university after

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 726-7.

2. Hindoo Patriot, 22 September 1879.

3. Bangalee, 20 September 1879. 6,000 Rupees were spent to send Ghose to England, and of this sum the British Indian Association contributed Rs. 200.

4. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 425-6.

5. Desp. Public No. 19, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 24 February 1876, in Parl. P., op.cit. The need to raise the standards of the Civil Service appears to be the central consideration of the official correspondence.

6. See J.M. Compton, "Open Competition and the Indian Civil Service 1854-1876, in English Historical Review, Vol. 83, 1968, p. 278. Between 1855-1859, the universities had supplied 86.2% of the candidates; between 1866-74, only 34%.

rather than before the examination. The customary two-year probationary course was continued, but "powerful encouragement" to take this at an "approved" university was given in the form of a subsistence allowance of £150 per annum. Although no university was designated in the Despatch, it was anticipated that the alterations would favour Oxford and Cambridge, which could best satisfy the residential requirements and give the requisite academic training.[1] While the Scottish and Irish universities had also been sending fewer men to India, their rate of decline of the proportion of candidates was slower than that of Oxford and Cambridge.[2] A parliamentary return for the period 1855-1874 giving the birth places of successful competitors, illustrated the relative fortune enjoyed by the Irish.[3]

Birthplace	No. of Successful Competitors
England	350
Ireland	156
Scotland	89

By the reckoning of Lyon Playfair, University Member for St. Andrews and Edinburgh, these figures in proportion to population should have read respectively 468, 77 and 50.[4] O'Donnell and other critics therefore jumped to the conclusion that *the new* regulations were designed as

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1. Lyon Playfair, "On the New Plan of Selecting and Training Civil Servants for India", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. XXI, 1877, pp. 115-125. A reply to Playfair was made by A.J.Balfour in the same volume who conceded the point that the regulations favoured Oxford and Cambridg (pp. 257-8); A.J.Balfour, "The Indian Civil Service: A Reply" in ibid., pp. 244-258. See also Hansard, Vol. 228, 23 March 1876, Cols. 473-4; and Richard Strachey's Minute of February 1876, in Parl.P., 1876, Vol. LV, pp.321-2: "It is as I understand the avowed object of the new conditions that the probationer shall be compelled in fact though not in name, to go to Oxford and Cambridge, which I believe are the Universities intended by the words of the Resolution".
2. Compton, op.cit., p. 278. See also Enclosure P, in Parl.P., op.cit., p. 42.
3. Enclosure D, in Parl.P., ibid., p. 35.
4. Playfair, op.cit., pp. 118, 124.

much to counteract this disproportion[1] as to improve the Service. The Scottish Universities at once got up a memorial to the Secretary of State demanding a return to the former age limit of 22.[2] As Dr. R.J. Moore has confirmed, "the Victorian preference for the gentleman" did indeed make "for the exclusion of many able middle-class and Irish youths" who had attended neither public schools nor accredited universities.[3]

O'Donnell was persuaded, not without reason, that the changes would militate against the "fair chances and rights of Irish candidates" adhering to the Catholic faith, and further favour the British "colony" in Ireland;[4] the Queen's Colleges of Cork and Galway which let their doors open to Catholics, and the Catholic University of Ireland entirely denominational, made no arrangements for residence. The Royal University of Ireland which replaced the Queen's University was purely an examining body, modelled on the lines of London University.[5] In order for

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1. Hansard, Vol. 246, 21 May 1879, Col. 942. Sir George Campbell in opposing the Irish University Education Bill of the O'Conor Don, cited the "abnormal" proportion of Irishmen successfully competing for the Indian Civil Service, and other Departments of the State as proof that Ireland already had "a very ample share of University Education".
2. L.S.S. O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service 1601-1930, London 1931, p. 246.
3. R.J. Moore, Liberalism and Indian Politics 1872-1922, London 1967, p. 12.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 112; ii, pp. 425-28.
5. See T.W. Moody, "The Irish University Question of the Nineteenth Century", in History, Vol. XLIII, No. 148, 1950, pp. 90-109. The Queen's Colleges were never popular with the Catholic hierarchy, who tended when their own Catholic university was endowed, to look on them as "infidel institutions". (p. 100). For a long time the Catholic University "led only a formal existence and was not recognised by the State". (p. 107).

Catholics to qualify for Indian grants, they had to undertake their probation at a mixed university. As Trinity College Dublin was virtually barred to Catholics, that meant Oxford or Cambridge.[1] The Universities formally approved in 1879 were: Cambridge, Oxford, Trinity College (Dublin), Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St. Andrews, Kings College (London) and University College (London).[2] On 18 March 1878, O'Donnell complained that a young Irishman had no chance of entering the Indian Civil Service unless he abandoned Catholic university education altogether.[3] In an interview at Arlington House, probably in 1879 the year after the probationary regulations were implemented, he made a strong personal appeal to Salisbury. But where Parliament had been unmoved, Salisbury was "adamant". O'Donnell claimed that he concluded his "useless" representation with a warning about England's future in India:

> "My Lord, the Englishman has many virtues, but I do not think that excessive sympathy with other races is one of them. I do not think the tone of Oxford and Cambridge will supply that sympathy. The day, my Lord, when you will have India staffed from end to end with Englishmen from Oxford and Cambridge, that day English rule in India will stand isolated in the midst of the hundreds of millions whom Oxford and Cambridge will have estranged from England for ever."[4]

The corollary that Irishmen, even as imperial administrators, could supply that sympathy, was implicit. It was the first and main canon of O'Donnell's

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1. See also M. O'Dwyer, India as I Knew it 1885-1925, London 1925, p. 16. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, later Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, went to India via Balliol. As he came from a wealthy Catholic land-owning family on good terms with their Protestant neighbours this presented no problems, either moral or pecuniary. O'Dwyer, ibid., Ch. II.

2. Regulations for Open Competition, India List, July 1879.

3. Hansard, Vol. 238, 18 March 1878, Cols. 1560-2.

4. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 425-6.

interventionist philosophy.[1] Recalling his days in the Indian Service, Charles James O'Donnell verified that the "Celtic fringe" which had contributed a large number of the first competition civilians, had "brought to their duties a cheerful sympathy with the people of India". This had been lost when Salisbury had made Oxford "the training centre" for the new recruitment. By the turn of the century "the alumni of the Scotch, Irish and Welsh Colleges", who passed out, were "few and far between".[2]

Another consideration for F.H. O'Donnell was that the Government's "tampering" with the Indian Civil Service threatened to undermine the federal case against separation made out by Isaac Butt in 1873. Certainly O'Donnell's confidence in the efficacy of the federal solution for Ireland received a severe jolt. Yet his concern did not appear to have been shared by the Home Rule party as a whole. While the Freeman's Journal ran a full report of O'Donnell's speech against the annual vote for the Civil Service Commissioners, it failed to take up any of his points,[3] relating to the future difficulties facing both Irish and Indian candidates. As the Civil Service rules had only just come into operation, O'Donnell's brief against them lacked statistical proof. As far as extreme nationalists were concerned, employment in the service of the "enemy Queen" was anyway considered unworthy of a true patriot and in

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1. See Chapter Two, section one, p. 72.

2. C.J. O'Donnell, The Causes of Present Discontents in India, London 1908, pp. 115-17.

3. Freeman's Journal, 22 April 1879.

India most unethical. Patrick Ford constantly proclaimed that any Irish interest in the maintenance of the empire was sheer hypocrisy.[1] Indeed, the news of George Butt's death in India[2] was seized upon by the Irish World as a likely explanation of his father's support for Beaconsfield in 1878, "in pushing out the empire on every side". It maliciously forecast that a suitable place would be found for the younger son Robert, either in Afghanistan or Zululand. On the other hand, it was hoped that considerable advantage would be salvaged from the 40,000 rank and file, and the 1,500 officers who were Irishmen in the armed forces. The Irish World imagined that many of these were "soldier Fenians, or Fenian soldiers", who might be well placed as in Afghanistan to upset British calculations.[3] The "Sepoy" Mutiny had almost overwhelmed the Raj; an Irish mutiny could possibly destroy it.

Salisbury's refusal to reconsider the Irish case provoked an aggrieved response from O'Donnell. In his own words, if the British Government intended to exclude Irishmen from India, it would be taught that such a task was beyond its capabilities. A project which he had thought about often "took shape and acquired consistency". He resolved "to unite all

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1. Irish World, 12 August 1876. See particularly P. Ford, The Criminal History of the British Empire , New York 1915. This book comprises reprints of open letters to W.E. Gladstone, published originally in the Irish World during April and May 1881.

2. Nation, 1 February 1879. George Butt [1842-1879] entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1863. See India List, 1879.

3. Irish World, 8 March 1879.

India in a national confederacy of the Indian races and provinces", and "to call into being the national co-operation of Indians."[1] In a sense, O'Donnell's counter-stroke would have been self-defeating. A national movement, far from combatting the exclusion of Irishmen, was likely to demand still further reductions in foreign recruitment. O'Donnell had of course more positive ambitions for such an organisation.[2] Again the impression that his interest in Indian nationalism stemmed more from thwarted Irish ambition than from other less selfish motives,[3] was misleading and did him little justice. It should not be forgotten that O'Donnell had attempted as far back as 1875 to instill a sense of patriotism into the Indian consciousness, or that in 1878 he had faithfully sponsored an Indian scheme to send Indian politicians to Westminster by means of Irish patronage.[4] In 1879 he attacked the Civil Service rules primarily from an Indian rather than an Irish standpoint, if he failed to outline all the reforms clamoured for in India.

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 426.
2. See Chapter Four, Section I, pp. 181-91. See Chapter Ten.
3. See Chapter Three, Section 2, pp. 146-7.
4. See Chapter Three, Section 3, pp. 157-161.

IV A Shift of Allegiance

As the elections drew near, however, it was the Liberals to whom Indian nationalists turned primarily for "protection" rather than to O'Donnell and the Home Rule party. The choice was dictated not by personal preference but by the sudden resurgence of partisanship in England. If in mid-term it had been practical politics to seek the help of an Irish contingent that had promised to hold the balance of power at Westminster, it was even more realistic to approach the party disposed to institute reforms and certain to become the next Government. Perhaps as Parnell had foreseen when he placed an embargo on inter-party arrangements, Irish attractiveness and Irish strength lay in the maintenance of a separate identity. The danger in committing Home Rule troops to a United Tenant party or to a coalition of "friends of India" was to associate them with the general movement to oust the Conservatives. As such, to native observers in India, they became indistinguishable from either Radical or Liberal opponents of Tory policies in the East.

Thus, with the landing of Lal Mohun Ghose in May, the initiative in representing India's point of view in England, on issues such as the Civil Service regulations, reverted to the "leaders of English opinion" with whom he was commissioned to effect "personal contact".[1] The special emissary wasted no time in indicating whom he considered these to be. Gladstone granted him an hour[2]

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1. Bengalee, 5 April 1879.

2. Ibid., 21 June 1879.

and undertook to present the petition of the Association on the Afghan war and the Cotton duties.[1] The all-Indian Memorial[2] on the Civil Service question was entrusted to John Bright, who presented it to Parliament on 12 June.[3] Ghose also communicated with other well-known "friends": Captain W.C. Palmer and Major Evans Bell, Secretary and Council member respectively of the East India Association, Hodgson Pratt and Samuel Morley, committee members of the National Indian Association, and Meredith Townsend editor of the Spectator.[4] Ghose even saw Lord Beaconsfield.[5] No record exists, however, of any meeting with leaders of the Home Rule party, not with Shaw, Parnell, or O'Donnell. The Dublin press did not report the Ghose procession through England, nor was there reference to Ghose in O'Donnell's memoirs, an infallible register of important persons whom he claimed to have met.

The semi-official organ of the Indian Association, the Bengalee,[6] sought alliance almost exclusively with the Liberal party. In the early months of 1879, its overdue reappraisal of methods of political agitation recommended such a policy of alignment.

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1. Hansard, Vol. 246, 12 June 1879, Cols. 1723-1724.

2. This consisted of six petitions from Bombay, Punjab, North West Provinces, Assam, Central India and Bengal.

3. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 1723. See also Walling (ed.), op.cit., pp. 423-4. Bright received Ghose on more than one occasion.

4. Bengalee, 21 June 1879.

5. Bagal, op.cit., p. 42.

6. Banerjea, op.cit., p. 64. It was Banerjea's aim to place the Bengalee at the disposal of the Indian Association, more or less along the lines of the relationship between the Hindoo Patriot and the British Indian Association.

The model closely examined pertained to Ireland. When, asked the Bengalee, was justice done to Ireland and the "badge of foreign domination", the Established Church of England "swept away"? Only, it answered when the cry for disestablishment became the "cry of the Liberals and Mr. Gladstone". The Ghose delegation, therefore, was launched in April because it coincided with the readiness of the Liberal party to make India a party question.[1] The Bengalee eagerly looked forward to the time when Indian matters would decide the fate of party battles.[2] One of the most important legacies of Lytton's Viceroyalty was the alienation of normally well disposed Indians from British rule. Another was the by-passing of the Government in India by an appeal to one of the major parties in England. Because of their antipathy for Lytton, the Liberals strongly recommended themselves as the logical allies of Indian nationalists, not the Irish. It was mainly in periods of political quiescence so far as India in Parliament was concerned that Indians turned to Irishmen as their real friends. It had been so in 1877 and 1878; it was to be so again from 1881 to 1883.

However, what the Irish might lack in power, they contributed in ideas. The influence of Home Rule tactics on Indian thinking was profound. In 1877 Salisbury referred to a "Home Rule" tone creeping into the cotton agitation in India.[3] The lessons of Irish

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1. Bengalee, 1 March 1879.

2. Ibid., 8 February 1879. See also Banerjea's speech to Indian Association on 3 September. Ibid., 13 September 1879; Times 7 September 1879.

3. Salisbury to Lytton, 20 April 1877, Salisbury Papers, Letters to Lytton II, Vol. XI, Class D.

tenacity and tumult were gradually working their effect. In a manner reminiscent of the "obstructionists", the Bengalee urged that henceforth Parliament should be given no peace, and England swamped with tracts on Indian topics: " Ever and anon, in season and out of season, in the beginning of the session, in the middle of the session or at the fag end of the session, the grievances of India must be laid before Parliament."[1]

In 1879 the leading Liberals seemed to be prepared to go along with Lal Mohun Ghose in forming a "united body" of Indian friends,[2] in Parliament. Hartington, as he showed during the debate on the Indian budget advanced to May,[3] was clearly anxious to avoid any semblance of party spirit.[4] But Fawcett had no such scruple. It was widely rumoured that he was to lead a full-scale party assault on the Indian budget. The Times reported that a three-line whip had summoned Liberals to vote for his motion of censure on Lytton, which Cranbrook had glumly forecast was "a real trap for votes'.[5] As it turned out, the "guns" were not "fired off",[6] Stanhope having disarmed the Opposition by the

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1. Bengalee, 12 April 1879.
2. Bengalee, 8 February 1879.
3. Hansard, op.cit., 22 May, Cols. 1040-93; 23 May, Cols. 1160-99; 12 June 1879, Cols. 1724-1803.
4. Stanhope to Lytton, 29 May 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218,517/7.
5. Cranbrook to Lytton, 20 May 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218,516/4.
6. Stanhope to Lytton, 29 May 1879, op.cit.

announcement that Lytton had sanctioned measures reducing expenditure.[1] But on the return of Parliament after the recess, Gladstone "brought up everything against [Lytton] that he possibly could;" Stanhope was this time caught unprepared.[2] Only hours before the speech, Gladstone had permitted Ghose to coach him on the latest intelligence from India concerning the Vernacular Press Act and other "raws"irritating native opinion.[3] His reference in the Budget debate to the new circumstances attending the discussion of Indian affairs seemed to justify the attitude of the Indian Association.[4]

On 11 July, the rapport between India and the Liberal party received institutional expression in a "Committee of Arrangement" formed ostensibly to watch over the interests of India and to secure for them much needed publicity. Sir David Wedderburn consented to act as Chairman and F.W. Chesson its chief architect was appointed Secretary.[5] Other Members of Parliament on the Committee included Dilke, Shaw Lefevre, W.H. James, McArthur, Potter, Pennington and Richard; the first two named were shortly to be given office by Gladstone.[6] The first public meeting organised

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1. Stanhope to Lytton, 21 May 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218,517/7. As Stanhope had confidently predicted, Lytton's "prompt measures" to reduce expenditure, had taken "the wind out of the sails of [their] enemies". See H. Fawcett, "The New Departure in Indian Finance", in Nineteenth Century, Vol. VI, 1879, pp. 639-63.
2. Stanhope to Lytton, 13 June 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218,517/7.
3. Lal Mohun Ghose, op.cit., p. 3.
4. Hansard, op.cit., 12 June 1879, Cols. 1739-40. Gladstone: "The consequence is that we approach the discussion of Indian affairs now, perhaps for the first time, under circumstances that are new--new in this respect, that they are now felt to have, what they were formerly only known in the abstract to have, an imperative claim upon the attention of this House".
5. Banerjea, op.cit., p. 50.
6. Times, 12 July 1879; Bengalee, 16 August 1879; Hindoo Patriot, 4 August 1879.

by this body was held at Willis's rooms on 23 July before a crowded audience.[1] It was presided over by John Bright who was enticed to brave the "disturbance" and "excitement" of such an assembly from which he had apparently shrunk in 1878.[2] Many of India's most reliable friends attended: Fawcett, Wedderburn, Courtney, Potter, Richard, and S.R. Edge. Bright also delivered the main address of the evening, finding fault with the Indian Government on a number of counts, and especially condemning the "wanton and persistent exclusion of natives from a share in the higher offices of the Civil Service". Lord Cranbrook expressed disgust at the "falsity and malignity" of the speech,[3] and Stanhope thought it "well calculated, [he] might say intended, to enhance" their difficulties in India.[4] Colonel Burne, who was neither an impartial nor an accurate judge of political trends, did not anticipate that "Mr Baboo Ghose [would] get much change out of his money".[5] He was wrong. Two days later on 25 July, Lytton's new statutory regulations[6] for the appointment of Indians to the Covenanted Civil Service were released to the Times. The Government possibly

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1. Times, 24 July 1879; Spectator, 26 July 1879.
2. John Bright to Henry Broadhurst, 16 February 1878, Broadhurst Papers, Mss Coll. L, Vol. I, L.S.E. See also Bengalee, 23 August 1879.
3. Cranbrook to Lytton, 28 July 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218,516/4.
4. Stanhope to Lytton, 24 July 1879, ibid., 517/8.
5. Burne to Lytton, 24 July, ibid., 517/8.
6. The rules were submitted to Cranbrook on 1 May and sanctioned by him on the 17th. Desp. Public No. 31, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 1 May 1879; and Desp. Public No. 68, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 17 July 1879, in Parl. P., 1878-79, Vol. LV, C. 2376, pp. 21-28. The rules authorised local Governments to nominate Indians, except on exceptional grounds of merit not above the age of 25, for employment in the Covenanted Civil Service. The total number of such nominations backed by the Governor-General in Council was not to exceed one fifth of the total number of civilians appointed by the Secretary of State in any one year.

hoped that their opportune publication would show up Bright's criticism of Lytton's administration as jaundiced. Indeed, the Times considered the new rules a "fitting commentary" on his "acrimonious remarks",[1] and Government spokesmen itched to have the chance of repudiating them.[2] In India, the announcement of the new rules was interpreted differently by the Bengalee, as a complete vindication of the Ghose mission, of the Liberal alliance, and as the "immediate and substantial result" of the meeting at Willis's rooms.[3]

Except for Patrick Smyth, whose relationship with the Home Rule party was uncertain, no Irish nationalist Member of Parliament attended this meeting or those at Lambeth on 13 August[4] and Kennington on 18 August.[5] The presence of Smyth might be explained by his regard for Bright with whom he was discussing ways of making Queen's College Galway a strictly Catholic university.[6] If O'Donnell, Sullivan and McCarthy received invitations there was no acknowledgement that they declined them. O'Donnell was seldom interested in movements he did not himself initiate or inspire.

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1. Times 25 July 1879.
2. Stanhope to Lytton, 24 July 1879, op.cit.,
3. Bengalee, 16, 23 August 1879; 3 January 1880; Indian Mirror, 9 March 1880.
4. Bagal, op.cit., p. 44. The writer has been unable to find any account of this meeting in the press.
5. Times, 19 August 1879; Hindoo Patriot, 15 September 1879.
6. Sturgis, op.cit., p. 168.

It was also possible that Lal Mohun Ghose was deliberately shielded from Home Rule introductions by Chesson and Hodgson Pratt, who were responsible for organising his itinerary in England.[1] On 25 July an Indian Loan Bill was read a second time. In a division on an amendment protesting against the entire burden of the Afghan war being levied on the Indian Exchequer, active Home Rulers were notable absentees. Had they thrown their undivided weight behind Fawcett's amendment, defeated by only 137 votes to 125, the Government would have been run even closer and probably found wanting.[2] Just two days after the meeting at Willis's rooms protesting against the sharing of military costs,[3] the abstention represented a warning that Home Rule support could never be taken for granted.[4]

Nonetheless, the last major attack on Lytton's administration that session was of Irish making. On 4 August, Sir Stafford Northcote moved a Vote of Thanks, not only as was customary to the military forces, but also as was not customary to the Government of India, on the successful conduct of military operations in Afghanistan.[5] Cranbrook, who had not anticipated "cordiality" from

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1. Indian Mirror, 9 March 1880. See Speech of Lal Mohun Ghose to a meeting in honour of his 'successful' visit to England.

2. Hansard, Vol. 248, 25 July 1879, Cols. 1301-34.

3. Spectator, 26 July 1879.

4. Nine Home Rulers supported Fawcett: Collins, Errington, Fay, McCarthy, Meldon, D.M. O'Conor, The O'Conor Don, O'Gorman, Smyth.

5. Hansard, Vol. 249, 4 August 1879, Cols. 68-102.

the Opposition, was "not disappointed".[1] According to him a "small minority" of Home Rulers and Radicals were not reluctant "to disgrace themselves".[2] Comparing Lytton with Bartle Frere as the progenitor of a "most unnecessary" and "pitiless" war, Major Purcell O'Gorman, an outstanding example of the swashbuckling type of Home Ruler in the Buttite era, moved that the Viceroy's name be omitted from the Thanks.[3] O'Gorman had taken instantly to intervention and was one of its earliest exponents. His declared maxim "to vote against the introduction of Englishmen to Ireland",[4] provided during his brief parliamentary career a complete statement of his political ideology. Like many Home Rulers who were not well informed about the empire, he had no trouble equating British imperialism with terms that were understandable to him. O'Gorman's reaction to the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 was typical: "By Heavens!" swore the Major, "it's the Union, and Castlereagh, and the Yeomanry over again".[5] A comic figure with a "Rabelaisian humour",[6] O'Gorman gave invaluable support to those whose views he sympathised with.

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1. Cranbrook to Lytton, 5 August 1879, op.cit.
2. Ibid.
3. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 78-9.
4. Lucy, The Disraeli Parliament, p. 4.
5. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 216.
6. Ibid., p. 146.

O'Donnell seconded O'Gorman's motion, while Lawson, O'Brien, Jacob Bright, Anderson, Jenkins, Sullivan and Parnell concurred with its motive. In the sense that all of them questioned the propriety of offering congratulations to Lytton for his part in a "criminal",[1] "petty",[2] and "unworthy"[3] war raged in retaliation for an imagined diplomatic slight, their opposition was not so much capricious as based on reasonable objections. As Sullivan put it, they were asked to thank Lytton first and judge him afterwards.[4] Indeed, reports had been filtering out of Afghanistan that the campaign against a poorly equipped and uncivilised enemy was not the "glorious" and "distinguished" affair the Chancellor claimed. Instead the war correspondent of the Standard had laid charges against Lord Roberts, some of which were admitted, that he had "carried fire and sword into peaceful villages".[5] In sanctioning a policy of "summary and severe retribution", Roberts was accused of infringing the normal "usages of civilised warfare".[6] Parnell described the military operations against the Afghan people as an "act of assassination" -- which could only go by the name of "murder".[7] The tiny band were of one mind that Lytton deserved

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 86.
2. Ibid., Col. 95.
3. Ibid., Col. 83.
4. Ibid., Col. 94.
5. Ibid., Cols. 88-89.
6. Ibid., Col. 80.
7. Ibid., Col. 101.

censure,not commendation, and that a Vote of Thanks in such doubtful circumstances could only serve to "cheapen" an historic ceremony. The Government easily martialled a comfortable majority and swamped O'Gorman's motion by 148 votes to 33.[1] While eight Home Rulers voted with O'Gorman and O'Donnell,who stood as tellers,[2] six Home Rulers opposed their colleagues.[3] Callan, who explained that he had intended to abstain on the division, took such exception to the "unparliamentary" censure "impartially distributed" by the Member for Dundee (Jenkins) on Irish, Scottish and English soldiers, that he was spurred to support the Government by way of protest.[4] McKenna, who was extremely apologetic in justifying his position, felt that the House should not look on the terms of the resolution "with too microscopic an eye", now that the war was successfully over.[5] Despite the defeat, the Hindoo Patriot found comfort in the formation of an "Indian Party" at Westminster,[6] which if essentially small, isolated and powerless, could prevent imperial action from being sanctioned by default.

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1. Those who voted for O'Gorman's motion: Anderson, Biggar, Blake, Briggs, Jacob Bright, Burt, Chamberlain, Courtney, Dillwyn, Fawcett, Finigan, Forster, Holmes, Jenkins, Lawson, McCarthy, MacDonald, McClaren, Mellor, Monk, P.O'Brien, Parnell, Pennington, O'Connor Power, Richard, Roberts, Rylands, Simon, Smyth, Sullivan, Tennant, Wedderburn, W. Williams. Tellers: O'Gorman, O'Donnell.
2. Biggar, Finigan, McCarthy, O'Brien, Parnell, O'Connor Power, Smyth, Sullivan.
3. Bowyer, Callan, Lewis, McKenna, Murphy, O'Byrne.
4. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 93-94.
5. Ibid., Cols. 98-99.
6. Hindoo Patriot, 25 August 1879. The Patriot was forced to "confess" that the debate on the cost of the Afghan war was "a great triumph for the Indian Party in Parliament".

The Summer and Autumn recess found the Irish Home Rule party still despondent. Throughout 1879, it had been merely marking time; indeed the general state of listlessness was exemplified at a meeting of the Home Rule League in Dublin on 21 August, at which only four Members of Parliament bothered to attend: Brooks, McKenna, O'Sullivan and Parnell. Recrimination rather than policy-making was still the order of the day. O'Sullivan, for example, attacked the O'Conor Don as the "right hand man" to their enemies in Parliament upon the land question. He then turned on George Morris, Member for Galway Borough, for the way he had voted in the debate upon the Zulu war. Such members, he recommended, should not be returned at the next election.[1] If Nationalism could still be judged according to the old terms of reference, namely obstruction and imperial politics, other criteria were becoming more important. Obstruction had served its usefulness as an instrument of Irish public appeal, and imperial politics could not stir the imagination of a downcast peasantry. The Home Rule movement needed to be revitalised. There had been in effect no Home Rule party from the end of 1877 and there was virtually no Home Rule League during 1879.[2] Both required an injection of personal leadership and popular support. O'Donnell had attempted as alternatives to form a Radical-Home Rule coalition and a United Kingdom Tenant-Right party. Neither scheme offered any outlet for nationalist expression. Land war, on the other hand, did, although it also served to purge the party of its right wing.

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1. Times, 22 August 1879.

2. Thornley, op.cit., p. 386.

Chapter VI

The Coming of Land War to Ireland

I A Change of Emphasis

II The Special Relationship Disintegrates

I A Change of Emphasis

During August, September and October, the war against landlordism was proclaimed.[1] In the name of peasant proprietorship and protection against unfair rents and eviction, Michael Davitt launched a movement that "tapped the very source of Irish nationalism".[2] Home Rule had broken down up to that point because it had failed to incorporate popular grievances into its political programme. Although "Obstruction" had won for the activists popular sympathy and the grudging respect of Fenians, it scarcely represented the spirit of the Irish people. The recurrence of severe agricultural distress together with the rapid strides of Davitt's land agitation soon convinced Parnell that the cause of Ireland could only be served by realignment and by the recognition of a powerful new factor in Irish politics. A year earlier he had been offered the leadership of a "united" nationalist movement provided he committed himself to a grand coalition with Devoy and Davitt on their terms. This he had refused to do, wanting more time "to work the parliamentary machine".[3] Home Rule, however, was simply not on in practical politics and at a meeting of the Home Rule League on 11 September he intimated that he was prepared to reconsider the "New Departure": "unless we unite all shades of political opinion in the country", he said,

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1. Freeman's Journal, 4 November 1879.
2. J.E. Pomfret, The Struggle for Land in Ireland 1880-1923, Princeton 1930, p. 123.
3. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 176.

"I fail to see how we can expect ever to attain national independence."[1] The Irish National Land League was formed in Dublin on 21 October 1879, with Parnell as its first President. Biggar, O'Sullivan and Patrick Egan were elected Hon. Treasurers, and Davitt, Andrew Kettle and Thomas Brennan as Hon. Secretaries. In this way many of the divergent elements of the nationalist movement in Ireland and America were reconciled behind Parnell on the pivot of land reform. Nothing was said about the promotion of Irish insurrection. The result was the consummation of the "New Departure" on Parnell's, not Fenian terms, and the resuscitation of the active wing of the Home Rule party.

For this breath of life, the Home Rule cause had to make certain realistic concessions. The most important was the temporary submergence of its claim for self-government, for the immediate needs of social reform. The agrarian question rather than the devolutionary programme was to occupy the foremost place among the priorities of the common organisation. Thus Parnell was theoretically forced to agree that none of the funds of the Land League would be used for parliamentary purposes.[2] Again, the loosening of American purse strings was dependent on the impression that Parnell at the bottom of his heart looked forward to eventual revolution. Indeed, as the British Consul General at New York complained, Parnell "so feebly

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1. R. B. O'Brien, Parnell, 1, p. 194.

2. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 172. In fact, however, £2,000 was advanced by the Land League to help defray the expenses of Parnellite candidates in the elections, though this was a trifling sum in proportion to its total resources. See C.C. O'Brien, "The machinery of the Irish parliamentary party, 1880-1885", in Irish Historical Studies, Vol. V, 1946-47, pp. 50, 70-1.

ehide[d] the open declarations in favour of armed rebellion that it would almost seem that he in reality desire[d] to encourage the movement".[1] Home Rule itself was possibly redefined in terms that sounded more separatist than federal. In a speech at Cincinnati on 23 February 1880, Parnell was reputed[2] by the Irish World to have told his American audience that their "ultimate goal" was the destruction of "the last link which [kept] Ireland bound to England".[3] Much of this was windowdressing for the sake of unity and raising funds; Parnell was willing to use the Clan na Gael but unwilling to be used by it. Nevertheless, the political movement lurched unavoidably to the left. The "New Departure", in whatever guise, was "nothing less than the strongest native revolt for over two hundred years".[4]

In the process the parliamentary party did not escape transformation. Parnell already controlled the Home Rule Confederation in Britain and now claimed the leadership of the agrarian movement in Ireland. The one was to merge with the other early in 1880 to form the Land League of Great Britain.[5] At the general elections

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1. Desp. (copy) Archibald to Thornton, 24 January 1880, Fenian Papers 1858-83, A Files, Box no. 4, S.P.O.

2. Parnell always denied knowledge of this speech. See J. MacDonald, The Daily News Diary of the Parnell Commission, London 1890, p. 215. Shaw Lefevre recalled that it was the only one of its kind detected out of many hundreds of speeches. Eversley, op.cit., p. 104. Mr. O.D.Edwards, who has looked into the origins of the speech, also doubts its authenticity.

3. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 203.

4. Garvin, op.cit., i, pp. 318-9. See also C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, p. 6.

5. Pomfret, op.cit., p. 129; Davitt, Feudalism, p. 227.

Parnell was to bring a majority of Home Rulers represented at Westminster into line with both. Although the Land League dissociated itself from the electoral campaign, the Home Rule party of Parnell was clearly grounded on its vote-catching powers. The result was the return of a number of League members loyal to Parnell and committed to an advanced land programme. For almost two years the political stage in Ireland was dominated by the nearly autonomous Land League, the "hard core" of which was made up of Fenians and ex-Fenians[1] who never lost their distrust of constitutionalism. Not even Parnell as its titular chairman was able to effect a mastery over it. Rather, it was the League which exerted an influence over the party. Indeed until its subordination to the parliamentary body in October 1882, it tended to act as "not so much an auxiliary of the party as its tutor".[2] To the extent that the Home Rule party derived political bargaining power in Parliament from agrarian disturbance organised by the League at home, it found itself in a semi-dependent position. Equally important were the standards of behaviour now demanded of the parliamentarian on the question of land reform, where formerly they had been demanded on the questions of Home Rule and imperial policy. At its inception, the League instructed its local branches to keep a close vigil on how local Members of Parliament acquitted themselves in this respect.[3]

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1. T.W. Moody "Michael Davitt, a Survey and Appreciation", in Studies, June-Sept. 1846, quoted in C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 3.

2. C.C. O'Brien, "The machinery of the Irish parliamentary party", op.cit., p. 52.

3. Ibid. See also Davitt, Feudalism, p. 163.

Thus ended what might be called the exploratory verbal phase of the Home Rule movement, when catch-words took the place of broad-based, practical objectives. When Gladstone formed his second Government, the alleviation of famine conditions and a new Irish Land Bill were the issues demanding the undivided effort and attention of Home Rulers. The O'Donnell policy of intervention in the affairs of the empire was a secondary consideration while such widespread grievances and distress remained. Indeed, the new test of a Home Ruler's patriotism, the new orthodoxy, was less his attitude on foreign policy than his position on peasant right and his relationship to the Land League. In short, nationalism became more insular, almost provincial in emphasis, deriving strength from local unrest rather than from esoteric internationalism.

Many of these changes were unforeseen, criticism of them occurring only as they evolved in practice. The Freeman's Journal at first sided with the moderates under William Shaw, as much because of personal differences between Parnell and Gray its editor, as from any fear that Home Rule would be subverted. Gray, who had fought shy of obstructive tactics on the Army Disciplines and Regulations Bill,[1] noticeably fell out with Parnell on the issue of Catholic education in Ireland. While Parnell took the advanced Catholic view, that advocated by O'Donnell,[2] on the Irish University Bill, Gray was

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1. See Letter signed by Parnell, Biggar and O'Donnell to Freeman's Journal, 15 July 1879.

2. T. Sherlock, The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell M.P., Dublin 1887, p. 56.

disposed to accept the compromise proposed by the Government. At a meeting of Irish Members on 28 July to consider the subject his view prevailed and Parnell was reported as having spoken contemptuously of the moderates as those "cowardly papist rats."[1] As the "whole of Ireland" resounded with this episode, people said that Dwyer Gray's ambition was "to put Parnell aside and make himself a sort of dictator worthy of high consideration for the Liberals when they came into power".[2] Clearly Gray had not yet accepted the fact that Parnell had gained the upper hand in wresting control of the Home Rule movement. An uneasy truce was agreed upon by them a few days later[3] but discord was never far off. Parnell's mission to America in December to raise funds for famine relief re-opened the breach, partly because it competed with a similar fund organised by Gray in his capacity as Lord Mayor of Dublin.[4] Gray belonged to the "Whig tradition" and had been "a devoted follower of Butt". As a man of "clear and somewhat cynical judgment", he held "the then not uncommon view of Parnell that he was a somewhat shallow and untrustworthy fanatic".[5] Besides, he never did like the land agitation, at least in the particular form it took.

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1. Times, 6, 7 August 1879.
2. Quoted in Haslip, op.cit., p. 97.
3. Times, 11 August 1879.
4. Lyons, Dillon, p. 34. See also N.D. Palmer, The Irish Land League Crisis, New Haven 1940, p. 99.
5. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, 1, pp. 47, 102.

In A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party O'Donnell claimed that he felt that Home Rule was being wrecked and that he was already "drifting out of Irish local complications". His "unbending fidelity" to the Home Rule programme of 1873 and his "refusal to alter its terms" were, he insisted, "already raising a wall between [him] and Parnellism, root and branch."[1] This was less than the truth. O'Donnell's absences from the various land demonstrations of the autumn were due to sunstroke,[2] not the "Skirmishing Fund" or the "peasant jacquerie".[3] From France where he was recuperating, he wrote to the Freeman's Journal assuring the Irish people that it was only ill-health that prevented him from taking an active part in the proceedings.[4] O'Donnell was after all an "advanced tenant-righter", and the concern he professed in his "History" for Irish landlordism was both sudden and incompatible with the violence of his customary attacks on it. It was significant that before Parnell, himself a landlord and much less committed to peasant proprietary, had finally agreed to co-operate with the Land League, Davitt confessed to Devoy that O'Donnell was the man to lead it. However, because of his "Imperial" speech of 1878, he could not be seriously

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 385-6.
2. Times, 6 September, 7 October 1879.
3. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 378, 385.
4. See Bagenal, op.cit., pp. 82-3.

considered[1]. Again, despite their rivalry, O'Donnell was on closer terms with Parnell at the end of the session than he had been for a very long time. He was quick to repudiate rumours that Parnell had abused Gray and other moderates after they had decided to accept the Government's compromise on the Irish University Bill.[2] Like O'Donnell[3], Parnell favoured a distinct Catholic university with fully endowed colleges of secular education in no way inferior to Trinity College or the Queen's Colleges,[4] and was probably influenced by him. It astonished the young and egotistical Healy, who acted as Parnell's secretary and was then his "closest counsellor", how "unassumingly" Parnell accepted the "advice of other people, and [placed] himself in their hands". When the subject was discussed in Parliament on Tuesday 5 August, he had spent, he told his brother, several hours taking "care that O'Donnell didn't lead Parnell into any mistaken jinks", and claimed success in getting his inflammatory style toned down.[5] Dr. C.C. O'Brien points out, however, that in this the "third phase of his letters to his brother, Healy was at pains to depict himself and Parnell as a team" though implying that he was its "brains".[6]

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1. Davitt to Devoy, 23 August 1879, in Devoy's Post Bag, i, p. 453.

2. Times, 6 August 1879.

3. Hansard, Vol. 248, 24 July, Cols. 1228-1231; Vol. 249, 5 August 1879, Col. 226. See also the case presented by Lyon Playfair, which O'Donnell recommended as best answering the "blot" of the Government's measure. Cols. 214-19.

4. Ibid., Col. 276.

5. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 72.

6. C.C. O'Brien, "Timothy Michael Healy", in C.C. O'Brien (ed.), Modern Ireland, London 1960, pp. 167-8.

Healy had not managed to curb Parnell's violence the previous day, when Parnell had first condemned the Government's policy on Afghanistan as one of "murder" pure and simple,[1] and secondly opposed a vote to allow troops in South Africa to "go on burning and killing women and children, and blowing them up with dynamite".[2] O'Donnell could not with fairness decry Parnell's acceptance of the "New Departure" on 21 October as "the final stab in the back of Home Rule",[3] unless connexion with the empire be considered intrinsic to the form self-government should take.[4] In 1878 he had accepted the need to seek accommodation with extreme nationalists, knowing full well their aversion for the empire and their preference for revolutionary tactics. One way or the other Patrick Ford's support had to be obtained. The husbanding of nationalist resources also meant the surrender by John Devoy and associates of their historical position on parliamentarianism.

It was not seriously suggested in Ireland that the "New Departure" would involve the withdrawal of Home Rulers from Parliament altogether, and thus from intervention in imperial and world politics. The stratagem of effecting alliances throughout Europe and the empire against English rule of Ireland was not countermanded

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 4 August 1879, Col. 101.
2. Ibid., Cols. 163-4.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 385.
4. Ibid., p. 376.

or declared obsolete. O'Donnell's efforts to solicit French sympathy for Ireland by keeping the continental press informed on the "Dispute Irlandaise", and his steps to form an association of resident Irishmen in Paris to undertake this function, received commendation from all nationalist quarters. The Irish World considered it a "good move",[1] and the Freeman's Journal "a yeoman service to Ireland."[2] A report in the less than friendly New York Nation stated that the Irish emissary had been repulsed by the French Republicans, for the very reason that the "Irish malcontents" did not really belong to the Liberal party of the world. They had displayed in the past "extraordinarily little interest in the political struggles of any other race or country", which had entailed an appalling isolation and made more difficult their task of securing foreign aid.[3] No doubt the form this should take would have been a matter of dispute between O'Donnell and the extremists. The Clan na Gael was less interested in moral pressure being brought to bear on England by foreign powers, than in their connivance in the military engagement of the "enemy" at a number of weak points.[4] These were detailed as Ireland, India and Australia, though the possibility of a Spanish-Irish"putsch" on Gibraltar was not discounted.[5] In fact, the American Fenians

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1. Irish World, 13 December 1879.
2. Freeman's Journal, 29 December 1879.
3. Enclosure 5 from New York Nation, 8 May 1879, in Desp. No. 14, Thornton to Salisbury, 12 January 1880, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1720.
4. Enclosure 1, Copy of Report of Military Agent sent to Ireland in 1879, in Desp. Secret No. 131, Thornton to Salisbury, 26 April 1880, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1745. This document can also be found among the Fenian papers in the State Paper Office, Dublin, Fenian Papers 1858-1883, A Files, Box 5, A 621.
5. Desp. Political No 4, Archibald to Salisbury, 17 October 1879, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1707. Archibald also forwarded a document given to him by the Spanish Consul at New York, Mr. de Uriante, containing the manuscript proposals of Millen and Kirwan for the recovery of Gilbraltar by Spain. See also, Fenian Papers 1858-1883, A Files, Box 4, A 591, S.P.O. J.J. O'Kelly and Dr. Carroll had proposed a similar plan for the capture of the British fortress to the Spanish Premier, Cánovas del Castillo. O'Kelly to Devoy, 23 December 1877, in Devoy's Post Bag, 1, pp. 60, 293-4.

looked on the anti-rent agitation in Ireland not as necessitating the postponement of these activities but as suitable accompaniment for them. The concurrence of agrarian disturbance in Ireland with native uprisings in Africa and Afghanistan was considered ideal conditions for popular revolution.[1]

Still the burning subject engaging the attention of Home Rulers and Fenians alike, was the Afghan situation. The murder of the British "maire du palais", Major Cavagnari, and his entire entourage at Kabul on 3 September, rekindled the whole question after it had come to be regarded as settled. Even the Viceroy[2] admitted that his Afghan policy had "virtually burst up and blown into the air".[3] Lytton now felt obliged to do what he had been anxious to avoid, to occupy Kabul and to "undertake the virtual administration of the country."[4] The reimposition of British control, which the Afghans strongly resisted, proved harsh and repressive. Kabul was retaken on 12 October, but the Military Commission set up was less an administrative body than an avenging tribunal.[5] Execution of those accused of complicity in the attack on the embassy on 3 September was

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1. Desp. Political No. 4, Archibald to Salisbury, 17 October 1879, F.O. 5 Papers, Vol. 1707; see also General Millen's memorandum.

2. Lytton to Beaconsfield, 4 September 1879, quoted in Lady Betty Balfour, op.cit., pp. 358-60.

3. Temple to Cranbrook, 10 September 1879, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F. 86, A 6.

4. Lytton to Beaconsfield, 4 September 1879.

5. See Times, 23 February 1880, in which are printed the instructions issued to the Commission for their guidance.

"summary",[1] and a policy of "indiscriminate hanging" and "burning of villages" was authorised by proclamation.[2] Roberts chose to regard Afghanistan as a rebellious province and her soldiers who opposed him as "rebels" to be treated without "mercy", instead of as legitimate national troops defending their country.[3] From October until February "detailed narratives" of the proclamations being "carried into effect", appeared in the Indian and British press "without any contradiction and without any doubt being thrown on them".[4] Lytton had urged Roberts to avoid anything "like a reign of terror", but on 5 December he complained to Cranbrook that the hanging of at least 89 Afghans for resisting the British advance on Kabul was for "an act of very questionable culpability".[5]

Famine or no famine Irish nationalists did not regard the worsening situation on the frontier with indifference. In America, "Transatlantic" of the Irish World, the strangest character in an unusual newspaper,[6] foretold the nearing end of the British empire,

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1. Regarding the punishment of individuals, the Government of India instructed Roberts that this was to be "swift, stern, and impressive, without being indiscriminate or immoderate". In matters of detail, Roberts was virtually given a free hand. Enclosure No. A 505 in Desp. No. 216, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 20 October 1874, in Parl.P., 1880, Vol. LIII, C 2457, p. 97.

2. Thompson and Garrett, op.cit., p. 522. See H. Hensman, The Afghan War 1878-9, London 1881, and Lady C. MacGregor (ed.), The Life and Opinions of Major-General Sir C.M.MacGregor, Vol. ii, London 1888. See also two articles by Frederic Harrison, "Martial Law in Kabul", part I in Fortnightly Review, Vol. XXVI, 1879, pp. 767-84, and part II in ibid., Vol. XXVII, 1880, pp. 435-59.

3. See Proclamations of 12 October, 14 November 1879, in Parl.P., op.cit., pp. 135, 162.

4. Harrison, "Martial Law in Kabul", part II, p. 439.

5. Lytton to Cranbrook, 5 December 1879, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 518/4.

6. In December 1877 Acting Consul G. Crump identified "Transatlantic" as Thomas Mooney. See Circular No. 24, Crump to Derby, 14 December 1877, F.O. 5 Papers, Vol. 1599.

with thirty thousand troops "scattered" helpless through the "passes" of Afghanistan.[1] The Freeman's Journal, as the defender of outraged public morality, at "no previous period in the world's history ... more glaringly trampled underfoot", placed major blame on the jingoism of the Prime Minister:[2] "the moral sense of civilisation is offended by the unprovoked invasion of a weak friendly country, and the sanctions of religion are defied by an outrage on its elementary commandments".[3] Like the Irish World, the Freeman seemed to say that imperialism infringed the natural if not the divine order of nationhood. On the matter of the Kabul atrocities, it trusted that the Government would be brought to account in an "Afghan debate" on the reopening of Parliament. When that time came Home Rulers were charged not to forget their duty, especially should English Members be unmindful or careless of theirs .[4]

The voice of the Freeman's Journal seemed suddenly to have become the voice of the two O'Donnells, Frank Hugh and Charles James. Commenting on the news that an attempt had been made on the life of Lord Lytton, it expressed little surprise that "Young Hindostan" had in recent years shown "a great desire to learn the lessons of

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1. Irish World, 29 November 1879.
2. Freeman's Journal, 22 December 1879.
3. Ibid., 17 January 1880.
4. Freeman's Journal, 27 December 1879.

European history and philosophy". The people of India, it confessed, had much to be bitter about. No longer the country of "proverbial" wealth, India was now the poorest in the world, her Princes "crushed" and "despoiled", her peasants "ground to the earth by taxation", and her rising intelligentsia progressively shut out from worthwhile employment. The danger of a people universally aggrieved was an obvious one: desperate "discontent" found vent in "desperate crime".[1] In past years, the Freeman might have concentrated on the heinous nature of assassination. It was not the deed but the motives behind it that occupied its present analysis. It did not agree with the Times that the incident was of no real significance,[2] but looked beyond the "evil transactions" of the military machine in Afghanistan, to the burden of the crushing expenditure needed to keep it there. While another "straw of taxation would break the back of that most patient camel-Hindostan", it was equally "intolerable" that the British people also weighed down by many troubles, should help shoulder it.[3]

Perhaps the Freeman's Journal had fallen under the spell of C.J. O'Donnell. On 4 September he announced his intended candidacy for Galway and published an address to the electors via its columns. An advanced nationalist and "unflinching advocate of tenant right with fixity of tenure", O'Donnell suggested that his Indian experience

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1. Freeman's Journal, 13 December 1879.
2. Times, 13 December 1879; See also Annual Register, 1880, p. 286.
3. Freeman's Journal, 27 December 1879.

in the areas that agitated Ireland--Home Rule, education, and land reform--might with advantage be put to good use in Parliament. Even in India he had found "germs of self-government recognised and practiced". Although under the overall control of a central Viceroyalty, the country was divided into a number of separate Presidencies. In these, local councils legislated upon the assumption that local knowledge was a supreme necessity and that wide decentralisation was advisable. This was an oddly unconvincing argument, for it could hardly be maintained that Indian Presidencies were any more "representative" than Irish counties or boroughs. Possibly O'Donnell felt that his electoral chances would be enhanced by showing that he could embarrass the Government. The Irish would hardly take kindly to the news that their country was ruled more autocratically than India. Above all, his election would establish a union between the unrepresented millions in India and the ineffectually represented millions in Ireland, to the benefit of the former and to the additional strength of the latter:

> "Gentlemen, I am before all things an Irish Home Ruler, but next to my fidelity to Ireland I cherish the hope that I might induce the Irish people to think more of the lot of the unrepresented millions of India whom Irish valour has done so much towards subjecting to the British Crown. It is our duty as well as our advantage to do so. Next to our own striving for national life we can have no nobler ambition than their enfranchisement."

If such a policy, "almost unknown" to "Whigs and Tories", was pursued, he concluded, Irish representatives in the House of Commons would be marked out as "its true and foremost liberals".[1] Clearly, Charles James O'Donnell was his brother's disciple.

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1. The text of this address is taken from the Hindoo Patriot, 6 October 1879.

Frank Hugh O'Donnell had of course conjured up this very vision of Ireland's role in the world in August 1878. But where he had faced ridicule, the Indian civil servant now found reasonableness approaching enthusiasm. "We have said that Mr. O'Donnell is a remarkable man", began an article in the Freeman's Journal. From a purely Irish aspect it was agreed that his "Indian knowledge" might be brought to bear on Irish subjects "with great effect". A speech of the late Sir John Gray on the Education question was recalled, in which he had pointed out the discrepancy between the English Government refusing liberty of education to their Irish subjects which they freely granted to their Indian subjects. But the part of O'Donnell's address that most excited editorial comment was "the bond of co-operation and union" between Irish representatives and the native population of India. "Naturally", asserted the Freeman's Journal, the Irish people, "themselves labouring under all the grievances incidental to a want of local self-government", sympathised with other populations "similarly circumstanced". It agreed that the discontent of Ireland, "identified with the discontent of other struggling nationalities under English rule", would become very "formidable" indeed and not so likely to be ignored by English statesmen:

> "If the unrepresented millions in India could find a representative through Ireland, they in their turn might strengthen the Irish cause, and awaken England to the necessity of dealing with Irish demands in a different spirit."

Whether that spirit would result from a recognition of Irish "liberalism" or from a concession to Irish interference, was left to the imagination. Ireland did, however, as both O'Donnells had at various

times stressed, owe an obligation to India to seek to insure that British rule was just.[1] A Viceroy like Mayo, a General like Gough, and many a thousand Irish soldiers had helped to consolidate the power of Britain in India. Because Ireland had in the past benefited from the empire through employment and conquest, this did not disqualify her from being of service to India in the future:

> "If at the same time that we can help the natives of India to an amelioration of their present wretched conditions, we can help ourselves, this would not lessen the gratitude we would thereby earn."[2]

The position of the Freeman's Journal in September 1879 exactly mirrored that of F.H. O'Donnell the year before. Possibly, Gray was casting round for an alternative to Parnell. Clearly his new-found confidence in O'Donnell was not entirely the result of sudden conversion and had something to do with his rivalry with Parnell and the alarming phenomenon of agrarian agitation. Recognition, however, came in a sense too late to be put to practical advantage. O'Donnell was no longer in a strong position either to check or seriously challenge Parnell's advance, and so create conditions favourable for Gray's personal suit. By the middle of 1880, the editor of the Freeman had little choice but to knuckle under and commit his journal to the land movement.[3]

Parnell's departure for America before Christmas[4] on a mission to rouse public opinion and raise money really settled the issue.

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1. See, for example, the programme O'Donnell drew up for Dr. Carroll. Chapter Three, section two, pp. 147-8.

2. Freeman's Journal, 4 September 1879,

3. See Haslip, op.cit., p. 98.

4. Times, 11 December 1879.

It was the view of Mitchell Henry that Parnell was completely in the hands of Davitt, although conceding that he was like "Robespierre" shifting "his ground over and over again".[1] Reports in circulation that India was included in his itinerary,[2] lend support to the notion that Parnell was anxious to keep all options open and that he still preferred some middle ground. An Indian "stop-over" would have represented a considerable advance for the theory of anti-imperial alliance proposed by the O'Donnell's and seconded by the Freeman's Journal. On 13 March the semi-official organ of the Indian administration, the Pioneer, announced that a telegram had been received from Parnell to the effect that he contemplated visiting Bombay, Madras and Calcutta.[3] The prospect of such a visit, it commented, gilded "the horizon of the future with a new charm"; "No doubt he intends to travel with a circus and address the audience in the intervals between the equestrian acts".[4] However, Beaconsfield's snap election forced Parnell to interrupt his schedule and to return at once to Ireland to take charge of the electoral campaign.

To judge from the annual meeting of the Home Rule party at City Hall, Dublin, on 21 January 1880, policy was still in doubt; especially since both Parnell and O'Donnell were absent, the latter on the request of Biggar and others consenting to act as locum

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1. Henry to Davitt, 11 January 1880, MacDonagh Papers, Ms 11 446.
2. Bengalee, 21 February 1880; Pioneer, 18 February, 13 March 1880.
3. Pioneer, 13 March 1880.
4. Ibid., 18 February 1880.

tenens as president of the electoral committee of the activists.[1] It was the opinion of many present that the only "duty" of Irish representatives was to their own people. No business connected with the British empire, asserted the Chevalier O'Clery, could be of the slightest importance to them so long as the lives of their fellow countrymen were at stake. While the Irish people were at that very moment being exterminated by their mortal foe, famine, the action of the British empire in Afghanistan or Zululand, or elsewhere, was irrelevant.[2] Philip Callan proposed that the Irish party should take no sides in the impending partystruggle on "issues wholly unconnected with Ireland". In other words, Home Rulers should be allowed to vote as each thought fit on foreign affairs. He admitted that he was interested in the Eastern Question, that he hated Russia, and that he abominated the Government that flogged the nuns of Minsk. As far as Ireland was concerned he would vote for any country that would go to war with Russia, "the enemy of the human race and of his religion".[3] In April, Parnell attempted to drive Callan out of politics by setting up a rival candidate against him. Callan in fact lost his old seat in Dundalk, but was returned instead for Louth as its senior Member.[4] The most persistent

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1. Nation, 13 March 1880.

2. Freeman's Journal, 21 January 1880.

3. Times, 22 January 1880.

4. See O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 429, 464-5. Callan's successful opponent at Dundalk was Charles Russell.

supporter of the Conservatives, Sir George Bowyer, avoided expulsion by resigning. He informed the party and his constituency that because Home Rule now prejudiced "British and imperial interests", he could not honestly seek re-election".[1]

The Freeman's Journal made the point that if the Queen's speech left out all mention of Irish distress, Home Rulers should insistently call attention to this omission by an amendment to the Address. The world should then be shown that Irish Members considered the "dreadful sufferings" of their countrymen "infinitely more important than troubles in Afghanistan, or disputes about the line of the Balkans".[2] This was not a retraction. The Freeman still held that Afghanistan was the concern of humanity and Home Rulers, but considered that it was not the immediate priority. Home Rulers could still be counted among the so-called "England Afghans" and "wire pullers" who did their "work noisily" and "therefore [attracted] some attention".[3] Justin McCarthy, for example, was a signatory of a Memorial to the Prime Minister demanding an inquiry into acts which affected the "honour of the Nation, of the Army and of the Sovereign".[4]

At a second meeting of the party held in the Committee rooms, King Street, on the re-opening of Parliament, thirty-five members

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1. See Bowyer's two letters to the Times, 14 November 1879; 15 March 1880.

2. Freeman's Journal, 23 January 1880.

3. Cranbrook to Lytton, 4 January 1880, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E. 218, 516/5.

4. Freeman's Journal, 2 February 1880. Among McCarthy's fellow signatories were: Chamberlain, Courtney, Hopwood, Howard, James, Lawson, and Pennington.

(including this time O'Donnell but not Parnell) attending, more definite plans were laid. On Shaw's motion it was decided to move an amendment to the Address condemning the Government for not fully comprehending the seriousness of Irish distress, and for failing to provide efficient measures for its relief. This was generally agreed upon, but as spokesman for the activist section of the party, O'Donnell openly reserved the right of moving a counter amendment, should the course of debate warrant him doing so.[1]

Lord Cranbrook expected that the "unavoidable calamities of war" would be the theme of most speeches.[2] Instead, what Parliament heard were "virulent outpourings of wrath",[3] from Irish rather than Liberal Members. After the first night's proceedings, the Times commented that Irish Members "were never less disposed to be friendly" to the Government.[4] While some of the early exchanges did centre on Afghanistan or Zululand, one after another of the Home Rulers managed to deflect the discussion onto Irish relief, which the Government would have preferred to postpone till a "proper opportunity".[5] Eventually W.H. Smith was "put up" on the third night[6] to explain the ministerial position and to justify the policy

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1. Times, 6 February 1880.
2. Cranbrook to Temple, 2 February 1880, Temple Papers, Mss Eur. F. 86, A 17.
3. Cranbrook to Lytton, 14 January 1880, op.cit.
4. Times, op.cit.
5. Hansard, Vol. 250, 5 February 1880, Col. 134.
6. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 432.

of caution on Irish relief.[1] His explanation merely made things worse. The Government's measures were denounced as "worthless" and "an insult to humanity".[2] At the end of the debate the Home Rule party was no nearer accommodation with the feeling of the House than at the beginning, and Shaw's amendment, duly tabled, was rejected by 216 votes to 66.

Thus, just as he had threatened to do, O'Donnell attempted to append a blanket condemnation to the Address. His long amendment had no prospect of success, but as a declaration of war by "rival potentates" on the Government, was a symbolic and not altogether hollow gesture of defiance. It proved that O'Donnell was still committed to the activist cum Parnellite cause, enjoying the role of its most articulate spokesman.[3] Like a loyal subordinate, he proclaimed the prime ministerial position forced on Parnell as leader of the Irish people by the abdication of the Lord-Lieutenant.[4] Parnell went to America, he said, on "no private mission of personal ambition", but as the "authorised ambassador of the tenants' organisations of Ireland."[5] Like an ambitious subordinate, the policy he defended was not only Parnell's on land reform, but also his own on imperial contacts. One part of his amendment indicted the Ministry for "sedulously describ[ing] as seditious

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 9 February 1880, Cols. 299-305.

2. Annual Register, 1880, p. 12.

3. Hansard, op.cit. 9 February 1880, Cols. 368-9. O'Donnell made a fine impression in the party by repudiating charges made against his absent "colleague and friend", Parnell.

4. Ibid., 11 February 1880, Col. 483.

5. Ibid., 12 February 1880, Col. 523.

and disloyal the consitutional endeavours of the Irish representatives to establish improved relations between Ireland and other portions of [Her] Majesty's Dominions, and to bring about a better distribution of the legislative work which now overburthen[ed] the Imperial Parliament". Significantly, O'Donnell introduced his speech with a catalogue of Government failures in Turkey, South Africa, Afghanistan, and India, and concluded it with a diatribe against "Jingo Imperialism" in Ireland. Lord Beaconsfield's model of government was that of "Byzantine Caesarism" or of "an Oriental Sultanate", his ideal "a servile horde" of subjects "crouching beneath the irresponsible supremacy of the State". This was the reason the "imperial levellers" of the Tory School deliberately slandered the claim for Home Rule as implying disintegration of the empire, when it really meant integration based on federal unity.[1] While the amendment was defeated by 128 votes to 12,[2] it came nearer to reflecting the mood of the nationalist organisation than Shaw's much milder equivalent.

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 12 February 1880, Cols. 525-8.

2. Home Rulers who voted for O'Donnell's amendment: Finigan, McCarthy, O'Beirne, *The O'Donoghue, O'Gorman, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Shaughnessy, O'Sullivan, O'Connor Power, R. Power, Synan. Tellers: O'Donnell, Biggar.
*The presence of the O'Donoghue in the activist lobby was an act of self-preservation. In his electoral address he stood as a supporter of Parnell: "It will not surprise you to hear that at the end of so many years in Parliament, I should be sorry to lose my seat". Irish Times, 15 March 1880, quoted in C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, p. 25 IN

O'Donnell was at least "acting" head of the energetic Home Rule Confederation,[1] whereas Shaw at a meeting of the ailing Home Rule League openly renounced all "pretensions" to lead either the Irish people or the Home Rule movement.[2] Biggar considered that O'Donnell had made out a "wonderfully strong case",[3] and Finigan promised, as an Irish representative, his support for any man found on "the platform of common humanity".[4] The Nation, which "had" no taste for flighty projects or for schemes which "dreams [were] made of",[5] congratulated O'Donnell for striking the right "key note".[6] The Freeman's Journal was also impressed. It rejected outright the views of the Times that the speech was the product of a "perverse temper" full of "preposterous imputations",[7] but asserted that on the contrary it was most "able".[8]

The "key note" referred to by the Nation was O'Donnell's explanation that the cry of "Down with the Irish People" was a Government ploy to blind the electorate to failure overseas.[9] It was this electoral manoeuvre that encouraged the Home Rule

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 434, 436.
2. Times, 4 February 1880. Shaw announced that he had been cured from ambitions in that direction "that day 12 months.". "The heart-broken looks of that poor old man who was then their leader haunted him still."
3. Hansard, op.cit., 12 February 1880, Col. 529.
4. Ibid., Cols. 532-3.
5. Nation, 3 January 1880.
6. Ibid., 14, 21 February 1880.
7. Times, 11 February 1880.
8. Freeman's Journal, 12, 13 February 1880.
9. Hansard, op.cit., 11 February 1880, Col. 429.

movement to appeal after all to the memory of Beaconsfield's disastrous foreign and colonial policy. O'Donnell declared that Irishmen would not be fooled into playing the game of that "transplanted vizier" or led away from their "national traditions".[1] In fact, no Home Ruler contributed to the two discussions on the cost of the Afghan war raised by Fawcett at the beginning and end of the short session, or challenged General Robert's glib answer to the grave charges of brutality brought against his army. This might have been for political reasons decided on at the two party meetings prior to the opening of Parliament. When the Government was unable to dispel the "Gladstonian mists",[2] it was sound tactics to give the Liberals free rein. On both matters, the Home Rule press identified itself with the arguments put forward by Fawcett and other Opposition spokesmen. The Freeman's Journal welcomed Fawcett's attempt to extract from the Government a statement of its intention on the Afghan War;[3] a "more important question" could not have arisen.[4] It assumed that the war was an "imperial" one and that the expenses should largely be borne out of imperial resources and not by the "miserable people of India". Taken as an issue of "right and justice", the only excuse that could be pleaded for charging the

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 12 February 1880, Col. 527.

2. Cranbrook to Lytton, 14 March 1880, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E.218,516/5.

3. See Fawcett to Gladstone, 8 February 1880, Gladstone Papers, Add.Ms 44156.

4. Freeman's Journal, 12 February 1880.

the Indian exchequer was the nearness of India to Afghanistan. As for the Kabul atrocities, the Freeman's Journal considered that Lord Roberts' letter of defence, which Stanhope read out to the House of Commons on 14 February,[1] confirmed the accusation made by Frederic Harrison in an article, "Martial law in Kabul".[2] Similiarly, the Nation thought Roberts culpable and likened him and his troops to "military brigands".[3]

A second blind, a new regulation for putting down obstruction introduced by Stafford Northcote on 26 February,[4] at best provoked a strong response from Home Rulers on the principle of intervention.[5] McCarthy, Synan, Sullivan and O'Donnell[6] all argued that as there had been no violation of rules that session, the motion was primarily designed "to dazzle the eyes of the parliamentary electorate",[7] and to uncover an alleged "combination between Liberalism and Obstruction".[8] Indeed, the debate was conducted throughout under the "menace" of an appeal to public opinion against any Member who

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 14 February, Cols. 592-3. A transcript of the letter is printed in Cols. 580-2.

2. See Chapter Six, section one, p. 298.

3. Nation, 14 February 1880.

4. The new rule provided for the suspension of any Member for the remainder of the sitting, named by the Speaker for obstructing the business of the House. If a Member was suspended three times for the same offence in a session, he could be barred from the House for a week or more.

5. Hansard, op.cit., 26 February, Cols. 1450-1541; 27 February, Cols. 1580-1668; 28 February 1880, Cols. 1669-1708.

6. Ibid., 26 February 1880, Cols. 1490-6, 1496-500, 1504-14, 1529-38.

7. Ibid., Col. 1530.

8. Ibid., Col. 1505.

opposed the resolutions. Again appointed to lead the Home Rule party on this issue,[1] O'Donnell wisely channelled Irish criticisms towards the propaganda aspects of the Government's motion, and steered his colleagues clear of the trap of moving a series of dilatory amendments.[2] Mitchell Henry had also tendered the same advice.[3] Two days later, the Freeman's Journal complimented the party on the "very sensible" attitude it had adopted.[4] The Government had been successfully deprived of an excuse for throwing the charge of impeding business on either the Liberals or the Irish. Still 'politiking,' Dwyer Gray claimed entire credit for this denouement.[5] Yet the initiative had always belonged to O'Donnell. On 2 March, Biggar, Finigan and O'Donnell published a joint statement finding fault with the English press for their blanket definition of obstructive behaviour. "Mere obstruction", they admitted, was a "contemptible absurdity", but "active hostility to bad government, intelligent criticism ofpublic business, and constant presence on the scene of Parliamentary duty [could] only be described as obstruction by rascals or by fools".[6]

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1. Hansard., Col. 1696.
2. Ibid., Cols. 1691, 1704-5.
3. Freeman's Journal, 26 February 1880.
4. Ibid., 28 February 1880.
5. Ibid., 9 March 1880.
6. Ibid., 2 March 1880.

When the dissolution was sprung on the country on 9 March, Lord Beaconsfield staked his future on proving the complicity of Home Rulers and Liberals as partners in crime, in the work of parliamentary obstruction, and in their desire "to disintegrate the United Kingdom". They were the enemies who challenged "the expediency of the Imperial character" of the realm. Having failed to "enfeeble" the Colonies by their "policy of decomposition", they had recognised in Home Rule a "mode" which would not only accomplish "but precipitate their purpose".[1] The manifesto failed to divert attention away from foreign policy. In fact, it had an "unexpected effect" upon the Irish vote.[2] O'Donnell persuaded the Home Rule Confederation to alter its "habitual tactics", and to punish Lord Beaconsfield by throwing its weight against all Conservative candidates without regard to their individual position on Home Rule. With the authority of the Confederation behind him, he urged,in a counter manifesto[3], the Irish electors of Great Britain to vote against Benjamin Disraeli as they should against the "mortal enemy" of their country and race. "Anybody but a Tory" became the watchword.[4] Liberal candidates were not to be asked for a pledge on Home Rule, even though the addresses of Hartington[5] and Gladstone[6]

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1. The Prime Minister's manifesto can be found in the Annual Register, 1880, p. 32.
2. Ibid., 1880, p. 54.
3. Eversley, op.cit., p. 107.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 434-5.
5. Freeman's Journal, 11 March 1880.
6. See R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 210-11.

held out no great promise of a substantial shift in attitude to Irish self-government. O'Donnell's manifesto reminded the Irish in Britain that the election was to be fought not solely on events in Ireland, but as well on the whole compass of the Government's record:

> "The foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield has been an ingl rious and disastrous failure".
>
> "The record of his domestic achievements tells of shams, nothing but shams. That is why he chooses to attack the Irish people, and to hound on, as he hopes, the passions of the ignorant and the unreflecting of the country."
>
> "Lord Beaconsfield fears that the British people will decline to applaud the destruction of unfortunate Afghans and Africans".[1]

O'Donnell was deputed to explain the situation to the Irish voters in the northern towns of England and to urge them to vote Liberal.[2] Thus "the solid Irish vote" was virtually secured for the Liberal cause.[3]

This action was O'Donnell's "last exertion of authority as Vice-President of the Home Rule Confederation".[4] Throughout 1879 and early 1880, he was motivated as has been shown by the concept of an "entente cordiale" between Home Rule and Liberalism. The conversion of one of the two main parties to Home Rule, before agrarian disturbance acted as a diversion, was the goal he was working towards. A.M. Sullivan also favoured a limited scheme of alignment with a specific party.[5] And Alfred Webb, before going over to the Land League as

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1. Freeman's Journal, 11 March 1880.
2. Ibid., 16 March 1880.
3. Annual Register, 1880, p. 54.
4. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 435.
5. Times, 27 December 1879.

treasurer, looked to justice from the Liberal party.[1] He wrote that it was a duty to mankind to weaken by every possible means Conservative power, which had "so long swayed the Empire for evil, and combatted truth, enlightenment and progress".[2] None of these hopes were realised. The elections in Ireland were fought on a different basis. Parnell's nominees were those who preached the message of an agrarian war. His campaign was permeated by general antagonism to England, to both parties, Liberal or Conservative. In the end, it was the former in Ireland which suffered the most damage at Irish hands. O'Donnell's letter to the Freeman's Journal on 22 April, stressing the wisdom of allowing Gladstone's Government time to show its face before adopting towards it an "aggressive and defiant" attitude, suggested that no such period of grace was contemplated.[3]

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1. Letter to Freeman's Journal, 14 April 1880, contained in Webb Paper, Ms 1745.

2. Letter to Freeman's Journal, 29 March 1880. in ibid.

3. Freeman's Journal, 22 April 1880.

II The Special Relationship Disintegrates

The repercussions of the Irish famine were felt as far afield as India, and arguably influenced the development of nationalism in Bengal if not in the other Presidencies. The sudden emergence of the Land League as a political power in Ireland, and the agrarian agitation it sponsored, were bound to influence the attitude of socially conservative Indian politicians to the Home Rule party and to Home Rulers as suitable parliamentary allies.[1] Implicit in this new Irish movement with its call for a general strike against rent, its demand for peasant ownership, and its occasional talk of "land nationalisation", was a threat to propertied interests, and the undermining of traditional society. Just as Indian political associations and Indian newspapers sought guidelines from Ireland on the techniques and tactics of political action, so they imbibed the lessons and dangers of social upheaval. The conclusions reached were not always the same, and in the case of the Indian Association and the British Indian Association were diametrically opposite. Significantly, the gulf which separated the two rival organisations was formed not because of divergence over extremist or constitutional paths to the same goal, but because of the support of one and the hostility of the other to a programme of peasant right and land reform.[2] The British Indian Association, the bastion of zemindari influence and privilege, jealously guarded the

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1. A brief account of the agrarian situation in Bengal will be given in Chapter Eight.

2. Seal, op.cit., p. 222 ff.

status quo and the political predominance derived from it. The Indian Association, the mouthpiece of Calcutta intellectual and professional classes, aspired to the undivided leadership of the Indian people as the "tribune"[1] of the peasants. It hoped to do this by mobilising a populist following along Parnellite lines. By claiming to represent the ryots, it sought to counter Government criticisms of narrow vested interests and to outflank the old landowning and aristocratic leaders who had long insisted that they spoke for the ryots. Moreover, the political climate in 1879 was particularly favourable for broadening the base of the Association's membership and following, by moving into the countryside. Several vernacular papers begged that it do so at once, and invited it to speak on behalf of the "helpless and voiceless";[2] as they saw it "the time for action [had] come".[3] A Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate serious agrarian disturbances had just recommended the reform of existing tenancy laws, and new legislation was confidently expected. Thus in 1880, the Indian Association formally announced that it had undertaken the solemn duty of making known the "wants and grievances" of the unrepresented ryots.[4]

Understandably, the honeymoon between O'Donnell and the Home Rule party on the one side and the British Indian Association

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1. Seal, op.cit., p. 222

2. See Sadharani, 2 February 1879, which begged the Indian Association to protect the ryots as the British Indian Association did the landlords. Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 5, 1879.

3. Sattachar, 13 January 1879. Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 5, 1879.

4. Fourth Annual Report of the Indian Association, 1879-80, pp. 7-8, quoted in Seal, op.cit., p. 223.

and the Hindoo Patriot on the other, began to show signs of disillusion. A souring in the relationship could be detected as early as April 1879. Then the Hindoo Patriot rushed to refute an article which appeared in the Pioneer[1] showing many points of resemblance between the Irish peasant and the Behar ryot, and concluding that the same measures which helped to improve landed conditions in Ireland--fixity of tenure, compensation for improvements--might prove equally beneficial in India. Landlords were described as being one and the same in both countries, the Behar ticcadar had his Irish equivalent and the village mahajan approximated to an Irish "gombeen man".[2] The Pioneer was in fact justified in making this comparison. Lord Cornwallis, the author of the zemindari settlement of 1793, had believed that he was transplanting the English system of industrious, progressive, improving landlord to India. He actually *imposed on* Bengal a policy which did nothing to anglicise the zemindars or make them capitalistic in their methods, but which deprived the ryots of their traditional property rights and exposed them to the machinations of money-lenders and middle-men.[3] The system of land tenure he took over therefore corresponded more closely to that of Ireland, where the chasm separating owner and occupier could be characterised as "Asiatic", than to that of England.

Charles James O'Donnell looked on the Pioneer as an authority on land administration and eminently "capable of independent

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1. Pioneer, 27 March 1879.

2. Hindoo Patriot, 7 April 1879.

3. Eric Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India, Oxford 1959, pp. 5-6, 25-26, 145-6.

criticism of the most trenchant kind."[1] Yet the Irish civilian might possibly have contributed the article himself. "Exceptionally well informed on the condition of a province in which he [had] spent nearly six years in close investigation on the agrarian question in its various phases", O'Donnell had been asked "to furnish a report on the land laws of Behar" f r the Commission of Inquiry.[2] In his judicial capacity his sympathies rested very definitely more with the ryot than with the zemindar. In May 1877 he had suffered downgrading, by a High Court order, f r proceeding against a zemindar in a "hasty, injudicious, arbitrary and unjust" fashion.[3] Again in June 1879, stationed at Sewan in the Sarun district of Behar, O'Donnell laid serious charges against the Maharaja of Hutwa for oppressing his tenants and for scheming at their "wholesale desertion".[4] On appeal, the Maharaja's uncorroborated answers to these allegations[5] were accepted as conclusive proof of his innocence, and O'Donnell was reprimanded for allowing "his sympathy with the ryots to lead him to seek support for what was really a foregone conclusion in his mind, rather than to conduct a full and impartial investigation".[6] In September, the Hutwa case was laid before the acting Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Stewart Bayley,

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, "The Wants of Behar", in Calcutta Review, 1879, Vol. LXIX, p. 160.

2. Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, Ripon apers, Add. Ms 43592.

3. Abstract of C.J. O'Donnell's service record, enclosure in ibid.

4. Ibid., see also l tter no. 85 R, Commissioner of Patna to Govt. of Bengal, 4 August 1879, enclosure in L/P&J/3, 1881, P. 1349.

5. Maharaja's letter of explanation, no. 4 a, 21 July 1879, Appendix VII in ibid.

6. Letter no. 867T., Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 30 July 1881, enclosure in ibid.

who found O'Donnell's prosecution against the Maharaja largely "hypothetical". On 14 October he ordered his transference without demotion to Jessore in Lower Bengal,[1] where his views "were less likely to do damage".[2]

Almost a year to the day when his celebrated open letter to the Marquis of Hartington caused a furore, O'Donnell traced the "real source" of Behar's "perennial misery" to three causes: rack-renting by zemindars, the ticcadari system of agricultural administration in which the "evidences" of "occupancy rights" were continuously destroyed, and exploitation by European Indigo planters.[3] In a bold and provocative article in the Calcutta Review of 1879, entitled "The Wants of Behar"[4] and reviewed by the Hindoo Patriot, O'Donnell accused the Government of breaking its contract with the ryots by ignoring the "binding" stipulations of the Permanent Settlement and by introducing "new and irritating land taxes of disputed justice". Had the Government enforced its "solemn pledge", Behar should have had a "wealthy farmer class", instead of "a mass of greedy ticcardars".[5] He stressed that "radical reform" was not too late and that fixity of tenure for the ryots

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1. O'Donnell was severely reprimanded for "want of judgment" in sending out police officers to investigate reports of widespread desertions and of maintaining the "correctness of the police reports in their most exaggerated form."

2. Eden to Northbrook, 29 October 1880, op.cit.

3. C.J. O'Donnell, The Ruin of an Indian Province: A Letter to the Marquis of Hartington, London 1880, p. 14. See also the Hindoo Patriot's review of O'Donnell's article. Hindoo Patriot, 28 July 1879.

4. C.J. O'Donnell, "The Wants of Behar", pp. 146-66.

5. Ibid., pp. 158-60.

and the curtailment of unrestricted subdivision by zemindars, would fulfil the intentions of the early British legislators. Perhaps it would even prevent a spate of famines and a peasant "jacquerie". Behar, which had none, "must have a land law of her own", he wrote, "to take into consideration local factors".[1] It would seem that O'Donnell was on that side of the official fence which favoured the ryotwari version of Permanent Settlement.

Surprisingly, the Hindoo Patriot thought the article a "fair transcript", and commended it to the Rent Commission. The Hutwa proceedings had not yet made the headlines, and O'Donnell's careful distinction between Behar and Bengal, with the Bengal tenantry "so strong in their rights", and the proprietary class associated in the British Indian Association, "intelligent" and "just", permitted a degree of objectivity.[2] Behar, he insisted, held a "very anomalous position in the administration of the Indian Empire", for it could still boast a "great landed aristocracy with many of the traditions and some of the tastes of an old nobility". On the other hand, there also existed "a great landless class" numbering between three and four millions, who were "wretched with a poverty" that was "unequalled in Bengal". In Bengal, land was divided amongst the people "in a manner that could not fail to delight a French republican and might even find favour with a moderate communist".[3] Yet excessive

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1. C.J. O'Donnell "The Wants of Behar", pp. 157, 160.
2. Ibid., p. 163.
3. Ibid., pp. 146-52.

rent rather than mismanagement, the ticcadari system, or the survival of a princely autocratic remnant, was seen by the Patriot as the overriding evil. In August Stewart Bayley admitted the feasibility of reforms suggested by O'Donnell--tenures made secure, due protection to ryots, enlarged landholdings--as an answer to "chronic pauperism". In Parliament, F.H. O'Donnell asked Stanhope to lay before the House reports of the Magistrate Collectors of Muzaffarpur, Durbhar, Sarun (C.J. O'Donnell) and Chumparan, concerning abuses which had been allowed to grow up in connection with indigo planting in Behar.[2]

Despite the understandable reluctance of the Hindoo Patriot to look kindly on any criticism of zemindars who might be its patrons, it owed a debt of gratitude to F.H. O'Donnell and Ireland. Old friendships died hard. Until land legislation became a sensitive issue in Bengal, and the Irish "hold the rent" campaign a thorn in the flesh of Indian landowners, there was no pressing reason to terminate the relationship, if it was now less than special. Indeed, the paper responded with open generosity to an appeal by C.J. O'Donnell on 9 February 1880, for subscriptions in aid of relief measures in Ireland. "No better channel for relief", O'Donnell wrote, "[could] be found than the present Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Dwyer Gray, M.P. for Tipperary, a firm and able friend of the native peoples of India"; a recommendation which incidentally confirmed his association with Gray.[3] He enclosed a cheque for 50 rupees to inaugurate the fund.

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 18 August 1879.
2. Hansard, Vol. 250, 26 February 1880, Cols. 1444-5.
3. See Chapter Six, section one, p. 299 f.

The Hindoo Patriot could be considered magnanimous in recommending this appeal "from a son of Erin, who [had] identified himself with the people of India by engaging himself in its service," and "whose talented and large-hearted brother" was ever ready to lend his tongue in Parliament to the service of India's "dumb millions". Not only that, but it expressed itself willing to receive subscriptions till a formal committee was regularly constituted:[1] "there is so much in common between Ireland and India that the news of the afflictions of the former ought to rouse the warmest feeling of sympathy in the breast of the latter."[2] Shortly afterwards, a Calcutta Executive Committee[3] was set up with Rivers Thompson, the future Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and an ardent advocate of Irish doses of land reform in India, as its President, and Kristodas Pal, the editor of the Patriot, as an Honorary Secretary.[4] Over £8,000 from this branch was handed over to the Duchess of Marlborough's and the Dublin Mansion House funds to be equally divided between them.[5] However, it was with a sigh of relief that the Hindoo Patriot recorded O'Donnell's departure for Ireland as "decidedly the man for Galway".[6] The Indian Mirror, itself rather patricism in outlook, gave him a more candid send off. Whether

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 9 February 1880.
2. Ibid., 23 February 1880.
3. A Bombay Famine Relief Fund was also established, and a similar committee of Europeans and Indians formed to administer it. Nation, 14 February 1880.
4. Indian Mirror, 24 February 1880; Hindoo Patriot, 23 February 1880.
5. Hindoo Patriot, 7 June 1880.
6. Ibid., 15 March 1880.

O'Donnell proved a success as a Home Ruler, it commented, he was definitely not a man "who would have made a name for himself in India". He was "deeply stirred by a feverish spirit of political unrest", and might have done "incalculable mischief among some classes of the Indian people", had his "abilities and judgment" been in proportion to his "real or affected zeal" for the promotion of "extreme views". The Mirror wished the retiring civil servant success, and God-speed, for "in truth" he was leaving India for India's good. As a parliamentarian he would be deprived of the opportunities he possessed in Government service of disparaging the "educated classes" of Bengal.[1] O'Donnell had made influential enemies indeed of the local zemindars.

A further explanation for the falling status of the Home Rule party in the eyes of the Hindoo Patriot was the rising reputation of the Liberal party, and of Gladstone, Fawcett, and Bright in particular. The annual report of the Committee of the British Indian Association read out on 29 August 1879, had registered special votes of thanks to Lord Northbrook, Gladstone, Fawcett and O'Donnell in that order; to O'Donnell for raising in the House of Commons Lytton's disgruntled reply to the cotton delegation, but to Northbrook, Gladstone and Fawcett for "expressing the correct principles of action", with respect to the remission of the cotton duties, for "strongly deprecating the illiberal and injurious

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1. Indian Mirror, 13 March 1880.

spirit" of the Viceroy's recent measures, and for unflinchingly advocating "economy", "reduction of taxation", and the administration of affairs on "broad" and "honourable" principles.[1] A new pattern of precedence was thus emerging.[2]

Like its contemporary the Bengalee, the Hindoo Patriot had conceded the importance of party politics in England, especially in an election year. Discussing the Freeman's Journal's comments on C.J. O'Donnell's electoral address to Galway, and its speculation that a "bond of union" between Ireland and India might profitably be arranged,[3] the Patriot was non-committal. In 1877 it had aimed its sights at this target; in 1880 it aimed even higher. Any party in England that espoused India's cause would win the paper's gratitude. Yet while a Fawcett here and an O'Donnell there might periodically plead India's cause, there was still no systematic agitation of Indian questions in Parliament. Where, asked the Patriot, was the "Indian Party" at Westminster whose formation it had earlier announced? While it made a ritualistic protest against India becoming the "sport of party politics", it recognised that in a form of government in which the majority ruled, "party alliances were essential to the successful agitation of public questions":

> "One may advance the most cogent arguments, lend the most charming and powerful eloquence, and adduce the strongest facts, but if it has no backers, his arguments, facts, and eloquence are simply thrown away. Parliamentary majorities are not moved by abstract principles. Party sympathies and influences go a great way in obtaining parliamentary support".

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1. Supplement to the Hindoo Patriot, 1 September 1879.
2. See in comparison, Chapter Five, section two, p. 264.
3. See Chapter Six, section one, pp. 300-302.

The Hindoo Patriot was therefore persuaded that it was of the "utmost importance" for India where practicable, "to contract party alliances." A combination of advanced Liberals led by Fawcett and Bright, "aided" by the Irish party, would give India "ample cause for gratulation and gratitude".[1] In such a scheme, the Irish were clearly intended to act as reinforcements for the Liberal storm-troopers. Fawcett, India's oldest friend, had come to resume his seat of prominence temporarily usurped by O'Donnell, her newest advocate. While O'Donnell always "kept up a brisk fire" on Indian questions, Fawcett was now seen as "a host in himself". No longer the "independent" Radical without influence of following,[2] he more than anyone else was credited with having wrought the change that had lately stolen over English feeling on Indian matters.[3] Fawcett, the Patriot predicted, was destined to occupy "the position of leader of the Indian Party".

With the Midlothian catch-phrases coming thick and fast, it was only natural that the native Indian press acclaimed the Liberals as deliverers from Tory tyranny. Fawcett, for example, if not deified, was accorded the respect due to a prophet. The Bengalee placed him on a pedestal alongside Burke, "the greatest authority on India last century", as the "greatest authority on India this century".[4] Even in England he came to be regarded by both parties

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 6 October 1879.
2. See Chapter three, section three, p. 164.
3. Hindoo Patriot, op.cit., see also Bengalee, 10 January 1880; Indian Mirror, 9 January 1880.
4. Bengalee, 31 January 1880.

as the "exponent of accepted principles".[1] Henry Broadhurst, a future representative of the labour movement in Parliament, urged Fawcett to undertake the production of a "good handbook on India" for popular consumption.[2] As a critic of Government policy, he was both respected and feared. Viceregal correspondence was punctuated with numerous references to his activities, and his ideas. In India, it was rumoured that in a Liberal Ministry Fawcett would become if not Secretary of State for India,[3] at the very least Under-Secretary of State.[4] As it had done in 1874 so in 1880, the British Indian Association reaffirmed Fawcett as its special representative; it not only raised a fund of Rs. 4,000 to provide for his electoral expenses but despatched a telegram to the electors of Hackney to sue for his return.[5] A year earlier it might have done as much for O'Donnell.

Above all, Gladstone's speeches had an uplifting impact on Indian morale. The Hindoo Patriot chose to interpret them as proof that Gladstone had seen in the "classic land of the Ancient Aryans", a parallel of ancient Greece, a "grand field...for the exercise of his philanthropic zeal, and his large-hearted humanity".[6] It rejected the assertion that they were the outpourings of partisanship,

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1. Stephen, op.cit., p. 396.
2. Fawcett to Broadhurst, 29 September 1878, Broadhurst Papers, Coll. L.I, L.S.E.
3. Bengalee, 6 December 1879.
4. Ibid., 22 November 1879; Hindoo Patriot, 19 April 1880.
5. Hindoo Patriot, 15 March 1880; Bengalee, 27 March 1880.
6. Ibid., 5 January 1880.

and that the Liberals would eventually follow in the same footsteps as the Conservatives. Any Ministry, in which Gladstone had a voice, could not possibly allow the Vernacular Press Act to be retained or the Conservative policy on native employment in the public services to remain. India might fairly look forward to good days when the Liberals came to power.[1] The Indian Mirror similarly "affirmed" the uniqueness of Gladstone as a practical statesman, "so thoroughly guided" as he always was by "deep moral convictions and by a most scrupulous regard and tender sympathy for the rights of other nations".[2] But it was not prepared to concede that its "misgivings" concerning India as a pawn of party rivalry were other than perfectly sound.[3]

Of the three leading Bengali newspapers, the Bengalee, as has been noted, identified closest with the Liberals. At a reception in his honour, Lal Mohun Ghose explained that if he conveyed the impression of addressing himself exclusively to members of the Liberal party, the fault lay not with him. His appeal was directed to the English nation as a whole and to every Englishman, in short, who was "amenable to reason". If the "violent partisans" of the Conservative Government disqualified themselves, it was "far otherwise" with the Liberals.[4] On 13 March Ghose was again deputed to

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 12 January 1880.
2. Indian Mirror, 9 January 1880.
3. Ibid., 10 March 1880.
4. Ibid., 9 March 1880.

England to advocate the interests of India[1] and to campaign throughout the country against Lytton's measures.[2] Apparently, it was also his intention to stand himself as a Liberal candidate in the general elections, but he was unable to obtain a constituency.[3] In a manifesto addressed to the electors of Great Britain and Ireland shortly afterwards, the Indian Association officially came out into the open against the Conservative cause, describing their policy as "retrograde and repressive". Printed copies were sent to Fawcett and Chesson.[4] A similar though more specific appeal by the Poona Sarvajanak Sabha, "fervently prayed" that the "Great Liberal Party" might secure a majority in the new Parliament. It exhorted voters to return the "true representative members for India--Gladstone, Bright, Fawcett, O'Donnell, Onslow,[5] Chamberlain, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Wedderburn, Grant-Duff, Laing, Campbell, Sir George Balfour and Harcourt".[6] In the general state of euphoria, the Bengalee went so far as to describe the Liberal party as the party of "Liberty".[7]

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1. Bengalee, 13 March 1880.
2. Lal Mohan Ghose, op.cit., pp. 9-10.
3. Indian Mirror, 13 April 1880.
4. Bengalee, 20 March 1880.
5. Denzil Onslow was a Conservative. Born in India in 1839, he became the Private Secretary in turn to Sir Charles Trevelyan, the Rt. Hon. William Massey, both former Indian Finance Ministers, and to Sir Richard Temple. He died in 1908.
6. Indian Mirror, 24 March 1880.
7. Bengalee, 27 March 1880.

Expectations of a Liberal victory whetted the Indian appetite for a generous advance towards representation. In order to strengthen the hands of Sir David Wedderburn, who in 1879 had given notice in Parliament of his motion for the admission of Indians into the Legislative Councils,[1] the Indian Association through Banerjea entered into negotiations with him and Sir Charles Dilke,[2] and prepared a scheme of representative government that broadened the Indian base in the consultative if not in the decision making processes.[3] It was Wedderburn's hope that Indian taxpayers could be granted some control over public expenditure, and that some concession might be made to the now respectable principle of "no taxation without representation". Indian representatives in the Legislative Council, he thought, could be more easily obtained and more useful when obtained, than representation at Westminster. Wedderburn duly redeemed his promise on 13 February 1880, but did not ask the House for its opinion or attempt to extract an answer from the Conservative Government.[4] The time was not yet ripe.[5]

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1. Bengalee, 19 July 1880. See Hansard, Vol. 249, 8 August 1879, Col. 583.

2. Bengalee, February 1880. See Wedderburn's letter to the Commitee of the Indian Association, in which he acknowledged the receipt of their letter dated 19 December 1879, and expressed his gratitude that his efforts should have met with their approval. See also Banerjea, op.cit., p. 61.

3. Bengalee, 3 January 1880.

4. Hansard, Vol. 250, 13 February 1880, Cols. 593-597.

5. The scheme was revived at a meeting of the Indian Association in May, when it was resolved to appoint a committee to draw up a plan for representative government. Pioneer, 20 May 1880.

The Bengalee also anticipated the curtailment of the Afghan War and the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act once the Liberals were in power. Its faith was buffeted therefore by Gladstone's statement in Midlothian that a Liberal Government could not completely recede from previous engagements entered into by the Conservatives.[1] Nevertheless, it held firm by its conviction that India could only hope to obtain justice from England when it became a "potent factor" in party-struggles.[2] All, in fact, was rejoicing on 5 May when news of the Liberal landslide was received.[3]

Yet while the Bengalee and the Indian Association subscribed to a Liberal victory, at the same time they were beginning to warm to O'Donnell and the Home Rule party. In the past the Bengalee had neither much time for the Irish, nor much sympathy. When Banerjea took over the editorship of the paper in 1879 this attitude changed. It was the goal of self-government that probably drew his attention first to Ireland. Not that Banerjea was a revolutionary, or aspired to complete independence. For him sovereignty meant "unification" with Britain as "an integral part" of the empire, not "severance".[4] Rather, it was the methods of political agitation adopted by Home Rulers to achieve independence that attracted his observation as a

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1. Bengalee, 10 April 1880.
2. Ibid., 22 May 1880.
3. Bagal, op.cit., p. 48.
4. R.C. Pailit and R.J. Mitter (ed.), Speeches by Babu Surendranath Banerjea, Vol, Calcutta (1891-1908), pp. 7, 226.

student of politics and not as a guerilla leader.[1] The Irish situation was instructive first as an example if not necessarily to follow at least to heed, and second as a reminder to the Indian Government of what could happen in India if similar policies were pursued. "Justice was done to Ireland", Banerjea addressed a meeting of the Indian Association, "precisely when Irish questions become party questions". "As it has been with Ireland so will it be with India".[2] The Bengalee responded quite differently from the Hindoo Patriot when news of the anti-rent agitation reached India:

> "The question has often occurred to us and we may say that it is fraught with meaning in connection with India--as to why the history of Ireland should be characterised by these periodical outbursts of popular feeling which are often followed by insurrectionary movements and which are scarcely ever allayed except by the adoption of stringent measures of repression".

The solution it recommended was the early application of a remedy, long before discontent took on any "malignant form". "All Governments should take a lesson from the history of Ireland", The wisest administrator, it concluded, was not he who knew "how most dexterously to put off concessions", but he who discerned when concessions to popular demands could no longer with advantage to the State be postponed.[3]

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1. See Chapter Five, section four, p. 276 ff.
2. Bengalee, 13 September 1879.
3. Ibid., 29 November 1879.

It was the land agitation in Ireland that encouraged the Bengalee to ponder the relationship between Home Rulers and Indian politicians; though no doubt C.J. O'Donnell's manifesto to Galway, reprinted in its columns, also invited such speculation.[1] Not until February 1880 when the severity of the Irish famine became known were its deliberations broadcast. In a leading article, the Bengalee urged that by helping Ireland in her distress, India should not be performing merely an unfulfilled duty:

> "Between Ireland and India, there ought to exist the closest relations of sympathy and mutual regard. Both occupy the same position in regard to the Mother country. Both are dependencies of Great Britain; and both have important concessions yet to obtain from England."

Essentially, therefore, aid would be an expression of brotherly concern. For their part, Irish representatives had always been "foremost" in fighting India's battles in Parliament. Ever since Frank Hugh O'Donnell had called attention to the Vernacular Press Act, he and his party had always tried to uphold the interests of India.[2] At this stage, it was not clear whether the Bengalee in recommending Bengal to participate in the "noble work of benevolence" was also suggesting that India should likewise uphold the interests of Ireland. What was clear, was that the decision to expand the base of nationalism, as the Land League had done in Ireland by championing the peasant cause, had yet to be made. On 28 February 1880, the Bengalee recommended that "as in India so in Ireland", fixity of tenure upon a fair and moderate rent alone could improve

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1. Bengalee, 11 October 1879.
2. Ibid.,14 February 1880.

the condition of the Irish tenant.[1] The condition of the Indian ryot presumably was thought to be satisfactory. In short, the Bengalee was set on the path of Indian land reform after C.J. O'Donnell's disclosures about Behar in 1879 and after the start of the Irish land war. If the Irish party had lost a friend in the Hindoo Patriot it was soon to find another in its competitor.

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1. Bengalee, 28 February 1880.

Chapter VII

Land and Politics

I Parnell Wins Ascendancy

II Lull before the Storm

III An Outcast

I Parnell Wins Ascendancy

The Home Rule party elected in 1880 was different from that elected in 1874, in terms of composition but fundamentally in terms of methods and objectives. Recalling the aftermath, Frank Hugh O'Donnell considered himself "a lonely, lonely man, as [he] looked on the crowd of newcomers who sat uttering strange watchwords and exhibiting strange passions around Mr. C.S. Parnell on his election for Cork and their election for the various constituencies which could as yet be controlled by the Land League branches and the American money". His lament for departed colleagues "who symbolised the union of Ireland under Isaac Butt", such as Lord Francis Conyngham, the O'Conor Don, Lord Robert Montagu, Charles French, Wilfred O'Callaghan, and their replacement by "penny-a-liners" under Parnell, was clearly an exaggeration though not without some basis.[1] Parnell's was the strongest faction to emerge from Butt's disintegrating party and it consisted "almost entirely of new Members of Parliament."[2] In a numerical survey, Dr. C.C. O'Brien has shown that while more conservative and respectable than was generally believed, these newcomers "had a streak of 'fenianism', a streak of more exotic radicalism, and were committed to a very advanced land programme".[3] Several, such as John Barry and James O'Kelly, had

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 467.

2. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, p. 26. For the purposes of analysis, Dr. O'Brien has taken the twenty-three Home Rulers who elected Parnell over Shaw as party chairman, plus Dillon, who was in America, as "definite Parnellites".

3. C.C. O'Brien, ibid., p. 32.

strong connections with the Fenian organisation and together with T.D. Sullivan and John Dillon were noted by the Dublin Metropolitan Police for their extremist sympathies.[1] O'Kelly secured Roscommon, the O'Conor Don's old seat, for Parnell, apparently with the aid of a sizeable contribution of £10,000 from the trustees of the Skirmishing Fund.[2]

Yet apart perhaps from O'Kelly, these and other "Cabinet Ministers of the Parnell Ministry" such as Healy,[3] T.P. O'Connor, Thomas Sexton, Arthur O'Connor and John Redmond,[4] were hardly the "oddities" O'Donnell depicted. Certainly, they differed from the usual Irish representative in the sense that they were men of exceptional ability who moved easily in English society and comfortably in the rarified atmosphere of Westminster. John Redmond, for instance, had been nurtured on a parliamentary diet by his father W.A. Redmond, and in 1880 was nominated to a clerkship in the House of Commons. He served his apprenticeship on Irish platforms in England rather than in Ireland. In January 1881 he was elected unopposed for New Ross.[5] Healy, of course, had been contracted

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1. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, pp. 29-30.

2. Desp. no. 62, Political and Secret, Archibald to Granville, 21 November 1882, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1820.

3. Healy did not enter the House of Commons until January 1881.

4. T.P. O'Connor published a series of biographical sketches in the Weekly Freeman entitled "The Men of the Party". Healy, Arthur O'Connor, T.D. Sullivan, O'Kelly, and Sexton were each the subject of separate studies, which were reproduced in T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement. See clippings from Weekly Freeman for 5, 19, 26 January; 2, 9, 16 February 1884, in Police Reports 1848-1921, Proceedings of the Irish National League 1883-4, Box 6, S.P.O.

5. D.N.B., 1912-1921, p. 447 ff.

by his father-in-law T.D. Sullivan to write a parliamentary letter for the Nation. T.P. O'Connor, previously on the staff of the Daily Telegraph, a "convinced Liberal of the Radical type", was singled out by O'Donnell as "by far the ablest" and "most versatile" in the new political combination. Before his eventual election for Galway as a Home Ruler, he had sought Parnell's backing to stand for Derry as a Liberal, but had not received it. Vice-President of the Lambeth Radical Association[1] at the time, O'Connor had also toyed with the idea of contesting Dewsbury again for the Liberal cause.[2] He was to become, because of his organisation of the Irish in Great Britain, the essential link between the Liberals and the party.

A good many were thus journalists[3] and lawyers or both, the very class among whom O'Donnell himself must be ranked. One, William O'Brien, as founder of the United Ireland in 1881, was to become in O'Donnell's opinion, Parnell's editor and "censor of news".[4] Another distinguishing feature of the Parnellite group was their residence outside Ireland. Some like Arthur O'Connor, who in speech and manner gave no hint that "he had a drop of Irish blood in his veins", were born overseas. London was his birthplace,[5]

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1. M. MacDonagh, The Home Rule Movement, pp. 136-38.
2. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 393. See also T. Healy to M. Healy, August 1880, in Healy, Letters and Leaders, 1, p.98.
3. Healy, McCoan, T.P. O'Connor, O'Kelly, Sexton, T.D. Sullivan.
4. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 457.
5. T.P. O'Connor, op.cit., p. 336.

just as Liverpool was of J.H. McCarthy, the son of Justin McCarthy.[1] Edward Sheil, who had held Athlone from 1874 to 1880, was born at the British Residency in Persia.[2] James McCoan, an Irish Protestant educated at Trinity College Dublin, qualified at the English bar before going out to the Crimea as war correspondent for the Daily News. He then settled in Constantinople for a number of years where he began and edited the first English newspaper in Turkey, The Levant Herald.[3] Donald MacFarlane, a Scottish-born Catholic, another who made his home in London, had only recently returned from India where he had formed part of the non-official European community of Calcutta.[4] Dr. Andrew Commins, Chairman of the Manchester Council of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, and one time President of the Confederation, had lived for the most part in Liverpool. Admittedly, there were others with little or no non-Irish background, men such as John Blake, John Daly, Henry Gill, James Leahy and Edmund Leamy. However, they could not be considered high-ranking.

These Parnellite lieutenants, young, ambitious, cosmopolitan, who replaced the "miserable duffers" of Butt's era,[5] were capable of ranging with effect over the whole parliamentary field, as to a

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1. See J. McCarthy, Story of an Irishman, London 1904, p. 192.
2. Dod's Parliamentary Companion; J. McCarthy, Reminiscences, Vol. II, p. 407.
3. D.N.B., Second Supplement, Vol. II, p. 507 ff. McCoan was also the author of a number of books on Egypt and the Middle East.
4. Indian Mirror, 23 October 1881.
5. T. Healy, to M. Healy, 1 August 1878, in Healy, Letters and Leaders, 1, p. 64.

certain extent they did. Besides O'Donnell and O'Connor Power, Healy, T.P. O'Connor, Arthur O'Connor, Sexton and Dillon after a torrid baptism, were superior parliamentary orators and platform speakers, well able to hold their own in the cut and thrust of debate. All of them were seduced eventually by the moderating influence of the House of Commons. The spectre of an enlarged activist party on pre-1880 lines, however, intervening with destructive purpose in all manner of English and imperial business, never quite materialised, at least in the form envisaged by O'Donnell. Writing to John Redmond the leader of the Home Rule party in 1904, he complained that as the new members had "nothing to do with the foundation of the 'Active Policy' from 1873 to 1879, but had been nursed on the fiction of T.P. O'Connor's 'Parnellism'; they did not know what his policy entailed and never wanted to know.[1] Ignoring the heavy overtones of recrimination, there was some truth in this view. Basically they were all Parnell's men and in varying measure owed their election to his patronage. As his private secretary Healy undoubtedly did. Arthur O'Connor, Garrett Byrne and Thomas Sexton were similarly indebted.[2] "Mr. T.P. O'Connor we know nothing of", wrote the Freeman's Journal. "He is said to be a journalist".[3] In fact he had been lifted into public notice in 1879 by his "unsparing" attack on the Prime Minister in Life of Lord Beaconsfield.[4] As Parnell was President of the Land

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1. O'Donnell to Redmond, 20 May 1904, Redmond Papers, Ms 15216.
2. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 25 N3
3. Freeman's Journal, 29 March 1880.
4. M. MacDonagh, op.cit., p. 137f.

League, so they were land leaguers, if only as Dr. O'Brien suggests "by contingency".[1] While it was an "over-simplification" for O'Donnell to assert that all the Parnellites were leaguers, Michael Davitt lists Dillon, Sexton, O'Kelly, T.P. O'Connor, McCarthy, Biggar, Barry, Redmond, A. O'Connor, Lalor, T.D. Sullivan, Leamy, and R. Power as being among those elected by the League movement "as the upholders of Mr. Parnell's parliamentary policy".[2] Once elected party Chairman therefore, Parnell became undisputed leader of the Irish people. At least thirty Home Rulers gave him their allegiance in 1880. As O'Donnell chose to put it, "officially and practically, the Parnellites were my unfriends from the start of the new Parliament, and they were soon to be my bitter enemies."[3]

Undoubtedly, O'Donnell's jealousy of Parnell blinded him to an objective appreciation of the changed circumstances in Ireland. The growth of extremism and the combination of left-wing forces that brought Parnell to the top insured some radicalisation of the party, if this was still less radical than the country as a whole. O'Donnell's "Policy of Power in the Empire and outside", over which he insisted his split with Parnell occurred, could hardly be upheld as an alternative to Parnell's policy of "parliamentary pressure" in 1880,[4] or to that of agrarian agitation in 1881. With daily evictions and mounting distress in Ireland, for which it

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1. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 32.
2. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 239.
3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 486.
4. See O'Donnell to Redmond, 20 May 1904, op.cit.

offered no solutions and with which it was not concerned, his long-term policy would have seemed peculiarly inappropriate. The immediate short-term priority of Parnell's party was to obtain a generous reform of the 1870 Land Act, and more if it could. This was sound politics and sound philanthropy.[1] The change of emphasis in the parliamentary programme seemed tailored to meet the requirements of the country and the imperative needs of the Irish people. For all O'Donnell's disdain for the likes of Ford, Egan, Davitt, Brennan and the activities of the Land League, he could present no more persuasive solution for dealing with the land problem than the old formula of moderation. Remedy was to be found "in the regulation and not in the convulsion of the relations of agricultural industry and society; not in the eviction of landlords, but in the security of tenants." Compulsory purchase and sale O'Donnell considered neither palatable nor a panacea.[2] His ambitious scheme of a parliamentary Tenant party dominating the House, enforcing reforms and carrying out "a further intervention in the very centre of English domestic policy",[3] could never appeal to practical politicians. Besides, Home Rule first and land reform second was not a very sensible order, nor did its reversal mean as he liked to suggest it did, the betrayal of Butt's "union with England". In a sense O'Donnell admitted this fact himself:

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1. See Chapter Four, section two, p. 196.

2. Times, 10 August 1880. See letter by O'Donnell headed "The Parnellite obstruction of the Constabulary Estimates".

3. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 357.

"I do not for one single instant accept the current legend that Mr. Parnell desired the destruction of everything in general, or of the British Empire in particular. His idea of an Irish Republic always included a British policeman and other accessories".[1]

Again, the policy of intervening in British affairs, which he saw as his own, was never discarded; it was merely shelved for a sunnier day. What was rejected was Buttite parliamentarianism, from which O'Donnell himself dissented, not his entire scheme of Home Rule. To intimate as O'Donnell consistently did that Home Rule and intervention were interchangeable constants, was a fallacy. Even if they were somehow related, intervention was thought of as primarily a means of obtaining Home Rule, irrespective of whether it came to hold greater significance for O'Donnell as perhaps an end in itself. If Irish Home Rule and empire affairs were now diverging, they did not lose contact altogether. Indeed, the land issue served to alter the connection but not to sever it. When some stability was eventually restored to tenant-landlord relations, the "group of penniless lads",[2] disparaged by O'Donnell for their narrow-mindedness and for their subservience to American paymasters, proved almost as internationally-minded as he himself.

By and large, the Parnellites pursued areas of interest related to their various experiences. Arthur O'Connor, previously employed as a clerk in the War Office and in 1879 elected to the Chelsea Board of Guardians,[3] brought informed inquiry to matters relating

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 450.

2. Ibid., p. 457.

3. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p.99. W. Saunders, The New Parliament 1880, London 1880, p. 295.

to Local Government, the Civil Service and the Estimates, the "subjects, in short, which [were] supposed to attract the plodding mind of the typical Englishman".[1] His devotion to "most uninviting" and "unrecognised" work of this kind made him, along with Biggar and Lysaght Finigan, one of the dependable work-horses of the party.[2] To a lesser extent he was also interested in foreign affairs. McCoan kept a watchful eye on the Levant, Macfarlane supported the struggles of Scottish crofters but also it must be said the supremacy of Anglo-India. J.J. O'Kelly, always the adventurer, championed the rise of Egyptian nationalism inside and outside Parliament, and went out to the Sudan in 1885 as special correspondent of the Daily News.[3] In O'Donnell's opinion, no one exemplified the maxim that "Ireland should interfere in English affairs so long as England interfered in Irish affairs", more persistently than T.P. O'Connor.[4] As a political commentator, he could not be indifferent to political events in Britain; they were his bread and butter. Whether any good, however, could possible result from Irish involvement in the affairs of India or other parts of the empire, O'Connor rather doubted and was mostly sceptical.[5] For John Dillon, next to Irish self-government, foreign policy was "all his life...to be an area of politics which interested him

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1. T.P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, p. 335; M. McDonagh, op.cit., p. 139.
2. T.P. O'Connor, ibid., p. 343.
3. Obituary, Times, 23 December 1916.
4. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 486.
5. See Chapter Nine, section three, p. 483.

profoundly".[1] After the "split" in 1891, he was the "solitary" Irish Member of Parliament "who could claim to speak with authority" on this subject.[2] In 1880, inspired by revolutionary fervour, the most extreme of the new men,[3] he was as might be expected antagonistic to all that Westminster represented and was not a particularly polished speaker. In these early years, the type of intervention which appealed to Dillon was that of pure "hindrance and impediment".[4] "With thirty good men", he once declared, "Parnell could stop the whole British Parliament".[5] William O'Brien, who in the Commons seldom strayed far from an Hibernian theme, and who according to his biographer "had no political interests" outside Ireland,[6] found nationalist progress in India, Africa and Egypt worthy of his notice as editor of United Ireland. As "practically every number of the paper" up to his Kilmainham arrest in October 1881 was written by him "from start to finish",[7] as was much of it after his release, O'Brien clearly possessed a fair knowledge of world events. Again, however, like Dillon, he envisaged intervention in Parliament as a kind of guerilla activity, a manifestation of war rather than a positive exercise of parliamentary investigation.[8] The only

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1. Lyons, Dillon, p. 25.
2. F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish Parliamentary Party, 1890-1910, London 1951, pp. 40 -1.
3. Lyons, Dillon,,pp. 38-44.
4. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 109.
5. Ibid., p. 212.
6. M. MacDonagh, The Life of William O'Brien, London 1928, p. 14. "Ireland," MacDonagh writes, "was not only his [O'Brien's] centre; it was also his circumference".
7. W.O'Brien, Recollections, p. 358.
8. Police Reports 1848-1921, Reports of Speeches of Irish Land League and Irish National League meetings, Box 3, S.P.O. See speech by William O'Brien on 30 October 1883.

Home Ruler for whom O'Donnell expressed unqualified admiration was Edmund Leamy,[1] Member for Waterford, "the orator of most distinction in the later Home Rule party". Perhaps because he was "continuously kept in the background by men who had their hands on the machine", he did not live up to this tribute.[2] Leamy was rarely impressive in the House and seldom vocal on non-Irish questions. Yet he was the one Irishman whom O'Donnell took into his confidence over his secret blueprint for Indian nation-building.

Basically the new recruits did not know what O'Donnell meant, not because they did not want to know, but because O'Donnell never put his case before them in a favourable light. He seemed to expect that bluster would send his critics packing, and was surprised and offended when it did not. Also his sense of timing was inopportune. The outlining of his policy and precepts in August 1878 in the Dublin press, for example, because it appeared as an apology for division in the party, was condemned as such.[3] In similar fashion, O'Donnell was driven to defend his imperial policy in July 1880, after he had denounced the Land League as an aberration, embarrassed his party in Parliament, and rocked the Parnellite boat over the Bradlaugh affair. For a second time, therefore, extraordinary and undisciplined behaviour was an unfortunate introduction to ambivalent theories.

By a series of questionable steps, O'Donnell proceeded after the general elections to estrange himself from the party, after he

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1. See M. Leamy, Parnell's Faithful Few, New York 1936.
2. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 439-40.
3. See Chapter Four, section two,

had virtually reinstated himself in its eyes. "Nothing gave more pleasure to Mr. O'Donnell's political friends", wrote the Nation on 1 May 1880, "than the capacity he displayed in the closing period of the last Parliament, not only for eloquently and courageously defending the advanced Irish party, but also for working with [it] in close harmony".[1] Yet he proceeded to make himself an enemy of the Land League. Essentially he was a parliamentarian who did not like extra-parliamentary activities. Even during the electoral campaign he demonstrated his intense dislike of this organisation, not least because it seemed to promote Parnell's ascendancy. Asked by a deputation to aid Parnell to defeat Colonel David Colthurst, "a straight Home Ruler," he replied that he remained with Butt and Shaw and would give no help "for faction and nation splitting". O'Donnell's view of the Land League throughout its existence was consistent, that it was a divisive influence in Ireland, superimposing "social anarchy and revolution" onto the "national crimes of discord and mutiny",[2] substituting "mob rule" for Home Rule, and undermining Irish parliamentarianism.[3] He sincerely believed that Davitt and Parnell, Egan and Ford, were splitting Ireland "into hostile camps again". Not that O'Donnell was ideologically opposed to peasant agitation in Ireland. Indeed even Davitt considered he was a "warm supporter" of the "land-for-the-people movement".[4] What he objected to was the eradication of landlords

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1. Nation, 1 May 1880.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 437-41. See also O'Donnell's letter to the Nation, 31 July 1880.
3. Ibid., p. 424.
4. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 240.

by violent means and to the dominating political influence of the Land League.

"The Home Rule Parliamentary Party", he wrote in anguish to the Freeman's Journal, "is the supreme constitutional organ for the expression of the wants and requirements of the Irish nation". Home Rule Members of Parliament were "the direct depositories of the trust of the electors". There could be "no pretence for accusing them of lack of information" on the land or any other question.[1] Parnell had just excused himself from attending a general meeting of the party called by Shaw to choose a Chairman for the coming year, having failed to prevent it.[2] The explanation he put forward was that he should first like to have the benefit of the deliberations of a land conference to be held in Dublin two days later.[3] At the party meeting, which was as a result, "desolate", empty, and necessarily adjourned without the election of officers,[4] O'Donnell protested that they were much more than a land reform party or a tenant-right party, and that only as a "National Party" were they able to obtain the reforms "demanded and needed" by the Irish cultivators. All of them must make it their duty to confound those journals "hostile to Irishmen", which were "day by day, month by month", congratulating themselves

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1. Freeman's Journal, 22 April 1880.

2. See Circular signed by Shaw, Brooks, Gray, P. O'Brien, Martin, Meldon, Gabbett, Dawson, Gill, Synan and Foley, sent out to Home Rulers on 17 April. Ibid., 22 April 1880.

3. See Parnell's two letters to Meldon dated, 19, 23 April, outlining his objections to the date for the meeting decided on in the Circular. Ibid., 20, 24 April 1880.

4. Times, 28 April 1880. Save for the twenty-two members present, "there was not the slightest sign of any interest in the proceedings on the part of the public". Those who attended were: Brooks, Callan, Colthurst, Collins, Errington, Fay, Foley, Gabbett, Gray, Leamy, McKenna, Martin, Meldon, Moore, P.O'Brien, O'Byrne, O'Donnell, The O'Gorman Mahon, Power, Shaw, Smithwick, Smyth.

on "the practical disappearance of the Irish cry for self-government", and its substitution by the new cry of land reform.[1] According to the Times, "the agrarian agitation of the autumn" had all but "obliterated the memory of Home Rule" and placed "responsible statesmen on their guard" against conciliating "impracticable claims".[2] In this letter O'Donnell not only threw down the gauntlet to Parnell but, more important, protested against any supersession of the Home Rule party, by an extra-constitutional body financed by expatriates, and run by "Jacobins" he did not care for.[3] At the same time, O'Donnell wrote to Kettle, Davitt and Brennan, Secretaries of the Land League, refusing their invitation to attend the conference of land reformers at the Rotunda, and observing that the Irish constituencies had just elected their "representative" land reformers, who were "more competent to 'formulate' the demand for necessary land reforms", than, with all due respect, they were. The Nation, which printed this letter, expressed itself puzzled by these and recent utterances and by the "very high ground" O'Donnell had taken in references to the Land League. "Some twist or turn in his line of thought seems to have taken place since his re-election", it commented. "Before the dissolution he was all for the active policy and the leadership of Mr. Parnell; since then the favour of his regard for both appears to havegreatly

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1. Freeman's Journal, 28 April 1880. This letter was also printed in the Nation, 1 May 1880.

2. Times, 27 April 1880.

3. O'Donnell, History, 1, pp. 450, 452. O'Donnell knew the risk of making such a point, that it was likely to result in "a vigorous attempt" by some "misinformed people to misunderstand" his opinions on this subject—"that in land reform, just as in other reforms, there [was] no certain finality".

abated". The Nation hopefully put this divergence down to the unsteadiness of a "vigorous and active" mind, and appealed for a "little more stability" in such matters. The Irish people, it warned, "have a very proper horror of the eccentric, uncertain, and unreliable class of politicians".[1]

In the second place, O'Donnell refused to follow the party line without question, and to recognise Parnell's authority. On 22 April 1880, he appealed for discipline and organization in national politics,[2] but when these were imposed by Parnell, claimed special dispensations for individual initiative. With A.M. Sullivan, who did not sympathise with the attempt to get rid of Shaw, and O'Connor Power, O'Donnell stayed away from a new meeting in the City Hall, Dublin, at which Parnell was voted Chairman by twenty-three votes to eighteen.[3] He resolved the difficulty by remaining "a private member of the Home Rule party", recognising Parnell "not as leader, but as sessional chairman."[4] Although O'Donnell did sit with the Parnellites on the Opposition benches, rather than with Shaw on the Government side,[5] the distinction enabled him to carry through his own policy

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1. Nation, 1 May 1880.

2. Freeman's Journal, 22 April 1880.

3. Ibid., 18 May 1880. For Parnell: Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Commins, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Finigan, Gill, Lalor, Leahy, Leamy, McCarthy, McCoan, Martin, A.O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Kelly, O'Shea, O'Sullivan, Sexton, T.D. Sullivan. For Shaw: Blake, Brooks, Callan, Colthurst, Errington, Fay, Foley, Gabbett, Gray, MacFarlane, McKenna, Martin, Meldon, P.O'Brien, R. Power, Smithwick, Smyth, Synan. The list is taken from R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 223-4. The Times put the division even closer at 21 votes to 18. Times, 18 May 1880.

4. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 460.

5. Times, 30 April 1880.

under cover of loyalty.[1] The Freeman's Journal recalled that there was "no open parting" between O'Donnell and Parnell, "but there was divergence". For a time during the election it was "doubtful" whether "Dungarvan would again accept its old member".[2] Sir Henry Lucy later made allowance for O'Donnell's unmanageable independence by concluding that he formed a party[3] in his own right, though it had a membership of one.[4] It was in these five years of Gladstone's second Ministry that O'Donnell's reputation was irrevocably won and lost. A rebel under Isaac Butt he became the toast of Dublin, a rebel under Parnell he became a political outcast.[5] His obituary notices told much the same story. Perhaps the basic reason why O'Donnell drifted away from the Parnellite group, "for most practical purposes" after May 1880 "the Home Rule party",[6] was his undying conviction that it was he who made Parnell what he was, and taught him all he knew. "Like the old jest about Disraeli catching the Whigs bathing and running off with their clothes, Parnell had been helped by Davitt and Devoy to my special copyright and creation—the policy of action".[7] O'Donnell clearly subscribed to some

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 468.
2. Obituary, Freeman's Journal, 6 November 1916.
3. The Home Rule party came to be recognised as the "third" party in the House of Commons. O'Donnell had first claimed that title for it on 29 April 1880. Hansard, Vol. 252, Col. 12. A quartet of Tory obstructionists composed of Lord Randolph Churchill, John Gorst, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and Arthur Balfour, was baptised the "fourth" party. O'Donnell, op.cit. p. 460-1; Lucy, The Gladstone Parliament, pp. 76-7.
4. Lucy, ibid., p. 76.
5. See Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 96.
6. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 26.
7. O'Donnell, op.cit., i, p. 460.

theory of meritocracy, of rule by clever men. Most of the pejorative epithets describing Parnell in A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party emphasised a relationship of intellectual inferiority. O'Donnell was thus never able to swallow the bitter pill of Parnell's success. Discussing the strained relations between the two men, T.P. O'Connor attributed the provocation to him alone rather than to Parnell.[1] Thus like O'Connor Power, he went his own way unfettered, and like him paid the penalty. The Nation's criticism of the former applied equally well to the latter. The part of an "independent" member of the Irish party could seldom, it fancied,be played with satisfaction to the Irish people. Ireland could not "afford to have representatives of the 'independent' pattern...men who claim[ed] the right to say and do what they like[d] in the British House of Commons, without reference to the decisions of the party of which they [were] ostensibly members."[2] O'Donnell might repudiate Parnell's right to lead, but the party soon repudiated his pretension to follow.

In Parliament, O'Donnell's inquiry into the credentials of Monsieur Challemel-Lacour, the new French Ambassador of the anti-clerical Gambetta régime, and his part in the controversy over the right of the republican and avowed atheist, Charles Bradlaugh, to take his seat in the Commons, made reconciliation improbable. Worse, the two incidents served to discredit his interventionist policy which

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1. Daily Telegraph, 6 November 1916.

2. Nation, 2 July 1881.

was believed to partly underlie his involvement on both occasions. On 14 June, O'Donnell was found guilty of violating "the decencies of debate" by insinuating that as a prefect of the provisional French Government in 1870, Challemel-Lacour had issued a murderous order and participated in the plunder of a convent.[1] Unwisely, Gladstone resorted to an unpopular and rare expedient of moving that O'Donnell "be not now heard".[2] The position taken by the Parnellites and many Conservatives was that although O'Donnell's action was "ill-advised and ill-judged",[3] he had not committed a breach of order, whereas the Prime Minister was in danger of establishing an unfortunate precedent. Parnell and T.P. O'Connor, for example, strongly impugned the justice of the charges contained in O'Donnell's motion but defended his right to propose it nevertheless.[4] Neither side emerged from the six hours "hurly-burly" with much credit. The Times considered that the Opposition "showed itself far too glad to embarrass the Government", a verdict with which the Freeman's Journal concurred.[5] It raised two considerations, first that all this energy might have been expended on great Irish causes, and second that "clever young Irish members should take care not to become the cat's-paw of the Tories".[6] Healy advanced an alternative explanation that the secret of O'Donnell's

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1. Hansard, Vol. 252, 14 June 1880, Col. 1904.
2. Ibid., Col. 1907.
3. Ibid., Col. 1908.
4. Ibid., Cols. 1908-9.
5. Times, 16 June 1880.
6. Freeman's Journal, 15 June 1880.

annoying the Government was its refusal "to redress the grievance of his brother in India".[1] O'Donnell's own version was probably the correct one, that he wished to assist some of his oldest friends-in the Roman Catholic establishment-who were "at deadly war" with the French Republican party. He frankly admitted that he also seized the opportunity "to show that a resolute Irishman could intervene with remorseless effect in the most delicate concerns of the British Government."[2]

O'Donnell's part in the Bradlaugh affair was accompanied by altogether more serious consequences for the Home Rule party and for Parnell.[3] He was virtually the only Home Ruler to oppose Bradlaugh initially. From the outset, O'Donnell adopted the pose of the moral conscience of Ireland and the official protaganist of the Catholic Church. In his "History" he claimed to be "in constant communication...during the whole of the struggle", with Cardinals Manning and McCabe, Bishops McEvilly and Dorrian. There is little reason to doubt that O'Donnell did in fact furnish Manning with "the most copious explanations of everything that was going on behind the scenes of set debate".[4] It is possible that when O'Donnell "put the Catholic view" to the Commons, he did so with clerical authority as the "Catholic leader of the opposition to Bradlaugh".[5] The claim

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1. T. Healy to M. Healy, 18 July 1880, in Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 96.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 419.

3. The role played by Irish nationalists in the affirmation controversy is analysed in W.L. Arnstein, The Bradlaugh Case, Oxford 1965, Ch. XIX. C.C.O'Brien, op.cit., pp. 49-50, puts forward a condensed and slightly different interpretation.

4. See Arnstein, op.cit., pp. 204-5.

5. O'Donnell, op.cit., i, p. 494. See also T.H.S. Escott, Randolph Spencer Churchill as a product of his age, London 1895, p. 107.

of the newly elected Member for Northampton to make a declaration of allegiance instead of the normal oath before God on taking his seat, involved not only a constitutional but also a moral issue, which O'Donnell, it appears, was the first parliamentarian to point out. On 11 May, he distinctly referred both to Bradlaugh's atheism, so far unmentioned and under common law still a bar to representation, and to his unpopular and "offensive" views on the touchy subject of birth control.[1] While fourteen Home Rulers[2] supported Gladstone and only three[3] joined with O'Donnell in opposing the appointment of a Select Committee to examine the statutory foundation of Bradlaugh's right to affirm,[4] O'Donnell had nevertheless sounded the important alarm and foreshadowed the stand of Catholic Ireland.

It was O'Donnell's revelation on 21 May of Bradlaugh's responsibility for publishing the Fruits of Philosophy,[5] a popular edition of which was sold on street corners by children,[6] that fatally weakened the Liberal case for exceptional favour being shown, and aroused the anger of Catholic Home Rulers. The possibility that "a blatant, brazen, howling Atheist" be allowed to take the oath was denounced

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 11 May 1880, Cols. 56-9.

2. Blennerhassett, Brooks, Byrne, Collins, Finigan, MacFarlane, McCarthy, McKenna, O'Beirne, T.P. O'Connor, D.M. O'Conor, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Shea, O'Connor Power.

3. Callan, A. O'Connor, W.A. Redmond.

4. See L. Stephen, "Mr. Bradlaugh and his Opponents" in Fortnightly Review, Vol. XXVIII, p. 178.

5. Hansard, op.cit., 21 May 1880, Cols. 216-19.

6. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 488-92. Dr. Arnstein, himself somewhat nervous of O'Donnell's "deserved reputation for unreliability", writes that his account was "partially" substantiated by Annie Besant. Arnstein, op.cit., p.203 See also, O'Donnell to Lucy, 19 July, n.d. (1910 ?), in H.W. Lucy, The Diary of a Journalist, Vol. III, London 1923, pp. 21-2.

by the Freeman's Journal the following day, as "a shocking and horrible thing".[1] A similar division on 24 May put a vastly different complexion on Home Rule loyalties, with a significant majority now opposed to Bradlaugh's cause.[2] Yet possibly out of regard for an old English friend of Ireland as Bradlaugh was,[3] or as an overture to English radicalism as has been suggested,[4] a dozen Parnellites including Parnell, failed to consult or at least refused to be guided by Catholic opinion. Parnell in fact voted as he did in the full knowledge that his opinions on the Bradlaugh issue "were not shared by the great majority of Irish members",[5] and that the "mass of the Irish people" were not behind him on the "present occasion".[6] Although "religious antipathy" to Bradlaugh's admission "was expressed even more forcibly than before,"[7] several Parnellites not only voted for Henry Labouchere's resolutions of 21 June to allow Bradlaugh to affirm,[8] but protested against his arrest when he refused to vacate the Member's bench. Parnell, Commins, Finigan, O'Kelly and O'Connor Power entered Captain Gossett's rooms after Bradlaugh's expulsion to

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1. Freeman's Journal, 22 May 1880.
2. See Annual Register, 1880, pp. 71-4. This time twenty-three Home Rulers voted with O'Donnell against the proposal to set up a second committee to consider Bradlaugh's legal right to affirm: Callan, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Errington, Gill, Leamy, Lever, MacFarlane, McCarthy, McCoan, McKenna, Martin, Marum, Moore, O'Beirne, A. O'Connor, D.M. O'Conor, O'Donnell, O'Shea, R. Power, W.A. Redmond, Sexton, T.D. Sullivan.
3. Arnstein, op.cit., p. 207.
4. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., pp. 49-50.
5. Hansard, Vol. 253, 23 June 1880, Col. 658.
6. Ibid., 1 July 1880, Col. 1304.
7. Annual Register, 1880, p. 75.
8. Barry, Biggar, Commins, Fay, Finigan, Nolan, T.P. O'Connor, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Kelly, Parnell.

tender their sympathy,[1] despite the knowledge that at least thirty-one Home Rulers were ranged against them.[2] As Lucy recalled, the incident "threatened to merge into a civil war among the Irish members".[3]

Parnell's relationship with the Catholic Church reached a low point[4] and might have proved fatal to his position as leader of the party had he not undergone a timely conversion to the anti-Bradlaugh camp in 1881. He faced pious objections from the nationalist press as well. Even the Nation failed to understand how the Irish could support a man "whom they suspected wished the eradication of Christianity in the British Isles".[5] Yet, by far the fiercest critic was O'Donnell. Certainly, his contribution to the movement against the Irish leader was the major one. While it is true that the Irish would probably have been divided by the Bradlaugh affair in any case, O'Donnell's attitude served to turn the issue into one of confidence in Parnell's ability to lead Catholic Ireland. As he boasted to Lucy, he "took the Irish vote to the Tories in spite of" T.P. O'Connor and Parnell.[6] Just as he had been the first to raise the crucial "spectre of atheism", so he now fanned Catholic

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1. Freeman's Journal, 24 June 1880.

2. Home Rulers who voted against Labouchere's motion: Bellingham, Blake, Brooks, Colthurst, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Errington, Gill, Lalor, Leamy, Lever, McCarthy, McCoan, Martin, Marum, Meldon, Molloy, Moore, O'Beirne, A. O'Connor, O'Donnell, The O'Donoghue, O'Shea, O'Sullivan, R. Power, W.A. Redmond, Smithwick, A.M. Sullivan, T.D. Sullivan, Synan.

3. Lucy, The Gladstone Parliament, p. 41.

4. Haslip, op.cit., p. 149.

5. Nation, 3 July 1880.

6. See O'Donnell to Lucy, 19 July n.d. (1910 ?), op.cit.

opposition to Parnell, by pointing out his refusal "to be guided by the instincts of Catholic Ireland". In a rather crude letter to the Freeman's Journal of 25 June, reprinted in the Tablet of 3 July, he protested against "the honourable weapons of the Active Policy being degraded by being used to protect, not Irish interests, but the interests of 'Atheism and filth'". Waving aside "every tie of comradeship", O'Donnell charged Parnell with repudiating the principles and convictions, acquired beneath the pulpits of "stainless Ireland". Was "Patriot Cork", he inquired, going to endorse its Member "solacing the merited imprisonment of the foul-mouthed insulter of Christ?" Over the last few days he had watched a group of Irish Members, lately conspicuous, declare "their admiration for the persecuting Republicans of France", and applaud the "honourable character of the men who amnesty the Communists and expel the Jesuits".[1]

While O'Donnell insured that Parnell did not emerge from the episode untarnished, he himself derived no credit from it. It was as that of an enemy of Parnell rather than as a partisan of Catholicism, that his action was interpreted. Patrick Egan in a rejoinder to the Freeman on 28 June, and Tim Healy in a private letter to his brother, both concluded that O'Donnell's "new departure" aimed at nothing but the downfall of Parnell.[2] Again a direct link was traced back to the interventionist policy. O'Donnell's "wrath", Egan declared,

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1. Freeman's Journal, 25 June 1880.

2. Ibid., 28 June 1880; Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 95.

was the product of resentment, first because Parnell refused to adopt his views on Republican France, and second because he would not endorse "his craze on 'Imperialism'".[1] In fact at a meeting of Parnellites on 21 June, Parnell was instructed to request O'Donnell not to delay the business of the House on Bradlaugh, and strong complaint was made against O'Donnell's attack on Challemel-Lacour for the same reason.[2] Ironically, for Irish Members as well as English Members, time-wasting, a prominent feature of intervention, had its draw backs. Where British business was affected no one was found to complain, but when Irish legislation was impeded, in this case the Relief of Distress Bill, intervention was rightly deemed a needless hindrance to reform. O'Donnell did not appear to appreciate this valid objection.

Egan's interpretation of O'Donnell's motives perhaps came closest to the truth, O'Donnell was a sincere Catholic but he was not a genuine fanatic. His rant against Parnell over Bradlaugh had all the symptons of frantic demagogy. Probably he realised that it was his last chance to take an option on the leadership and to avert the domination by the Land League in Irish politics. Just as Parnell had suddenly risen to power on the back of the land agitation, so O'Donnell sought a desperate counter by turning to the Church. Rampant clericalism had once killed off the Tenant League; perhaps O'Donnell hoped it might similarly kill off the Land League now. After all, the Parnell of the House of Commons was not expected to succeed, and O'Donnell knew very little about the Parnell of

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1. Freeman's Journal, op.cit.

2. Times, 22 June 1880; L. Stephen, "Mr. Bradlaugh and his Opponents", op.cit., p. 126.

conferences and the hustings. While he was not a person of substance, not a landlord, not a Protestant, not a patriot with any Fenian connections, O'Donnell believed he had in India a possible issue to put him back on top. Politicians before had made a come-back on foreign politics. Gladstone had done so over the "Bulgarian Atrocities" and over Disraeli's "Forward-Policy" during the Midlothian campaign; if O'Donnell imagined he could do the same he could perhaps be forgiven. In this light India was not at all exotic but represented, as the Freeman's Journal had earlier pointed out, a possible focus for Home Rule activity. Again, in Daniel O'Connell's "ferocious verbal onslaught" at Birmingham in 1838 on the American Minister to London, Andrew Stevenson,[1] O'Donnell had a precedent and an inspiration for his attack on Challemel-Lacour. It had been O'Connell's "deliberate conviction" that no "slave breeder" or "one of those beings who rear and breed up slaves merely for the purpose of traffic" ought to be received "on a footing of equality by any of the civilised inhabitants of Europe".[2] However, if O'Donnell was doing the right thing it was on the wrong issues. Healy agreed with his brother's estimation that O'Donnell "must be nearly 'off his nut'", although he felt there was "a great deal of method in his madness".[3] By throwing down a challenge to Parnell, O'Donnell became all the more dependent on what he could get from England by way of concessions on the

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1. O.D. Edwards, "The American Image of Ireland: A Study of its Early Phases", in Perspectives in American History, Vol. IV, 1970, p. 261.

2. O'Connell quoted in H. Temperley, "The O'Connell-Stevenson contretemps: a reflection of the Anglo-American slavery issue", in Journal of Negro History, Vol. 47, 1962, pp. 225-6.

3. T. Healy to M. Healy, 5 August 1880, in Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 99.

playing fields of Westminster. By any criteria, therefore, his move was a dangerous one and over Bradlaugh it was a grave mistake. O'Donnell had built up a nucleus of anti-imperial support which he ran the risk of alienating. The co-operation of the Fourth party was a poor substitute for the loss of Radical good-will.

Both he and his brother, who had opportunely arrived in Ireland at the moment of crisis, were showered with abuse. Significantly, the two of them seemed to be associated in the public mind as part of a double-act to oust Parnell. It was Charles James O'Donnell who answered Egan's jibes in an article entitled "Mr. O'Donnell and his Critics".[1] One letter subsequently described their efforts to "convert Ireland's national people into an Imperial protection club", pledged to keep Ireland under the heel of Britain, and "to do homage to the Indian rajahs".[2] On 31 July Frank Hugh O'Donnell himself replied to his detractors. In a slightly hysterical letter to the Nation, he announced that he had no intention of altering his political convictions, expressed at the Conference of 1873, "a jot, a tittle, an iota", for Parnell or anyone else. Although laughed at then by many "profound wiseacres" for his "unIrish notions", it was now better understood what Irish Members could effect in English internal affairs:

> "Before long Irish public opinion will be better informed upon the part which Irish members can play in foreign and Imperial affairs as well, in conformity with the national dignity of Ireland, and in order to prove to British critics that the refusal of Home Rule is no hindrance to the continual intermeddling of Irish members in the affairs of the Empire and the Colonies".

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1. Nation, 17 July 1880.
2. Ibid., 24 July 1880.

Home Rulers who sought "to postpone the exercise of Irish influence in foreign affairs" until the day Ireland was officially recognised as a nation, did "an evil turn to Irish nationality". Such a blind and backward policy, O'Donnell declared, could only encourage the resistance of every British party, on the calculation that the longer Ireland was kept in provincial degradation, the longer British rule in India or Africa would remain unquestioned by Irish statesmen. This had some point, but was not altogether convincing. In simple terms, however, the letter emphasised one of the basic tenets of an interventionist policy, that Home Rulers would receive no change from the British Government unless at parliamentary gun point. Provincialism could do Ireland no good at all:

> "The man who puts off the hour of the exercise of the imperial prerogatives of our nation until our nationality has been, forsooth, graciously recognised by an Imperial Parliament does, in effect, encourage and stimulate that Imperial Parliament never to recognise our nationality at all."

In an imperious conclusion he stated that Parnell might "reckon on his unfaltering assistance" when he eventually decided to support "Home Rule, fixity of tenure, fair rents, free sale, and the speedy facilitation of a peasant proprietary."[1] For a second time after an exposition of his views, O'Donnell resigned as Vice-President of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain.[2] History had repeated itself.

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1. Nation, 31 July 1880.

2. Freeman's Journal, 10 August 1880.

II Lull Before the Storm

The first period of the Liberal Ministry in Parliament, a period lasting from 29 April 1880 to the beginning of August, was a moderate, almost a peaceful one. Naturally, after fruitless years under Tory Government, the Irish looked expectantly to the Liberals to introduce alleviating measures, to stop evictions, and to reverse the trends that their predecessors had bequeathed. For this reason not only the followers of Shaw but also the followers of Parnell adopted a policy of watchful cease-fire. Gladstone's administration, in the past responsible for one great measure of land reform, was to be allowed time to prove its good intentions, by introducing another. There were, however, as Dr. C.C. O'Brien has shown, other reasons for the background of truce, such as the unity of the party, and the difficulty of Parnell's position as leader.[1] Besides, before the Government had introduced some kind of package, obstructive tactics would have been distinctly premature and possibly damaging. This was another reason why Home Rulers were quick to dissociate themselves from O'Donnell's attack on Challemel-Lacour, about which they had not even been consulted.[2] As A.M. Sullivan informed the House, they conceded to O'Donnell "the right of distinguishing himself at his own peril on many subjects".[3]

Indian and imperial affairs, however, did not generally fall into the category of perilous topics. The Irish press and individual Home Rulers still professed an interest in both, although again there were

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1. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., pp. 44-47. See Times, 19 May 1880, which also analyses the courses of action open to Parnell.

2. Hansard, Vol. 252, 14 June 1880, Cols. 1910-11.

3. Ibid.

no obvious areas of dispute between Liberals and Home Rulers. The latter were fully in sympathy with the programme of Midlothian as it dealt with foreign politics. It was not until it became clear that the Liberal Government was prepared to stand by Lytton's commitments in Afghanistan and Bartle Frere's presence in South Africa that the Irish had cause to protest against "empty" promises. Even then, considering the reinforcement of the obstructive group, the Irish response was muted. To sum up, a discussion of Irish intervention in non-Irish affairs in the parliamentary sessions of 1880, 1881, and 1882, must take into account three new factors: first the critical agrarian situation in Ireland; second O'Donnell's worsening relations with the party; and third the spectacular argument between C.J. O'Donnell and the Government of Bengal, described in the next chapter.

Before the "Queen's speech" considerable interest in Ireland as in Britain was generated by the exposure of extraordinary errors in the Indian Budget estimates for the Afghan war. These amounted to a miscalculation of nearly 12 million pounds [1] in excess of the original computation presented in the Indian Budget statement in February 1880, of approximately six millions for the complete charges over three years.[2] At the time the details of Sir John Strachey's Budget "seemed almost too good to be true",[3] but the Indian Finance Minister put on record his personal conviction that the departmental calculations "erred rather on the side of being too high than too low".[4] The Home Government not only accepted this "wholesome view" of the state of Indian

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1. S. Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon 1880-1884, Oxford 1953, p. 4.

2. Financial Statement of Sir John Strachey to Legislative Council, 24 February 1880, paras. 3, 8, 17 in Parl. P., 1880, Vol. LIII, C 2560, pp. 8, 9, 11.

3. Times, 6 May 1880.

4. Private Letter of Strachey, 19 December 1879, referred to in Minute of E. Stanhope on Afghan War Expenditure, 21 April 1880, para. 5, in ibid., p. 75. See also Financial Statement of Strachey, para. 27, in ibid., p. 13.

finances, but committed itself to it in policy statements [1] and in sanctioning various measures. The repeal of certain export duties, and the decision not to proceed with the revision of the license tax thus reducing taxation, for example, were agreed to by the Secretary of State, only because Lytton's assurances were taken at face value. His resolve to meet an expenditure of 3 millions on public works without recourse to any loan at all either in India or in England[2] seemed proof enough of his confidence. Moreover, the Viceroy predicted that his Government could comfortably meet the £16,900,000 drain of the annual home charges.[3] Thus, in the House of Commons on 12 March, Stanhope forcefully rejected any suggestion that the India Office had received information tending to show that the estimates would be exceeded.[4] He fully believed that the expectation of a surplus of £119,000 "rested on a sure basis", and promised that the Indian Government could meet its commitments without borrowing. When the Times published the contents of a despatch from Lord Lytton acknowledging the blunder,[5] the Government continued to boast that the situation was satisfactory and that Liberal forebodings, particularly Fawcett's, were unwarranted and opportunist. What stirred the political waters so profoundly was the suspicion, perhaps justified in the circumstances, that Lytton and

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1. At Hackney on 19 January, Stanhope declared that the expenses of the Afghan War, could be defrayed out of the current yearly revenue. Times, 20 January 1880.
2. Desp. Financial No. 133, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 22 April 1880, paras. 9, 10, in Parl.P., op.cit., p. 78.
3. Desp. Financial No. 119, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 15 April 1880, para. 6, in ibid., p. 71.
4. Hansard, Vol. 251, 12 March 1880, Cols.946-49. Supporting Fawcett's motion that England should make a contribution towards the expenses of the Afghan War, Gladstone explained that the allegation that the Indian Government had deliberately falsified its military accounts to conceal the real cost of the war was not his own, but had been given to him with "such an appearance of truth that [he] thought it right to give it public mention, in order that, if incorrect, it might be contradicted."
5. Times, 6 May 1880.

Strachey had purposely falsified the accounts, and that the Conservative Government connived at this deceit by withholding new facts during the electoral campaign. Summing up, the Times felt that Gladstone, Fawcett, and other Liberals were justifiably aggrieved at being taunted with misrepresentation, when the Government "must have shrewdly begun to suspect" Strachey's mistake. Both he and Lytton "were too desirous of making things pleasant all around, of shutting their eyes to every painful contingency."[1]

For his part, Cranbrook keenly felt the delicate position in which he and Stanhope had been placed, and doubted that they would be able to extricate themselves from it with credit. The most favourable interpretation could not avoid indicting them at the very least for negligence. An investigation of the official correspondence only too clearly reveals that the India Office ought to have been put on its guard if not as early as 25 February,[2] then progressively on 13, 17, 23[3] March, and become positive on 8, 10 April.[4] Stanhope confessed to Stafford Northcote that he "felt not the slightest apprehension" till he saw the Viceroy's telegram of 17 March,[5] but if as he also said,

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1. Times, 3 June 1880.
2. Letter, Financial no. 81, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 25 February 1880, para. 9, in Parl.P., op.cit., p. 66.
3. See Telegrams from Viceroy, 13, 17, 23 March 1880, and the Replies of the Secretary of State, 15, 20, 24 March 1880, in ibid., p. 69. Lytton cabled Cranbrook on 13 March, for example, that his treasury was unable to meet the weekly home drawings without borrowing, because of as he further explained on 17 March, "the constant military drain, ultimate aggregate of which quite uncertain".
4. Telegrams from Viceroy, 8, 10 April 1880, in ibid., pp. 69-70.. At last on 8 April Lytton admitted after probing by Cranbrook that "outgoing from our treasury for the war very alarming, far exceeding estimate".
5. Stanhope to Northcote, 12 May 1880, Iddesleigh Papers, Add. Ms 50041.

in his minute of 21 April that "the first note of alarm" was then sounded, neither he nor Cranbrook bothered to inform the public of this latest intelligence. While Lytton's telegram of 17 March was unequivocally black, they continued to have hopes that this and other telegrams were exaggerated, and undoubtedly profited by their decision to wait for further information.[1] In a farewell letter to Lytton as Secretary of State, Cranbrook was frank enough to admit the suspicious nature of their caution:

> "I have only one wish in regard to Indian affairs viz that the mistake about war expenditure had not occurred. But for it you and we should have left office without any chance of being at all discredited, but it would be wrong to conceal from you the general feeling upon this painful subject. Intentional deceit will soon cease to be imputed but the fact will remain and we shall have no easy task to vindicate so vast an error as seems to have been made. No person in the press says a word in justification and of course our opponents make the most of it...one cannot but admit that there has been inexplicable want of accuracy somewhere".[2]

Throughout the year, as fresh estimates were periodically readjusted upwards, and the error mounted in proportion, the "most discouraging view" of the whole business was "confirmed".[3]

In a long editorial on 18 May, the Freeman's Journal joined the journalistic outcry demanding that the affair be "sifted" through, till it was made quite clear whether the budget "was a piece of almost

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1. Minute of E. Stanhope on Afghan war Estimate, 21 April 1880, op.cit.

2. Cranbrook to Lytton, 13 May 1880, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur.E. 218, 516/5.

3. Times, 12 July 1880. See Hartington's Budget Statement, Hansard, Vol. 255, 17 August 1880, Col. 1398. "...he could not help saying that it appeared to him that there had been, from the very commencement of that war, a determination which he must consider reckless, if not deliberate,* to underestimate, not only in respect to finance, but in every other respect, the difficulties of the enterprise in which we were engaged." *The underlining is the writer's.

incredible blundering or a gross political trick." On the ground that Lytton and Beaconsfield followed the same political method of "falsehood and unreality", it was inclined to believe the worst. The time had come to regard India, "ground down to the very verge of bankruptcy", as a land to be governed for the benefit of its people and not "a Tom Tiddlers ground for shoals of white officials to pick up gold and silver". A general inquiry into the taxation of India was the logical sequel to the budget deficit. The Freeman also supported the demands, "well understood and thoroughly sympathised with in Ireland", of the British Indian Association, drawn up in a petition to Parliament. These included: the repeal of the Coercion Code "of draconian severity"; the removal of difficulties in the way of Indian entry to the Indian Civil Service, "a system which hand[ed] over to young gentlemen from England the control of the destinies of India"; the extension to the rest of India of the Bengal Permanent Settlement, corresponding "somewhat with the Ulster Tenant-Right"; and the introduction of a representative element in the Legislative Councils, the "only natural" "desire" of the Indian people. The Freeman's Journal perhaps saw the Permanent Settlement as exercising a restriction on landowners, but it hardly bestowed upon a tenant, as was the "custom" in Ulster, the right to "undisturbed possession of his holding" provided he paid his rent or the right to sell his interest in it should he not wish to continue in possession.[1] Until the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, the Bengal ryot was liable to eviction without compensation if he fell into arrears of rent and no

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1. See Palmer, op.cit., pp. 44-8.

transference of "occupancy" rights by sale was recognised until 1928.[1] At any rate the Freeman was confident that the Indian people would, in their demands for reform, receive every aid from Irish Members "who had for their suffering a fellow feeling".[2]

On the day of the Address to Parliament, the Freeman's Journal published a letter dated 15 May from F.H. O'Donnell to the Council of the British Indian Association,[3] in appreciation of the vote of thanks forwarded to him, giving a similar undertaking of Irish assistance. In common with educated "India", O'Donnell was led to attach "special expectations of Indian reform" to the premiership of Gladstone, not least because of the appointment of a Catholic Viceroy, Lord Ripon. O'Donnell was going to run the clerical issue for all it was worth. Brought up in a "good school of Indian politics" he wrote, Ripon was clearly marked out "as a man to be relied upon".[4] Of one thing, anyway, the "leaders of Indian native opinion" might rest assured, and that was the "earnest sympathy of the Irish Parliamentary Party", with their "just and constitutional efforts"of improvement. Imperial force required to be completed by local liberty. Home Rulers did not seek to impose on Indian nationalists their own special object of "legislative independence", but next to Irish interests felt bound to protect and extend popular liberty in India.[5]

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1. M.N. Gupta, Land System of Bengal, Calcutta 1940, Ch.X, pp. 185-233.
2. Freeman's Journal, 18 May 1880.
3. Hindoo Patriot, 3 May 1880.
4. Times, 27 May 1880. See O'Donnell's letter, "Lord Ripon and the Natives of India".
5. Freeman's Journal, 20 May 1880.

Yet no one demanded a broad inquiry into the financial structure of India itself, although for once there was a demonstrable case for some investigation. The Radicals had been decimated by promotion. As Postmaster-General, Fawcett was safely closeted out of harm's way in the bureaucratic recesses of the Post Office. He spoke just twice on India during the entire session. When he did speak "with the old freedom he enjoyed below the gangway", as in the Indian Budget debate,[1] he came in for much criticism from his colleagues. As Dilke informed Ripon, "if he, as a member of the Government, is to be allowed so much tether--why not Grant Duff, for instance, who holds views diametrically opposite?".[2] Sir David Wedderburn confronted the new Secretary of State, Lord Hartington, with Fawcett's resolution about the overdue review of the Government of India Act of 1858, which had been supported by 100 Liberals and Home Rulers in 1879. Without help from either quarter in May 1880, Wedderburn's question was ineffectual. Like his predecessor, Hartington was able to state that the matter could be handled with most advantage by the Government in their own way and "on their own responsibility".[3] Gladstone had given the cue during the debate in reply to the "Queen's speech", that any attempt to fasten blame for the budget errors would be premature and that a detailed discussion of the subject would be out of place and unnecessary.[4]

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1. Times, 20 August 1880.
2. Dilke to Ripon, 20 August 1880, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43528.
3. Hansard, Vol. 252, 24 May 1880, Cols. 313-14.
4. Ibid., 20 May 1880, Col. 144.

Apart from O'Donnell, no Home Ruler raised any objection on this score. Instead, to Irish amazement the "Queen's speech" said virtually nothing about Irish distress, but dealt almost entirely with the problems of Turkey, Afghanistan, India and South Africa.[1] No promise of substantial legislation to Ireland was held out, and the lapse of the Peace Preservation Act after its expiry on 1 June was no palliative. Following the lead of O'Connor Power, who proposed a "token" amendment[2] rectifying this omission, one after another of the Home Rulers discussed the Irish land question and the urgent need to introduce an exhaustive land Bill not simply as an interim relief measure. Irish Members might admire the Government for refusing "to prop up a ruinous and tyrannical Empire in the East", but they insisted that its "first duty" was to Ireland.[3] O'Donnell was the only one to attempt to synthesise in his speech the four questions of foreign policy given prominence by the Government, with the issues of eviction, compensation and rent in Ireland, largely ignored by it. Of the Indian Budget deficit, however, he made very little, except to assert that his fellow-Members below the Opposition gangway would conduct the future discussion of finance with an eye not only to profit but also to ascertaining the cause of growing discontent among Indians.[4]

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1. Annual Register, 1880, p. 65.
2. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 47.
3. Hansard, op.cit., Col. 160.
4. Ibid., 21 May 1880, Cols. 250-1.

As it happened, the major part of the session was devoted to Irish legislation and reciprocally little or none to India. A reticent Government, anticipating quiet and "unambitious work,"[1] was caught more or less unprepared. On 31 May the introduction of O'Connor Power's private Bill amending the Land Act of 1879 to allow compensation irrespective of non-payment of rent, shamed Forster into coming up with an alternative proposal.[2] His Irish Compensation for Disturbance Bill encountered opposition all the way, and kept both Houses of Parliament busy until August. In the circumstances, most Home Rulers had little thought for other than the problems of their own country.

What contribution was made to internationalism was not insignificant, however. A.M. Sullivan twice questioned Hartington about corporal punishment in Indian gaols,[3] which set the wheels of official investigation turning. When O'Donnell made the subject his own in 1881 and 1882 relentlessly pursuing the Indian Government until he received from it satisfactory assurances, an overhaul of gaol administration was authorised and reforms instituted. This result was perhaps the finest memorial of Irish intervention in India in the nineteenth century.[4]

Sullivan's and Meldon's adhesion to the anti-opium lobby and their participation in the campaign to prohibit the trade with

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1. Annual Register, 1880, p. 70.
2. Wemyss Reid, Forster, ii, p. 242.
3. Hansard, Vol. 253, 28 June, Col. 961; 1 July 1880, Cols. 1246-7.
4. See Chapter Nine, section two.

China and limit the cultivation of the poppy in Bengal, did not inspire equal gratitude. The Hindoo Patriot, one of many Indian newspapers which refused to see the trade as an infringment of morality, regarded the pressure of "sentimental moralists" in England as an unwarrantable encroachment on India's internal affairs.[1] In a parliamentary debate sponsored by Sir Joseph Pease, Sullivan was unimpressed by the financial argument of the protectionists that revenue, although the Indian Exchequer stood to lose annually by seven or eight million pounds, was a convincing defence for "hideous iniquity".[2] His speech was an impressive piece of oratory, if it failed to show how India might make good the loss.[3] Both Fawcett and Gladstone who followed Sullivan, made this point in explaining that conscience was not a convincing argument.[4] Nevertheless, although Hartington refused to bind himself to any timetable of gradual abandonment, he inquired of India whether changes of policy might make the revenue "less obnoxious to the British moralists". The House of Commons was "very virtuous" and he anticipated still more serious attacks upon the opium trade each year.[5]

Frank Hugh O'Donnell, as might be expected, asked twice as many questions about India as any other Member of Parliament, and

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 12 July 1880; Indian Mirror, 14 July 1880. Meldon was a member of a deputation to the Foreign Office on 14 June, to petition Granville to prohibit the import of Indian opium into China.

2. Hansard, Vol. 252, 4 June, Cols. 1268-70.

3. Times, 7 June 1880.

4. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 1270, 1278.

5. Hartington to J. Ferguson, 11 June 1880, Hartington Papers, Reel 794, I.O.L.

with more effect.Over the Vernacular Press Act, for example, now moribund but unrepealed, his was the leading voice helping to move the India Office and the Viceroy to undertake the final examination of its usefulness. In 1878, he had "ceded" the "advocacy of the liberties of the Indian Press" to Gladstone;[1] but with the Liberals in office felt empowered to remind them of their promise in Parliament and outside to do away with Indian censorship.[2] Undoubtedly, more effective pressure was exerted by Gladstone who was still "anxious" about repeal, and by a section of the Liberal party which would have pressed the issue before the end of the session. Yet to O'Donnell must go the credit for alerting the House of Commons. With apparent reluctance, on 25 June the Secretary of State instructed Lord Ripon to look into the matter at the earliest moment,[3] and stressed the urgency of this request on 16 July.[4]

In the same month, Justin McCarthy, briefed by O'Donnell, brought to Hartington's notice the recent publication of C.J. O'Donnell's pamphlet: The Ruin of an Indian Province, which described the impoverishment of Behar and investigated the reasons for it. Emanating from inside the Indian Civil Service, the pamphlet contained all ingredients of a first-class scandal. High officialdom in India, shown in a bad light, was resentful at this exposure. Above all, in

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1. Freeman's Journal, 20 May 1880.

2. Hansard, op.cit., 21 May 1880, Col. 237.

3. Hartington to Ripon, 25 July 1880, Hartington Papers, Reel 794, I.O.L.

4. Hartington to Ripon, 16 July 1880, ibid. See Desp. legislative no. 4, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 28 January 1881, para. 10, in Parl.P., 1881, Vol. LXVIII, No. 113.

F.H. O'Donnell it encountered the perfect foil of any attempt to maintain secrecy and silence. His presence in Parliament ensured that the case became public knowledge rather than departmental property.

The massacre of General Burrow's forces at Maiwand on 27 July might normally have been expected to divert Irish attention to the East. Indeed, far from mourning the disaster, the Nation at once expressed satisfaction that "nemesis" should again "dog the footsteps" of the British invaders.[1] It recalled its precursor in 1840, when Dost Mohammad triumphed over a British force in the first Afghan war, and reprinted a verse of Thomas Davis's "Ballad of Freedom", commemorating the event. "Thousands of liberty-loving Irish hearts" joined with the "dusky millions" of India in celebration, and in tune to the Indian strains of the equivalent Irish chorus:

> "They came across the wave
> But to plunder and enslave,
> And should find a robber's grave
> Says the Shan Van Vocht".

To the cause of Home Rule all over the world, the Nation wished success.[2] "Transatlantic" of the Irish World under the headline "England's Outrages in India, Africa and Ireland Coming Home to her", was also inspired to lyrical prose by the reverse at Maiwand. With the "Heavenly Father" disposed to put forth his word that the "British Empire" should cease, and to drive British soldiery "from the face of the earth", Irishmen everywhere were told to "Spread the Light". Their turn was near.[3]

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1. Nation, 31 July 1880.
2. Ibid., 7 August 1880.
3. Irish World, 21 August 1880.

In his capacity as Vice-President of the Home Rule Confederation O'Donnell circularised Home Rulers for the last time on 1 August, suggesting that a meeting be held "for the purpose of organising the united action of the party on the question of the Afghan War". He urged that the "influence of the party should be brought to bear in terminating" a war which was "being waged against an unoffending people".[1] The unfeeling though not unexpected action[2] of the House of Lords on 3 August in throwing out the Compensation for Disturbance Bill by an overwhelming majority,[3] crowded out this possibility. At a meeting of the Irish party on 6 August, the proceedings were completely dominated by angry schemes of reprisal. Parnell proposed to convert criticism of the Constabulary Estimates into a "species" of obstructive demonstration. The result was that O'Donnell was denied the chance of proposing his motion on Afghanistan. Protesting against the "mysterious manoeuvre" of castigating the Liberal Government in the Commons for the anti-tenant views of the Tory Opposition in the Upper House, he walked out in disgust.[4] His resignation as Vice-President, handed in to a Home Rule Convention at Newcastle on 9 August, was accepted without comment.[5] Perhaps as Northbrook put it, Parnell and the Land League were provided with all the "powder and shot" they needed or could handle to "fire at the Saxons".[6]

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1. Times, 2 August 1880.
2. Northbrook to Ripon, 16 July 1880, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43570.
3. The Lords rejected the Bill by 282 votes to 51.
4. Times, 10 August 1880.
5. Ibid.
6. Northbrook to Ripon, 6 August 1880, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43570.

In a sense, O'Donnell's surrender of office was a tacit acknowledgement that Parnell had won conclusively. As he admitted over the Bradlaugh and Challemel-Lacour debates, his action had "dug a hole" between him and Parnell "the extent of which" he did "not care" just then "to estimate".[1] He must also have realised that he could get no further mileage out of the clerical issue, or essential backing from Dwyer Gray. On 11 August he wrote to the Freeman's Journal that the country would "pay bitterly for the consequences of abandoning the traditions of Grattan and O'Connell and Butt on behalf of the raving idiocy of revolutionary radicalism".[2] It was with bitter irony that O'Donnell expressed the view during the Indian Budget debate on 17 August, that "enough" had already been said about the Afghan war. He also cautioned the Commons against the "unwisdom" of "interfering too much" in India's domestic affairs, instead of letting reform proceed from within.[3] This advice hardly squared with his past record, and it was to contrast with his attitude in the future to Indian questions. Probably he was soured by the apparent collapse of his Indian strategy and by the Parnellite decision to pursue a collision course with the Liberals in the fields of Ireland.

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1. Nation, 31 July 1880.
2. Freeman's Journal, 11 August 1880. The underlining is the writer's.
3. Hansard, Vol. 255, 17 August 1880, Col. 1475.

III An Outcast

Despite his differences with the Parnellites, Frank Hugh O'Donnell remained "without an instant's variation, a Nationalist Irishman", in basic opposition to the Government of the day.[1] As long as Ireland was deprived of self-government he would stand firmly by this old obstructive principle. From time to time he might be unpredictable in the House of Commons, but he never voted against the party on Irish issues. It was his conceit and his temper, as much as any other factor, that left him isolated in nationalist politics at this period of crisis in Ireland. In his conception of an Irish Parliament, his avowal of internationalism and his notion of Home Rule, O'Donnell was convinced that he was the true custodian of the nationalist tradition established by Grattan, O'Connell and Butt. Yet as much as he might protest that he was following "the guidance of history",[2] in opposing the activities of the Land League, he could hardly take the high position that the Parnellites were ignoring it. The latter did not stop being internationalists because they declared a "holy war" against the system of landlordism. Instead they became more,not less,interested in the empire as the feasibility of carrying the flame of agrarian revolution to other "colonies" suggested itself. The party steered off imperial affairs only while O'Donnell remained a threat to Parnell. Once he had ceased to be a danger it could then go back to the luxury of

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1. See Lucy, The Gladstone Parliament, p. 3.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 472.

discussing Indian or African questions. As for betraying the cause of Home Rule, O'Donnell never for a moment imagined that Parnell was a revolutionary or that he "had the slightest intention of realising the Devoy or Davitt ideal". He "talked daggers" merely for the benefit of the American audience. "Very probably", O'Donnell conjectured, the scheme that would have attracted him most "would be the position of leader of the Irish delegation within the Imperial Parliament".[1] O'Donnell himself exhibited no slavish loyalty to the concept of federalism. On 9 February 1882, for example, he advocated continued union between Ireland and Britain only on the condition that the Irish people received genuine not counterfeit self-government. While he was "not such a fool to Irish intellect" to waste the "brains and blood" of Irishmen--a sentiment in the very best Buttite tradition--he much preferred separation "ten thousand times" than the present arrangement.[2]

O'Donnell was appalled by Ireland's reply to the rejection by the House of Lord's of the Compensation Bill. As the West fast drifted into anarchy,[3] Parnell at Ennis of 19 September "struck the keynote of the agitation" by enunciating a fearsome policy of social ostracism or "boycott" and laying down the lines on which the Land League should work. If there was to be land reform in the coming session of Parliament, he told a gathering of farmers, it would be the

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 506-8; ii, p. 16.

2. Hansard, Vol. 266, 9 February 1882, Cols. 268-71; Freeman's Journal, 10 February 1882.

3. Annual Register, 1880, p. 106 ff.

measure of their activity and energy that winter. They must show their determination by refusing to pay unjust rents, by keeping a firm grip on their homesteads, and by not bidding for farms from which others had been evicted. Above all they must rally to the League, obey its mandates, and cast out the "weak and cowardly" who did not.[1] To O'Donnell the message of this "ruin-making" speech, that reverberated through the country with devasting clarity and impact, was: "So much violence, so much reform". Indeed, it was no exaggeration to describe the black nights of winter as "the sacred season of Ribbon methods".[2] The Times spoke of "unparalleled terror",[3] murder was committed, cattle maimed, and bands of peasants "scoured the country" burning and shooting. Yet the "reign of terror"[4] added to Parnell's strength. Not only Fenians and Irish-American sympathisers, but also the parish clergy "who knew the sufferings of their flocks at first hand" and "sober nationalists...most likely to be alienated by violence" swelled the ranks of the Land League.[5] "What agonies moderate revolutionists must have undergone during the horror of the French Revolution", Alfred Webb wrote to his brother Richard.[6] At Cork on 3 October Parnell was welcomed as the "Uncrowned King" of Ireland. "So instinct with power, so redolent of victory" was he that day that he reminded Michael McCarthy of "a Greek god come to take part in a festival organised by his votaries".[7]

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1. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, pp. 235-7.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 502-3.
3. Times, 26 November 1880.
4. R.B. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 247.
5. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 160.
6. A. Webb to R. Webb, 4 June 1881, Webb Papers, Ms 1745.
7. M.J.F. McCarthy, The Irish Revolution, Vol. I, Edinburgh 1912, p. 126.

The distinction of being one of the first Home Rulers to be shunned by the Land League went to Frank Hugh O'Donnell. In A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party he claimed that at this period he "only knew enough about the Land League to refuse to join it, and to protest against the deliberate excommunication passed against all owners of landed estate".[1] Yet the reason he was treated as an opponent and "like the leper of old" was as much because of his haughty and irreconcilable manner as because he disapproved of intimidation and outrage. When it was suspected[2] that the Government intended to prosecute the leaders of the Land League in a demonstration trial on charges of conspiracy,[3] O'Donnell offered them his support. While "still of the opinion" that only a "tenant-right platform" had advantages, he felt that it was his "duty as a humble member of the Irish National party to ask admission" to the League and to "claim the honour of sharing the risks which [might] attend the defence of constitutional action in Ireland". Patrick Egan was reluctant to "permit" O'Donnell to "come in" as a matter of "self-respect" and Dr. Kenny doubted the "sincerity" of his "conversion." Nevertheless, the motion nominating O'Donnell was agreed to.[4] If Egan in the end was not forced to swallow his pride, it was because O'Donnell found the role of suppliant unbearable. Explaining that

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1. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 506.

2. See Times, 18 October 1880.

3. On 2 November Parnell, Biggar, Dillon, T.D. Sullivan, Sexton, Egan, Brennan and other prominent leaders were duly prosecuted.

4. Freeman's Journal, 27 October 1880.

he had given as much proof as was in his power that he was "prepared to sink a good many points of difference against a common danger to the country", O'Donnell refused to budge from his position on the land question. He was no more ready than in the past to advocate a "programme of expropriation of landlords" and he still believed that the protection of tenants was more important than the creation of peasant proprietors: "I have a general hatred of the mania for new beginnings and new departures, which is the perpetual curse of Irish politics".[1] That a unanimous sentence of "excommunication" was passed on O'Donnell himself was inevitable. At the next weekly meeting of the League he was fiercely denounced as a parliamentarian who was "always cadging after" British Ministers and "always looking if he could oblige them in any way". Egan impugned O'Donnell's "political honesty" and Andrew Kettle declared that there could be "no working union with any gentleman holding Mr. O'Donnell's views". The Land League was established not to "purify" and "nationalise" landlordism, he clarified, but to abolish it altogether.[2]

Rejected by the Land League O'Donnell was subsequently excluded from the counsels of the party. He did not attend the important meeting in Dublin on 27 December at which thirty-eight[3] members were

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1. Freeman's Journal, 3 November 1880.

2. Ibid., 10 November 1880.

3. Barry, Biggar, Brooks, Byrne, Commins, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Dillon, Fay, Gill, Healy, Lalor, Leahy, Leamy, McCarthy, McCoan, McKenna, Marum, Martin, Meldon, Metge, Molloy, Nolan, A. O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Kelly, O'Sullivan, Parnell, O'Connor Power, R. Power, Sexton, Smithwick, Smyth, A.M. Sullivan, T.D. Sullivan, Synan.

present. Nor was he among the seven[1] who sent letters of apology. He chose to remain in London on the very occasion that Parnell proceeded to consolidate his power in the party and to impose a much tighter discipline over it. Not only were "Whiggish" Home Rulers given an ultimatum to "come in or get out"[2] when it was resolved that all members "should henceforth sit in opposition", but the party's constitution was altered and the "power of shaping and directing" policy in an "emergency" or on any measure not previously discussed by the party was placed in the hands of a Parnellite committee. Consisting of Parnell as Chairman, McCarthy as Vice-Chairman, Healy and Sexton as Hon. Secretaries, Nolan and R. Power as Whips, and the Treasurer,[3] together with Barry, Biggar, Commins, Dillon, Gray, A. O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, O'Connor Power and A.M. Sullivan, the committee was designated as a "Cabinet"[4] although it never functioned as one.[5] An attempt to bind the party to the principle of obedience to majority rule was also made but the pledge contained loopholes and could not be strictly enforced.

When Parliament reopened in January, W.E. Forster as he had hinted in the previous session, applied for the expected dose of coercion to enable him to cow rather than cure the land agitation in

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1. Bellingham, Colthurst, Finigan, MacFarlane, O'Shaughnessy, O'Shea, Shaw.
2. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit. p. 56.
3. Initially Maurice Brooks.
4. Freeman's Journal, 28 December 1880; Times, 28 December 1880.
5. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., pp. 142-45.

Ireland, Short of temper, the Parnellites answered by "individually and collectively" resisting the Government's Protection of Person and Property Bill "by all and every means placed at their disposal".[1] Embarrassment not argument was the avowed policy. According to O'Donnell the "watchword" went out to all members to "obstruct in the crudest way and by the simplest methods".[2] This resulted in the proposal of amendment after amendment and the renewal of numerous motions of adjournment;yet "mulish" though it was, such obstruction could not be checked by the existing rules and the House was brought to a standstill. Dillon's dream of a determined party of thirty Home Rulers working in shifts and trampling underfoot parliamentary tradition, had been realised. Shaw, Henry and ten of their followers,[3] most of whom were landowners, reacted to this situation by declining, as the Times put it, to go into "uncompromising and unconditional surrender".[4] They announced their formal secession from the party rather than be brow-beaten into adopting the programme of "extreme obstruction" that had been "marked out for them across the Atlantic".[5]

O'Donnell, on the other hand, although he "hated and despised" these proceedings "of ignorance and unadaptability", set himself "squarely" against coercion. He regarded "the whole thing with contempt" but was not to be outdone by the militants when the Government

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1. See T.P. O'Connor's resolution at the party meeting on 27 December, Times, 28 December 1880.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 18.

3. Blennerhassett, Brooks, Collins, Colthurst, Errington, Maldon, O'Beirne, P. O'Brien, D.M. O'Conor, Smyth.

4. Times, 7 February 1881.

5. Ibid., 18 February 1881. See Shaw's letter to the Bishop of Cloyne.

chose to attack Irish liberty.[1] Eventually on 2 February the Speaker authorised the use of the closure after one sitting lasting more than forty-one hours. On the following day Michael Davitt was arrested for violation of his ticket-of-leave. As an indication of the degree to which O'Donnell was working inisolation, he realised that the party must protest but "had got no inkling of what the opposition would be".[2] He was therefore "sitting quietly" in his rooms at Craven St. while the Parnellites one after another were being suspended and then ejected from the House. O'Donnell had not been in the habit of attending recent party meetings but it was also possible that the Land Leaguers had purposely excluded him from anything they thought would be popular. He suspected that the "Irish news agency" was "regularly boycott[ing]" him in its communication to the Irish newspapers abroad and at home. Certainly Healy was reluctant to give him publicity[3] and O'Donnell's name for a time all but disappeared from the columns of the Freeman's Journal and the Nation. However, Biggar spoiled their game by dragging O'Donnell off to be suspended with the rest of them.[4] His name was thus hastily added to the historic list of thirty-six martyrs.[5]

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 19.

2. Ibid.

3. Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 96.

4. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 20; R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 285.

5. Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Dillon, Finigan, Gill, Gray, Healy, Lalor, Leahy, Leamy, McCarthy, McCoan, Marum, Metye, Molloy, Nelson, A. O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, O'Donnell, The O'Donoghue, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Kelly, O'Shaughnessy, O'Sullivan, Parnell, O'Connor Power, R. Power, J. Redmond, Sexton, Smithwick, A.M. Sullivan, T.D. Sullivan. See Lucy, The Gladstone Parliament, p. 137.

By his sudden anddramatic intervention Sir Henry Brand administered the death blow to obstruction and removed the most effective weapon of the "active" policy, the power of waging almost endless discussion. There could be no repetition in the future of the type of demonstration Home Rulers had made against the South Africa Bill in 1877. Parliamentary privileges, which in O'Donnell's view might have been "invaluable for the defence of human rights", were revoked for the protection of the House of Commons.[1] If the Irish expulsion was construed in Ireland as a victory of nationalist resolve, it was a victory at a price. Parnell refused to follow it up logically as Davitt urged by permanently evacuating the Home Rule party from Westminster, and by declaring a general strike against rent. Instead, he returned to a Parliament, considerably strengthened to withstand if not to quell obstruction, advocating that the party "go on widening the area of the agitation" rather than fall back on retirement or "appeal to force".[2] This policy of effecting "a junction between the English masses and Irish nationalism", was one whose principal advocates included not only Davitt and T.P. O'Connor,[3] but O'Donnell as well. Having rejected the path of revolution, Parnell choose the alternative at hand, that of responsible argument. Although dressed up to appear more tigerish than it actually was, moral influence remained the last resort. On the decision to withdraw British troops from Candahar, for example, the party did not gang up against a "Coercion Government" for the sake

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 19.

2. Freeman's Journal, 17 February 1881, quoted in C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 62.

3. Ibid.

of defeating it, but was allowed a free vote.[1] As P.J. Smyth eloquently[2] put it, the "soul of the British nation [was] troubled for India", for the "moral law" would "assert its power".[3] Thirty-three[4] Home Rulers opposed the retention of Candahar--because if Britain had no right to seize the city, it had even less right to retain it--while "thirty" abstained.[5]

In these circumstances, there were several reasons why O'Donnell returned to the fold. The most important, perhaps, was that the Land League, with its executive either in gaol or in exile, was in no position to exert irresistible pressure on Parnell and the party. Parnell had resolved to see Gladstone's Land Bill through the House of Commons and to amend it in good faith, because it was not "thoroughly bad" as some hoped[6] but represented an "intelligent" attempt to satisfy many of the tenants' demands. O'Donnell supported the policy of attacking the deficiencies of the Bill without wrecking it altogether,[7] and he went along with Parnell's role of delicately balancing between the extremes of deliberate sabotage and unconditional acceptance. At a meeting on 5 May, he was one of eighteen[8] activists

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1. Nation, 2 April 1881.
2. Times, 26 March 1881.
3. Hansard, Vol. 259, 24 March 1881, Cols. 1890-14.
4. Blake, Blennerhassett, Brooks, Byrne, Collins, Colthurst, Errington, Fay, Gabbett, Henry, McCarthy, McCoan, McKenna, Martin, Meldon, Molloy, Moore, Nolan, O'Beirne, P. O'Brien, T.P. O'Connor, D.M. O'Conor, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Shaughnessy, O'Shea, O'Sullivan, O'Connor Power, Sexton, Shaw, Smyth, A.M. Sullivan, T.D. Sullivan, Synan. This tally includes the moderate seceders.
5. Times, 28 March 1881. Among these were: Barry, Biggar, Corbet, Daly, Dawson, Dillon, Finigan, Gill, Gray, Healy, Lalor, Leahy, Leamy, Martin, Metge, O'Kelly, Parnell, R. Power.
6. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 291.
7. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 20-22; see O'Donnell's letter to Times, 26 May 1881.
8. Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Commins, Corbet, Dawson, Finigan, Healy, Lalor, Leahy, Leamy, A. O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, O'Donnell, O'Kelly, Parnell, J. Redmond, Sexton.

to agree to a motion calling for general abstention on the second reading of the Bill, as a way of resenting John Dillon's arrest. Yet the proposal "came as a shock" and was intensely disliked.[1] Although Parnell had threatened to resign if defeated on the issue, twelve[2] members were prepared to risk such a contingency and some contemplated mutiny. Apart from the seceders, fourteen[3] Home Rulers including McCoan, The O'Donoghue, O'Connor Power and O'Shea, henceforth branded as "black-legs" or "carpet-baggers",[4] disobeyed the party decision and voted for the Bill on 19 May. Even more were in favour of the third reading when Parnell left the matter of abstention to individual discretion. A further seventeen[5] "defected" and Parnell walked out of the House followed only "by a handful of friends".[6] Significantly, O'Donnell could be counted as one of those.[7] Again and again when Parnell found himself in a tight corner, O'Donnell would come to his assistance rather than connive at his downfall.

Another reason for O'Donnell's change of heart was a practical one. He needed the party as a back-up in his dealing with the India Office over the question of gaol reform in India and more personally

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1. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, i, p. 177.
2. Blake, Daly, McCarthy, McCoan, MacFarlane, Marum, The O'Donoghue, O'Shaughnessy, O'Sullivan, O'Connor Power, Smithwick, T.D. Sullivan, Three—R. Power, Nolan and O'Shea—did not vote. These figures are taken from the Times, 6 May 1881.
3. Bellingham, Blake, Daly, Fay, Gabbett, Martin, Moore, The O'Donoghue, O'Shaughnessy, O'Shea, O'Connor Power, Synan, Whitworth.
4. See Egan's letter to the Times, 27 May 1881.
5. Callan, Corbet, Dawson, Gill, Lever, McCarthy, MacFarlane, McKenna, Marum, Molloy, Nolan, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Kelly, R. Power, Smithwick, A.M. Sullivan, T.D. Sullivan.
6. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 297.
7. Thirty-nine Home Rulers (including the seceders voted for the third reading. Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Cousins, Finigan, Healy, Lalor, Leahy, Leamy, A. O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, O'Donnell, and Sexton were among those who abstained with Parnell.

over the fate of his brother. The latter had challenged,at considerable risk,the authority of Indian bureaucracy,in pursuit of justice not only for himself but also for the Behar peasantry. As Frank Hugh read the situation he was probably the one safeguard against hasty and retaliatory action by the Bengal Government. In his view all three causes were worthy material for concerted party action. Gaol conditions had poignant relevance to both nationalist parliamentarians and land leaguers exposed to the new Coercion Act. C.J. O'Donnell could be seen taking on "Castle" Government at Calcutta, in furtherance of Land League principles. The Behar ryots were deserving of "enlightenment" as much as Irish tenants.

Chapter VIII

C.J. O'Donnell: A Home Rule Critic in the Indian Bureaucracy

I A Land Problem in India

II The "Enfant Terrible" of the Indian Civil Service

III The Indian Reaction: Irish Agitator or Friend of the People?

I A Land Problem in India

In contrast with Ireland, there was no Land League in India, no Davitt to guide the ryots into collective action, no Parnell in the Legislative Council to obstruct public business or to extract from the Viceroy rent relief and a land bill. Yet the condition of the peasantry in India, subjected to the visitations of periodic famines, to inequitable rent settlements and to illegal expropriation, was probably as bad as in Ireland and in parts of Bengal worse. By the time Ripon arrived in India, the occupancy rights of the Bengal peasantry, for example, originally recognised in the Permanent Settlement of 1793, had all but disappeared, violated by landlords over the years. In short, tenants-by-right had become tenants-at-will. The zemindar's power to enhance rent and to subdivide holdings was virtually unrestricted, and in cases of eviction there was seldom compensation for improvement and little redress.[1] The important tenancy reforms clamoured for in Ireland were by no means irrelevant to those areas in India under the "zemindari" system. Of course, serious agrarian riots were not unknown, as in East Bengal between 1873 and 1875 and in the Deccan in 1877, but they were more spontaneous that organised outbursts. Others like the Patna outbreak in 1872-1875 contained some of the characteristics but little of the violence of the Irish Land League agitation. Only in rare instances did cultivators combine against the zemindars in witholding their rent. Their motto was: "We shall not fight, but we shall not pay".[2] The silent millions

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1. See G.R.G. Hambly, Sir Richard Temple and the Government of India, 1868 to 1880; Some Trends in Indian Administrative Policy, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge 1961, Ch. V.

2. See W.W. Hunter's Address: "What the English have yet to do for the Indian People" in Times, 10 November 1880. Also, reports on the agrarian situation can be found in Temple Papers, Eur. Mss F. 86 .

had no voice, no one to represent their interests to the Viceroy's Council, no one to galvanise them into a potent force. Just as in Ireland before the coming of the Land League the political potential of the peasantry was largely unrealised.

However, between 1879 and 1882 an important transference of experience from Ireland to India can be observed. Two years of agrarian disturbances and parliamentary speeches culminating in Gladstone's Irish Land Bill of 1881 helped to remove some of the scales from Indian eyes. The columns of the Bengalee, the Indian Mirror and the Hindoo Patriot provided an unbroken commentary on the Irish situation,[1] the one comparing the similarities, the other two stressing the differences with Bengal. Just as the Indian Association studied the political organisation of the Home Rule party in 1879, so it turned its attention to the agrarian campaign of the Land League in the years following. While it did not aspire to organise the peasantry on an Irish scale, it at least sought to effect contacts with the peasantry for the first time. The attempt thoroughly alarmed the British Indian Association which had enjoyed a long unrivalled spell as the so-called mouthpiece of the Indian people.

This steady flow of news from Ireland was given added weight because of the parallel attack on the whole system of land revenue and tenurial law in India. The Report of a Famine Commission, appointed in May 1878, was a damning treatise on the relations between

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1. Bengalee, 6 November, 18 December 1880; 29 January, 30 April, 14 May 1881; The Indian Mirror, 2, 15 November 1880; Hindoo Patriot, 10, 31 January; 23, 30 May; 6, 13 June 1881.

landlord and tenant, "becoming yearly more and more hostile", and on the ineffectiveness of recent legislation to in anyway improve them. The Commission found that "an opposition of interests" had been created between the two classes, the former doing all in their power to harass their tenants and to diminish the value of their occupancy rights. The Bengal province was particularly bad, owing to the failure of the law to afford protection at all. In Behar "the relations of landlord and tenant [were] too often those of a high-handed proprietary body on the one hand, habitually disregarding the law, and on the other a tenantry ignorant, very helpless, and sunk in the most abject poverty". The "illegal conduct" of the former was without exception declared to be at fault. They were the villains of the piece, if villains were to be found. The Report therefore urged the Government on the grounds of justice and duty to amend the rent law, to prevent evasion, and to check abuses.[1] Indeed, in 1879 a Bengal Rent Commission was already engaged in such an investigation, and in an abstract of a draft bill presented to Ripon in 1880 embodied many of the broad recommendations suggested by James Caird.[2] The Viceroy, however, chose to postpone a definite decision on the grounds that he first wished to acquire a thorough grasp of the subject.

In the meantime, the political Associations of Bengal declared their positions and entered into fierce debate. The Indian Association

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1. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, Part II, Ch. 3, paras. 8-4, pp. 113-23 in Parl. P. Vol. LII, 1880, C 2735, p. 479 ff.

2. Abstract of a Draft Bill of the Bengal Rent Law Commission, in Parl. P., Vol. LXVIII, 1881, no. 62. James Caird was the author of the Famine Report.

welcomed the possibility of remedial legislation, while the British Indian Association, fearing "impending ruin" defended the Permanent Settlement intact. Their terms of reference were frequently Irish. Even the Government tended to see in Ireland both a precedent and a parallel. In a letter on 26 May 1881 to his old friend W.E. Forster, the Irish Secretary, Lord Ripon spoke of a land problem which also pressed for his "early and careful consideration". The "questions connected with the relations between landlord and tenant", he wrote,"[were] very similar to, and scarcely less difficult than, those with which you have to deal in Ireland...".[1] Forster's solution therefore suggested itself as a possible guideline. At his own request, the Viceroy was kept informed by Hartington on the progress of the Irish Land Bill.[2] The Hindoo Patriot undertook a five part analysis of its principles.[3] Unavoidably, the arguments for and against legislation debated in England found their way to India, together with the emotion and the propaganda. The enemies of Indian reform, for example, saw in the movement to protect tenants' rights no less than the transplantation from Ireland of a policy of confiscation, calculated as there "to bear terrible fruit". Such was the opinion, minuted and later published in the Englishman, of Sir Richard Garth, Chief Justice of Bengal, the most significant ally to lend support to the zemindars. He prayed that such catastrophe might "with the blessing of God", be averted from their "Indian

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1. Ripon to Forster, 26 May 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 537.

2. See Hartington to Ripon, 1, 6 July; 12 August 1881, Hartington Papers, Reel 794, I.O.L.

3. See Chapter Eight, section three.

possessions".[1] Garth, as A. Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government of India, pointed out, believed that Ireland had "become the scene of agrarian outrage" because of the confiscation not of tenants' but of landlords' rights.[2]

It was in this very explosive climate, that Charles James O'Donnell's The Ruin of an Indian Province was published in London. Utilising information he had been instrumental in collecting for W.W. Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, O'Donnell painted an even grimer picture of the Behar peasantry than before, ground down by rapacious zemindars, driven from their land by money-hungry European indigo planters, betrayed by a negligent Government and by local officials who aided and abetted their exploitation.[3] The condition of Behar, which nothing but a pronounced expression of parliamentary will could ameliorate, was described as a disgrace to the English name.[4] The pamphlet was the very catalyst that was needed to launch India into the throes of controversy about land reform. As an Irishman if also a member of the Indian Civil Service, O'Donnell seemed to bridge in person the philosophical gulf that could be claimed to separate the two countries and the two situations. To Ireland at least he brought a glossary of hitherto incomprehensible terms that had made India seem more a distant planet than a colonial counterpart. To India he personified the danger of agrarian uprising often theorised about but not before threatened. It

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1. Minute of Sir Richard Garth on Proposed Rent Law, 6 December 1882, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 584.
2. Minute of A. MacKenzie in reply, 1 December 1882, in ibid.
3. C.J. O'Donnell, The Ruin of an Indian Province, London 1880, p. 14.
4. Ibid., p. 33.

will be recalled that in March 1879 he had left India as a prospective Home Rule candidate for Galway, only to arrive after the general elections. In September he returned to India, his political ambitions dashed once Frank Hugh O'Donnell had given up the struggle over Parnell. Yet to some Indian politicians, he reappeared conceivably the follower and possibly the emissary of Parnell and the Land League. His harsh criticisms of the zemindari system and his defence of the peasantry, as more sinned against than sinning, confirmed their suspicions that his pamphlet was a thinly disguised Parnellite tract against landlordism. As the brother of F.H. O'Donnell, he was also a direct link with the Home Rule party itself. Thus, according to whether their position on landownership was patrician or radical, they tended to redefine their attitude to Irish friendship and to the party, no longer of Butt but of Parnell.

While the description of poverty and distress throughout Bengal might have been sufficient reason for F.H. O'Donnell to take up the cause of the Indian peasantry in Parliament, there was an added incentive. The Ruin of an Indian Province became the subject of a departmental furore. The issue that was to emerge was one between the freedom of speech allowed a public servant and the demands of bureaucratic censorship. Besides discussing the ills of Behar, the pamphlet was crammed with material of a sensational and somewhat libellous variety, with serious allegations concerning the conduct of British administrators. These were of "so grave a character", the Secretary of State assured Parliament, that he would take immediate steps to satisfy himself as to the evidence on which they rested.[1] A communiqué in the Times of 13 July indicated that Hartington

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1. Hansard, Vol. 253, 5 July 1880, Col. 1626.

was as good as his word. Ignoring reputation and standing, O'Donnell tilted at the highest officials in the Indian Civil Service, at Sir Richard Temple for doing nothing and for "roseate writing",[1] and at the late Viceroy Lord Lytton as the evil genius, for condoning malpractice and for obstructing and cancelling reforms.[2] No one was immune from critical appraisal. Even Sir Ashley Eden, while described as a "man of masculine strength of character", who would hit "straight at wrong", when convinced of its evil nature, was rebuked for allowing his hands to be tied by Lytton.[3] He was the "fettered Hercules", and Sir Stewart Bayley the "wicked counsellor".[4] O'Donnell went further still by attacking the system of British government itself, "utterly out of tune with the time and its requirements". He described it as being "half-paternal, half-bureaucratic, the most superficially informed system of administration", that governed from "some narrow council-chamber in Calcutta...with more than the despotism of Caesar". This was heresy to an official caste which practically deified the edifice based on British law and order. It was little wonder that the authorities wanted to discipline O'Donnell as a sacrificial example.

An assistant Joint Magistrate dependent on the good-will of his superiors for promotion, O'Donnell utterly disregarded personal safety. He recklessly ran the gauntlet which "inevitably awaited the critic

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 33.
2. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
3. Ibid., pp. 18-20.
4. Pioneer, 5 August 1880.

of Indian Administration", and seemed intent on defying fate and ruin. Yet he was determined to vindicate himself and to purge the Civil Service for "the cause of good government in India", at the risk if necessary of "vindictive opprobrium".[1] His justification of defiance was a clever one and was not dismissed out of hand in England, as it was in India. If he broke the rules of "official subordination and reticence", O'Donnell pleaded, it was because as a servant of the Crown he was not only an official in the narrow sense of the word, but pre-eminently a "trustee of the public honour".[2] This was the basis on which he rested his case, and which the Bengal Government endeavoured to break down. For over two years it sought evidence to prove that he was neither a trustee nor a man of honour but a traitor to his service, and a totally unreliable critic.

The official inquiry into C.J. O'Donnell's allegations and activities was one of the most unusual in the annals of Indian history, and unique of its kind. Twice O'Donnell came to England, not to stand before the bar of Westminster to confront his accusers as did Warren Hastings, but to petition the Secretary of State against unjust proceedings in India and to conduct his defence before a less hostile audience. That he was able to go so far without being summarily dismissed seems remarkable. While he cannot be considered as a specimen of the "wild Irishman", he was certainly allergic to discipline and extraordinarily sensitive to reproach. Perhaps he was trading on his brother's parliamentary influence; perhaps he was fortunate that the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, was a Gladstonian Liberal and a Catholic; perhaps because his criticism of land administration was conceded

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 33.

as being soundly based, his insubordination was partially excused. Such rebelliousness would probably not have been tolerated under Lytton and was inconceivable later on. It would appear, therefore, that O'Donnell owed his survival to the intervention of Parliament and to the reputation of the Parnellite party for contention.

The case, which dragged on well into 1882 exerted a profound influence on Frank Hugh O'Donnell. In the first place, it infused in him a new enthusiasm for parliamentary intervention. Secondly, it plunged him deep into a minute investigation of the most personal aspects of Indian administration, from gaol conditions in Bengal to mining concessions in Madras. It is easy to believe that in this activity he saw himself as the reincarnate Burke, bringing another man of evil, Sir Ashley Eden, to judgment. From 1881 to 1884, Frank Hugh deservedly replaced Fawcett as India's most loyal and persistent friend, though he never inspired equal admiration. To some extent also the way in which C.J. O'Donnell's charges were handled in India provoked the attention of other Home Rulers. Their interest in Indian problems, which the unpredictable individualism and arrogance of F.H. O'Donnell had done much to destroy, was partially recaptured. As Frank Hugh had hoped, the showing of the Irish Civil Servant was one which Home Rulers could readily understand and endorse. The exposure of bureaucratic inefficiency and of agricultural distress in another part of the empire, prejudicial to the name of English dominion, naturally struck a receptive chord in its critics' minds.

II The "Enfant Terrible" of the Indian Civil Service.

C.J. O'Donnell returned to India resentful that he had in his absence been "degraded" in public eyes. The Government had decided to drop the Hutwa case and saw fit to transfer O'Donnell to Jessore, to "give him another chance". Although the reason officially given was that O'Donnell was too senior an official for a sub-division such as Sewan, the decision was perhaps untimely.[1] Later developments indeed presented a different story.[2] In December 1879,[3] O'Donnell's attempt to exculpate himself failed when Sir Ashley Eden refused to reopen the investigation or to countermand Sir Stewart Bayley's orders.[4] Thus, while remaining in England until the duration of his furlough in September 1880, he took the opportunity of side-stepping the Lieutenant-Governor's veto, by a direct appeal to the Marquis of Hartington. The Ruin of an Indian Province was presented in the form of an open letter to the Secretary of State. The pamphlet achieved what petition through normal departmental channels had failed to do, not only notoriety but the notice of the highest Indian authorities, from the Council of India to the Viceroy in Council. Although the gravity of the charges in it alone guaranteed publicity, O'Donnell made certain by using the services of the Home Rule party to alert Parliament. The Indian Council subsequently discussed the

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1. Memorial of C.J. O'Donnell, 21 November 1881, discussed in Govt. of Bengal to Residency Commissioner, No. 3887J, 21 September 1881, para. 13, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 577.
2. See Chapter Eight, section two, p. 390.
3. C.J. O'Donnell to Govt. of Bengal, 31 December 1879, referred to in Minute of C. Grant, 28 July 1880, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 575.
4. Letter no. 344 from Govt. of Bengal, 12 February 1880, referred to in no. 867T, Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 30 July 1881, L/P&J/3 Vol. 2, 1881, P. 1349, I.O.L.

pamphlet on six separate occasions, two of which were protracted, delving back into the starting point of the affair, the mismanagement of the Hutwa estate.[1] For his part, Ripon commissioned Rivers Thompson, Eden's successor as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in 1882, to look at the allegations for a second time and to submit a report. That a more favourable conclusion could be reached, however, was quite another matter.

Suspecting that the Anglo-Indian world would be ill-disposed to judge the case on its merits, Hartington prescribed the form that he should like the investigation to take. He admitted to Ripon that the question was not an easy one to decide. His Council was divided as to how O'Donnell's charges should be treated, though in the meantime they had drafted two despatches on the subject. Even if O'Donnell resembled his Home Rule brother "a good deal in cleverness and in an obstinate pertinacity, with a good deal of wrong headedness", nevertheless, Hartington instructed the Viceroy, he must be allowed the benefit of a fair hearing. Ripon was to have the statements carefully examined and to give O'Donnell opportunity and facilities to prove them, without being condemned or "shunted out of the way" beforehand. If he could not, then he must take the consequences. The bad agrarian condition of Behar, which he admitted was not a new discovery to the India Office, was to be looked upon as a less important feature of the inquiry.[2] In India, it was deemed quite irrelevant.

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1. Minutes of the Council of India, July to December 1880, 1, 8 September; 16, 23, 29 November; 7 December. C 45, I.O.L.

2. Hartington to Ripon, 9 September 1880, Hartington Papers, Reel 794, I.O.L.

As feared, the Bengal Government severely restricted itself in the initial stages to an ad-hominem defence, reluctant to give O'Donnell the luxury of a judicial hearing. As far as it was concerned his was an open and shut case. Replying to a deputation of enraged indigo planters thirsting for O'Donnell's blood, Eden publicly dismissed the views of the "young" officer as "hasty and crude", and his motives as "open to question". "To have first submitted his statement to the test of experienced and responsible criticism" would not have suited the purposes of the writer, Eden declared.[1] In a private letter to Northbrook, the concluding part of which for obvious reasons he did not wish to be shown to Hartington,[2] the Lieutenant-Governor complained that the people in London must be ignorant of Indian history. O'Donnell had no right to be heard or to be considered in any way an expert on Behar:

> "Although he has a certain amount of sharpness, I have no hesitation in saying that there is not a worse, or more useless, officer in the Bengal Civil Service. There is not an officer of two years standing whose opinion on questions of administration would not rank higher than his."

The man whose statements the Secretary of State accepted against his own had served but two years in that province in a most subordinate position. This was an inaccuracy which Hartington readily acknowledged.[3] O'Donnell had been stationed in Behar for nearly six years, and had access

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1. Bengalee, 21 August 1880; Indian Mirror, 27 August 1880.
2. See Eden to Ripon, 14 January 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 592.
3. Hansard, Vol. 255, 17 August 1880, Cols. 1377-78.

to the "Statistical Account" of the area, three volumes of which he had been involved in compiling.[1] Nor was it true that O'Donnell, if shunned by his seniors, was believed by no one, and detested by natives as much as by Europeans. Yet, complained Eden, the instructions of the Secretary of State made it impossible for his Government "to bring the young man to book".[2]

It is clear that although O'Donnell was guilty in his pamphlet of exaggeration, he was not guilty of falsehood. Official reports tended to confirm rather than to confute his general conclusions about a poverty-stricken peasantry especially in Behar. Sarun had once been singled out by Temple as being in a deplorable condition.[3] The most serious complaint that A.P.MacDonnell could find against the pamphlet, as Collector Magistrate of Sarun, himself by implication branded as one of O'Donnell's "backsliding" local officials, was that it made no mention of reforms already begun in Behar. The remarks about the oppression by the zemindars as a class he found nothing to object to. As for indigo planting, despite improvements "that were worthy of a philanthropist", they had not reached the root of the question or reconciled ryots to this form of agriculture.[4] Eden, it should be mentioned, had called strongly for the "speedy amendment" of the system of zemindari management as recently as 7 September 1878.[5]

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1. Times, 25 August 1880. See Letter of F.H. O'Donnell on Behar.

2. Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 592.

3. Minute of Sir Richard Temple, 5 January 1877, Administration of Bengal 1875-76 (no. 182), Temple Papers, Eur. Mss F. 86, 148.

4. Letter no. 2000, A.P. MacDonnell to Govt. of Bengal, 4 June 1880, enclosure in Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, op.cit.

5. Report of the Indian Famine Commission, Part II, para. 21, p. 117, in Parl. P., Vol. LII, op.cit.

MacDonnell's report, a whitewash of the Lieutenant-Governor, was cited as weighty and irrefutable proof against O'Donnell. Anyway, the Indian Civil Service reacted not so much to O'Donnell's allegations, but to the fact they had been made at all, let alone broadcast to the world. Irrespective of their authenticity, O'Donnell's letter to the Secretary of State was held, rightly it must be said, to infringe stringent procedural regulations governing an appeal by a public servant. The stages of communication were defined as District Commissioner, Lieutenant-Governor, Viceroy and finally Secretary of State, if in the unlikely event the petition got through unpruned or was considered safe enough to forward. By breaking this rule in so spectacular a fashion, O'Donnell forced the Indian Civil Service to take action. Worse, he disregarded the shield of collective confidence and solidarity behind which in an alien country it was necessarily protected.

Eden keenly felt the danger of a premium being set on such disloyalty and contempt of discipline. If special favour were shown to "so unworthy a critic", he believed, a very dangerous precedent would be established. This was his trump card which he played for all it was worth. Already the presence of F.H. O'Donnell in Parliament was spoken of as the reason for Governmental impotence. As the Lieutenant-Governor explained to Northbrook, there were people who said that O'Donnell defied all local authority because he had a brother "who [could] command a certain number of votes and who [had] therefore to be conciliated".[1] This point was emphasised even more strongly in an official despatch to the Viceroy:

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1. Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, op.cit.

> "It would be affectation to ignore the fact that he [C.J. O'Donnell] conceives himself able to do this [defy authority] because of his close relationship to a well known Irish Member of Parliament who prompted by him, has no scruple in making repeated and unwarranted attacks upon the Government to which Mr. O'Donnell is subordinate."[1]

In this way, however, O'Donnell's Irish nationality and fraternal connection worked very much to his disadvantage. Hartington and the Permanent Under-Secretary for India, Sir Louis Mallet, were naturally anxious to dispel the notion that they feared the wrath of any Home Ruler. The former wrote to Ripon on 18 November 1881 that although he envisaged a great deal of trouble about the case in Parliament, he did not want "any undue favour" to be shown O'Donnell "on that account".[2] The latter minuted a similar opinion in 1882. F.H. O'Donnell was, he wrote, "no good reason for setting all the rules at defiance", or for allowing C.J. O'Donnell "to behave in a manner which would not be tolerated in any other member of the Service...".[3]

Thus, as an Irishmanwho had allies at Westminster ready to do battle for him, it was similarly emphasised that C.J. O'Donnell was tainted with the Home Rule disease of his countrymen. The Maharaja of Hutwa in his reply to the charges of mismanagement conveniently recalled O'Donnell's proposal to establish in London a landowner's association "to ventilate [Indian] grievances to the British public and to represent to Parliament the evil doings of the Government of

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1. Letter no. 867 T, Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 30 July 1881, para. 13, L/P&J/3, Vol. 2, 1881, I.O.L.

2. Hartington to Ripon, 18 November 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 567.

3. C.J. O'Donnell's Memorial to the Govt. of India, 29 May 1882, L/P&J/6, Vol. 75, 1882, discussed in Department Papers, J & P 985.

India and Bengal". Unless this was done, "the despotic tendency of the Indian administration would not be checked", and the Bengal landowners would lose their Raj just as the Irish had lost theirs. Eden seized on the statement, which he had "no reason to doubt", as evidence that O'Donnell was also "guilty of deliberate disloyalty".[1] He now altered the official version of the Hutwa case. The explanation was simply that Bayley had been compelled to censure O'Donnell for "endeavouring to foment ill-feeling" between the Maharaja and his ryots. His role had always been that of a Home Rule agent, not a responsible civil servant:

> "he acted as a follower of Mr. Parnell and a brother of Mr. F.H. O'Donnell might have been expected to act, and he officially made statements and assertions which were shown on the report of an officer [MacDonnell] specially appointed to inquire into the matter to be utterly untrue."[2]

Charles James O'Donnell thus stood condemned not as the champion of the "ryatti", but as the informer of a party ill-disposed to English rule in India.

The position of a critic within the ranks of a despotic if paternalistic bureaucracy was an embarrassment the British did not care to tolerate. Yet, in a sense, it was the logical outcome of its theory of stewardship carried to an extreme. C.J. O'Donnell was less a subversive bent on upsetting the Raj than a traditional "guardian",[3] whose concern for his wards could be said to have led him to defy his superiors. As this was unthinkable in a well-disposed

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1. F. Halliday to Govt. of Bengal, 8 July 1881, para. 19, enclosure in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 575.

2. Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, op.cit.,

3. See P. Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India: The Guardians, Vol. II, London 1965.

official, a harsh interpretation was placed on his motives. Eden was perplexed and puzzled by O'Donnell's obstinacy: "He [C.J. O'Donnell] suffered no punishment or degradation at the hands of the local Government", he informed the Viceroy.[1] The Foreign Secretary, Charles Grant, found it "impossible to avoid the conclusion" that O'Donnell was influenced by some personal animus. Because O'Donnell had confined himself to finding faults, while others had turned their attention to devising remedies, Grant did not consider his interest in Behar impartial. He credited O'Donnell with having "real sympathy for the Behar peasantry", but considered his "injudicious proceedings and sensational reports" as the wrong way to improve their conditions. The correct way was to be "quiet", "conciliatory" and unobtrusive.[2] Once in possession of official papers, the Council of India also were "almost unanimous" against taking notice of his allegations, "unless in the form of a rebuke for insubordination".[3]

The only ally O'Donnell could look to in the India Office was Sir Louis Mallet, who was convinced that the land system was "the central stronghold" of all that barred progress in India. He had always been opposed to state landlordism and had seized every opportunity to ventilate the principle of private property in the soil. According to his biographer, he was a man "who absorbed more thoroughly than most of his contemporaries the liberal political teaching of the mid-Victorian epoch". Certainly he despaired of the short-sighted

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1. Letter no. 867 T, Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 30 July 1881, para. 10, op.cit.

2. Minute of Charles Grant, 28 July 1880, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,575.

3. Hartington to Ripon, 5 May 1881, ibid., Add. Ms 43,566

"monomaniacs" who sat in the Indian Council, who were so absorbed by the idea of India that they were insensible to "all the facts of European and general imperial policy".[1] As Northbrook informed the Viceroy, Mallet was not regarded as a "safe opinion on all Indian affairs"[2]; on the question of land in particular he was considered "doctrinaire" and looked upon "with something like pitying contempt."[3] Mallet interviewed O'Donnell several times and was "a good deal impressed" by his statements and by his sincerity.[4] The Permanent Under-Secretary in fact held out for a "strong despatch" authorising an inquiry founded on O'Donnell's pamphlet, especially as the Revenue and Judicial Departments had reported that the charges had been insufficiently gone into by officials in India.

The Council, however, refused to budge and proved an effective block to further progress. It would not hear of reopening the case for a "troublesome person like O'Donnell". As for the Secretary of State, he was unusually open-minded although reluctant to move without the Council's authorisation. He had of course a healthy regard for the influence of a Parnellite-Radical coalition, having been forced by it to back-track over the issue of flogging in 1879.[5] At first Hartington was inclined to believe O'Donnell rather than the Government of Bengal, and in Parliament repudiated Eden's disparagement

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1. B. Mallet, Sir Louis Mallet: A Record of Public Service and Political Views, London 1905, pp. 107, 118-9, 124-36, 150-1.

2. Northbrook to Ripon, 7 December 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 571.

3. Mallet, op.cit., p. 126.

4. Hartington to Ripon, 9 September 1880, Hartington Papers, Reel 794, I.O.L.

5. Garvin, Chamberlain, 1, p. 273 ff.

of the Irishman.[1] He went with Mallet in thinking that there was a certain element of reason on O'Donnell's side, but also concurred with his Council that he was a "troublesome and ill-conditioned fellow", who was spoiling everything by pushing his charges much too violently. It is significant that Hartington seemed to move towards a bad impression of O'Donnell at the very time that the Irish struggle over the Coercion Bill reached its height.

Hartington's natural inclination was to believe that the British officials were probably right, or if mistaken, that they had "acted to the best of their judgment in difficult circumstances". But he was also aware that abuses did from time to time occur and would increase in number "if they could not be checked by the existence of perfectly free [representatives] or institutions or perfectly independent public criticism". It was this want of representative bodies and the inadequacy of the Indian press as an engine of criticism, that persuaded him to attend to "independent opinion" on the part of an official, "when it [did] not obviously proceed from personal or interest motives". The official tendency, he confided to Ripon, was always to suppress freedom of criticism and he did not feel confident that a man like O'Donnell would have "a fair trial before the Council":

> "I do not mean that actual gross misconduct would be carried out by the higher officers of the Government, but when the charges are in the nature of incompetence, or negligence, or in any way seem to impugn the system, and when they are made by a member of the service who ought to know better, then I think there must be some tendency to get rid of them as quickly as possible, and to brand the complainant as a mischevious intruder. This at all events is the opinion which I form from my experience of the Council at home, which as you know is thoroughly official in spirit."

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1. Hansard, Vol. 255, 17 August 1880, Col. 1378.

He doubted that the draft despatches recommended by his Council would see the light of day again; and he was pessimestic about anything coming from Thompson's inquiry. As no one but an Indian official could act as detective, Hartington saw only one way round the impasse. Unless the Viceroy himself or one of his Governors, "who from English political training ought to be free [from] Indian prejudices", intervened and went thoroughly into a "representative" case, the present unsatisfactory arrangement would have to be tolerated. Even then there was no guarantee of impartiality from a man like Ferguson, Governor of Bombay, "who was so thoroughly saturated with Bombay official prejudice", that he might have been "born in a Bombay office."[1]

Ripon obliged the Secretary of State by "carefully" reading through all the papers himself as suggested, and making an answer to be circulated to the Government of Bengal's letter of 30 July 1881. He concluded that Bayley's remarks upon O'Donnell's Hutua proceedings had been "just and proper":

> "They fully acknowledge Mr. O'Donnell's good faith and the worthiness of the motives by which he was actuated, and they recognise his energy and ability. They did not involve anything which deserves the name of censure; but point out in a considerate manner errors of judgment, such as all men are liable to, and such as it is the duty of official superiors to observe upon in the best interests of their subordinates. To describe such observations as tending to "degrade" the officers to whom they relate, is not so much exaggeration as a total misconception of the true position of the members of the Civil and Military Services."

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1. Hartington to Ripon, 5 May 1881, op.cit.

Concerning the mismanagement of the Hutwa estate he felt "bound to say" that the evidence showed that the estate was not in a satisfactory condition in 1879. This was "conclusively established" by MacDonnell's report, and O'Donnell was entitled to the full benefit of the fact. Ripon could not absolve O'Donnell, however, from the incautious statements "into which he was unfortunately led", but he did absolve him from the somewhat extravagant charges to which he had been subjected in Eden's letter. He could not help saying that he regretted its tone, and "a good deal" of its "substance". In reply, he briefed his secretary that care should be taken to avoid expressing anything like a general concurrence with it. Practically speaking, the Viceroy's Minute pardoned O'Donnell, but cautioned him against repetition. The request of the Lieutenant-Governor to remove O'Donnell from the Province of Bengal, he entirely rejected as being without sufficient cause.[1] O'Donnell ignored the Viceroy's warning and in certain other developments allowed Eden to have the final word.

In February 1882, he was found guilty in the High Court of Calcutta of serious judicial misconduct in the course of duty, and was transferred with demotion to an outpost in Bengal. The Jessore affair, as it became known, which achieved a "wide celebrity"[2] in its own right, developed out of an "unseemly squabble" over Municipal taxation. As elected Vice-Chairman of the Municipality of Jessore representing the rate-payers, O'Donnell drew up a budget for 1881-1882 reducing expenditure, in order to absorb a large deficit

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1. Minute of Lord Ripon, 10 November 1881, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 575.

2. Indian Mirror, 2 November 1881.

left over from the year before. As ex-officio Chairman representing the Bengal Government, Barton, his immediate superior, instructed the Councillors to reject O'Donnell's scheme and to replace it with his own, increasing taxation, to the extent of Rs 2,000. Both parties petitioned their District Commissioner who decided against Barton on a technicality.[1] Thus outmanoeuvred, the latter chronicled a list of complaints against O'Donnell, stressing his disobedience of "distinct and repeated orders", his neglect of allotted work, and the misuse of his judicial powers. An abstract of 108 cases was appended to the report in substantiation.[2] Barton also attempted to throw responsibility onto his subordinate for the state of bankruptcy in Jessore, an unnecessary fiction easily disproved by the fact that O'Donnell was new to the district.[3]

On the basis of three reports from the Presidency Commissioner on August 7 and 31 and 5 September concerning the validity of Barton's grievances, Sir Ashley Eden at once not only banished the Irishman to Mymensingh, recognised as "a penal settlement for refactory civil servants",[4] but he also deprived him of the power of trying criminal cases summarily. In the process O'Donnell was demoted to Assistant Magistrate. The orders embodied a series of crushing observations about his capacity as a public official, which the Lieutenant-Governor had long been making in private. Without investigation, Eden satisfied himself that O'Donnell was:

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1. Extracts from Pioneer in Bengalee, 12 November 1881 and in Indian Mirror, 2 November 1881.
2. Letter no. 332 J, H. Cockerell to Govt. of India, 25 January 1882, L/P&J/3, 1882, I.O.L.
3. Bengalee, 26 November
4. Indian Mirror, 27 October 1881.

(i) "Either unable or unwilling to perform properly his duties as Joint Magistrate.
(ii) Devoid of qualifications and business habits to be expected from a man of his standing.
(iii) Possessed of absurd theories as to his duties and position in respect of certain offices held by him in virtue of his appointment as Joint Magistrate.[1]
(iv) Habitually disloyal to his immediate superior, where there was too much reason to believe that he is in the habit of encouraging intrigues against the authority of such superiors.[2]
(v) Wanting of administrative discretion in his management of routine duties of Magistrate's office.
(vi) In the habit of summarily dismissing complaints on insufficient grounds and thus denying justice to injured persons.
(vii) Partial to illegal procedure in disposing of cases, which was grossly unfair to complainants".

For good measure, the complete saga of O'Donnell's history of "insubordination" was also dredged up.[3] Here was the evidence to utterly discredit O'Donnell and to counter the imputations contained in his Ruin of an Indian Province. Indeed, when a K.C.S.I. fell vacant, Eden recommended the Maharaja of Hutwa for the order, describing him to Ripon as "a good specimen of the large landed proprietor of Behar, much respected and anxious to do the best in managing an enormous estate"; he was in addition a "good English Scholar, benevolent and loyal".[4]

Yet Eden seemed too eager to have O'Donnell run out of India. The Anglo-Indian press, or at least the influential Pioneer, at once

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1. O'Donnell protested to Eden that as "elected" Vice-Chairman of the Jessore Municipality, and thus as "a representative of the people", he was independent of Barton's authority on Council matters. In a theoretical sense, O'Donnell was right. As a non-official he could hold his post against the wishes even of the Lieutenant-Governor. In a practical sense, such a position was untenable, and the Government ruled that O'Donnell was duty bound to assist and to obey his Chairman. See Article, "Mr. O'Donnell and the Jessore Municipality", in Pioneer, 29 October 1881.

2. The underlining is the writer's.

3. Letter no. 3887 J, H. Cockerell to Residency Commissioner, 21 September 1881, in Ripon Papers, Add.Ms 43, 577.

4. Eden to Ripon, 14 November 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 592. In the event, Hutwa was not awarded the K.C.S.I. The honour went instead to the Maharaja Mohun Jotendro Tagore.

accused the Lieutenant-Governor of conducting little better than a witch-hunt, of "high-handed" despotism and of "scandalous exaggeration".[1] The suspicion that O'Donnell had been wronged rapidly found many apologists. Certainly O'Donnell in his memorial to the Viceroy accused the main prosecution witness, Barton, of tampering with the evidence compiled against him.[2] In addition, Eden's orders were mysteriously leaked to the pro-Eden Hindoo Patriot and werepublished verbatim by Kristodas Pal, although he insisted "parenthetically" that there had been no understanding with the Bengal Government.[3] Nevertheless, the O'Donnell camp was given an immediate encouragement. Hartington's comment on the episode was that it was "rather unfortunate."[4] The usually reliable and friendly Pioneer took great offence at the "accidental way" the orders had been presented, instead of "honestly" appearing in the official Gazette as was the practice. While expressing sympathy with Eden up to a certain point, it found nothing reassuring in Horace Cockerell's letter and little to explain the severity of O'Donnell's punishment:

> "It gives us no facts, it is merely a long scolding administered to the culprit, and the only explanation of his degradation which it furnishes, is that, on the whole, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks he deserves it."

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1. Pioneer, 1 March 1882; Bombay Gazette quoted in Indian Mirror, 21 March 1882. The Indian Spectator was another paper to fault Eden for his hasty action.

2. Letter no. 332 J, Govt. of Bengal (H. Cockerell) to Govt. of India, 25 January 1882, para. 25, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 577; see also Bengalee, 21 January 1882.

3. Hindoo Patriot, 24 October 1881.

4. Hartington to Ripon, 18 November 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 567.

The Pioneer dismissed Barton's complaints against O'Donnell, which Eden treated "as if they were all so much gospel", as being "really little better than a tissue of inaccuracies and misconceptions". The "present transaction", it concluded, had all the appearances of a "very scandalous piece of injustice". The fact that O'Donnell was guilty of the "horrible quality of self-sufficiency", no doubt a "heinous characteristic" in the eyes of a Lieutenant-Governor, afforded no excuse for his present treatment, and was a wholly insufficient reason, "to meet the peculiar emergencies of the case".[1] The Bombay Gazette endorsed this reading of Eden's orders,[2] and in a later issue, the Pioneer, having in the interval filled out the gaps in the affair, completely vindicated the civil servant.[3] To a certain extent, the attitude of the Pioneer might be attributed to the friction that always existed more or less between official and non-official Anglo-Indians. On the issue of land reform, however, it would appear that the journal was really more progressive than the Bengal Government, and supported O'Donnell less because it wanted to make capital out of the feud than because it concurred with his protest.

The Viceroy's Council discussed the case on February 1 and 2 1882, and recommended that the charges of judicial malpractice against O'Donnell be sent up to the High Court of Calcutta for a ruling. A stand might "safely and properly" be taken on the opinion of the judges. On 10 March they found that O'Donnell had erred on three counts:

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1. Pioneer, 29 October 1881. See also issues for 4, 27 October 1881.
2. Bombay Gazette, quoted in Indian Mirror, 21 March 1882.
3. Pioneer, quoted in Bengalee, 12 November 1881.

first, that he had dismissed complaints without proper inquiry; second, that he had introduced an irregular procedure in criminal complaints; and third, that he had misused his powers of summary trial. The evasion of appeal, it was declared, was the "worst offence of which a judicial officer could be guilty, short of actual corruption."[1] The intervention of the Chief Justice, Sir Richard Garth, therefore, not only rescued Eden but crushed the O'Donnell defence. The accusation of bias could not be levelled with any force against the Bench as it was against the Bureaucracy. Had the Bengal Government referred the case of judicial malpractice to the High Court in the first instance, recorded Alexander MacKenzie, O'Donnell would have been "without a leg to stand upon".[2] The Viceroy, substantially agreed. In a concluding Minute he discarded Eden's other charges as altogether less important, which in some instances had been made more of than was necessary. That of disloyalty to superiors was in its nature vague, and what "one person [might] consider palpable disloyalty, another [might] regard as justifiable independence of opinion". Although O'Donnell talked "a good deal of nonsense on the subject", Ripon attached little importance to the squabbles about municipal affairs. It was to be regretted,he said,that the public had seized hold of the idea that O'Donnell was removed from Jessore because of these disputes.

Yet to be fair, they formed the kernal of Eden's letter of banishment. The decision to refer the case to the High Court was taken only

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1. A lengthy correspondence on the "Jessore Affair" can be found in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 577. See also Desp. no. 20, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 18 April 1882, with enclosures, L/P&J/3, 1882, I.O.L.

2. Minute of A. MacKenzie, 22 March 1882, in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 577.

when it seemed O'Donnell was about to elude disciplinary procedure. Once again the Viceroy dissented from the "vein of exaggeration" running through the Bengal letter and ordered that their reply, which should be "short and plain", should not commit them in any way to "the general and sweeping allegations" which it contained. Nor was he anymore willing to entertain Eden's suggestion that O'Donnell be threatened with dismissal from the Service:

> He [O'Donnell] is not a person upon whom such a threat would have much effect; indeed, my impression is that he would be rather glad to receive it than otherwise."[1]

Ripon's caution was justified. Without waiting for the Viceroy's decision,[2] O'Donnell took leave and sailed for England again in December to apply renewed pressure on the Indian Office through Parliament. He was already in London when the Viceroy on 13 April 1882 confirmed the orders of the Government of Bengal, though dissenting from its opinions.[3] Closing the case, Ripon reported to Hartington that "it seemed impossible to doubt that Mr. O'Donnell's whole conduct could fully justify his removal from the service." However for the sake and reputation of the I.C.S. he had decided not to adopt this drastic course:

> "It is possible that he might be able to do more harm to India if he were out of the service than he can do if he remains in it being carefully looked after and kept in a subordinate position until he has shown that he can be safely trusted."

Thus, while O'Donnell was not cashiered he suffered severe reprimand and demotion. "Greater leniency was never before shown to a man proved

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1. Minute of Lord Ripon, 5 April 1882, in Ripon Papers, op.cit.
2. Bengalee, 24 December 1881.
3. Departmental Papers, J&P 985 [Attached 784, 927, 1035, 1060], in I/P&J/6, Vol. 75, 1882.

to be an unjust judge and a disloyal and inefficient public servant", was one comment pencilled on the Viceroy's despatch.[1] By contrast, Sir Ashley Eden emerged from the whole affair in official eyes a hero. But he had not always been popular. The year before, his image had sunk so low that Northbrook had begged Ripon to say a good word in the Secretary of State's ear about him. They had got him "wrong somehow".[2] With the O'Donnell business nicely out of the way Eden's appointment in April 1882[3] to Sir Erskine Perry's vacant seat on the Council of India confirmed his rehabilitation, and according to Northbrook put "several very distinguished noses out of joint."[4]

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1. Letter no. 20 of 1882, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 18 April 1882, J&P 784, in L/P&J/6, Vol. 75, 1882. This letter can also be found in L/P&J/3, Vol. 3, 1882.

2. Northbrook to Ripon, 6 May 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43, 571.

3. Northbrook to Ripon, 21 April 1882, ibid, Add. Ms 43, 527.

4. Ibid.

III The Indian Reaction: Irish Agitator or Friend of the People?

How did C.J. O'Donnell come to be regarded by Indian opinion: as an insubordinate civil servant rightly put in his place, as an unreliable critic of Government, as a prejudiced pamphleteer? Certainly, there could be found Indians to endorse all of these judgments, as there could be found others to reject them. Whatever the verdict, it seems incontrovertible that O'Donnell made a deep impression on both Government and governed. In the first place, he won a name for himself as a political writer of ability, whose incisive and caustic style, together with the controversial nature of his material, courted observation and critical appraisal. The Black Pamphlet, his first work, was a ready-seller and was recalled in the same breath whenever O'Donnell's name was mentioned.[1] Its conclusions were notorious. Northbrook and Temple had been accused of "prostituting charity" and of wilfully misapplying 8½ million pounds, the indigo planters of "pocket[ing] the loot".[2] In effect, The Ruin of an Indian Province was reviewed as a sequel and drew the same initial critical notices.[3] As usual there seemed to be "too much sulphuric acid in Mr. O'Donnell's view of things", observed the Pioneer. It was prepared to concede however that he had the "faculty of stirring up a question thoroughly and awakening attention". Writers of his kind were often "an indirect cause of good", although "constantly unjust to individuals".[4]

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1. Pioneer, 23 June 1881.
2. Letter no. 332 J, Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 25 January 1882, para. 11, op.cit. The Black Pamphlet is discussed in Chapter Two, Section two.
3. Pioneer, 30 July 1881.
4. Ibid., 23 June 1881.

As a writer, O'Donnell became a thorn in the side of the bureaucracy, the "enfant terrible" of the Indian Civil Service,[1] disrespectful of its conventions and critical of its organisation. To a degree, therefore, he had acquired a certain reputation and fame disproportionate to his actual employ. In terms of rank and service, O'Donnell was a junior official in a relatively unimportant position. As a civilian of less than twelve years standing, he had yet to be on the "Warrant of Precedence" of persons holding appointments in the East Indies, of which in July 1880 there were seventy-seven classes in descending order.[2] Unwittingly, the Government of Bengal, by dealing with him as a dangerous trouble-maker, merely added to his stature. Whatever it did to "sit" on O'Donnell, or to reject his credentials as a reliable and unbiased witness, it drew attention to his views. Not only that, but it made him a willing "martyr", who appeared to choose the road of self-sacrifice rather than forsake the right to speak out. This objective was seen by Allen's Indian Mail as O'Donnell's "Mission in Life". His premature flight to England in December 1881, suicidal to his chances of successful appeal, was presented as concrete evidence of a "death-wish".[3]

To this extent, O'Donnell did become a household figure in India, and his case a talking-point for several years. The Indian

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1. Pioneer, 1 March 1882.
2. The India List, July 1880, pp. LXII-LXIII.
3. Allen's Indian Mail, 26 December 1881.

press, English-language and Vernacular,[1] understood as well as its Anglo-Indian contemporaries that his heresy was precocity and disregard for discipline. Even the detractors among them appreciated that O'Donnell's belittlement of the Permanent Settlement in Behar, "a long standing reproach", was not the real reason for the appearance of the prosecutor. The Indian Mirror, which did not entertain a high opinion of O'Donnell,[2] agreed with the Indian Spectator of Bombay, that the "missing link" between his fault and his punishment was the Black Pamphlet and his role as "public writer". The Spectator thought that "gagging all the sources of correct information" was not a "safe course" for any Government to follow:

> "It will render officials the mere tools and mouthpieces of departmental heads and all expression of independent and honest opinion will be forever smothered".[3]

Again, the startling about-turn of the Pioneer, from frontline critic to foremost defender, can also possibly be explained in this context of censorship. A friend and apologist from the beginning, the Bengalee's explanation was no different. O'Donnell had been "sent down" for exercising his "undoubted talents" as a writer. If he had committed a "blunder", it was by choosing the Indian Civil Service "for his career in life".[4] In general, the Vernacular press of Bengal similarly took the view that O'Donnell had been persecuted for plain

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1. The source for Vernacular opinion unfortunately is not the original issues of the various journals cited, but is the official compilations of a sample of translated extracts by Government Press Agencies.

2. Indian Mirror, 27 October 1881.

3. Indian Spectator quoted in Indian Mirror, 22 October 1881. See also Indian Spectator, 9 October 1881, Bombay Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 136, 1881, I.O.L.

4. Bengalee, 29 October 1881.

speaking. The Navavibhakar traced his ruin to the "courage" and "independence" which he displayed in publishing the "Black" and "Behar" pamphlets.[1] A civilian would be forgiven every other offence, except that "unpardonable sin", wrote the Ananda Bazar Patrika.[2] His punishment was "a foregone conclusion", declared the Sahachar, and was only delayed for "opportunity ofinflicting it." There were "few officials whose whole careers, if subjected to examination, would not furnish ample evidence for an adverse verdict."[3]

Primarily, however, it wasas an agitator for land reform that O'Donnell made the most impact on Indian politics. Unlike the Government or the Anglo-Indian community, native politicians were more interested in what he said than in the way he said it. To them, The Ruin of an Indian Province was less a matter inviting disciplinary proceedings than an attack on vested interest. After all, O'Donnell ascribed the sufferings of the people of Behar and the degradation of the province not only to the vices of a few English adventurers, but also to the oppression of the rich and powerful. The finding was one not likely to recommend itself to the Aristocracy of Bengal, if it strengthened the resolve of the educated middleclasses to use it to out distance their rivals. The Bengalee commended the "facts brought to light" by O'Donnell to the "anxious consideration" of public bodies, but specifically to the Indian Association. Banerjea strongly urged that it depute a delegate to Behar at once, to collect information

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1. Navavibhakar, 31 October 1881, Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 7, 1881, I.O.L.

2. Ananda Bazar Patrika, 7 November 1881, ibid.

3. Sahachar, 26 October 1881, ibid.

and to enable it to make "definite proposals".[1] The Bengalee warned the Government that it did not hold angry denunciations to be a sufficient reply to O'Donnell, and that it awaited the result of an official inquiry with interest: "If Mr. O'Donnell's pamphlet at all contributes to afford relief to the peasantry of Behar, the writer will have rendered valuable service to Bengal".[2]

The first reaction of the Hindoo Patriot, mild, almost warm, was less predictable. "No one [could] rise from a perusal of the pamphlet", it observed, "without being perfectly satisfied of the truthfulness of the picture", drawn by O'Donnell.[3] A month later in August, it swung round in the opposite direction,[4] put on its guard by Sir Ashley Eden and the Indian Mirror.[5] The attitude of the Mirror to O'Donnell was uncompromising and hostile. He was always that "Irish agitator",[6] not quite a substitute Parnell, but equally perverse and almost as dangerous. It attributed "the source of inspiration" to which the pamphlet owed its origin, to neither the alleged mal-administration of Behar, nor to sympathy with the oppressed ryots. Rather this "violent diatribe against landlords in Behar" was

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1. Bengalee, 24 July 1880.
2. Ibid., 18 September 1880.
3. Hindoo Patriot, 19 July 1880.
4. Ibid., 23 August 1880.
5. Indian Mirror, 20 August 1880.
6. Ibid., 23 October 1880.

a down payment for Irish votes at a future election, a "consolation" for failing to secure Galway. The "worthless pamphlet" was made up of "gross and barefaced mis-statements", based on slander.[1]

This conjecture was plausible but not completely satisfactory. O'Donnell was certainly in Ireland at the time when he wrote to Hartington, but his brother's strategy was in ruins and his own career in Irish politics was clearly a very long way off. Unless it can be accepted that he was 'politiking' as far back as 1874-1876 when he began to criticise both the Government and its land administration, then the Mirror's suspicions must be rejected as at best only partially true, and probably self-interested. Indeed, as the news from Ireland filtered through, describing a state of agitation "not seen since the days of Fenian uprising",[2] The Ruin of an Indian Province took on a more sinister and subversive appearance. Both the Hindoo Patriot and the Indian Mirror grew thoroughly alarmed that the ryots might "imitate the foolish example" set them by the Irish tenantry and outlined by O'Donnell. His forecast that India might see "one of the genus blossoming into an Indian Dillon, and openly advocating the non-payment of rents", no longer seemed an idle possibility.[3] The congratulations of the Mirror that India was free from these "village Dillons" who took delight in "fomenting resistance to law, peace and order", were without conviction.[4] As the Pioneer remarked,

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1. Indian Mirror, 27 August 1880.
2. Ibid., 12 November 1880.
3. Ibid., 17 September 1880.
4. Ibid.

the public of Behar had not forgotten incidents in Sarun in 1879, which had supplemented and served to translate O'Donnell's "epigrams" and "italicised quotations". His policy, demonstrated in the Hutwa estate as a test case, was "violent, hasty and revolutionary", and "ruinous to all concerned". On that occasion a European inspector "with a posse of chowkidars" had "paraded the country proclaiming the advent of a new regime". O'Donnell himself had presently held a progress through the land "attended by throngs of excited villagers". Within a week the whole estate was in a blaze, and the "guardian" of order was revealed in his true colours as the "fomenter of disturbance".[1]

Before the end of the year, O'Donnell's influence, whether seen to be working for good or bad, was acknowledged in all quarters. In October Eden was rumoured to have instructed local authorities that in future vacancies in the public service of Behar local inhabitants should be shown preference for all employment, a principle which O'Donnell had been advocating. The order was a blow to migrating Bengalis for whom the less educated Beharis were no match in the quest for jobs. Surprised that a "staunch friend" like the Lieutenant-Governor could inflict such a prohibition, the Indian Mirror spied the evil hand of O'Donnell.[2] Twelve months later, it positively asserted that it was his "indiscretion" that had turned Behari against Bengali and caused the "ill feeling" between the neighbouring peoples.[3]

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1. Pioneer, 5 August 1880.

2. Indian Mirror, 23 October 1880; see also Sahachar, 17 January 1881, in Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, L/R/15, Vol. 7, 1881, I.O.L.

3. Indian Mirror, 27 October 1881.

What the Bengalee termed the "most noticeable event of the year", the publication of the Draft Rent Bill and the Report of the Bengal Commission,[1] was also put down to the Irishman's genius. While he had contrived through sensationalism to get the ears of the Press, his brother had got him the ears of the House of Commons.[2] His pamphlet, coming as it has "in the midst of Irish land agitation", observed the Hindoo Patriot, "has put an additional pressure upon the Government for legislation".[3] Indeed, the Rent Commissioners recommended that their chapter containing special provisions for Behar should be read in conjunction with The Ruin of an Indian Province.[4] Despite the protestations of Eden and his minions to the contrary, O'Donnell was classified in an official report as an authority on peasant conditions in Behar. It reinforced O'Donnell's statement that he had been requested by the Commissioners to furnish information on the landlords of Behar, which the Lieutenant-Governor claimed had not a "shadow of truth".[5]

The result was that O'Donnell's name was linked with the Draft Bill, which in some ways could be regarded as the cultivators' charter. The Commissioners concluded that a substantial tenant-right in the soil existed in Bengal, and enunciated the principle that "the land of a country belongs to the people of a country". Under its terms,

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1. Bengalee, 1 January 1881.
2. Hindoo Patriot, 3 January 1881.
3. Ibid., 15 November 1880.
4. Abstract of Draft Rent Bill, Ch. 12, p. 6, in Parl. P., 1881, Vol. LXVIII, No. 62.
5. Eden to Northbrook, 19 October 1880, op.cit.

the peasantry was granted much-needed protection, which amounted to the augmentation of their rights. First, a cultivator who had held his land at the same rent since 1793, which was in reality reckoned at twenty years or more, could not have it raised.[1] Second, the occupancy rights of a cultivator of twelve years were consolidated into a valuable peasant-tenure, transferable by sale, right or inheritance. The most significant change pertained to the cultivator of less than twelve years whom the law code of 1859 admitted to no right whatever and who was left to fend for himself with the landlord as best he could. The solution proposed by the Commission was the creation of an intermediate group of tenants of between three and twelve years standing who would acquire a quasi-proprietary right in the land. Should the ryot refuse or be unable to pay the rent claimed by the zemindar, he could only be evicted on receipt of compensation for disturbance and for various improvements to his holding.[2] The operation of these clauses was thought to be a powerful deterrent to evicting landlords, and to "more or less give a complete degree of tenant-right" to "almost the whole agricultural population of Bengal".[3]

Although Lord Ripon later concluded that some of these proposals were inadequate,[4] they encountered immense hostility from the landholding classes. At a protest meeting of Behar zemindars on 5 November

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1. Abstract of Draft Rent Bill, Ch. I, para. b, p. 2, in Parl.P. op.cit.
2. Abstract of Draft Rent Bill.
3. Address of W.W. Hunter, in Times, 10 November 1880.
4. S. Gopal, op.cit., p. 191.

the Maharaja of Durbhanga foreshadowed a general reaction. He characterised the provisions as totally "one-sided", "calculated to give annoyance and heavy loss to landholders"; with corresponding advantage to ryots. His class stared utter ruin in the face.[1] Solidarity with the landlords' movement was expressed by the Bengal aristocracy and a systematic agitation against the Draft Bill commenced. They contended that the least extension of occupancy rights was a violation of the Permanent Settlement,[2] although not ninety years old already sacred; the land in the settled area of Bengal they saw as being their absolute property. The British Indian Association condemned the Bill as "simply revolutionary and confiscatory in character".[3] Subsequently, a new Draft Rent Bill was published, which was much less favourable to the rights of the tenant.[4]

There was also the temptation to attribute the rising fashion on the part of journalists and newspapers of finding analogies between the land problem of Ireland and India, to O'Donnell. Yet O'Donnell was not alone in encouraging comparisons to be made. While the Irish situation was referred to indirectly in The Ruin of an Indian Province, it was a new Home Ruler, D.H. MacFarlane, who saw direct significance in the "parallelism". In a letter to the Times on 4 November he presented an argument in favour of altering the land

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1. See Som Prakash, 16 August 1880; Tripura Vartavaha, 21 August 1880 in Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 6, 1880.

2. Hindoo Patriot, 15 November 1880.

3. Letter no. 8497, Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 27 July 1881, Report of the Rent Law Commission, Vol. I, Bengal 1880.

4. Navavibhakar, 28 March 1881, "The New Draft Rent Bill", in Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 7, 1881.

laws of Ireland drawn from the experience of agrarian legislation in Bengal. In substantial agreement, the Times felt that he had not gone far enough. Citing the report of the Famine Commissioners, it concluded that their solution to the evils of Bengal was that programme of fixity of tenure and fair rents recommended by many Irish authorities.[1] By far the most important comparison was ventured by O'Donnell's former superior, Dr. W.W. Hunter in an address to members of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institute on 9 November 1880. Hunter felt that in many respects the situation in Bengal presented a striking analogy to the agrarian agitation in Ireland, provided this was not "pushed too far". In the two countries there had grown up a "state of things" "unbearable to a section of the people", the peasantry, who he felt would "completely win the day". The difference was that the proprietary right in Bengal was a right conferred by the English Government, "hedged in by reservations in favour of the peasantry"; in Ireland it was the "growth of centuries of spoliation and conquest". It was therefore possible and easier to accord a secure position to the Bengal cultivators without injustice to landlords, than in Ireland which was a more complex difficulty. There, "a national inheritance of wrong" had to be got "rid of" with the least cost to the nation and the least infringement of vested proprietary rights. Coming from the Director-General of Statistics to the Government of India, these observations were widely reported.[2] In a way

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1. Times, 4 November 1880; see letter "Bengal and Irish Land Laws", and the Times' leader on it. See also Indian Mirror, 27 November, 10 December 1880.

2. Bengalee, 13, 27 November; 11, 18 December 1880.

they were directed at O'Donnell. Just as The Ruin of an Indian Province was a criticism of Hunter's two sanguine Addresses,[1] "What England has done for India", delivered in late 1879,[2] so his two lectures a year later, "What the English have yet to do for the Indian People",[3] were partly an acknowledgement of correction.

The first lecture was seized by the Times as confirmation of its view. It was impossible to read the barest analyses of it, it commented, without seeing that it was throughout applicable to Ireland. Of course there were "naturally and nessarily differences in the circumstances of the Western Island and the great Peninsula", but "the essential facts of the situation [were] the same", as was "the gist of the political problem". The rent war of Patna, the Times instanced, was a rent war "waged according to the theoretical principles of the Irish Land League". So much so that Parnell might be suspected of "borrowing his instructions" from India, rather than the reverse.[4]

At the beginning of 1881 the Hindoo Patriot complained that there seemed to be a "sort of combination" among the London papers and periodicals to prejudge the Bengal Land Question, along Irish lines.[5] Many of them in fact echoed the Times and Dr. Hunter. The Patriot later took issue with the Westminster Review, for example, for drawing just such a "false parallelism" between the conditions of

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 4; Pioneer, 23 June 1880.
2. Times, 12, 15 November 1879; Hindoo Patriot, 15 December 1879.
3. Times, 10, 13 November 1880. See F.H.Skrine, Hunter, Ch. XV.
4. Times, 10 November 1880.
5. Hindoo Patriot, 3 January 1881.

the Irish and Bengal peasantry.[1] Yet in India there were also advocates of the analogy school. The Hindu of Madras was a leading example:

> "Like India, Ireland is a conquered dominion of the British Empire, and is regarded as such, there being not the slightest attachment between the ruling and the native race; like India, Ireland is misgoverned, being looked upon more as a field for the distribution of the patronage of the ruling race, rather than a country worth being governed as disinterestedly as possible; like India, her industries and commerce were deliberately crushed to protect those of England; like India, Ireland was, until recently, burdened with the establishment of a foreign church; like India, she pays a tribute of nearly £7,000,000, taken out of that country each year in the form of remittances to absent landlords".[2]

The Indu Prakash affirmed that the grievances of the Irish peasant were just the grievances of the Indian ryot.[3] The Bengalee as it had done in the past, took frequent delight in tormenting its foreign rulers with the threat of an Irish-type uprising, the "legitimate results of past misgovernment":

> "Indian administrators above all, should bear in mind that there comes a time in the history of a nation when concessions are of no avail, and when the greatest favours showered with most profuse liberality, fail to appease the spirit of discontent."[4]

Even the Indian Mirror, taking pains to show that the Indian people were actuated by the spirit of loyalty, referred by way of contrast to the "exactly similar circumstances" under which the "two subject peoples" were ruled.[5] The methods of Home Rulers, "neither humane nor

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 30 January 1881.
2. Hindu quoted in Indian Mirror, 12 November 1880.
3. Indu Prakash, 2 March 1881, Bombay Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 136, 1881.
4. Bengalee, 6 November 1880. See issues 18 December 1880; 29 January 1881.
5. Indian Mirror, 12 November 1880.

wise", were totally foreign to the way of Bengal. The Vernacular Sadharani agreed. The means adopted by Irish tenants to enforce their demands could not possibly be resorted to by Bengal ryots, who did not have "the power", or "the inclination to try extreme measures."[1] The Bombay Aruno Daya reassured the Government that it need not entertain any fear that the Indian peasantry would imitate the example of the Irish.[2]

Other papers were less sure. How was it, asked the Som Prakash, that the Government of India, "with the example of the landlords of England and Ireland before it", dared confer occupancy rights on tenants at the expense of zemindars?[3] Commenting on the trouble in Ireland and the rejection by the House of Lords of the Disturbance Bill, the Sahachar, thought that the murder of one or two landlords appeared but "a small matter" compared with the sufferings of the Irish tenantry. The editor then dwelt on the "utter inutility" of the Upper House and of landlords as a class.[4] The reaction of the Maharatta was very much in keeping with a journal, more aggressively independent and nationalistic than its contemporaries. "Our people", it instructed, would "learn a good lesson on many points if they [would] take the trouble of carefully studying and contemplating the present conduct of the resolute, patriotic and self-sacrificing Irish

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1. Sadharani, 15 May 1881, in Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, L/R/15, Vol. 7, 1881.

2. Aruno Daya, 12 June 1881, in Bombay Native Newspaper Reports, L/R/15, Vol. 136, 1881.

3. Som Prakash, 16 August 1880, in op.cit., L/R/15, Vol. 6, 1880.

4. Sahachar, 10 January 1881, in ibid., L/R/15, Vol. 7, 1881.

people in their onward constitutional progress". A firebrand speech from Father Eugene Sheehy at a demonstration in Cork in honour of Parnell was greeted with approval.[1] In an earlier article, possibly borrowing from an Irish newspaper, the Mahratta proclaimed the coming of the "revolution":

> "May it be thorough and world wide, sweeping before it, and abolishing for ever, all autocratic rulers, privileged classes, and brute force institutions, and substituting therefore a state of matters in which it shall be the privilege and the pleasure of all to work for the greatest good of the greatest number".[2]

Much of this of course was shadow-boxing, a statement of strategic positions, and of theoretical rather than genuine beliefs. Few newspapers were committed to a policy of violent agitation, even if they recognised that Ireland was wresting reforms by force.[3] The Bengalee might safely conjure up the spectre of a rampant peasantry, in the belief that it was unlikely to materialize, and in the hope that the Government would forestall its appearance by timely intervention. Basically it looked to Ireland in 1881 not for lessons in disorder and public disturbance, but for signs of bounty from the English Government, such as "a free and spontaneous concession of tenant-right to the Irish peasantry":

> "We the people of this country have a special interest in the above principle being recognised by the rulers of the Irish people who are also our rulers. The same selfishness which characterises England's relations with Ireland characterises her relations with this country...".

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1. Mahratta, 30 October 1881, in Bombay Native Newspaper Reports, op.cit.

2. Ibid., 9 October 1881.

3. Bengalee, 5 November 1881.

While statesmen like Bright and Gladstone, "the foremost to recognise the rights of peoples to govern themselves", were in power, the Bengalee sought to prevail on their sense of justice. In November it presented a completely different, slavish picture of the Indian people, "always resigned uncomplainingly to the will of providence for the fate that befalls them, voiceless in their sufferings, dumb and mute in their woes".[1]

In reality, however, the response of Bengal ryots to the Draft Bill and to the counter campaign of seminars fell somewhere between the two extremes, neither revolutionary nor resigned. There were occasions when the "monotony of Bengal life" was "relieved by agrarian outrage" and a "half-starving" peasantry appealed to "physical force", but these were infrequent.[2] Several demonstrations of ryots were organised under the auspices of the Indian Association.[3] A landlord supporter such as the Dacca Prakash detected the influence of a recalcitrant official or of an unscrupulous lawyer, who found it "profitable to foment" this kind of agrarian discord.[4] As a general rule, however, the meetings were orderly and peaceful, although the Bengal Government was not inclined to view them with favour. On the occasion of a meeting held in Wellington Square, it was alleged that the authorities were afraid that "peaceful agitation" might degenerate into the "lawless violence and terrorism" of Irish Land Leaguers.[5]

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1. Bengalee, 5 November 1881.
2. Ibid., 14 May 1881.
3. A.Seal, op.cit., p. 223.
4. Dacca Prakash, 16 January 1881, in Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, op.cit.
5. Bombay Chronicle, 3 July 1881, in Bombay Native Newspaper Reports, op.cit.

The Indian Association eventually submitted to the Government a report on the Draft Bill, based on its investigations of ground root opinion.[1] This included a demand for important provisions also embodied in Gladstone's Irish Land Act. That both parties took their stand on certain principles of the Irish measure was the most significant aspect of the debate between ryot and zemindar. The particular sections each decided to highlight were carefully selected, those on the one side enhancing the privileges of the tenant with respect to the landlord, those on the other the rights of the landlord with respect to the tenant. While the Bengalee called for "fixity of tenure, freedom of sale and fair rents" [2] for the Indian ryot, the Hindoo Patriot claimed for the Bengal zemindar the " ssential rights of a proprietor" granted his Irish counterpart. In the case where there was no heir, for example, land under the Irish Act lapsed to the landlord; under the Bengal Bill it reverted to the Government. "Need we say that the last is an equitable provision". The Hindoo Patriot also recommended for consideration the restrictions placed by Gladstone on the "transferability of the occupancy tenure", showing "a just tenderness" for the landlord but which had no place in the Bill of the Rent Commissioners or in the amended Bill of Mr. H.J. Reynolds, Secretary to the Revenue and General Department of the Government of Bengal.[3] On the other hand, the Bengalee concentrated on the disturbance and compensation clauses favourable to the tenantry, which the Patriot had understandably rejected as

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1. Seal, op.cit., p. 223.

2. Bengalee, 14 May 1881. Article: "the Rent Question and the Irish Land Bill".

3. Hindoo Patriot, 23 May (Parl I); 13 June 1881 (Part 2); five part article: "The Irish Land Bill".

having "no application" to Bengal. The period for which rent in Bengal once fixed, was to remain unaltered, was ten years. At their various public meetings, the ryots demanded that this be extended to thirty years, but at the very least were prepared to settle for the Irish compromise of fifteen. Weighing up the merits of the respective Bills, the Bengalee concluded that the Indian ryot would not be much worse off than the Irish peasant.[1] It took the Hindoo Patriot into the fifth part of its analysis of "the Irish Land Bill" to "confess" that as a whole, the 1881 Irish Act was not "based on substantial justice";[2] as far as landlords were concerned.

To deduce that the crucial impetus moving the Indian Government to revise its law of tenure in Bengal came from C.J. O'Donnell would be to go much too far. Long before The Ruin of An Indian Province appeared, Sir Ashley Eden and Sir Richard Temple before him had examined the relations between landlord and tenant and concluded that they were unsatisfactory and in need of improvement.[3] Eden must receive credit for appointing a Committee of Behar officials in 1878 to advise him on the ticcadari system. Its report submitted in March 1879, recommending that the whole rent law of Behar be recast, was referred by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Rent Law Commission, the author of the Draft Bill. Although of the opinion that in details it was "open to modifications", Eden thought that

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1. Bengalee, 14 May 1881.
2. Hindoo Patriot, 13 June 1881.
3. See G.R.C. Hambly, op.cit., Ch.V.

the Bill presented "a reasonable basis for legislation".[1] Thus the Government of Bengal was already decided at least in principle that legislation was both necessary and desirable, when O'Donnell's pamphlet was published. The direction and pace of reform was quite another matter. The Ruin of an Indian Province deprived Eden of any breathing space to allow Government intervention to be as painless and as unobtrusive as possible. Together with Dr. W.W. Hunter, O'Donnell was chiefly responsible for attempting to familiarise the British public with the main features of Indian land law, which became the subject of many addresses and learned articles in England.[2] It was on the request of an ex-Buttite, George Errington, that the Draft Bill of the Rent Commission was laid upon the Table of the House of Commons on 7 February 1881, and a copy of its report placed in the parliamentary library.[3] In India, as a contributor in bringing latent fears to the surface and class prejudices to the boil, O'Donnell hastened the virulent controversy that Eden had sought to avoid. His pamphlet was the prelude to division in Bengal society, and of intense rivalry between the two political Associations. It might reasonably be argued that O'Donnell helped to crystalise this conflict, if also to accelerate the legislative process of the central Government. Yet a Bengal Tenancy Act was not passed until 1885 in order to find some compromise formula that would reconcile the warring parties and resolve basic differences between the Indian Office and the Indian Government.

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1. Letter No. 8497, Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India, 27 June 1881, Report of the Rent Law Commission, Vol. I, Bengal 1880. See also R. Rahman, Social and Administrative Policy of the Government of Bengal 1877-1890, Ch. 6, "The Tenancy Problem", unpublished M.A. Thesis, London 1959.
2. Bengalee, 1 January 1881. "The Resumé of the Year".
3. Hansard, Vol. 257, 13 January 1881, Col. 631.

In effect, Charles James O'Donnell was also both the wedge that separated the Home Rule party from its former friends, and the go-between of a new alliance. The British Indian Association, as evidenced through the attitude of the Hindoo Patriot, regarded him with cool dislike, a dislike which was passed on to the Irish Home Rule party as a whole. "So many analagous circumstances and feelings", declared the Indian Mirror, "should draw closer the bonds of sympathy between Irishmen and Indians". Yet it was "the Irishmen of this country" who were the "most harsh and unjust in their judgments of people".[1] The reference was obvious. Welcoming O'Donnell's demotion in 1881, the Mirror begged Sir Ashley Eden not to retain his services any longer. It was a "gross injustice" to the Indian people that he should be allowed the least opportunity of again mis-using his large powers:

> "We are afraid that Mr. O'Donnell's utter want of judgment prevents him from seeing the absurdity of his tendency to allow his notions of Home Rule, perhaps, an undue ascendancy in the fulfilment of his official relations".[2]

The contrast with the Bengalee was complete. Soon after the appearance of O'Donnell's pamphlet, it announced that the Irish party was to take special care of all affairs relating to India, starting with an early debate on the budget.[3] However, because of the Irish Land Bill, the Indian Estimates were held back to the usual time, although Frank Hugh O'Donnell's unremitting harassment of the Government in related fields was seen as adequate compensation. It was as the direct

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1. Indian Mirror, 12 November 1880.
2. Ibid., 27 October 1881.
3. Bengalee, 2 October 1880.

link with this parliamentary agitation that Charles James O'Donnell was accorded the "very best thanks" of the Bengalee. His banishment to Mymensingh was the "punishment" for such worthy service.[1]

1. Bengalee, 29 October 1881.

Chapter IX

"The N tural Representatives of Unrepresented Nationalities"

I In the Image of Burke

II Indian Gaol Reform

III The Nursery of Missionary Ideas and I eals

I In the Image of Burke

On the question of imperialism, Frank Hugh O'Donnell imagined that he was following in the footsteps of Edmund Burke. Certainly, likenesses between them can be found. The "rise and consolidation" of a "federated empire" on the basis of equality between members,[1] was perhaps a vision Burke would not have rejected. Neither figure was an imperialist in a conventional sense. As Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien has suggested, Burke could be labelled more easily as a counter-revolutionary. He was strongly opposed to "contemporary forms of imperialist psychology", wherever he considered they were manifested, in the thirteen American colonies, in Ireland or in India.[2] Except over the Eastern Question and the setting up of a buffer-state on India's North-western frontier, O'Donnell was no friend of the Beaconsfield colonial policy. Both men conceived that the relationship between parts of the empire ought to be more fraternal than autocratic, a system of mutual help and advantage rather than of commercial exploitation.[3]

It was with respect to India in particular, however, that O'Donnell chiefly fancied himself as Burke's disciple and natural successor. Unquestionably they shared a joint passion for the so-called "brightest jewel in the imperial crown", although initially Burke looked on the Indian empire as "an awful thing" strongly attacking its acquisition and its consolidation. Once having accepted the

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 473.

2. C.C. O'Brien, (ed.), Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, London 1968, p. 66.

3. See P.J. Marshall, The Impeachment of Warren Hastings, Oxford 1965, p. 186; T.H.D. Mahoney, Edmund Burke and Irel , Cambridge (Mass.) 1960, pp. 134-5, 312-3.

British presence in the East, he devoted his energies in Parliament to protecting the Indian constitution from Western interference. The greatest work of his life he considered his efforts to defend India against the ravages of fortune-seekers and conquistadors, to regulate the activities of Company agents, and to subordinate the rule of a joint stock Company to the supervision of Parliament. Burke's concern for the "undone millions" of India assumed the proportion of a crusade[1] and was epitomised by his tenacious attempts to secure the impeachment of the first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, whome he saw as the symbol of all disorder.

If Frank Hugh O'Donnell was no doctrinaire respecter of indigenous constitutions or advocate of non-interference in Indian society, he sought to emulate Burke as parliamentary overseer of justice, to protect the interests of the "dumb millions" against the representatives of the Crown as the latter had protected them against the servants of the Company. "If you were an Edmund Burke, you would *defend* the oppressed Indians, and make things unpleasant for Warren Hastings", O'Donnell had flung at the sceptical John O'Leary in 1878. At that time, the Fenians had much preferred a soldiering hero to a parliamentary orator; swords rather than words.[2] O'Donnell failed to persuade them about the merits of parliamentary activism, but was not himself converted to a policy of violent action. In advising the political leaders of the Indian community on the methods of agitation he was insistent that these must be constitutionally-based.

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1. Mahoney, op.cit., p. 111.

2. See Chapter Three, section two, pp. 145-6.

Second only to the cause of Home Rule for Ireland, it became his great ambition to lay the foundations in India of a nationalist movement, capable of influencing the Government peaceably. In this sense, O'Donnell was Burke's opposite, not a social conservationist but an advocate of social and political change. Far from wishing to protect the Indian constitution from Western meddling, O'Donnell hoped to modernise it along the lines of western thinking. His advice to Indian politicians echoed that of John Bright, that they must exorcise their spirit of dependence on British philanthropists and learn to help themselves, just as the Irish were doing.

Where India was concerned Burke was really more of a political philosopher than O'Donnell and much less of a pragmatist. The former had extensive knowledge of East India Company affairs but little appreciation of Indian conditions. In effect, his love of India was largely theoretical. One historian has written that Burke was "more concerned with expounding and justifying conservative *principles* than with defending the laws, customs, and civilisation of India".[1] Equally, it could be argued that O'Donnell was using India as a vehicle for Irish nationalist propaganda. It has been seen that he had the ulterior motive of securing the leadership of the Home Rule party by means of the Indian connection. Yet it was possible that his overriding concern was not only to enlist Indian support for Irish self-government but also to sow the seed of federalism in the imperial context. While neither Burke nor O'Donnell knew India first-hand, O'Donnell's impression of it was less obscured by imagination. He was well acquainted with some of her people, with

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1. Bearce, op.cit., p. 18.

an Indian student population studying law at the Inns of Court and with an itinerant commercial class. In his "Civilian" brother, O'Donnell possessed a source of intelligence closer to Indian feeling than ever Burke could lay claim to having in his kinsman William, a notorious "wastrel" who had gone to India primarily to recoup a fortune lost in the East India stock crash of 1769.

Strangely, in the harassment of important officials, O'Donnell followed a pattern set by Burke. His burgeoning interest in Indian social administration from 1881 onwards resembled Burke's sudden attack and single-minded hounding of Hastings in 1781.[1] In A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party O'Donnell recorded that there was no year in Parliament in which he did not devote a large portion of his time to the defence of Indian interests.[2] Yet reference to the indices of Hansard show clearly that 1881 was something of a watershed for O'Donnell. Previously, while he had intervened in Indian affairs from time to time, he now intervened persistently. In 1881, he made twenty-three separate interventions,[3] in 1882 thirty-five,[4] and in 1883 fifty-five,[5] which more than doubled the total number of questions he asked about Ireland that year. In the case of Burke, regarded as the great Indian reformer of his age, there is some reason to doubt whether he was inspired entirely by motives of self-interest over Hastings or whether he was

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1. See Marshall, op.cit., p. 14.
2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 424.
3. This total includes two questions on Burma and one speech on Afghanistan.
4. Questions concerning the cost of Indian Regiments sent to Egypt are counted as relating to India.
5. Two or more interventions during the same debate are calculated as one.

representing the conscience of Britain as well as her conservatism. It is likely that he was influenced in some degree by William Burke and Philip Francis, neither a friend of the Governor-General.

O'Donnell's story was not dissimilar. He bitterly resented the treatment that Charles James O'Donnell received at the hands of the Government of Bengal. Just as he had looked to the example set by Daniel O'Connell over Andrew Stevenson, so it is possible that he consciously modelled his response over Sir Ashley Eden along Burkean lines. Conceivably, the Lieutenant-Governor appeared to him as a latter-day Hastings responsible for a variety of internal administrative disorders that it was his duty to expose, reform, and to exact punishment for. At any rate, O'Donnell set about not only clearing his brother's name but also discrediting Eden's. Yet while his motives remain complex, his persistence in ferreting out cases of misgovernment and injustice suggests a zealous reformer rather than a celtic mafioso.

II Indian Gaol Reform

A case in point was the treatment of Indian prisoners in the gaols of Bengal and the appalling conditions under which they were run. More than any other single political question, this was to claim O'Donnell's undivided attention from 1880-1883. The scandal broke imperceptably. In the Annual Report on the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India for 1877, a large increase in the incidence of petty crimes and their punishment by whipping, was noted and casually attributed to the prevailing scarcity of that year.[1] 72,650 Indians had received this type of sentence. Yet it was not until 28 June 1880 that T.C. Thompson, Radical Member for Durham, first raised the matter with the Secretary of State and requested that he submit a return of the specific offences for which "flogging" had been considered the appropriate remedy.[2] Because judicial statistics did not classify offences under punishments, Hartington was unable to comply, and fell back on the Report's explanation that exceptional conditions were to blame. Where there had been widespread distress among an underfed population, whipping was preferred to either fine or imprisonment. He volunteered the information that prison mortality had been so high that regretfully the latter sentence "necessarily carried with it considerable risk of life."[3] Surprisingly, this somewhat revealing admission aroused not a ripple of concern.

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1. Statement exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year 1877, in Parl.P., 1878-79, Vol. LVI, No. 366.

2. Hansard, Vol. 253, 28 June 1880, Col. 960.

3. Ibid., Cols. 960-1.

"Flogging", on the other hand, which was still very much a contentious issue in British politics, did. Alexander Sullivan, at the forefront of the campaign to abolish the "cat" in the armed services, wanted to know what difference there was between flogging and whipping. He also inquired whether in deference to British public opinion the Government intended to eradicate "flogging" in India.[1] However, like Thompson, he also drew a blank. The only distinction the Secretary of State could furnish was that unlike the practice in Britain, "flogging" in India was inflicted with a light cane.[2] However, Hartington did promise to ask the Government of India whether there was any necessity for maintaining flogging and whether it might be modified or possibly even discontinued.[3]

In fact, Hartington had already done this when he forwarded Sullivan's questions to the Viceroy on 29 July.[4] An inquiry was thus set in motion but with little sense of urgency. Local Governments were not circulated with instructions until 24 September,[5] and it was in May the following year that H.A. Cockerell, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, supplied the desired information. His table listing the number of floggings inflicted between 1875-1880 and their proportion to the total number of punishments in gaol revealed even by the standards of the time an alarming increase:[6]

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Cols 960-1. These questions were repeated by Sullivan with formal notice on 1 July.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 1 July 1880, Col. 1246.

4. Desp. Judicial No. 14, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 29 July 1880, Indian Home Proceedings, P/1509, Prog. 223, p. 1541.

5. Circular No. 15/1052-61, 24 September 1880, ibid., prog. 226, p. 1542.

6. Letter no. 984P, Sec. to Govt. of Bengal to Sec. to Govt. of India, 26 May 1881, Indian Judicial Proceedings, P/1852, prog 113, p. 37 ff.

Year	No. of Corporal Punishments	Proportion % of Corporal Punishments to total no. of Punishments in Gaol
1875	2973	18.7
1876	2370	13.4
1877	3014	14.2
1878	4789	15.1
1879	8232	16.0
1880	4654	7.5

Later the figures were slightly amended upwards.[1] In the meantime, The Reports on the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India for the years 1878 and 1879 proved that 1877 was not as "exceptional" as had first been claimed.[2] Bengal supplied the most spectacular evidence of this.[3] Within two years, punishments meted out to a smaller total of male prisoners had more than doubled and floggings had almost tripled:

Year	Total no. of Prisoners	Punishments	Floggings	% of Prisoners flogged
1877	71327	20753	3014	4.2
1878	72089	30785	4815	6.6
1879	70114	50268	8324	11.8

Cockerell offered no explanation for these figures. Instead, the overall effect of his report was to give an impression of general

1. Extract from the Proceedings of the Govt. of India in the Home Dept., no. 1 33-43 11 January 1882, Indian Judicial Proceedings, P/1852, prog 114, p. 41 ff.

2. Parl. P., 1880, Vol. LIII, No. 402, p. 1 ff; 1881, Vol. LXIX, No. 345.

3. Times, 1 September 1881.

well-being and progress. It confidently pointed out that Sir Ashley Eden had immediately issued orders on the subject,[1] which had had the "desired effect in checking the infliction of corporal punishment" except for the most serious offences. A reduction of diet had been substituted for flogging with no apparent fall in the standard of health, moderate mortality figures proving that this punishment had been used "judiciously".[2] This verdict had soon to be modified.

The inquiry was quietly stagnating when O'Donnell injected it with a new lease of life. On 23 June 1881 he shocked the House of Commons with some alarming allegations. He wanted to know, if as reported, the incidence of mortality among prisoners was as high as 360 per thousand in some districts and if statements made by the Bombay Gazette, the *Calcutta Englishman*, and other Indian newspapers were true, that:

> "Prisoners who, from want of food, were unfit to labour, were dragged to the triangles and flogged by the thousand because they were weak and sick unto death on starvation rations."[3]

The Secretary of State replied that although they contained "some inaccuracy and much exaggeration" there was regretfully "too much foundation" in them. He had thus written to the Government of India for immediate details.[4]

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1. On 16 July 1880 and on 21 January 1881.
2. Letter no. 984 P, Sec. to Govt. of Bengal to Sec. to Govt. of India, 26 May 1881, op.cit.
3. Hansard, Vol. 262, 23 June 1881, Col. 1106.
4. Ibid., Cols. 1107-8.

The following day, Hartington begged the Viceroy in a private letter to "look at O'Donnell". It was not a "very satisfactory case" and he expected that he would probably have to send him another despatch on the subject. The Judicial Department in London had neglected to read the Gaol Administrative Report for 1880 and a Bengal Resolution of 20 July 1880 restricting the use of corporal punishment, until O'Donnell's notice had drawn their attention to them: "This was of course very wrong". But the Viceroy was also partly to blame. "Considering the grave facts" brought to light in these documents, Hartington remonstrated, he ought to have received a despatch from Ripon himself. Anyway, "the whole subject" would now be gone into "officially and fully".[1]

On 5 August he again wrote to Ripon that the situation was worse than he had originally thought. A committee of the Council was looking further at the evidence. There had been "nothing like a regular or thorough examination" of the Gaol Administrative Reports, sent home from the various provinces, for years. He was thus afraid that Sir Ashley Eden would be "more exercised" yet by the question. While he believed that the mortality in Bengal compared favourably with other provinces, there was still, he said, some gaols in which both mortality and punishments appeared "to be something frightful." A "good deal more discussion and inquiry" could therefore be expected.[2]

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1. Hartington to Ripon, 24 June 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43566.

2. Hartington to Ripon, 5 August 1881, ibid., Add. Ms 43567.

Yet somewhat to his annoyance, Hartington discovered that the gaol question was to be raised again during the "Budget" debate. O'Donnell had had the discourtesy to get up a motion about it practically on the eve of the Secretary's annual Indian Statement to Parliament. As he informed the Viceroy, he would now probably have to sit and listen to an hour's speech not only from him, but perhaps more from Irish Members whom O'Donnell might "induce to take it up, in order to waste time". The observation was uncharitable for Hartington but characteristic of English opinion. The Liberals were no more receptive than the Conservatives had been to Irish advice on how to run their empire. There was still a consensus that the underlying motive behind Irish intervention was obstructive and delaying. Such a suspicion now seemed to be running through Hartington's mind. Unless the House of Commons procedure w s reformed, he projected, the House would become "an object of contempt and derision". Worse, the whole business of administration "would be brought to a standstill". He blamed Irish obstruction not only for holding up the Viceroy's proposals, but also for the "perfunctory way" in which they were dealt with when eventually taken up.[1]

On this occasion, however, Hartington misread the feeling of the Commons. Parliamentarians on both sides were unusually willing to accept the validity of O'Donnell's allegations. The Tory Member for London, R.N. Fowler, strongly supported his case for an official inquiry into the whole area of gaol administration. He himself had just received a letter from a "distinguished" native editor of a

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1. See Times, 20 July 1881 in which a similar sentiment is expressed. Hartington to Ripon, 19 August 1881, Ripon Papers, add. Ms 43567.

Calcutta newspaper, which had referred to the "considerable interest" the Home Ruler's agitation was arousing in India.[1] His Liberal namesake, W. Fowler [Cambridge] was equally ready to accept O'Donnell's story at face value. What he thought would otherwise have been a satisfactory statement from the Secretary of State was marred by the details which O'Donnell had brought to light. They showed "how much there was in the Government of India that did not meet the eye".[2] O'Donnell's word had suddenly become authoritative and above suspicion. Hartington had no choice but to concede him belated recognition.[3] He thanked O'Donnell on behalf of the ouse, but regretted that Bengal had been singled out from other provinces for attack. Such a course, he warned, was not "calculated to stimulate increased activity".[4] What annoyed the Secretary of State was O'Donnell's insistence that the officials responsible for the medieval condition of gaol administration be brought to account. O'Donnell had threatened that he would not rest satisfied if those who had been guilty of "whole-sale murders" were allowed to go "scot free".[5]

Far from delaying solution, however, the search for culprits speeded up the process of reform. The Secretary of State did not want to be placed in the embarrassing situation of knowing little more about the subject when Parliament met again in the new year.

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1. Hansard, Vol. 265, 22 August 1881, Cols. 659-60.
2. Ibid., Col. 686.
3. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 62-3, 424. In later years, O'Donnell over-estimated the "warmth" with which Hartington thanked him for his "successful" agitation against flogging in Indian gaols, to the extent that he saw the "Whig" Grandee and not Gladstone as the one British statesman who "could have reconciled Nationalism and Imperialism in Ireland".
4. Hansard, op.cit., Cols. 697-8.
5. Ibid., Cols. 682-3.

Still apparently in the dark on 3 February 1882 he pressed the Viceroy for some observable sign of progress. "I should have been glad to have known exactly what is going on", he complained.[1] By the end of the month he was informed that arrangements had been made to bring gaol administration under "closer and more systematic check and review".[2] Inspectors-General were required to submit quarterly returns to their local Governments not only showing the total number of male prisoners, offences and whippings, but also as Hartington had requested, statements concerning the severity of corporal punishment and resultant mortality figures should there be any.[3] In future, corporal punishment would be curtailed though it was to remain "sufficiently severe to act as a real deterrent."[4] Once fixed to keep prisoners in health, the diet scale was not to be altered or interfered with. The Secretary of State reminded the Viceroy that the gaol of every district fulfilled "to a large extent the functions of a poor house". As he understood the problem, remedy lay within the reach of an "energetic and vigilant administration".[5] Whatever happened they could not allow a repetition of 1879.

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1. Hartington to Ripon, 3 February 1882, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43568.

2. Desp. Judicial No. 2, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 16 January 1882, and Extract from the Proceedings of the Govt. of India in the Home Dept., No. 1/33-43, 11 January 1882, in Indian Home Proceedings, P/1852, progs. 197, 114, p. 261 ff., p. 41 ff.

3. Desp. Judicial No. 6, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 2 March 1882, para. 6, in ibid., P/1853, prog. 242. See also Desp. No. 26, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 29 July 1882, L/P&J/3, 1882, p. 677.

4. Desp. Judicial No. 2, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 16 January 1882, op.cit.

5. Desp. Judicial No. 16, Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 25 May 1882, paras. 4, 7, in L/P&J/3, 1882. A Return containing much of this correspondence can be found in Parl.P., 1882, Vol. XLVIII, C. 3316.

While the Government steadfastly refused to apportion blame, O'Donnell's approach forced officials to defend themselves. Sir Ashley Eden, for example, had felt the need to clear his name of suspicion as early as 16 July 1881. He instructed his private secretary, Colonel Henry, to write down "a few facts" for the Viceroy's benefit which would enable him to judge how far the Bengal Gaol Administration was "obnoxious" to the charges laid against it by "certain persons". That the health of prisoners had seriously deteriorated during 1879 was not denied, but the fault was traced back to the recommendation of a Prison Conference assembled by the Government of India in January 1877 to reduce the scale of diet. At that time, Colonel Henry explained, a campaign had been mounted by the "advocates of law and order" to make gaols "places of real punishment instead of idle lounges for the bad characters of the country, where they were fed and clothed at the public expense". Gaol Superintendents had been encouraged to use the "rattan" or cane quite freely.

The letter was a complete vindication of Eden's part. Far from ignoring the alarming statistics as exceptional, Eden had on his own initiative, it was stated, supplied necessary correctives. First, having been informed in March 1880 that the prison diet was insufficient, he had taken immediate steps to increase it. The mortality rate had as a result noticeably fallen off during the second half of the year. Secondly, he had issued a circular order to the Gaol Department that it was both "expedient and possible" to enforce prison discipline without constant resort to whipping. Again the trend of 1879 was reversed, corporal punishments being reduced by almost 50 per cent in six months.[1]

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1. Henry to Primrose, 16 July 1881, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43592.

Dr. Roger Lethbridge, as Inspector-General of Bengal Gaols directly responsible for their "well-being" and running, substantiated Eden's brief in a letter to the Times.[1] The Government of India's explanation, on the other hand, was more ingenious than convincing. While it cleared the Lieutenant-Governor of all blame, it concluded that no one had erred, not even the Prison Conference of 1877. The Viceroy in Council rejected the notion that prisoners had died in excess numbers because they had been insufficiently fed. Instead, the "disastrous" mortality was ascribed to mysterious influences affecting the general population of the country.[2] This was adopted as the official line. Hartington fell back on it twice in countering O'Donnell's call for an impeachment.[3] A widespread shortage of food could hardly be indicated for criminal negligence.

O'Donnell was not deflected by this argument. Where a charge of murder had been ruled out, he attempted on 10 August 1882 to secure one of manslaughter.[4] Had similar deaths occurred in England, he argued, there could be no doubt that a verdict of "serious dereliction of duty" would be returned. O'Donnell was particularly incensed by the appointment of Sir Ashley Eden to the Indian Council, an honour which represented in his estimation "a condonation of

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1. Times, 26 August 1881.
2. See Extract from the Proceedings of the Govt. of India, No. 3 114-124, 3 February 1882, p. 338; and Memorandum on Indian Jail Diets of Surgeon-General J.M. Cunningham, pp. 329-32, enclosures with Desp. Judicial No. 2, Govt. of India to Sec. of State, 16 January 1882, L/P&J/3, 1882.
3. Hansard, Vol. 268, 30 March 1882, Col. 304; Vol. 270, 8 June 1882, Cols. 478-80.
4. Ibid., Vol. 273, 10 August 1882, Col. 1409.

reprehensible misgovernment".[1] The Secretary of State should not be allowed to whitewash in this fashion the kind of supervision which had for many months allowed prisoners to perish like flies.[2] There could be no dodging the fact that whereas the period 1868-76 had been one of low mortality in gaols, Eden's succession had begun an era of high and increasing mortality. If proof were needed of culpability, the statistics were available for all to see.[3] The Commons refused, however, to be drawn into sanctioning what appeared to be "personal vendetta".

What rank did the wrong of Bengali prisoners occupy among O'Donnell's motives? This question was subjected to various interpretations at the time. In a letter to the Times, O'Donnell himself pleaded his bona fides against the aspersions cast by Dr. Let bridge.[4] The "sole motive" for calling the attention of Parliament and the public to the Bengal gaols, he insisted, was "that feeling of the commonest humanity" which could not be altogether denied even to an Irish nationalist.[5] As he lamented in his "memoirs" his "b st work" was invariably "sneered down as brainless obstruction."[6] Certainly, the Times in an editorial, veered towards this stance. Its experience of human nature had taught it that grief was a selfish thing, and that "victims of real and savage oppression" had little compassion to spare for sufferers at a distance. Such

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1. Hansard, op.cit. Col. 1408.
2. Ibid., Col.. 1410.
3. Ibid., 14 August 1882, Col. 1745.
4. Times, 26 August 1881. See Lethbridge's letter.
5. Ibid., 31 August 1881.
6. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 424.

men tended to survey the universe from their own point and w r almost indignant at competitors for pity. On the other hand, O'Donnell, as everyone knew , was "one of the chosen m t ieces of Irish imp tience of English predominance". The Tim s deduced therefore that because crushed Ireland was beginning to breath again, O'Donnell had found the leisure to turn his attention to alleged outrages in India;[1] "any stick to beat a dog with". O'Donnell had attacked Sir Ashley Eden, the very reformer of the abuses he denounced, because it gave him the pretext for commenting on British mi government. This purpose was of course better served by an imputation against a great officer of state who had amended a defect, than upon obscure subordinates who had overlooked it.[2]

The Times, although not its Calcutta correspondent,[3] rule out p rsonal vindictiveness as a motivating force, for it failed to see where O'Donnell's brother had "incurred any actual loss" at the hands of the Bengal Government.[4] Obstruction was more convenient and more acceptable explanation. Other sceptics, however, were l ss sure about th innocence of Charles James O'Donnell. During the Budget debate Frank Hugh O'Donnell strongly denied the current rumours that he was in the first instance indebted to inside or classified information passed on by his brother. Not one but many

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1. Times, 14 August 1882.
2. Ibid., 12 August 1882.
3. Ibid., 1 August 1881.
4. Ibid., 12 August 1882.

correspondents had called his attention to the conditions prevailing in the Bengal gaols. Admittedly, he had asked his broth r to clarify points of detail, but these had formed only part of the evi ence on which he had acted. Yet it was because of this help, he believed, that Charles James O'Donnell had been exposed to "official persecution". He would like therefore to reassure the persons concerned that their efforts to gag independent criticism would neither prevent him from bringing forward the grievances of the people of ndia nor deter his brother from continuing to do his duty.[1] Two days later, he was even more insistent that family allegiance had nothing whatever to do with his investigation. A comparison of dates would prove that his condemnation of Sir Ashley Eden had not followed but preceded Eden's own condemnation of C.J. O'Donnell. He had first attacked Eden in the House on 23 June 1881, whereas the Lieutenant-Governor did not denounce his brother until 21 S ptember. All this suspicion was anyway, he dismissed, beside the point. Had a similar situation existed in Ireland, would personal as distinct from political factors be attributed to his attempt to fix responsibility on Lord Spencer or Mr. Trevelyan?[2]

In Bengal especially, there was initial agreement among the native press that the subject of gaols and Eden's efforts to discipline Charles James O'Donnell were inter-related. The Hindoo Patriot

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 10 August 1882, Col. 1411.
2. Times, 14 August 1882.

conjectured that it was "personal animus" that was behind the Home Ruler's campaign in Parliament.[1] The Indian Mirror was more inclined to attribute his persistence to "wrong information" than to malevolence, although it regretted that Eden had been described in not very eulogistic terms.[2] As time went on, however, these views were considerably modified. By July 1882, the Bengalee was persuaded that the "recollection of wrongs" done to his brother was not the reason that prompted Frank Hugh O'Donnell to seek out "the delinquent" responsible for the high death rate in prisons. There was an urgent need for an "Indian Howard to drag to light the dark secrets" of their gaols.[3] Likewise, the Indian Mirror had been converted whole-heartedly to the justice of O'Donnell's agitation. Where previously it had considered his criticism of Eden's management unsavoury and carping, it now found his language "timely" and not "too strong". The Mirror ridiculed Eden's "tenderness for suffering humanity", seeing that the work with which his name was most closely associated was the mortality of native prisoners from starvation and flogging. It recommended that the figures of those who had perished in this fashion might appropriately decorate the pedestal of a statue of Sir Ashley Eden, which was to be built by his friends and admirers.[4]

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 12 September 1881.
2. Indian Mirror, 11 July, 16 September 1881.
3. Bengalee, 8 July 1882.
4. Indian Mirror, 8 July 1882.

Among these could still be counted the Hindoo Patriot, which with the Englishman remained the only other journal to bestow "indiscriminate praise" on the retiring Lieutenant-Governor.[1] As a result, Kristodas Pal was pilloried by his fellow editors as the "High Priest" of Eden worship.[2] He yielded a little under constant bombardment, but if he toned down his criticism of the two O'Donnells, he refused to concede that he had been wrong about Eden. The Hindoo Patriot reminded its detractors that it had been in its columns that C.J. O'Donnell's services "as a public spirited official" had first been recognised, that the value of parliamentary co-operation of the Home Rule party had first been explained, and that public attention had first been directed to the position of usefulness assumed by F.H. O'Donnell for the ventilation of grievances. The O'Donnells, it was confident, would confirm how heartily it had co-operated with them in such pursuits.[3] Frank Hugh especially occupied "an exceptional position" in the House of Commons as an "M.P. who [took] a genuine interest in India", but it could not thereby ignore or condone his attitude towards Sir Ashley Eden.[4]

Probably all of these assessments owed something to political calculation. The Hindoo Patriot may have had at the back of its mind the negotiations over the proposed rent legislation. Both the

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1. Indian Mirror, 5 April 1882.
2. See Bengalee, 6 May 1882.
3. Hindoo Patriot, 13 February 1882.
4. Ibid., 11 September 1882.

Bengalee and the Indian Mirror suspected that their contemporary was really bidding to increase the bargaining power of landowners.[1] Neither was adverse itself to scoring propaganda points, at all events when it became expedient to do so. Eden's refusal to act against the indigo planters was turned into an attack on the British Indian Association. "It is clear that after this outrage upon public opinion", the Bengalee confidently asserted, "the British Indian Association will cease to be regarded as a representative body and will lose that confidence and esteem which it had hitherto inspired in the public mind".[2] Support of O'Donnell's attack on Eden over the gaols can also be seen in this sense as an extension of the Indian Association's campaign to discredit the political pretensions of its rival. Of the three journals, the Indian Mirror is less open to the change of ulterior design. It did not support O'Donnell on all issues and in particular not on the Rent and Tenancy Bills; nor had it always disliked the Lieutenant-Governor. Yet, disillusioned with the Liberal Government in Britain by 1882, it had come to realise that the Home Ruler was the one Member of Parliament who showed any sustained interest in Indian questions.

It was O'Donnell's "tireless advocacy" of native interests, in contrast with the appalling apathy felt by Parliament, that ultimately counted with the "nationalist" press. Their retrospective analyses of 1881 without exception told the same story: the ranks of India's

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1. Bengalee, 15 April 1882; Indian Mirror, 5 April 1882.
2. Bengalee, ibid.

"friends" had seriously thinned and indifference rather than vigilance once again characterised the general attitude to the "great eastern dependency".[1] Even the lips of their erstwhile hero seemed to have been sealed. "Outside the pale of bureaucracy", lamented the Indian Spectator, "what a different man was Mr. Fawcett".[2] Irrespective of whether Fawcett was still acting noiselessly behind the scenes,[3] the Bengalee did not believe that over-dependence on a few Englishmen was a healthy state. Indians had to help themselves, the first step being to set up a "political committee" in England.[4] The Mirror renewed the old outlawed call for direct parliamentary representation. The Colonies and Ireland had their spokesmen; why not India, it asked?[5] If only by default O'Donnell had come to command, as in 1877-78, the centre of the stage.

The Gaol scandal was, it should be emphasised, only the most important subject unearthed by O'Donnell. The Secretary of State was agitated by a series of questions, equally controversial that required lengthy and often troublesome investigation in both London

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 2 January 1882; Bengalee, 6 January 1882.
2. Extract from Indian Spectator in Indian Mirror, 16 September 1881.
3. Bengalee, 9 September 1882. From time to time, Fawcett was in fact consulted on matters relating to Indian finance and taxation, a field in which he was acknowledged to have expert knowledge. Lord Ripon evidently valued his advice, although Hartington was most reluctant to consult anyone outside the Cabinet. See Hartington to Ripon, 1, 23 December 1881; and Fawcett to Hartington, 22 December 1881; in Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43567.
4. Bengalee, 22 April 1882.
5. Indian Mirror, 14 October 1881.

and Calcutta. These ranged from a "scandalous promotion drive" by the Governments of India and Bengal to encourage the consumption of alcohol by the Indian people for revenue purposes,[1] to the embarrassing reports of fraudulent and illegal speculation by civil servants in gold mining companies in Mysore State. It was alleged that certain high officials in the Government of Madras had misused their position and violated stringent department rules by obtaining favourable land concessions and by selling them to commercial buyers at a handsome profit.[2] Such traffiking suggested to the economic journal, Money, that the days of shaking the pagoda tree had returned with a vengeance.[3] The issue which took the House of Commons by surprise, however, was O'Donnell's elucidation of discriminatory practices in the working of the Indian Criminal Code with respect to Indians and Europeans.[4] Two Bills, the first amending the Indian Penal Code and the second revising the law of Criminal Procedure,

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1. Hansard, Vol. 262, 4 July 1881, Cols. 1937-9; Vol. 265, 22 August 1881, Cols. 680-2; Vol. 266, 8 February 1882, Col. 326; 17 February 1882, Col. 1066; Vol. 267, 9 March 1882, Cols. 456-7; 13 March 1882, Cols. 741-2; 16 March 1882, Cols. 1006-8. See also Hindoo Patriot, 1 August 1881.

2. Ibid., Vol. 273, 14 August 1882, Cols. 1681-2; Vol. 274, 23 November 1882, Cols. 1917-8; Vol. 276, 22 February 1883, Cols. 591-2; 26 February 1883, Cols. 835-6; Vol. 277, 25 March 1883, Col. 561; 9 April 1883, Cols. 1833-5; Vol. 281, 5 July 1883, Cols. 786-7. A rule of June 1872 expressly laid down that no official could hold land in a province with whose administration he was in any way connected.

3. Extract from Money, 6 December 1882, J & P 1951, in Departmental Papers, L/P&J/6, Vol. 86, 1882.

4. Hansard, Vol. 261, 2 June 1881, Cols. 1858-9; Vol. 267, 9 March 1882, Col. 456; 13 March 1882, Cols. 742-3; Vol. 271, 22 June 1882, Cols. 35-6; 26 June 1882, Cols 389-91; Vol. 274, 23 November 1882, Cols. 1917-18; Vol. 275, 30 November 1882, Cols. 397-8. See also Indian Mirror, 9 April, 23 July 1882; Hindoo Patriot, 1 August 1881.

were at the time under review by the Viceroy's Council.[1] The principle of equality between the races as a guideline for future legislation was in conformity with the thinking of both Governments. Nevertheless, it could be said that O'Donnell's appeal for determined and scrupulous fairness anticipated the violent reaction against the crucial proposals of the ill-fated "Ilbert" Bill of 1883--which enabled Indian judges to exercise a limited jurisdiction over British citizens.[2]

For the most part, O'Donnell toiled unaided, although on an issue like the spread of drunkenness in India, he attempted to enlist the help of the United Kingdom Alliance.[3] Usually he could rely, when it was needed, on the backing of a Home Rule reserve. Arthur O'Connor, for example, was frequently at hand to add strength to his investigations. When it came to economic matters his knowledge of accountancy proved particularly useful.[4] Yet, while O'Donnell might threaten to unleash the entire Parnellite contingent ready "like a pack of wolves" to devour the Indian Government,[5] he was essentially a one-man inquisitor.

Some newspapers were highly critical of O'Donnell for over-playing his hand. The London correspondent of the Times of India

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1. Times, 6 March 1882.

2. For a detailed account of the Ilbert Bill Controversy, see Gopal, op.cit., Ch. IX.

3. Hansard, Vol. 266, 17 February 1882, Col. 1066.

4. Ibid., Vol. 258, 1 March 1881, Cols. 2022-3; Vol. 260, 5 May 1881, Cols. 1921-5; Vol. 262, 17 June 1881, Cols. 760-1; Vol. 265, 22 August 1881, Cols. 699-703; Vol. 267, 16 March 1882, Col. 1007; Vol. 270, 12 June 1882, Col. 830; Vol. 271, 7 July 1882, Cols. 1784-5; Vol. 273, 28 July 1882, Cols. 147-8.

5. Ibid., Vol. 265, 22 August 1881, Cols. 685-6.

described how he would start into "a Sadler's Wells frenzy upon the slightest provocation".[1] The Indian Spectator feared that he had become not the depositary of truth but the "mere mouthpiece" of his brother and other miscreants.[2] Few were prepared to take his effectiveness on trust. The Hindoo Patriot, for example, admitted that he might be "a most useful interrogator" but doubted whether interpellation could ever rise to the dignity of a debate.[3] The Times of London depicted O'Donnell pompously talking down to empty benches and succeeding only in sending Mr. Speaker Brand off to sleep.[4] His speech on the Indian Budget, for example, was dismissed as a "desultory skirmish" on the outskirts of a vast and complicated subject from which no practical result could ensue. The Catholic Times, describing the normal parliamentary scene when O'Donnell got up to speak, saw his performance as a sort of pantomime.[5] On his name being called, he would rise inevitably to a general "howl" of disapproval and jeering, whereupon his eye-glass would drop as he feigned an air of "injured innocence" and disbelief.

Over a period, however, it became apparent even to O'Donnell's detractors that his candour and independence had produced results,

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1. Extract from Times of India in Indian Mirror, 27 August 1881.
2. Extract from Indian Spectator in ibid., 16 September 1881.
3. Hindoo Patriot, 29 August, 5 September 1881.
4. Times, 23 August 1881; Bengalee, 24 September 1881.
5. Extract from Catholic Times in Nation, 19 March 1881.

where polite motions and restrained exhortations had brought miserly return. No finer or more solid memorial to Irish intervention could be found than in the thorough revision of the Indian Gaol Code. As informed a writer as Sir H.J.S. Cotton, who attained high office in India before retiring to Parliament, testified in the Humane Review of 1906 that it was due to O'Donnell's efforts that the "brutal and wholesale resort to corporal punishment" had been put down.[1] Cumulatively, his questions helped to revive the principle of accountability to Parliament which had become toothless through years of neglect. This was *demonstrated* by the production of various Returns and Papers, relating not only to Gaol administration,[2] but to alleged jobbery by civil servants[3] and to the importation of highly explosive petroleum to India.[4] The Secretary of State, then Lord Kimberley, took extremely seriously the charge that the interests of Mysore State were being sacrificed for private gain by Government officials.[5] Certainly, he was not deflected by the reassuring explanation of the Governor of Madras, Mountstuart

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1. Humane Review, Vol. VI, 1906, p. 217.
2. Parl. P., 1882, Vol. XLVIII, C 3316.
3. Ibid., 1883, Vol. L, No. 61.
4. Ibid., No. 290. See also Times, 5, 12, 21, 22 June; 27 July; 1 August 1882.
5. Desp. Public no. 26, Sec. of State to Govt. of Madras, 28 December 1882, in ibid., Vol. L.

Grant-Duff, which some saw as an attempt "to throw dust in the eyes" of the Home authorities,[1] from making doubly sure that rules against peculation were enforced.[3] Kimberley in fact referred the matter to the Governor-General in Council to consider whether the rules might be strengthened.[3]

O'Donnell probed deeper into Indian affairs than any Member of Parliament had ever managed before. If Eden's complaints were anything to go by, then the Home Ruler was regarded as the main tormentor of the Bengal Secretariat.[4] Where others shied away from the mire of Indian complexities, O'Donnell plunged boldly in mastering each problem with relentless enthusiasm. Political analysts, like Sir Henry Lucy, could not but admire his versatility or marvel at his work-load which was as heavy and in some cases heavier than many Ministers of State. He spoke with the authority of an expert not only on Ireland, India or Britain, but also on the colonies, on Europe and on America. All this required amazing intellectual agility and was accomplished without the least suspicion of dilettantism. Even the Times of India absolved him from playing the game of blocking Bills and filling up three or four pages of amendments for the fun of it, enjoyed "so gleefully" by his "brother comedians in the burlesque House of Commons".[5]

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1. See Desp. Revenue no. 2, Govt. of Madras to Sec. of State, 30 January 1883, in op.cit., and Memorandum from Resident of Mysore State, 3 April 1883, J & P 346, 547, in Departmental Papers, L/P&J/6, Vol. 94, 1883.

2. Pioneer, 29 May 1883.

3. Desp. (draft), Sec. of State to Govt. of India, 19 April 1883, in Departmental Papers, op.cit. See also Pioneer, 29 May 1883.

4. Eden to Ripon, 23 June 1882, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43592.

5. Extract from Times of India in Indian Mirror, 23 July 1882.

By 1882 Frank Hugh O'Donnell was widely acclaimed by the Indian press as their "New Champion". The exception, perhaps, was still the Hindoo Patriot which continued to withold full recognition of O'Donnell's worth, upholding him as a man of "great ability" but of little personal influence in the House of Commons.[1] Yet in its review of the year it acknowledged without qualification that O'Donnell's ceaseless interrogation was not only valuable but decidedly effective: local Governments, it confirmed, were "imbued with a wholesome dread of parliamentary agitation". Nothing escaped his "lynx eye"; things great or small came equally under his observation. Even more surprising, the Patriot now testified to the correctness of O'Donnell's information where previously it had challenged it.[2] The most satisfactory explanation for this change of heart was that O'Donnell's sincerity could no longer be doubted. The departure of Sir Ashley Eden for the relative peace and quiet of the Indian Council did not silence O'Donnell as sceptics maintained it would had he been solely activated by the desire for revenge. Nor did Bengal consume his entire concentration. In his speech on the Indian Budget, which was reprinted in full in several newspapers, O'Donnell effortlessly discussed in detail and in turn each of the provinces.[3] By its own standards of assessment, the Hindoo Patriot was obliged to "give credit where credit was due".[4]

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 16 October 1882.
2. Ibid., 1 January 1883.
3. Hansard, Vol. 273, 14 August 1882, Cols. 1740-45.

Where Indian administration consisted for the most part of a "vast amount of details" which her "responsible rulers" seldom condescended to the "drudgery" of freely examining, O'Donnell's introduction of an element of compulsion was accepted as necessary. Interpellation and a "running fire" of questions had the added virtue over debates, which the Patriot sorrowfully admitted were so few and far between, of keeping India constantly before the House.[1]

This was the situation that most journals had gradually come to terms with. The Bengalee, realising that the "millenium" was not going to be realised under the Liberals, was thankful for any help whatever its origin, from the socialists outside Parliament under H.M. Hyndman[2] or from the Irish inside spear-headed by O'Donnell. It was no longer disturbed that Home Rulers formed a discredited community, and insisted that their motives be respected, their earnestness admired, and their efforts applauded.[3] The most fulsome praise for O'Donnell came from the Indian Mirror, a paper not noted for extravagant credits. In two very long articles on O'Donnell's Budget speech, it wiped clean the slate of old complaints against him. Gone was any reference to a jaundiced brother or to a tasteless persecution of Eden. O'Donnell's advocacy of the cause of India's people was now deemed "entirely disinterested",[4]

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 1 January 1883.
2. Bengalee, 7 October 1882.
3. Ibid., 14 July, 21 October 1882.
4. Indian Mirror, 27 October 1882.

and the channels at his disposal for obtaining local information "completely reliable". Native political associations were urged to establish a rapport with him in order to facilitate the future agitation of Indian grievances in Parliament.[1] However, it was a reformed and changed O'Donnell to whom tribute was paid:

> "Though Mr. O'Donnell has taken up a brief for us rather late in the day, it must be remembered he acts gratuitously; but if we may judge from his parliamentary career, his earnestness, his persistency, and his vigorous eloquence will make him a tower of strength in any cause he undertakes."[2]

In the light of O'Donnell's sustained interest in India over a number of years, this statement undoubtedly reflected the earlier attitude of the Mirror that he was essentially a trouble-maker. It now praised O'Donnell for "worthily filling" the vacant position of "Friend of India";[3] an overdue recognition for the one parliamentarian who undertook to conduct "the grand inquest of the Empire".[4]

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1. Indian Mirror, 1 November 1882.
2. Ibid., 27 October 1882.
3. Ibid., 27 October 1882, 23 February 1883.
4. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 60.

III The Nursery of Missionary Ideas and Ideals

O'Donnell had courted nationalist recognition as the brains of the Home Rule party, invariably to date in the face of ridicule. The inheritance of Professor Fawcett's titles might have indulged his sense of importance and strengthened his ambition to be placed alongside Edmund Burke in Ireland's hall of fame, but did his undisputed and unrivalled "leadership of the Indian party" in the House of Commons amount to much? Burke was spokesman for the Rockingham Whigs; O'Donnell aspired to direct and to speak on behalf of an enlightened cross-section of British parliamentarians, internationalists not imperialists. In the absence of such a bipartisan group, he was forced to fall back on Parnellite support. The difficulty here lay in recruiting from the ranks of Home Rulers who might devote themselves single-mindedly to the solution of internal problems. Since 1877 O'Donnell had never given up hope of eventually converting the party from "parochialism" to internationalism. His "sub-policy" of "making Ireland a power throughout the general Empire", had been frustrated previously for several reasons[1]--it had been tainted by Tory imperialism, devalued as an aspect of the power struggle left in Butt's wake, and hindered by "the destruction of the Home Rule movement by the Land League". All too often its advocacy had been accompanied by dubious eccentricity. However, when O'Donnell again put the case that the Home Rule party at Westminster was more than an Irish party, he encountered a more receptive audience.

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 69.

The situation had changed in several ways. In the first place, the Government's action of interning Parnell in Kilmainham prison on 13 October 1881 not only united Ireland in anger,[1] but did much to dissolve the bitter resentment that had been gnawing away at O'Donnell since 1880. O'Donnell was convinced, after "innumerable conversations" with all sorts of people, "that a critical turning-point had arrived" and that he must revise his "estimate of Parnell and Parnellism in Irish politics":

> "I now saw clearly that the suppression of the Land League had removed the figure-head and left the monarch, and that, for the first time at least, Parnell was autocrat of his former allies and directors".[2]

Lord Spencer also proceded to round-up Parnell's inner-cabinet--Dillon, O'Kelly, Sexton, William O'Brien and Davitt--for organising indignation meetings. O'Donnell's reaction was to hurry to Dublin to oppose "English differential treatment of Ireland by every honourable means in [his] power"; "I found Dublin hot, and I did my best to make it hotter". Within forty-eight hours he had flung his "hostility to Land Leaguism and Parnellism to the four winds".[3]

In truth, O'Donnell had been moving towards rapprochement with both several weeks before an exasperated Gladstone gave way to the advocates of martial action. At Dungarvan on 5 October, he praised Davitt and Parnell for having taught the first real lessons of self-government to the Irish people and for having wrested the

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1. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 317 ff; see also Freeman's Journal, 15 October 1881.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 84, 148.

3. Ibid., p. 35.

Land Act from the Liberals. Moreover, he warned that the Act would be rendered valueless without the protective presence of the Land League and he urged Home Rulers to guard against its disbandment and disappearance.[1] At a time when the League was seriously wavering under coercion,[2] O'Donnell felt that he must uphold its right to exist. He subsequently wrote to the Times under the pseudonym "Audi Alteram Partem" protesting against its suppression for engaging in the "legitimate defence of tenants' interests"[3] and describing it as really a "poor men's institution".[4] O'Donnell's expression of solidarity with the banned League was, of course, timely. As all the leading Parnellites had been taken out of circulation, O'Donnell was virtually the only Home Ruler of any standing left to articulate the Irish case. Tim Healy and T.P. O'Connor were marked men and were disabled from freely crossing to Ireland for fear of immediate arrest.[5] They were consequently ordered to the United States to orchestrate the grateful cheers of Fenian rallys and to harvest the bounty. They did not return to England until February 1882.[6]

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1. Freeman's Journal, 5 October 1881.
2. Parnell to Mrs. O'Shea, 13 October 1881, in K. O'Shea, Charles Stewart Parnell: His Love Story and Political Life, Vol. I, London 1914, p. 207.
3. Letter of Audi Alteram Partem to Times, 19 October 1881.
4. Letter of Audi Alteram Partem to Ibid., 25 October 1881.
5. See Times, 27 January 1882. It was because so many Home Rulers were liable to arrest that the annual meeting of the party was held at Westminster rather than Dublin. Parnell urged Healy and other M.P.s not to come to Ireland during the Easter recess. Ibid., 4 April 1882.
6. See Healy, Letters and Leaders, i, p. 148; W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 356; O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 93.

Although Vice-Chairman, Justin McCarthy had no stomach for clandestine activity and was not the man for rallying the remnants behind decisive action. Even the "indomitable" Biggar was "bound for the Boulevards of Paris".[1] Thus, just as O'Donnell found himself by default titular head of the vanishing Indian party in Parliament, so by contingency he found himself the most prominent member at large of the shrinking "activist" segment.

He resumed his old *functions of Vice-President* of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, soon to be dissolved and reconstituted in different form,[2] organising from Dublin a monster demonstration of Irishmen in Liverpool to protest against the display of armed force in Ireland *and the suspension of law.*[3] Under his chairmanship a meeting in London on 23 October decided as an interim measure to set up the "Constitutional Rights Protection Association" to publicly debate any question affecting Ireland raised by the Government.[4] More important, it was entirely O'Donnell's decision to carry the war to England. The whole administration of the Irish electoral organisation had fallen into his hands and the maintenance of its "constitutional efficiency" because his "special endeavour".[5] At a by-election at Stafford he used it to commit the Irish vote to the defeat of the Liberal candidate. The result was sweet retaliation for the Kilmainham coup.[6]

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 45.
2. Times, 25 January 1882.
3. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 36.
4. Freeman's Journal, 24 October 1881.
5. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 86.
6. Freeman's Journal, 21 November 1881; Nation, 26 November 1881; Times, 21 November 1881.

In the second place, O'Donnell's activities were seemingly given Parnell's stamp of approval when he received a "pressing invitation" to visit Kilmainham, more a headquarters now than a prison, on 28 November 1881.[1] In what O'Donnell described as a very cordial meeting he was asked to repeat the "Stafford trick" in Derry and to persuade Northern Catholics to vote Orange. In return Parnell agreed to support "to the utmost" the policy of shielding the Land League in England from the danger of Government prosecution.[2] O'Donnell therefore went to Ulster bearing Parnell's commission to unseat the Liberal candidate, and was received like a conquering hero. While the mission failed in its purpose[3] it greatly increased O'Donnell's standing in Ireland. Parnell had appealed to him, not as a servant or as a subordinate to be ordered around at will, but as an old comrade who was keeping the Irish colours flying in the backyard of the enemy.[4]

In the third place, if O'Donnell's services as a platform speaker were now highly sought after, his skills as an orator were more than ever prized in the House of Commons. Deprived of most of its leaders and shunned by the seceders, the Home Rule party was little better than an impotent Rump. When it met to elect its officers on 6 February 1882 only nineteen members attended.[5] Further

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1. Times, 29 November 1881.
2. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 46-7. At Hixton on 31 October the English police intervened to suppress a meeting of the British branch of the Land League. It was later held on 6 November, following written complaints to the Inspector-General of Police by O'Donnell. Times, 5, 7 November 1881.
3. Times, 8 December 1881.
4. O'Donnell apparently made several visits to Kilmainham, one immediately on his return from the North and another in January. Freeman's Journal, 10 December 1881; Times, 10 December 1881; Abels, op.cit., p. 159.
5. Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Callan, Corbet, Finigan, Gill, Gray, Lalor Leahy, Leamy, McCoan, Metge, A. O'Connor, O'Donnell, The O'Gorman Mahon, R. Power, J. Redmond, T.D. Sullivan.

loss was incurred when A.M. Sullivan, over the years one of its most effective and respected spokesmen, was forced to resign through ill-health.[1] With such a poverty of talent it was no longer feasible to exclude O'Donnell from the decision-making process. Not only was he elected by ballot to a place on the Parliamentary Committee,[2] but it was soon apparent that he had assumed a position of some influence within the party. The summons for its annual meeting at the beginning of the session were issued by O'Donnell in conjunction with Philip Lalor.[3] Significantly, although policy matters were deferred until after the Address, it was resolved to vote against Bradlaugh[4] without concession for his having registered strong disapproval of the Coercion Act.[5] When Parnell was temporarily released on parole in connection with the death of his nephew, it was O'Donnell who accompanied McCarthy and Frank Byrne to Willesdon Junction to meet him from the train. Again, on the evening of 10 April, it was McCarthy and O'Donnell with whom Parnell din d and discussed the political situation.[6]

There were of course limits to personal initiative. While O'Donnell sought to explain the imperfections of the Irish Land Act, he obtained neither Parnell's authority nor that of the League

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1. Freeman's Journal, 7 February 1882.
2. Ibid. The Committee comprised: Barry, Biggar, Finigan, Gray, Lalor, A. O'Connor, T.D. O'Connor, O'Donnell, T.D. Sullivan, See also Nation, 11 February 1882.
3. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 108.
4. Time , 6, 7 February 1882.
5. Freeman's Journal, 10 February 1881.
6. N tion, 15 April 1882.

to behave as official mediator.[1] The Kilmainham circle hardly regarded with pleasure the series of letters he wrote to the Times about the nature of the impasse blocking progress. The solution he put forward was one of "conciliation" and "commonsense". What was needed, he urged, was not only "fair treatment" of arrears to save tenants, but also "fair compensation" to save landlords from desperate action.[2] This doctrine that "compensation of landlords [was] protection to tenants", anathema to those who had sought the entire destruction of the former species, was roundly denounced.[3] Equally, O'Donnell's advice on how to work the Irish Land Commission with justice to both sides, if it attracted attention in Ireland encountered resentment as well.[4] Yet, believing that Parnell personally "wanted to cut adrift from his moonlight tail" and "make bids in the direction of the Liberal left wing",[5] O'Donnell, unforgiveably perhaps, took it upon himself to negotiate through Herbert Gladstone for settlement:

> "I spoke from my own personal knowledge of the internal situation in Ireland, that the release of Parnell would be an immense work of pacification, that Parnell was anything but irreconciliable, that an Arrears Bill would act like oil on troubled waters, that Mr. Forster's coercion was only exasperating without coercing".[6]

While Gladstone understood the overture to mean that O'Donnell wished to "offer counsel in an impartial spirit on the course to be

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 102.
2. See letters from "Audi Alteram Partem" to Times, 3, 17, 26 November; 13 December 1881; 2, 10 January 1882.
3. O'Donnell, op.cit., p. 92.
4. Freeman's Journal, 4 November 1881.
5. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp. 84, 101.
6. Ibid., p. 102.

pursued in Ireland", and considered his letters "worth reading", he was rightly circumspect.[1] The reward from Kilmainham for such unilateral intercession was the issuing of "strict orders" that O'Donnell was to have nothing to do with the Arrears Bill which the Parnellites were to introduce.[2]

Nevertheless, O'Donnell's services were not rejected in other fields. When the Government introduced additional rules of procedure, which many felt were designed to bring Ireland to her knees by depriving her not of the power of unrestricted speech but of the ability to speak at all, it fell to O'Donnell to lead the defence of Ireland's "freedom";[3] who better, when Gladstone justified "restraint" in the name and for the security of the empire. In calling up the "resources of civilisation",[4] Gladstone uncharacteristically imperialised his terminology of arrest. Parnell was locked away in Kilmainham as a national enemy, and the British empire was seen to breath again.[5] The theme was carried further at Liverpool on 27 October 1881 when the Prime Minister described the Land League as a subversive association and implied that its adherents were jack-booting anti-imperialists:

> "It is perfectly true that they wish to march through rapine to the disintegration and dismemberment of the Empire, and, I am sorry to say, even to the placing of different parts of the Empire in direct hostility one to the other. That is the issue in which we are engaged."[6]

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1. See correspondence concerning O'Donnell's offer to "fill in the gaps" of the Land problem, in Viscount Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss 46044, 46049.
2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 100.
3. Ibid., p. 57; "On May 1, 1882, it was my duty and distinction to move the resolution which was the last defence of the great tradition of the Chair".
4. Annual Register, 1881, pp. 187-8; Times, 8 October 1881.
5. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 313.
6. Freeman's Journal, 28 October 1881; Times, 28 October 1881.

If land leaguers conspired to undermine the empire, Gladstone had given his pledge at Leeds on 7 October that he would ensure that its integrity throughout the world remained unimpaired.[1] While virtual surrender to the Boers was compatible with that promise, surrender to the Irish was not.

Nor, by the same token, was the dignity of the empire served by permitting the Irish the license of full discussion at Westminster. "The Mother of Parliaments" had been reduced almost to impotence by the "discursiveness" of a few Home Rulers. Strengthening the powers of the Speaker, Gladstone explained that Irish "obstruction" on the South Africa Bill and the Army Disciplines Bill had convinced the House that it must protect itself against such undermining. The latest steps were the culmination of that intent.[2] According the right of closing a debate to a bare majority can therefore be seen as an essential part of the Liberal package to quell Ireland by force. Indeed, Sexton interpreted it as an act of pure revenge;[3] and Justin McCarthy was not alone in thinking that closure was merely preparation for coercion, that Parnellites were to be first gagged, then bound.[4]

Just as Gladstone looked to an imperial sanction to allow him to introduce extraordinary measures, so O'Donnell appealed to an imperial sanction to defend extraordinary actions. He rejected

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1. Times, 8 October 1881.
2. Hansard, Vol. 266, 20 February 1882, Col. 1141.
3. Ibid., Vol. 268, 30 March 1882, Col. 373.
4. Ibid., 27 March 1882, Cols. 91-2.

the accusation that Home Rulers were indifferent to the interests of the British empire. On the contrary, there were none more earnestly in favour of all that "ought" to be supported in it. Most of the great questions touching the welfare of the various peoples within the empire had been introduced by members of the Irish party. When the Transvaal was annexed Home Rulers had represented the interests of the Boers; when the Indian Press Act clamped down on Vernacular journals they had spoken up in defence of a free press; they were now giving voice to the terrible hardships experienced by Indian prisoners. Home Rulers, O'Donnell proclaimed, were none other than "the natural Representatives and spokesmen of the unrepresented Nationalities of the Empire".[1]

The rationale of "Intervention" was complete, but was it reality or pretension? There was a certain logic in the proposition. In its relation with the rest of Britain Ireland had colonial status, economically, socially, and politically, although it also differed from other colonies by an "intimate blend of conquest and settlement".[2] Apart from the North-East, Irish industry was sacrificed to the needs of British economic development.[3] As J.G. MacCarthy contended in 1874, Ireland was gradually being reduced to the condition of an outlying farm for the supply of English markets.[4] Politically, Ireland was administered more like a colony

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1. Hansard, op.cit., Vol. 266, 17 February 1882, Cols. 1065-6.
2. See Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 283.
4. Hansard, Vol. 220, 2 July 1874, Col. 881.

than in theory an equal partner of the Union. Government by foreign agency, the maintenance of an alien church and the imposition of an alien land system had been some of the legacies Pitt had bequeathed in 1801. As Michael Davitt summed it up, Dublin Castle was a "centralised despotism without parallel in any European state outside Russia".[1] The presence of Irishmen in the House of Commons affirmed the special position of Ireland, but did not contradict the subordinate status. This was later understood by Lord Carnarvon who refused to serve in a Conservative Government that continued the distinction,[2] and by Gladstone who attempted to remove the Colonial aspect without removing the Crown. The development of Irish nationalism, especially the aggressive form which it took under Parnell, was more akin to the experience of African and Asian dependencies emerging from British rule in the twentieth century than to that of dominions like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It invariably expressed itself in hostility to the manifestations of English hegemony and in the championship of democratic over autocratic principles.

There has been a tendency among Irish historians to regard the Parnellite party in the Commons as an "alien" or "foreign" body,[3] and its descendents as "intruders with only a transient interest in the passing scene and with only a momentary opportunity of

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1. M. Davitt, Leaves From a Prison Diary, Vol. II, London 1885, p. 171.

2. A. Hardinge, Life of Henry Fourth Earl of Carnarvon, Vol. III, London 1925, pp. 197-5.

3. T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin (ed.), The Course of Irish History, Cork 1967, p. 291.

influencing the events which were being duly enacted before their eyes".[1] Such an interpretation is necessarily based on the assumption that the Home Rule contingent had thoughts only for the ultimate goal--self-government--in fact for the removal of its very position at Westminster, and none of the normal desires and ambitions of a stable party. On the contrary, very few members actively sought to cut the knot with England altogether and considerably more were interested in obtaining for Ireland the interim benefits of an advanced industrial state--prosperity, favourable trading relations, equal parliamentary suffrage--in addition to the right to regulate her own internal affairs. At least until 1914, Home Rulers, as much as any English or Scottish representative and in many cases more so, had their fingers on the pulse of British political life. In the sense that it represented not only Irishmen in Ireland but also Irishmen living in Britain, the party of Parnell supremely spanned the politics of both countries.

As the acknowledged "Third Party" at Westminster, it often siphoned off the residuum of the electorate uncatered for or ignored by either the Liberals or the Conservatives. Certainly it claimed to speak on behalf of abandoned minorities and was the obvious channel for unpublicised grievances. That Home Rulers were besieged by English and Scottish petitions for communication to Parliament is indisputable. Replying to an anonymous letter in the Times of 1 April 1882 denouncing O'Donnell and Arthur O'Connor as "Irish Malcontents", who had no business to raise the matter of abuses

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1. F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish Parliamentary Party 1890-1910, London 1950, p. 224.

in the system of appointment to top Civil Service posts, O'Donnell explained that they were responding to letters of appeal from "every class and profession of the British community", from:

> "privates and officers in the Regular Army, officers of the Ordinance and Hospital Corps, harassed schoolmasters, union officers, revenue officials, workmen evicted from their homes by railway extensions, ...Scottish crofters crushed with rack-rents, Indian editors muzzled by Vernacular Press Acts, Indian prisoners flogged and starved todeath in hundreds under a Government experiment in economy and dietary scales, Baptist missionaries bewailing the discouragement of civilisation and the promotion of intemperance by a paternal administration in Bengal, Transvaal delegates refused a hearing in every quarter...".[1]

In O'Donnell's calculation only about one third of the "obstruction" complained of had been for the benefit of his own country. As he pointed out there were obvious advantages in working through the Irish as distinct from either of the two main parties. Home Rulers could not be bought off or intimidated; they were uniquely "independent of Ministerial favours, and indifferent to Ministerial frowns".[2] To recapitulate the hypothesis of Eric Strauss: the Home Rule party at Westminster constituted "the only compact representation of unrepresented classes and subject nations in the British Empire".[3]

While it would be a mistake to assert that all Home Rulers in criticising government identified with O'Donnell's arguments as well as his protest, his ideas about imperial mandateship were seldom sneered at. Speaking in the Indian Budget debate on 22 August 1881--at the height of the land troubles in Ireland--Arthur O'Connor appealed to Irish Members that they were the only men in the whole

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1. Times, 3 April 1882.
2. Freeman's Journal, 23 January 1882.
3. Strauss, op.cit., p. 187.

assembly who could have a thorough sympathy with India. Like their own country, India had been subjugated by an alien power, but unlike it, was "absolutely" unrepresented in Parliament. Home Rulers, therefore, had a "duty" to bring India before the House with the fullness and detail it deserved. Should they undertake to do this, the gratitude felt in India would know no bounds and would react to the benefit of Ireland.[1] Arthur O'Connor had become a splendid advertisement of all that was worthy in Irish internationalism. So in a sense, although by 1882 a virtual independent, was John O'Connor Power. In protesting in July 1882 against the suppression of what he termed the "Egyptian National movement", he ventured certain observations about the attitude which Irish representatives,for far too long,were thought to have towards foreign policy. The time had passed by, he said, when it was the sole desire of any section of the Irish people to profit from the foreign difficulties of England. He personally did not believe in that sentiment at the present hour. He was as much against a policy of universal surrender as he was against a policy of universal aggression. The opinion he had held in the past and the opinion he held nowwas that the highest interests of the e pire could best be served by encouraging "National sentiment", not only in every part of the dispersed empire, but amongst those populations in whose relations Britain was from time to time obliged to interfere.[2] If O'Connor Power no longer had any party interest

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1. Hansard, Vol. 265, 22 August 1881, Cols. 699-701.

2. Ibid., Vol. 272, 27 July 1882, Cols. 2078-9.

to serve, he nonetheless aspired to sit for a Liberal constituency, and could not have improved his chances by criticising the Government's Egyptian policy.

On the other side of the balance sheet, however, must be debited the undiluted emnity of Fenians and "Skirmishers" towards England, and the considered opinion of an intelligent Home Ruler like T.P. O'Connor. In August 1882 he disapproved of Irish members taking up the cause of countries like India, because he did not think their interference would be calculated to do these peoples much good. They would merely push English Governments over the brink of intransigence.[1] Even if threats about exploiting England's foreign difficulties were simply talk, Home Rulers were never unmindful of their propaganda value at least. Addressing a public meeting of the Irish National Land League of Great Britain on 22 January 1882, O'Donnell, for example, would have done justice to any revolutionary. "Not since the days of the American Revolution", he said, "when England had capitulated to Grattan, [was] the position of foreign politics in England more dangerous". The present situation was one which afforded Irishmen "myriads of opportunities for making use of their power to avenge the insults, indignities, and outrages practiced on their leaders and on their country".[2] But then hatred of England,as well as the concept of humanitarianism, was one of the fundamental roots of Irish internationalism.

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1. Hansard, Vol. 273, 10 August 1882, Col. 1414.

2. Freeman's Journal, 23 January 1882.

Yet ironically, considering its early impulse to concentrate nationalist attention on Ireland, it was Irish "Land" that in time engendered the strongest feelings in favour of internationalism. Rivalled by the Land League as the most effective mouthpiece of national expression, the Home Rule party had initially succumbed to centripetal impulse. By 1881, however, it was the realisation that the Irish land system was not confined to Irish soil, that reversed the process, and enabled the party to regain its outward-looking character and its centrifugal momentum. The credit for this must go not to O'Donnell but to Patrick Ford, who week after week instructed avid Irish readers that their hardships were of a kind experienced by peoples overseas. Even in the grim days of 1879 and 1880 such a message entered thousands of Irish homes.[1] While the circulation of the Irish World was large, the demand so exceeded supply "that a day after its arrival from America it [was] impossible to obtain a copy".[2] Patrick Ford realised, if land leaguers did not, that the twin dangers of a contracting movement were its inability to enlist and its propensity to repel world sympathy. He believed that if "Home Rule" was to have any chance of fulfilment, then it had to capture the imagination not only of the Irish race but of the human race. This was one, possibly the main reason, why India loomed so large in his recipe of Irish freedom. Ireland had to effect contacts with fellow-travellers throughout the world though particularly throughout the empire.

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1. Irish World, 31 January, 3 April 1882.

2. P.H. Bagenal, Parnellism Unveiled or the Land-and-Labour Agitation of 1879-1880, Dublin 1880, p. 12; see also Bagenal, The American Irish and their Influence on Irish Politics, London 1882, pp. 191-2.

If the early sermons of the Irish World fell on an unresponsive congregation, its clarion evangelism was gradually absorbed. In a remarkable series of open letters to Gladstone[1] as "Minister-in-Chief of the British Empire", Ford summoned England to the bar of Christendom to answer the gravest charges known to mankind. In terms that were biblical not legal, the Irish World impeached the British empire for having infringed the law of God. In the first letter, published on 2 April 1881, the empire was variously described as a "work of the devil", a "system of diabolism", a "modern Babylon"; and the "spirit of conquest" exhibited by it-damned as "sinful".[2] Ford exhorted all the "victims of this infernal system"--the Chinese who had opium forced down their throats,[3] the Indians emaciated by English-made famines,[4] the Zulus sullenly nursing their wrath[5]--to combine with the Irish "in a holy crusade" to lay it in ruins.[6] Perhaps Ford dreamed of a reign of virtue as he urged a reign of terror. In advocating violence the Irish World, he argued, was simply doing "God's work upon earth".[7] After all, the cause of these downtrodden nations, which dwelt in the "shadow"of the English "pirate flag", was identical: "it [was] not the Irish people alone but scores of other peoples" who hated Gladstone's empire.[8]

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1. These letters were subsequently published in New York in 1915 under the title: The Criminal History of the British Empire.
2. Irish World, 2 April 1881; Ford, The Criminal History of the British Empire, pp. 7-11.
3. Ibid., 30 April 1881; Ford, Criminal History, p. 43.
4. Ibid.; Ford, Criminal History, pp. 44-5.
5. Ibid., 23 April 1881; Ford, Criminal History, p. 27.
6. Ibid.; Ford, Criminal History, p. 13.
7. Ford, Criminal History, p. 63.
8. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

Not surprisingly it was land, the lowest common denominator of shared experience, that was upheld as the direct link binding the enemies of England together. The Nation, in an article on 28 May 1881 headed "The Evictions", compared the situation of Kaffirs burnt out in the South Africa wars with that of Irish tenants "exterminated" by their landlords. Despite differences in detail, it insisted that the result in both cases was the same: houses were devasted and countryside turned into wilderness.[1] In August O'Donnell was reminded by Sir David Wedderburn[2] that the Government of India stood in the same relation to the Raj as a bad Irish landlord stood to his rack-rented estate. The periodical reassessment of land impoverished the Indian cultivator in much the way that rack-renting had impoverished the Irish tenant.[3] In short, the history of India was the history of the Irish estates.[4]

During the summer recess John Blake (Waterford Co.) a special friend of Parnell's and an "Irishman of the inimitable order",[5] journeyed to India to study the question first-hand.[6] On his return to Westminster, he confirmed the picture of a starving peasantry made wretched by bad landlordism and bureaucratic neglect--Ireland's complaint exactly.[7] As the Irish World interposed, the "criminal

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1. Nation, 28 May 1881.
2. Hansard, Vol. 265, 22 August 1881, Cols 669-70.
3. Ibid., Cols. 669-70.
4. Freeman's Journal, 23 August 1881.
5. Lucy, The Gladstone Parliament, p. 377.
6. Irish World, 17 September 1881; Bengalee, 24 September 1881, 9 January 1882.
7. Hansard, Vol. 273, 31 July 1882, Cols. 284-7.

class" which subjugated Ireland was the very class which had enslaved the empire.[1] Exchange "zemindar" for landlord, and "ryot" for tenant, and you had a perfect likeness between "the two sets of land thieves".[2] Justin Huntly McCarthy in England Under Gladstone 1880-1884 saw the Bengal Tenancy Bill "as in some measure the fellow of the Irish Land Act of 1880". This "first important attempt to define the relative rights of zemindars" was "practically a repetition on Indian soil of the landlord and tenant difficulty of Ireland".[3]

It followed that because Ireland, India, and to a lesser extent Africa, were united in similar grievance, so they might resort to similar remedy; the "holy crusade" was to take the form of land war. The No Rent Manifesto which issued from Kilmainham on 18 October 1881, whether or not a "brazen bluff...to confer autocracy on Parnell",[4] announced the call to arms by urging a general strike against rent. "In spirit and language", wrote William O'Brien, the draughtsman of the Manifesto, "it was the product of a country in full revolution".[5] It should surprise no one that its inspiration came less from Parnell than from Ford and Egan.[6] With his own policy of testing the Land Act rendered impossible, Parnell had nothing to lose in allowing the supporters

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1. Irish World, 30 April 1881; Ford, Criminal History, pp. 44-7.
2. Ibid., 18 August 1883.
3. J.H. McCarthy, England Under Gladstone 1880-1884, London 1884, p.289.
4. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp. 110-111.
5. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 367.
6. R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, i, p. 320.

of the latter their head. Parnell, in fact, was pessimistic about the effectiveness of the Manifesto,[1] but the Irish World confidently acclaimed it as the death-knell of empire. Its cable despatches from India carried the comforting news that the No Rent Manifesto had been translated into the Vernacular languages of India and published in most of the nationalist journals.[2] In January 1882 O'Donnell "triumphantly" addressed the same message to a gathering of land leaguers.[3] Patrick Ford was reassured that the "light" was spreading rapidly and that an Indian Land League movement would be started before the year was out:

> "We have often said that the Land Question was a universal one, and could not be confined to Ireland. The events of the day are proving the truthfulness of this assertion".[4]

Henry George, who had sailed from America in the hope that his theories on land nationalisation were about to be realised,[5] lectured in similar vein to Irish audiences up and down Britain. At Glasgow on St. Patrick's Day, he proclaimed the slogan "The Land for the People" as the "true battle-cry", not merely for Irishmen but for oppressed millions everywhere. Let them not be deceived that they were in the van of a movement that had meaning beyond the shores of Ireland. Every Irishman, he urged, "ought to feel himself a missionary" and give up everything to "push forward the true doctrine".[6]

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1. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, pp. 73-4.
2. Irish World, 17 December 1881; 14 January 1882.
3. Freeman's Journal, 23 January 1882.
4. Irish World, 14 January, 4 February 1882.
5. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 440.
6. Irish World, 22 April 1882. See also George's interview with H.M. Hyndman on the subject of India, in ibid., 18 March 1882.

If "No Rent" failed as a proselytising campaign, however, it would be wrong to conclude that it made little impact on Eastern minds or won few adherents. It has been seen that events in Ireland were watched by Indian spectators with greater attention than at any other single period. Not only was the Irish call to withold rents widely publicised, but Land League speeches were given unusual prominence.[1] The Dnyanodaya, for example, angrily complained that the conduct of the banned Land League was approved by many admiring journalists and that land leaguers were upheld as "ideal patriots".[2] No newspaper openly urged its readers to adopt the code of the Land League, although the Mahratta and the Native Opinion went as far to incitement as safety would permit. The former denied disseminating "Parnellite" principles itself, but it did not rule out the possibility that Indian students in Britain would make such an attempt on their return. "Who will say", it queried, "that the [Imperial Parliament] shall not have to consider the Indian land problem very soon?" [3] It warned zemindars not to oppose the Tenancy Bill lest the maintenance of landlordism result in "Irish difficulties".[4] The Native Opinion thought it not unlikely that Indian cultivators would as the Irish "take the law into their own hands" if nothing was done to improve their plight.[5]

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1. Bengalee, 5, 12 November 1881; Indian Mirror, 23, 25 November 1881.
2. Dnyanodaya, 1 December 1881, in Bombay Native Newspaper Reports, L/R/15, Vol. 136, 1881.
3. Mahratta, 9, 30 October 1881; 1 January, 7 May 1882, in ibid., Vols. 136-7, 1881-2.
4. Mahratta, 14 October 1883, in ibid., Vol. 138, 1883.
5. Native Opinion, 25 March 1883, in ibid.

Most newspapers, however, were revolutionary only to the extent of citing Irish outrage as the product of Government stubborness. If they thought that a diet of Irish aggression might wrest concessions, they could not say so for fear of sequestration.[1] Nevertheless, it is impossible not to detect in the editorial comment on Irish affairs a detached acceptance of violent action as a legitimate means of persuasion. Brushing aside the "daily" breaches of the public peace in Ireland, the Bengalee applauded the struggles of "a brave and patriotic people" for "freedom and constitutional privileges".[2] The Phoenix Park murders of Cavendish and Burke it abhorred, but considered the fault to lie not with Irish assassins but with an "unrighteous Government".[3] Even the Hindoo Patriot, which detested the notion that national redress lay through "pools of blood", was inclined to condemn the violence of "Young Ireland" less because it was wrong morally than because it was wrong tactically--for it had "tended to postpone the day of remedy and relief".[4]

It is tempting to speculate whether isolated nationalist atrocity later in the century owed anything to the example of Irish terrorism. The Muzafferpur murders of 1908[5] had their parallel at Phoenix Park in 1882 and possibly their inspiration in "Captain Moonlight".

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1. Sadharani, 21 May 1882, in Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/R/15, Vol. 8, 1882.

2. Bengalee, 5 November 1881.

3. Ibid., 13 May 1882.

4. Hindoo Patriot, 15 May 1882.

5. See S.A. Wolpert, Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India, Berkeley 1962, pp. 217-9.

Certainly Swadeshi was the rough equivalent of Boycott. In this connection, the Bengalee's comment that a "selfish policy" in Ireland's case had recoiled upon its English authors and in India's case was "poignant with mischief", was prophetic.[1] Moreover, it was persuaded that the visit of Home Rulers would greatly benefit the Indian peasant.[2] The Arya Dnyan Vardh k looked forward to the day when India herself gave birth to a leader such as Parnell.[3]

The "No Rent" movement did not propel Ireland along the path of revolution, and it did not convulse the empire in land war. As far as Parnell was concerned it was never intended to anyway;[4] it simply fizzled out amid sporadic acts of local terror. Politically, its main achievement was to prompt Gladstone to look afresh at the direction of his Iri h policy and to parley with Parnell. Y t intellectually it could boast a new awareness of the outside world. Indeed it was this aspect of Fenian propaganda that most agita ed W.E. Forster. In February 1882, he banned the circulation of the Irish World[5] in Ireland not only because it encouraged Irish insurrection but more especially because it threatened the integrity of the empire. The Irish Secretary spelled out the danger he saw ahead by quoting to the House an extract "typical" of the basic tenor of the paper:

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1. Bengalee, 13 May 1882.
2. Ibid., 9 September 1882.
3. Arya Dnyan Vardhak, June 1882, in Bombay Native Newspaper eports, L/R/15, Vol. 138, 1882.
4. Times, 18 January 1883.
5. Annual Register, 1882, p. 188.

> ..."the whole crowd of aliens who misgovern Ireland--the Goulates--will be hated, despised, and execrated for all time...India and Africa will learn from Ireland the lesson of implacable hostility to their common oppressor."[1]

An admirable illustration of how Ireland and India were liable to be linked in the minds of conservative pessimists was the anonymous "Battle of Dorking" which made a sensation in 1871. It is a warning tale about an imaginary invasion of Britain by foreign powers, aided by a rising in India in which all the Europeans are destroyed, while half the army is locked up coping with trouble in Ireland.[2] To advocates of empire and perhaps to a sponsor of imperial federation like Forster,[3] "Dorking" was a pertinent reminder that security depended on constant vigil. In America, praises were sung as loud as ever for "the Land for the People" movement. The pastor of St. Stephen's Church, New York, believed that if this gospel continued to be preached universally the "millenium" would not only have dawned but reached its "meridian".[4] Thus, when Arabi Pasha began to cause the British trouble in Egypt, he was at once portrayed as "gallantly upholding the No-Rent banner".[5]

Perhaps it was fitting, therefore, that the figure who came to personify the spirit of internationalism was none other than the founder and philosopher of the Land League, Michael Davitt. In an address to workingmen of New York, Brooklyn and Jersey City on 5 July 1882, he admitted that what gave him pleasure in the

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1. Hansard, Vol. 266, 9 February 1882, Col. 312. The extract is from the Irish World, 17 December 1881.
2. See G.T. Chesney, "The Battle of Dorking. Reminiscences of a Volunteer", in Blackwood's Magazine, May 1871.
3. Wemyss Reid, Forster, ii, pp. 97 ff, 503 ff.
4. Irish World, 8 July 1882.
5. Ibid., 19 August 1882.

land war in Ireland was the sentiment, that while Ireland and Irishmen were fighting for the cause of labour and justice for Ireland, they were at the same time fighting for the cause of labour and humanity throughout the world. As a land leaguer he was proud that the Irish could battle for the rights of man against England beyond the national boundaries of their own country and the United States.[1] While Davitt declined to say whether this was a new feature of the land movement, he had been aware of these universal implications from the start.[2] A lengthy spell in Portland gaol enabled him to collect his thoughts on the subject, away from the heat of the battle. In Leaves from a Prison Diary, Davitt analysed the character of British rule over dependent nations, looking first at Ireland where it was "bad" to India where he concluded it *could not* be worse. From his researches into conditions prevailing under the Raj, Davitt was convinced that India was seething with discontent. The belief that the British were regarded there with passionate adoration he considered the most complete delusion possible to imagine: "any student of revolutionary symptons [knew] perfectly well that the overthrow of British rule in India [was] only a question of time"; and that it was simply "delayed pending the organisation of a concerted movement".[3] Because the air was full of rumours about Indian risings, Davitt had made a visit to the

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1. Irish World, 15 July 1882.

2. T.W. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882-1906", in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, Vol. III, 1953, pp. 57-8.

3. M. Davitt, Leaves from a Prison Diary, Vol. II, Lecture 31, London 1885, pp. 142-161.

Indian Museum at Kensington to ascertain whether the intensity of Indian agitation would favour a corresponding agitation in Ireland.[1] It could be argued, though incorrectly, that Davitt was really interested in sizing up the possibilities for Armageddon. As O'Donnell more correctly put it, however, Davitt "had a call to preach a covenant".[2] Indeed, it became an inseparable aspect of his faith, that Ireland's role in the world, when not being "dragooned or otherwise persecuted by England", was that of the "nursery of missionary ideas and ideals".[3]

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1. M. Davitt, Leaves from a Prison Diary, Vol. II, Lecture 24, p. 47.

2. O'Donnell, History, i, p. 452.

3. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 446.

Chapter X

The Politics of Internationalism

I After Kilmainham

II Pitt's Covenant

III Professor of Men and Nations

The immediate answer was no. Passivity alienated more Irish-Americans than it converted. Across the Atlantic the Kilmainham pact was denounced as a sell-out of the Land League[1] and support for Parnell dwindled alarmingly. More serious perhaps, the American contribution which had formed to date 95 per cent of Irish funds plunged to well under a third.[2] The most significant defection was Patrick Ford, who feeling the cause betrayed declined to have anything further to do with it.[3] Neither he nor his followers were represented at the Philadelphia conference in April 1883 at which the Irish National League of America was formed.[4] The Irish World severed relations with the Irish Parliamentary party completely, describing it as a "sham" and branding it as a "swindle".[5] Ford was totally committed to the concept of revolution in Ireland, and refused to jettison this policy, as yet untried, for one of "dubious moderation" which had a dismal record of past failure. Similarly, if the Clan na Gael as a whole eventually rallied behind Parnell, extreme elements within it seemed equally reluctant to abandon skirmishing. On 8 August 1882, the Foreign Office was informed by its Consulate in New York that Fenians there were boasting that men and money were being sent to strengthen Arabi Pasha's uprising, but was disinclined to take the threat seriously.[6] Information

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1. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 362.
2. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, p. 135.
3. Desp. Political No. 57, Archibald to Granville, 7 October 1882, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1820.
4. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 396.
5. Irish World, 2 December, 4 November 1882.
6. Desp. Political no. 27, Edwards to Granville, 8 August 1882, F.O.5 Papers, Vol. 1819. See also enclosure of an extract from the New York Sun of 8 August, alleging that three Irishmen had already set sail for Egypt to enlist in Arabi's army. Parnell was reported to have telegraphed strong disapproval of this action. Desp. Political no. 32, Edwards to Granville, 16 August 1882, ibid.

about a secret society operating from Washington and infiltrating underground agents into England, Ireland and India with orders to cause disruption, received rather more attention. Sackville-West, the British Ambassador, thought it quite possible that such a society existed but rather doubted its capacity to work much mischief.[1] Later, the Clan itself under Alexander Sullivan's leadership did inaugurate a campaign of dynamite terrorism in Britain. Attempts were made to blow up the House of Commons, the Tower and other notable landmarks, but apart from emphasising the pointlessness of American strategy, achieved nothing.[2]

Parnell rightly considered military insurrection in Ireland a futile alternative at the time, even if he did not reject this desperate possibility outright. The type of action he favoured was that which might lead to further advance,[3] and terrorism in the form it took at Phoenix Park had put the clock back not forward. Parnell ridiculed the isolated bomb attacks on London buildings,[4] though he was prepared to countenance under the right conditions the diversionary impact of invasion. According to William O'Brien, the "outlaw side" of Parnell's opportunism revealed itself in 1885, when a Russian march on Penjdeh filled the air with rumours of imminent confrontation with the British empire. The temperature was such that Parnell investigated the possibilities for a raid on Ireland

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1. Desp. (draft), Nos. 329, 330, Granville to Sackville-West, 9, 16 December 1882; see also reply Desp. no. 449, Sackville-West to Granville, 22 December 1882, ibid., Vol. 1820.
2. T.N. Brown, Irish-American Nationalism, p. 154 ff.
3. W. O'Brien, Evening Memories, London 1920, pp. 78-9.
4. Abels, op.cit., p. 205.

by 5,000 Irish-American veterans of the civil war under the command of General Phil Sheridan. James J. O'Kelly was sent to the United States to explain the plan and O'Brien surreptitiously hastened to London for "lengthy conversations" with a Russian envoy "in a frowsy back drawing room in Ebury Street". Parnell calculated that Gladstone might be sufficiently startled "into some epoch making proffer of Irish freedom", but the withdrawal of Russian troops defused the situation and put an end to this "castle in the air".[1]

The post-Kilmainham period then was necessarily one not only of reorientation but of reorganisation as well. The Land League was still declared an illegal organisation and the agrarian crisis was gradually improving thanks to the attitude of the new land courts and to Parnell's secret negotiations with the Liberals. The Irish leader undertook to use his influence to check violence and outrage in return for political concessions. An Arrears Bill according tenants in arrears the benefits of the 1881 Land Act passed the Commons on 21 July 1882 as a sign of good faith. If the carrot was given, however, the stick was held in reserve. Public feeling, following the murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and T.H. Burke, ran so high that Gladstone was not permitted to let coercion lapse. Nevertheless, Parnell accepted the Land Act and agreed to work it. The stage was thus set for the Home Rule party to assert its authority over the entire national movement.

The transfer of power was confirmed by the formation of the Irish National League on 17 October 1882, an organisation controlled

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1. W. O'Brien, Evening Memories, pp. 84-6.

by the Parliamentary party.[1] Its constitution allowed for a council of 48; a third of which was to be nominated by the party, the remainder to be elected by county conventions under the supervision of a "party" chairman. As the council was never elected, the government of the League effectively devolved on an organising committee of thirty members, the majority of whom were Parnellites.[2] By such means the Parliamentary party was provided with a "smooth-running national electioneering machine" which it had never had before. The new League, which ultimately united all sections of the Irish national movement, became in effect its political arm. As for Parnell, he was established as potentially a dictator, although in practice he was seldom dictatorial. Davitt summed up the change as "the overthrow of a movement and the enthronement of a man, the replacing of nationalism by Parnellism...", the eclipse of semi-revolution.[3]

The shift of emphasis from agrarianism to constitutionalism soon became apparent at the parliamentary level, despite the denial of T.P. O'Connor at Newcastle in July that passivity was henceforth to be the new order of the day.[4] Referring to the recently proposed rules of procedure, he rejected the suggestion that they could restrain Home Rulers, since the only guarantee for parliamentary decorum was opinion out of doors. As Irish Members were independent of English opinion, that guarantee was wanting. He referred to the example of O'Donnell burrowing into the administration

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1. Freeman's Journal, 17, 19 October 1882; Times, 17, 18 October 1882.
2. For a full list of members see C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 127n3.
3. Davitt, Feudalism, pp. 377-8.
4. See J. Morley, "Irish Revolution and English Liberalism", Nineteenth Century, Vol. 12, 1882, pp. 647-66.

of India. No rules could prevent him or several of his colleagues from entering upon a fertile field of parliamentary debate, namely the terrible grievances of the Indian people. Home Rulers might also profitably combine with the Conservatives to launch lengthy discussions on the affairs of Egypt[1].

To some extent the party proceeded to prove O'Connor's point. Home Rulers and Radicals initiated a debate in protest against India bearing the entire cost of an Indian detachment sent to reinforce the British army in Egypt. The Government argued that because the Suez Canal was the "high road to the East", its security was vital to Indian interests but not to English interests; which "could get on very well without [it]".[2] Egypt was therefore an Indian rather than an imperial concern. The House of Commons, however, was determined to relieve India of extraordinary expenses and the Government was forced to compromise to avoid being beaten on the issue.[3] Assurance was given that final decision would be subject to parliamentary approval. However, Ripon had his arm twisted in the meantime and agreed to accept as equitable Gladstone's settlement of a British contribution of £500,000, the Indian Exchequer absorbing the balance of £1,297,000.[4] Should the Viceroy continue to agitate against any Indian liability, Northbrook rudely informed him this would mean "curtains" for the Liberals:

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1. Nation, 22 July 1882.

2. Hartington to Ripon, 30 August 1882, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43569. See also Northbrook to Ripon, 25 August 1882, ibid., Add. Ms 43572.

3. Hartington to Ripon, 4 August 1882, ibid., Add. Ms 43569; Hansard, Vol. 273, 31 July 1882, Cols. 259-307.

4. Gladstone to Ripon, 1 December 1882, ibid., Add. Ms 43552.

> "Of course all the Irish and a considerable number of Radicals will vote that India should pay nothing, and though the Opposition will not be very consistent in taking this line, it will be scarcely possible for them to resist the temptation of inflicting a d feat on the Government".[1]

A committed Liberal himself, Ripon could hardly ignore such an argument, or relish the prospect of bringing about the downfall of his former colleagues.

Irish protests against the shelling of Alexandria and against direct British military intervention to restore law and order in Egypt, was much less popular or effective. Home Rulers were virtually alone in seeing Arabi Pasha not as the instigator of a narrow military revolt but as the leader of a genuine nationalist movement.[2] Sir ilfred Lawson and the "Peace" party sympathised with tneir opposition to "gun- o t diplomacy", but the Government had tne overwhelming support of public opinion in its determination to suppress ' utiny".[3] Tel-el-Kebir was acclaimed as a just victory.[4]

Yet the Kilmainham treaty achieved what rules or procedure perhaps could not; it seemed progressively to deflate and depress t e Home Rule party. If intervention over India and Egypt was an important reaffirmation of continued Irish independence--Ho e Rulers alone upheld the principle of nationality,[5] whereas the Radicals repudiated the Egyptian war on the ground that it was waged solely in

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1. Northbrook to Ripon, 1 December 1882, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43572.
2. Hansard, Vol. 272, 27 July, Cols. 1611-18; 27 July 1882, Cols. 2037-44, 2074-79.
3. Fre an's Journal, 28 July 1882, Ten Home Rulers voted in a minority of 19: Callan, McCarthy, Nelson, A. O'Connor, T.P. O'Connor, The O'Gorman Mahon, O'Kelly, O'Connor Power, Redmond, Sheil. O'Donnell and Biggar were tellers.
4. Annual Register, 1882, pp. 149 ff.
5. Hansard, Vol. 272, 24 July, Cols, 1611-1618; 27 July, Cols.2037-44, 2074-79; Vol. 273, 16 August 1882, Cols. 1958-59.

the interests of bondholders and usurers;[1] it did very little to disturb the decorum of Parliament. The speeches of Justin McCarthy, O'Connor Power, John Blake, O'Donnell and Arthur O'Connor seemed to lack the old fire and Parnell's was at best token.[2] John Bright suspected that the reason for the meekness of the party and the loss of obstructive power was its "enfeeblement" in Ireland.[3] Compromise on the land question had brought about hiatus in Parliament. Although only in a very loose way, Kilmainham committed Parnell to a policy of co-operation with the Liberal party "in forwarding Liberal principles and measures of general reform".[4] In effect, Home Rulers were asked to conserve their energies for an electoral assault in the still rather distant future.

A spirited opposition was put up against the Crimes Bill for over a month, but the period from May 1882 to the trial of the "Invincibles" was, as the Times had forecast, one of "temporising" and "drift".[5] Resistance to coercion was anyway a matter of principle, a "sacred duty" of any Irishman who did not wish "to forfeit all claim to popularity", rather than a barometer of political resolve. That twenty-four Home Rulers were suspended after an all-night sitting on 30-31 June[6] was primarily a gesture to the past. The closture succeeded in softening the asperities of debate, but obstruction[7]

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1. Annual Register, 1882, p. 182.
2. Hansard, Vol. 274, 26 October 1882, Cols. 210-211.
3. Bright to Ripon, 2 October 1882, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43632.
4. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 167.
5. Times, 17 October 1882.
6. Annual Register, 1882, pp. 98-103.
7. Northbrook to Ripon, 2 March 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43572.

as the "Fourth party" proved could easily be veiled "under plausible excuses".[1] Parnell himself, however, appeared to have lost his appetite for politics and rarely came to the House or took a "systematic interest" in the work of the National League.[2] The everyday running and direction of the party was placed in the hands of Healy, Sexton and later of Harrington. As O'Donnell recalled, these were months of "indefinite waiting for a cue", with "more police government" on the side of the Ministry and mere protests on the side of Parnellites.[3]

Although the party, or what was left of it,[4] acquiesced in the general line out of loyalty to the cause, the waiting policy held little charm for disappointed agrarians. Patrick Egan made a final audit of the Land League's accounts, committed the Paris funds to Parnellite control,[5] and emigrated to America.[6] He was followed shortly afterwards by Thomas Brennan. John Dillon not only resigned his parliamentary seat but intimated that he intended to withdraw completely from Irish politics "for the next few years". He set sail for Colorado via the Mediterranian and was not heard from again till June 1885.[7] His departure was excused on the grounds of prolonged ill-health, but its suddenness and finality suggested that this was not only reason for his decision.

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1. Annual Register, 1883, p. 109.
2. W. O'Brien, Recollections, pp. 470-1.
3. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 135.
4. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p. 80 fn. At its lowest point in the winter months of 1883, the party sank to about twenty members.
5. Freeman's Journal, 18 October 1882; Times, 13 March 1883.
6. Davitt, Feudalism, p. 378; Times, 9, 10, 15 March 1883.
7. Lyons, Dillon, pp. 69-71; Annual Register, 1883, pp. 198-9.

Michael Davitt and Frank Hugh O'Donnell were disturbed, among other things, by the undemocratic constitution of the new League. The one appealed against the "nominee" system of appointment,[1] the other protested against the way the League had been constituted, "in a moment of undue pressure, and without adequate notice".[2] Both were accused of promoting open disruption. Davitt's criticism was construed as an attack on the party, O'Donnell's as an attack on Parnell. The Derry Journal, for example, warned him that the nation was not disposed to allow any clique or combination to impair the efficiency of Parnell's leadership.[3] O'Donnell's objection, however, was not to Parnell personally. Prior to the convention at which the National League had been formed, he had been described as a "staunch supporter" of Parnell's policy and had made platform appearances in Drogheda, Dungarvan and Cork as a Parnellite.[4] If he was less than enthusiastic about it, he had at least accepted the fact that Parnell was not only "chairman" of the party[5] but also "head of the Irish nation".[6] Nor could he fault Parnell for releasing the pressures of social revolution--a course he had consistently advocated himself. What O'Donnell objected to was firstly the importation of the machine politics of Tammany Hall, which he feared would produce a party of yes-men and result in the expulsion of gifted individualists;[7] and secondly, the absence of a suitable

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1. Times, 18 October 1882; W.O'Brien, Recollections, p. 468.
2. Freeman's Journal, 19 October 1882.
3. Extract from Derry Journal in Nation, 28 October 1882.
4. Freeman's Journal, 15 September 1882; Nation, 30 September 1882.
5. O'Donnell, History, 1, p. 468.
6. Ibid., p. 148.
7. Ibid., p. 450 ff.

replacement lever in the political game. O'Donnell was not opposed to the exercise of stricter discipline within the party. Indeed, he came to welcome any measure that would increase its parliamentary effectiveness. Rather, he was apprehensive that over-riding control might fall into the possession of a coterie of absolutist lieutenants, who had neither time for his views nor understanding of them. It was Tim Healy, not Parnell, who ultimately sealed O'Donnell's political fate by dubbing him "Mr. Crank Hugh O'Donnell".[1] Davitt confirmed that these men were "infinitely" more "intolerant" *and more* "dictatorial", in matters of principle and policy, than their leader.[2]

Many saw the Kilmainham "pact" as a return to the lethargic days of Butt. Richard Power, a loyal Parnellite, wrote to Dillon that having always feared and hated private treaties and Government negotiations, he would have preferred rather "than remain a member of the party which was not thoroughly independent and perfectly indifferent to English interests", to have followed his example.[3] O'Donnell expressed a similar point of view in the Freeman's Journal. The national programme that had been outlined at the convention, he renounced as a truncated one. He would not resign but he could take no part in the new League that persisted with such a sterile policy. Instead, he should continue to support the national programme "in its full extent, without compromise and without conciliation". This meant demonstrating to Englishmen that Irish legislators "were both willing and able, to cross the path of imperial misgovernment in every department however vigilant, in every question

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1. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 247n.

2. Davitt, Feudalism, pp. 378-9.

3. Power to Dillon, 26 September 1882, Dillon Papers, quoted in Lyons, Dillon, p. 69.

however large, at every crisis however ominous". Failure to do this, when they faced persistent interference from English statesmanship, was to grant a premium for continued provincialisation. Opposition to the Government of the day, not co-operation with it, was the only policy that could bring home to imperial authorities the "reality of Irish hopes and of Irish organisation".[1]

O'Donnell had tradition on his side. Irish dissociation from political compacts had been since 1873 an integral part of parliamentary nationalism. In 1879, O'Donnell himself had advocated close alliance with the Liberals, but primarily to secure the over-throw of the Beaconsfield Government. If disposed at first to allow Gladstone breathing space to prove his good intentions towards Ireland, O'Donnell nevertheless upheld "neutrality" by keeping a watchful brief on the administration of his erstwhile allies and by joining with the Fourth party in "constant and exhaustive criticism" of Liberal legislation.[2] O'Donnell was prepared like Parnell to negotiate for concessions,but not at the expense of abandoning parliamentary pressure. Parnell's strategy, on the other hand, was something else again, a "one-man new departure".

Reinforcement of O'Donnell's misgivings came from an unexpected quarter. The Irish World, an unswerving critic of O'Donnell's political philosophy, applauded his stand as honourable. Ford had

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1. Freeman's Journal, 20 October 1882.

2. O'Donnell, History, i, pp. 487 ff, 498 ff.

no illusions about the meaning of the Kilmainham treaty. That "definite understanding" between Home Rulers and Gladstone, he insisted, had merely transformed the Parnellite party into "the recognised tail" of the Ministerialists.[1] He was equally certain about the outcome. A "moment's reflection" was all that was required "to see that England [would] never loosen her grip on Ireland unless forced to do so".[2] Michael Davitt fundamentally agreed. He believed that the new "arrangement" could benefit no one except the Government, in short that cease-fire was capitulation by any other name. At Edgeworthstown, he impressed on Irishmen that the only way of winning their rights was by agitation, by the "disagreeable means of agitation".[3]

According to the Annual Register, the opponents of the Irish movement were over-joyed by the split in Parnellite ranks.[4] The Times talked gleefully of division into two camps,.one following Parnell the other Davitt. It left no doubt with whom its sympathies lay. Davitt was dismissed as an unreasonable "fanatic", whose unrelenting extremism was calculated to win back the Irish people to violent ways. Parnell, by contrast, was complimented for having sensibly come down on the side of peace. His old sins conveniently forgotten, he was spoken of as the cork in the bottle of Irish revolution. The Times considered his reformation tactically sensible:

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1. Irish World, 18 November 1882.
2. Ibid., 2 December 1882.
3. Times, 17 October 1882.
4. Annual Register, 1883, p. 190.

> "He has quietly but effectually effaced himself. He has formally presided at the initiation of the National League--but he has not 'taken his coat off', to quote his own classical phrase, for the working of the new organisation. He has given no rash pledges, he has refrained from a conflict with the law in which he knew he would be worsted, and he has left to more reckless and less prudent spirits the task of denouncing the vigorous and successful administration of Lord Spencer."

These "Fabian" tactics were represented not as the politics of surrender, but as the politics of realism.[1]

Davitt's challenge, however, was more illusory than actual. In the interests of unity he moderated his criticism of Parnell's change of direction, although he was unwilling to give up land nationalisation. While he declined office in the National League, he was a member of its organising committee and often spoke on its platforms.[2] Embarking on a "whistle-stop" tour of Great Britain after the break-up of the national convention,[3] Davitt allowed himself a few "sub acid" comments about the probable ineffectiveness of the new policy;[4] his intention being to educate the Irish electorate, not to get it to take sides.

Thus, although Parnell was "more feared than loved", there was no move to supplant him. The leading opponents of the new policy, like Davitt and O'Donnell, "conspired" to point out its shortcomings in the hope that it would be reappraised. They had no more sinister

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1. Times, 9 October 1882; 9 February 1883.
2. D.N.B., Vol. I, 1912, p. 478; yet see also W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 470.
3. Times, 16, 30 October 1882; 4 January 1883.
4. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p. 471.

motive than this. In fact, both suggested modifications that were seriously considered by Parnell and the high command, not least perhaps because they had much in common. Here were serious doubts expressed from the left as well as the right of the movement. Davitt was committed to the deepest principles of social revolution--he was "a revolutionist without alloy";[1] O'Donnell believed that social justice was compatible with the readjustment rather than the destruction of the Victorian constitution. Both felt that the Irish movement had gone off the rails, Davitt because the land war had been suspended prematurely, O'Donnell because the "active" policy had been subverted. Their solutions to rectification were broadly identical: the Home Rule party by adopting an internationalist role in the House of Commons might take advantage of "Kilmainham" and hasten the day of Irish deliverance.

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p. 27.

II Davitt's Covenant

If Michael Davitt bemoaned the passing of "activism", his scheme for Irish independence was more democratic than revolutionary. At a political meeting at Bermondsey on 22 December 1882 he explained that he preached neither dynamite nor crime as the panaceas of Irish freedom. He relied solely on "moral dynamite", "on ideas alone". There was sufficient in ideas to crush landlordism despite the power of the British empire.[1] Like Patrick Ford, Davitt also came to see that landlordism and imperialism were related manifestations of the order he wished to destroy. The way to undermine it and them, he believed, was to challenge the monopoly of political power exercised by the aristocratic and wealthy classes. This was the very method of attack suggested by J. A. Hobson in his celebrated study on imperialism at the turn of the century.[2] The alternatives to imperialism and class rule were internationalism and popular government.[3] Similarly, Davitt argued for a new radical ideology. In his view a great deal could be done and done at once. Labour associations without further ado had to effect an urgent change of tactics. Instead of waiting on political parties like beggars in search of crumbs, they had to make political parties wait on them. In short, they had to organise themselves into a distinct party within the State. An "excellent beginning", he wrote, might be made with the creation of a Labour party initially of fifty or sixty strong,

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1. Times, 23 December 1882.

2. J. A. Hobson, Imperialism: A Study, 1st edition, London 1902. See also B. Porter, Critics of Empire, London 1968, Ch. VII, pp. 207-38.

3. Hobson, ibid, p.181.

instructed to act independently in Parliament and with a view to the interests of Labour. The House of Lords would certainly perish, for "wealth to propitiate labour would make a holocaust of privilege".[1] Meanwhile, the Home Rule party might start the ball rolling by demonstrating the value of combination and by holding up the virtues of progressive reform.

In early February 1883[2] Davitt was imprisoned in Richmond gaol with Tim Healy and J. P. Quinn, yet again, for making subversive speeches[3]. Before his arrest, he outlined to Parnell a parliamentary plan of campaign which he urged him to adopt experimentally for at least one or two sessions. Basically, this involved the suspension of all Irish business, except a bill for housing Irish agricultural labourers, and the preparation in its place of "a dozen bills dealing with every English, Welsh, and S ottish popular question of issue" that, according to Irish ideas, was "on advanced, progressive lines". They might, for example, sponsor legislation to better the lot of British tenant farmers, or to improve safety conditions in coal mines, or to provide a "less degrading provision for infirm old age than the existing workhouse". "1882-1883," he was convinced," was a time for counting chances and looking ahead". Davitt tendered three main reasons in support of such action. First, it would represent in military terms a "turning movement" against the "territorial interests and class which were the predominant influence in the Imperial Parliament

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1. Davitt, Leaves from a Prison Diary, pp.160-1.

2. Nation, 10 February 1883.

3. Times, 17, 25 January, 8 February 1883; Annual Register, 1883, p.190.

and the most inveterate of Ireland's enemies" within it; second, it would "attempt to do for the British working classes what no party or section of their own representatives would dare to do in the way of radical reform"; and third, it "would remind both Parliament and the public of the revolutionary principles and measures the aristocracy and vested classes of Britain would be confronted with" in their very citadel of law-making power, unless Home Rule was conceded and Irish Members were "packed off" to their own domestic legislature. The "daring Irish policy" which all this entailed was a clear vindication of parliamentary intervention. There could be "nothing inconsistent", Davitt reassured, " though there might be something startling, in Mr. Parnell and his chief lieutenants rising in their places at the opening of the session of 1883 or 1884 and giving notice, one after the other, of bills to be introduced by them on the lines indicated...".[1]

Davitt's advocacy of "parliamentary retaliation" was not utopian, at least by his own standards. It was based on a practical and realistic assessment of the sudden change of atmosphere in Ireland. Parnell had called a halt to the land war. Irish tenants had anyway not responded overwhelmingly to Davitt's call "to march down in their serried phalanxes upon the plains", to "seize the lands upon which to live like civilised beings in a Christian country".[2] A direct frontal approach was therefore ruled out. If landlordism was to be kept under pressure, more subtle means would have to be employed. It was the Government's proposal to extend the franchise that provided Davitt with the answer. "It

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1. Davitt, Feudalism, pp. 444-7.

2. Times, 25 January 1883.

was a matter of serious concern", he wrote, "how the approaching enfranchisement of the British industrial democracy would affect the fortunes of the Irish cause".[1] Davitt was convinced that a new Reform Act pressaged a "social-democratic revival" and would drastically alter the balance of power in both the country and the House of Commons. Leaning more and more towards socialism and moving increasingly among socialists,[2] he had little doubt that Labour was the party of the future. Any action that might hasten its coming and bring the day of reckoning nearer, had to be taken at all costs. This was precisely where the Irish could play their part in fostering the triumph of the new order. At Leeds on 3 January 1883, Davitt held up the "terror" of the Irish vote to Radicals and Liberals lest they consent to stop the new franchise short of Ireland.[3] The Home Rule party must ensure that there would be no sell-out. In the House of Commons it ought to promote and where necessary lead the cause of democratic reform. Isaac Butt and Parnell after him had proved their willingness in the past to support every measure brought forward in Parliament for the benefit of the working class or for the widening of their liberties.[4]

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1. Davitt, Feudalism, p.444.
2. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labout Movement", op.cit, pp. 62-3.
3. Times, 4 January 1883.
4. Davitt, Feudalism, p.446.

Davitt felt that in this way Ireland would serve not only the interests of labour but also the interests of nationalism. He stood, wrote his biographer F. Sheehy Skeffington, "for the harmonising of democracy and nationality".[1] By undertaking the burden of representing working people now, Home Rule would assuredly reap the reward when a Labour Government came to power. Davitt in fact went further than this. He subsequently argued that Ireland could achieve Home Rule only with the assistance of the British working classes.[2] It was through the emancipation of British Labour that emancipation would come to Ireland. With working men alone lay the power of restoring to countries like Ireland their independence and of granting them free development:

> "You who have been excluded by the privileged classes from practical politics, have yet a living principle of justice and equity storing in your hearts and you will not sacrifice them to party spirit and intolerable faction. It is you now who can decide the long quarrel of the two nations and adjust all the wrongs of the Irish by restoring them their national freedom."

As the working class was the "life blood" of the nation, it would neither tolerate oppression at home nor imperialism abroad.[3]

Davitt's focus was essentially universal not partisan. His concern for the welfare of the Irish people always spilled over into a concern for people at large. A Welsh historian, Dr. K. O.

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1. D.N.B. Vol. I, 1912, p.478.

2. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement", op.cit, p.53.

3. Undated address by Michael Davitt to "Fellow Working Men", among collection of Davitt Papers in the National Library of Ireland (Dublin), Ms 2159.

Morgan, has called him a "Social Democrat - folk nationalist".[1] On the other hand, Frank Hugh O'Donnell remembered him less as a hybrid and more as a Lancashire radical with "Hibernian varnish", maintaining that he "lacked the very conception of nationality".[2] Certainly, if his first loyalty was to Irish self-government, Davitt was never just a nationalist. He was convinced from early life that the "thorough-going regeneration of government and society" in Ireland and throughout the world must rest on a socialist basis.[3] There was never for Davitt one path to Irish freedom. In his time he was to tread several - he had been a Fenian, was an advocate of agrarian revolution, and was to become a Member of Parliament. Always his concern was to extend the field of combat. From 1882 onwards, he was associated with many causes in the name of "justice and equity": with British Labour, with the defence of Scottish crofters, with Boer Independence, with an "amnesty" investigation into Russian pogroms. Significantly, the "young visionaries of Cymru Fydd" turned not to Parnell but to Davitt as "the very personification of 'widening the area of agitation' beyond Ireland", to draw upon the Irish experience.[4]

Completing Davitt's interventionist programme was the proposal to allocate an Irish seat to Dadabhai Naoroji, "a thoroughly

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1. K. O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics 1688-1922, Cardiff 1963, p.70.
2. O'Donnell, History, i, p.372; ii, p.27.
3. D.N.B. Vol. I, 1912, p.479.
4. Morgan, op.cit., pp.69-70.

representative" Indian, "well known" to Parnell and to many Home Rulers. As President of the London Indian Society and leading exponent of the "Drain Theory", Naoroji was a prominent spokesman in Britain of political reforms in India.[1] The two possibly met through H.M. Hyndman, who was well-acquainted with both of them. Hyndman, in The Record of an Adventurous Life, referred to Davitt as his "close and intimate friend".[2] Having studied the Irish land crisis first-hand,[3] Hyndman had no hesitation in joining the Land League and became the one English member to sit on the executive of its British branch.[4] Three of the main planks of the Democratic Federation, which he founded, interestingly enough included adult suffrage, land nationalisation, and legislative independence for Ireland.[5] Also, as a student of Indian economics and as a critic of the British Administration in India[6] though not of the British influence,[7] Hyndman was in this same period in "constant consultation" with Naoroji,[8] His discovery that India was

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1. R. P. Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji, pp. 97, 129f, 211f.
2. H. M. Hyndman, The Record of an Adventurous Life, London 1911, pp.2, 225.
3. See C. Tsuzuki, H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism, Oxford 1961, pp.28-40.
4. Hyndman, op.cit. p.255; Tsuzuki, ibid. p.44.
5. Tsuzuki, ibid. p.41.
6. See Lytton to Cranbrook, 14 November 1878, Lytton Papers, Mss Eur. E.218, 518/3.
7. Hyndman, "The Bankruptcy of India", op.cit., p.607.
8. Masani, op.cit., pp.197-201.

economically exploited, that her famines were man-made and perennial[1], made him a firm advocate of decentralised government and Indian representation[2]. Naoroji himself was beginning to think in terms of a parliamentary career and was sounding out the chances of securing a constituency. Davitt, of course, was in no position to offer him an Irish one, but he had Parnell's ear and was enthusiastic about "giving a direct voice in the House of Commons to countless numbers of British subjects who were ruled despotically and taxed without votes". Such a sacrifice would reflect to Ireland's credit and must surely convince the enemies of Home Rule, that even when there was no Irish business under consideration, they would gain nothing by the gag in Westminster or by the "state of emergency" in Ireland. Like T. P. O'Connor, Davitt thought it an opportune moment to execute O'Donnell's plan of "making the affairs and government of India an Irish concern" - after the manner of the Home Rule campaign against flogging[3]. Naoroji's presence in the Parnellite camp, therefore, would not only strengthen Ireland's position at Westminster as the legitimate voice of stifled nationalism, but consummate the new politics of internationalism. As Davitt pointed out in a lecture at Clerkenwell on 23 October 1882, India and Ireland alone of the countries subject to England were virtually ruled outside the British constitution.[4]

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1. Hyndman, "The Bankruptcy of India", op.cit., pp.585-608.

2. Hyndman, "Bleeding to Death", in Nineteenth Century, Vol. 8, 1880, pp.157-76. Hyndman's ideal solution in the circumstances was for some form of self-government under British supervision.

3. Davitt, Feudalism, p.447.

4. Times, 24 October 1882.

Parnell's reaction was initially favourable. He was "very much taken" by the prospect of foisting an Indian Home Ruler on the House of Commons, but asked for a fortnight to consider Davitt's scheme as a whole. In the event, Davitt was deprived through imprisonment of Parnell's answer until June. On his release he was informed that the plan "would not be completely understood in Ireland", and "might possibly lead to trouble within the party".[1] The whole issue had been debated in his absence over consideration of the less far-reaching though equally controversial blueprint of Frank Hugh O'Donnell. Like Davitt's, O'Donnell's scheme also stipulated an interventionist programme and an Indian alliance. Unlike his, it was concerned less with furthering the cause of social democracy in Britain as a pre-requisite for self-government, than with transforming the party into a powerful instrument of anti-imperialism, capable of rendering Home Rule an irresistible force throughout the empire. With Davitt, parliamentarianism was to play a support role; with O'Donnell, it was the kernel of his strategy. Davitt envisaged the party as simply the springboard to launch revolutionary ideas; O'Donnell aimed to provide it with a machinery which would enhance its knowledge and increase its effectiveness. There was also divergence in the mode of creating a parliamentary outlet for Indian nationalism. Davitt revived the project of direct access rejected in 1878, and since abandoned by O'Donnell as "impracticable"[2]. The latter now argued the case for indirect agency by the Irish party itself, an honest and committed broker for all unrepresented peoples throughout the empire. Davitt supported Naoroji's candidature because of what it

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1. Davitt, Feudalism, p.447.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p.429.

might symbolise; O'Donnell pleaded internationalism to increase the status of Irish statesmanship. The influence Ireland might derive, irrespective of the good she might promote, from speaking as accredited agent of Indian nationalist opinion, matched if it did not outweigh the immediate impact of sponsoring the first Indian Member of Parliament.

Despite such differences in emphasis and detail, it is possible to discern a broad understanding between Davitt and O'Donnell. Evidence suggests that they were 'bed-fellows' no matter how strange, that they were working along similar lines rather than at cross purposes. Was it purely coincidence that they both advocated in the space of a month active policies which featured coalition with India? O'Donnell's assurance, that Davitt was a man whom he "could not possibly take as a co-worker in any national movement",[1] has the ring of experience, and the hint of involvement in other than the cause of Ireland. Indeed, Davitt stood unusually and consistently high in O'Donnell's estimation, despite these and other reservations about his misguided socialism and simplistic nostrums:

> "Mr. Davitt was by far the most honourable man among leading Parnellites and Land Leaguers with whom I ever had to do."

Again, he was described as "a man who loved truth, who loved humanity", and who was "wonderfully honest".[3] These judgments withstood the blight of seldom generous disillusionment.

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1. O'Donnell, ii, p.27.
2. Ibid, p.245.
3. Ibid. p.22.

Davitt's attitude to O'Donnell is equally revealing. When the latter ostentatiously quit the party in 1884, publicly denouncing the "imposture" of Parnellism, Davitt advised him that people in Ireland were unlikely "to admit that they had been taken in so hugely, or that so little had been done for all the sacrifices made during the last four years"; an "illuminating" admission and an unlikely gesture from a political adversary[1]. When Dungarvan, at the constituency level, soon afterwards began to voice doubts about O'Donnell's ability to represent them, it was Davitt who communicated to the Town Commissioners the hope that "he would never hear them saying one word " against their Member.[2] The point might be made that Davitt sought to promote unity and to strangle discord at its source; O'Donnell's penchant for responding to criticism in kind was famous. Yet Davitt himself was careless of this consideration when he knowingly swam against the tide of party thinking and continued to advocate land nationalisation. At Drogheda on 15 April 1884 he was sternly reprimanded by Parnell for risking "serious disunion".[3] Clearly Davitt shared most of O'Donnell's irritation for the type of "moderation" that appeared to sanction the "quiet life at Westminster". His remark that O'Donnell had "created a flutter in the parliamentary dovecote" was less a reproach than a commendation: "People will agree with mostly all you say and condemn you for having said it."[4]

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1. Davitt to O'Donnell, n.d. 1884, quoted in History i, pp.372-3.
2. Extract from Cork Examiner in Nation, 26 July 1884.
3. Freeman's Journal, 16 April 1884.
4. Davitt to O'Donnell, n.d. 1884, op.cit.

Henry Harrison has suggested that Parnell's "moderation" in the post-Kilmainham period, was also calculated "to hold the Liberals to electoral reform, without discrimination against Ireland".[1] This consideration was dominant in Davitt's thinking as has been seen. But he believed that franchise reform could be secured more definitely by accelerating agitation, not by slowing it down. After the rebuff to "activism" both Davitt and O'Donnell were left out in the cold, the former temporarily, the latter permanently. Significantly, it was Davitt, who at the turn of the century, despite describing O'Donnell to William O'Brien as an "eternal mischief maker" and "scandal monger", offered to get him "back to Irish politics tomorrow", provided he renounced his "feudalism".[2] His old colleague in the Land League, Andrew Kettle, had since "fallen under the influence of Crank O'Donnell" whom he believed "to be the man of our time".[3]

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1. Harrison, Parnell, Joseph Chamberlain and Mr. Garvin, p.86.
2. Davitt to W. O'Brien, n.d. 1899?, Davitt Collection, Ms914.
3. Ibid.

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O'Donnell did not show his hand until after Davitt's arrest and Parnell's summons to the party to consider policy for 1883. Although it was widely rumoured that Parnell had every intention of occupying a "considerable share of the session" and was prepared to attack the government on the Crimes Act "all along the line", O'Donnell was reluctant to take the outcome of the meeting on trust.[1] In a letter to the Freeman's Journal on 12 February, he announced his intention of moving at the first opportunity for the radical change in the constitution of the party. Hitherto, he wrote, its organisation had been "simply a chaos" and the need for streamlining was desperate. Since the last general elections Home Rulers had fallen back into "the old exploded system" of bothering only with Irish affairs, respectfully retiring to the reading room or to the smoking room when English land tenure or Egyptian bombardment or Indian gaol starvation came under discussion. As the first Home Rule Conference of 1873 had been told, Englishmen would never be impressed with a "vestryman" policy. So long as Irish representatives submissively refrained from coming out of their "Irish shell", they could always be "bottled up" and "stoppered down" by majorities and gags. On the other hand, they could never be silenced or suppressed if they were determined to defend right and avenge wrong in every sphere of British administration. O'Donnell conceded that it would be difficult if not impossible for the same Irish member to deal with every class of question which might come before him in the discharge of this duty. But he could see no reason why the Irish Parliamentary party should not resolve the problem by dividing itself into specialist committees

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1. Times, 12 February 1883.

or "ministries " to correspond with actual departments of Government. By such reconstruction, they could easily make every branch of the imperial legislature the subject of Irish scrutiny.[1] O'Donnell was recommending no less than the formation of a parallel shadow Government.

If the Freeman's Journal showed no reaction, the Nation gave the scheme careful thought, perceiving that two distinct leading considerations were involved: first, whether it would be good for Ireland that the Home Rule party should "plunge" into matters concerning the relations of the British empire with colonies and foreign nations; and second, supposing the answer to be in the affirmative, whether O'Donnell's was the most practical way of giving effect to the idea. It concluded that a policy of active interference in English and imperial affairs was indeed the "best way of making Irish discontent with the Union felt", not alone in Parliament but throughout the British Isles. "Many a time and oft" it had urged such a course of action in its columns. Nonetheless, it felt obliged to negative the second proposition. The party, with its present numbers and obvious limitations, was not only too small for the work cut out for it, but had to labour under disadvantages unknown to British parliamentarians. Home Rulers unfortunately were not millionaires and were more like part-time politicians.[2]

As the agenda was overloaded with conventional business, O'Donnell was denied the opportunity to raise his motion at the party meeting on 14 February. However, the decision neither to re-elect the

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1. Freeman's Journal, 12 February 1883.

2. Nation, 17 February 1883.

parliamentary committee nor to defer its election to a set date, would suggest that some reorganisation of party management was contemplated.[1] The 19th February was given over entirely to the consideration of O'Donnell's plan. The proceedings were not reported, but O'Donnell dropped several hints in Parliament immediately afterwards, which indicated a new-found confidence.[2] Brushing aside Hartington's warning that until Ireland behaved herself nothing further would be done to remove her discontent, O'Donnell retorted that Irish resolve to end English rule was increasing all the time:

> "So far from the Irish nation having exhausted one-fiftieth part of constitutional agencies already at its disposal, they were only at the beginning of the formation and the organisation of the resources and power of the Irish race."

This was less a boast than notice that Ireland was on the threshold of applying new and more sophisticated forms of pressure. Secondly, O'Donnell claimed that the Irish race would stand by Parnell's "last-link" speech,[3] even himself, although he had been accused by "some warm" Irish nationalists of being "too imperial in his views." Admittedly, he would prefer to make the House of Commons an "Imperial Chamber", and the representative not only of England, Scotland and Ireland, but of Australia, of Canada, of misgoverned India, and of everyone of the dependencies of the British empire, if it were at

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1. Times, 15 February 1883. Twenty-two Home Rulers answered the summons.

2. Freeman's Journal, 20 February 1883. Nineteen Home Rulers, virtually a full Parnellite complement, attended: Barry, Biggar, Byrne, Corbet, Kenny, Lalor, Leamy, Marum, McCarthy, McCoan, Metge, O'Brien W., A. O'Connor, O'Donnell, O'Kelly, O'Sullivan, Parnell, R. Power, Sullivan.

3. Hansard, Vol.276, 20 February 1883, Col.451.

all possible. Whilst Ireland remained enslaved, however, this could only be a fool's dream.[1]

Nothing was definitely decided at the meeting,which was adjourned until the following week. As it turned out it was adjourned for much longer. "The strange streak of luck which had so long favoured Parnell", writes Dr. O'Brien, " and of which he never failed to make effective use", intervened again to preserve his reputation "with two providential attacks."[2] In as serious a charge as could be made against another Member of Parliament, W.E. Forster inculpated Parnell in the Phoenix Park murders.[3] The Irish leader's response was to wrap himself in a contemptuous silence, denying the right of his English accusers to judge him.[4] Ireland went "almost wild with joy",[5] and Parnell was restored as the symbol of Irish rebellion. A testimonial on his behalf realised a staggering £40,000.[6] Even O'Donnell could "scarce forbear to cheer", having, as he claimed, devised the tactics of "scornful defiance" for Parnell, who became almost the companion of old.[7] No sooner had this storm passed over,

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1. Hansard, op.cit., 21 February 1883, Cols.533-4.
2. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p.85.
3. Hansard, op.cit., 22 February 1883, Cols.607-34.
4. Ibid., 23 February 1883, Cols.716-25. See also Annual Register, 1883, pp.39-49.
5. O'Donnell, History, ii, p.148.
6. Annual Register, 1883, p.201.
7. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp.147-8. Dr. O'Brien thinks O'Donnell's claim improbable; yet the rest of the party urged Parnell to reply to Forster "on the instant". See R.B. O'Brien, Parnell, ii, p.8.

than the Parnellite movement was besieged from Rome. An "angry message" from the Vatican commanded the Irish bishops and priests to discountenance the "tribute" to Parnell and to break-off all association with the National League. The "Roman letter", thought to have been inspired from England, resulted in an emphatic repudiation of papal interference in Irish politics. The clergy did not obey the call and the press upheld Parnell's authority. Against this background of English "conspiracy", the need to rejuvenate confidence in the movement by radical action, in the form suggested either by Davitt or by O'Donnell, became less urgent.

While O'Donnell ensured that his scheme was not lost sight of in the emergency, Parnell appeared nevertheless to drag his feet. At Glasgow on 19th March, O'Donnell argued that Forster's defamation of Parnell necessitated more than ever the organisation of the Irish race. An Irish Bureau of Information at Paris, for example, might "strike down English falsehoods" before they were spread over the Continent. "Let the Irish ally themselves with the champions of every good cause", and "when occasion demanded become the mouthpiece of the wronged of every nation." This proposal was "heartily endorsed",[1] and the Nation proceeded to hound parliamentary absentees.[2] Still nothing was done, and on 2 April in a moment of acute frustration O'Donnell fell back on shock tactics; if the party did not respond to argument, it might be bestirred by disclosure. In a provoking letter to the Freeman's Journal he outlined the "prerequisites" of an Irish parliamentary policy: "it was high time" that the Irish people be told "some home truths" about the real situation. Home Rulers, O'Donnell wrote,

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1. Nation, 24 March 1883; Times, 20 March 1883.
2. Nation, 10 March, 21 April 1883.

lacked the "elementary requirements" of practical politics and of national dignity and honour. They could not even lay claim to possessing a conference room, a library of ordered information, a register of Irish statistics, a file of the national journals, a secretary to aid them to check a reference, or a clerk to transact the manual part of their multifarious correspondence. Yet they were expected "to do so much and to know so much, to be up early and up late", to answer "inquiries from all sides" and to handle "requests from all quarters." Little wonder, he concluded, that up to now Irish policy had amounted to "the fluctuating impulses of a collection of Irish members, without allies, without division of labour, without knowledge of the weak points of the enemy, without any regular supply of information, without organisation."[1]

O'Donnell's outburst was not calculated to win friends, but the sudden resignation of Arthur O'Connor and Richard Power as Whips on 16 April[2] indicated that his disquiet about the way the party was being run was shared. O'Connor and Power had never liked the soft-peddling tactics implied in the "treaty", and felt that they were failing in their duty by not being "perpetually engaged in hostilities with the Government or with the House."[3] Arthur O'Connor, therefore, reinforced O'Donnell's call for change.[4] At the weekly meeting of the party on 8 May, he moved "that in order to utilise the resources, and render effective the efforts of the party, it [was] necessary

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1. Freeman's Journal, 2 April 1883; Nation, 7 April 1883.
2. Times, 17, 18 April 1883.
3. Nation, 4 November 1882.
4. Freeman's Journal, 3, 4 May 1883.

that some systematic plan of action should be adopted and carried out embracing all the members of the party, and extending to all parliamentary work, whether relating to Ireland or not." Essentially, this was a revival of O'Donnell's motion, though modified to make it "more acceptable to the great body of the party." O'Connor's object like O'Donnell's was to extend Irish influence to "all questions of general interest." The result was that three sub-committees were formed - specialising on the Estimates, on foreign and colonial affairs, and on the local affairs of Great Britain - to "advise" the party on appropriate action in each of these fields. Biggar, Harrington, Kenny, Mayne and Arthur O'Connor were delegated to the Estimates committee; and Leamy, McCarthy, W. O'Brien, O'Donnell and O'Kelly were given the imperial "portfolio". The composition of the third committee was reserved until after the Whitsuntide recess.[1]

The new machinery was heralded in Ireland, not only as a "new departure" in party organisation, but a "complete innovation in parliamentary history." Hitherto, no matter how influential a party might have been in the Commons, the only "regular criticism" of departmental business had been conducted exclusively under the direction of the "legitimate" Opposition. Now, however, it was in the power of the Home Rule party as well to address itself "systematically" to "the performance of such matters."[2] O'Donnell, it would seem, had won the battle.

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1. It was formed on 28 May by McKenna, Sexton, Healy, T.P. O'Connor and T.D. Sullivan. Freeman's Journal, 29 May 1883.

2. Ibid, 8 May 1883; Pall Mall Gazette, 8 May 1883; Times, 8 May 1883.

Yet, important as this victory was, its fulfilment was linked to the creation of a "Pan-Indian Union", part two of O'Donnell's "plan de bataille". O'Donnell had toyed with the possibility of uniting India in a "national bond of brotherhood" as far back as 1875,[1] but following his fruitless interview with Salisbury about the Indian ivil Service,[2] he "pressed" the proposition onto Ganendra ohun agore "with added earnestness". Tagore hesitated at first, dou ting the readiness of his countrymen for such an ambitious venture. But on being shown the 1878 initiative of the British Indian ssociation setting out the terms of an Indo-Hibernian alliance,[3] Tagore's reservation melted away: "from that moment", O'Donn ll wrote, "Mr. Mohun Tagore devoted himself to the realisation of our idea with all the patient resolution of a strong and deliberate nature."[4] Over the next three years they worked necessarily alone and in secrecy, O'Donnell providing the outline, Tagore filling in the details. Great care was taken to avoid "premature disclosure" and therefore " remature misrepresentation" - "too much talk" had brought the 1875 experiment "to grief."[5] To those Indians whom O'Donnell met at Collington Gardens, ensington, Tagore's residence, national confederacy was represented as being within the law and in no way a menace to the Raj. O'Donnell claims that he saw en two occasions, for example, at Tagore's and at the London Indian Society,

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1. See Chapter Two, section two, pp.86-7.
2. See Chapter Five, section three, p.271.
3. ee Chapter Three, section three, pp.157-8.
4. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp.423-31.
5. Indian Mirror, 29 March 1883. (See extract from Indian Spectator).

a quartet of high-caste plenopotentiaries who had come direct from Western India and the Deccan. In this way, knowledge of the O'Donnell-Tagore proposals was spread informally and discreetly. Certainly, neither the press nor the India Office received the slightest inkling of what was afoot. The second precaution was to leave all "public" appeals to Indian sentiment to O'Donnell alone. He suspected that "the immovable complacency of Whitehall" looked on him as a visionary and thus harmless.[1]

Indeed, it was "the vision of the Eastern continent being led by the Western Island", that inspired him to promote the development of Indian nationalism. Even when Butt and Parnell shattered that dream there remained "the realisation of leadership by a Western man."[2] Salisbury's snub to Irish youth, real or imagined, was less the motivation than the cue for O'Donnell to adopt the role of nation-builder. At the very time that the Land League began to dominate Irish politics, involvement with India filled an occupational gap as well as a psychological need. O'Donnell recalled that instead of "grinding the ABC of parliamentary intervention into the uninformed minds of a half-illiterate squire [Parnell] and a Belfast bacon-merchant [Biggar]," he was to "direct the aspirations and aid the intelligence of the most intellectual and philosophic body of patriotic statesmen whom any man could meet in the most intellectual era of Italian history." In his estimation, the Indians he walked with and spoke to embodied something of "the world-wide craft of Venice" and "the smooth determination of Rome." Thwarted in Ireland O'Donnell sought expression through India:

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, pp.432-5.

2. Ibid., p.429.

> "I was now back to my old post of Professor of Organisation to men and nations who, for one reason or another, had a quarrel with the British Constitution."[1]

It was simply not enough to succeed Fawcett; O'Donnell wanted to outdo Mazzini.

In December 1882, O'Donnell and Tagore adjudged the time ripe to enlist the opinion of India, not only because all the preliminary steps had been taken, but also because Ireland was particularly amenable to innovation. The proposals first appeared in the Bengalee of 30 December 1882, and subsequently in other leading journals, in the form of a letter from O'Donnell to an anonymous correspondent. Any community seeking redress of grievances, O'Donnell explained, had to make application to the ultimate authority - Parliament - through the correct procedure - constitutional agitation. Down to the present India had failed to do this, and friendly Members of Parliament were forced to dredge for information "slowly and imperfectly" by their own "unaided exertions." What was required therefore was intelligent self-help. India had to organise a "Constitutional Reform Association" in such a way that it could place, "with the least possible delay and with the utmost weight of evidence and authority", any complaint before a committee of English and Irish friends willing to argue the case. Such a body might be established on the following basis:

First: the most "intelligent and distinguished" men from all parts of India should have a hand in its formation.

Second: a web of local branches should connect with all the capitals.

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1. O'Donnell, History, ii, p.431.

Third: a central executive council should supervise and keep in constant communication with all these local centres and with an overseas arm in the very seat of empire.

Fourth: the London office should fulfil all the functions of an information bureau and clearing-house.

Not only was this London "depository of Indian intelligence", occupying "handsome apartments commodiously situated", designed to resemble an embassy,[1] but in the early stages at least was to direct operations. O'Donnell felt that England had to be the centre of the movement until it had taken firm root in India.[2]

The response from India was encouraging. O'Donnell triumphantly recalled that the air between Lahore and Madras resounded with the "beautiful harmony of praise."[3] Most newspapers urged "nationally minded men" to act on O'Donnell's advice unreservedly. The Indian Mirror, the Hindoo Patriot and the Madras Hindu called on existing Associations to immediately "join hands" and to sink their local jealousies in the work of union.[4] In the meantime, suggested the Mirror, the first "useful service" public bodies like the Indian and British Indian Associations of Calcutta, the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona, the Madras Native Association, and the East India Association of Bombay,

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1. Bengalee, 30 December 1882; Indian Mirror, 14 January 1883.

2. O'Donnell, History, ii, p.439.

3. Ibid., p.438. See extracts from various native journals quoted in Voice of India, February 1883.

4. Indian Mirror, 25 January, 2 February 1883; Hindoo Patriot, quoted in O'Donnell, History, ii, p.437; Hindu, 18 January 1883 quoted in Indian Mirror, 25 January 1883.

might perform would be to place themselves "in direct communication" with O'Donnell:

> "it is time for us to prove by our actions that we are making good our claim to be treated as a free people. Let us cast away the things of our political childhood, and establish, by concerted action, our reasonable right to be released from the leading strings by which we are now held."[1]

The Hindu of Madras, according to Dr. Anil Seal, came closest to anticipating the future Congress, if only in name.[2] The plan it liked best, was one that it believed had been maturing under the direction of the Indian Association; namely a "national congress" held annually in Delhi or some other central city:

> "If a similar meeting of native gentlemen be not considered practicable, we do not see why the Associations that have been started in several important towns throughout the country cannot arrange to depute delegates to meet in a central place. They can devise a scheme of perpetual constitutional agitation, and thereby provide a means of bringing the united Indian public opinion to the notice of Government or Parliament in a manner the force of which it will be impossible for the Anglo-Indian or the English public to mistake."[3]

Not surprisingly, it was the editor of the Hindu whom O'Donnell singled out for the "extent of his information and the acuteness of his suggestions." The "lengthy and admirably written letters" he received from this source, were of the standard of "real State papers." Both the editors of the Hindu and the Indian Mirror (Narendra Nath Sen), it would appear, were part of the network of "affiliates" in communication with T gore.[4]

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1. Indian Mirror, 2 February 1883.
2. Seal, op.cit., p.258; B.B. Majumdar, op.cit., pp.153, 177-9.
3. Hindu, 18 January 1883.
4. O'Donnell, op.cit., p.438. See Indian Mirror, 24 February 1883.

The Bengalee was "disposed to think" that if the people of India "set to work to carry out the principles laid down by Mr. O'Donnell", they would "lay the solid foundations of their political regeneration":

> "Mr. O'Donnell simply repeats the valuable lessons taught by the history of the civilised west, when he says that all agitation of the kind recommended by him is the sure panacea for the evils besetting at the present hour the Government of India."

It was less convinced about the need to form a new association in London, and suggested that either the East India Association or the Indian Society should take up the work O'Donnell proposed.[1] Privately, Surendranath Banerjea instructed his London editor to use his influence with the Raja Rampal Singh to secure the offices of the Indian Society.[2] Banerjea's efforts to deputise an accredited Society reflected his concern to retain the centre of gravity in India:

> "Here is our battlefield; here the stern fight must be fought out; here public opinion must be prepared and nurtured; and then, but not till then, should we seek to awaken the sympathies of the English people."

O'Donnell had stipulated all along that they must not arouse suspicion at the India Office by initiating "revolutionary changes". He agreed that if a new organisation were started, "officials might dream of a formidable band of Indians sailing from London or Liverpool in a specially chartered vessel for the conquest of Hindustan."[3] On 12 January 1883, O'Donnell, McCarthy and Arthur O'Connor,[4] were

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1. Bengalee, 30 December 1882.
2. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp.444-5n.
3. Bengalee, 10 March 1883; Indian Mirror, 3 March 1883.
4. O'Connor sent his apologies. See Freeman's Journal, 30 April 1883.

invited to address a general meeting of the Indian Society t the Inns of Court Hotel, Holborn. O'Donnell elucidated the letter he had written to India and suggested that the Society set up a small working committee to fulfil the function of liaison between the Indian people and their parliamentary friends. Composed on a national basis, its members as far as possible representing the several divisions of India, it should meet every week after the Indian Mail to translate, compress and catalogue all the news into a manageable and authentic record of public opinion. If conducted reasonably, O'Donnell assured, this work would be only the beginning of a "mighty movement":

> "The Indian Intelligence Committee will gradually draw to itself the leading thoughts of India, and form a federation of the Indian nations by helping the different sections of the Indian people to rally round the banner of emancipation."

Justin McCarthy also pledged his allegiance to the venture. While he did not pretend to have an equal knowledge with O'Donnell on Indian questions, he said that he had been struck during his parliamentary career by the practical advantage of Home Rulers raising them. Not only did they find the "same misgovernment and misunderstanding" as prevailed in Ireland, but they were, moreover, "perfectly independent", incorruptible by "power, place or pension."[1] It was reported in the Indian Mirror that O'Donnell's speech produced a "very marvellous effect" on the audience and that a "wave of awakened life" was breaking over the community of Indians in London.[2]

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1. Bengalee, op.cit.

2. Indian Mirror, 15, 17 February 1883.

A start was formally made a short time later at Tagore's house. With due ceremony, it was resolved to launch the "scheme of Constitutitonal Association", first by communicating to distant "constituents" by letter what had taken place that day, and secondly by implementing the Indian Society's motion to form a "National Representative Committee" in London. O'Donnell, who was the only European present among the 300 Indians forming in character a "great representative parliament", was "moved with no common emotion" as he looked "into the eyes of those chosen ministers" sent to aid his work. "As a matter of fact", he wrote, "there was a constant stream of letters, kept up for many months to all parts of India."[1]

In March an official Circular apprised India of the existence of the National Representative Committee,[2] describing in broad terms the duties it might perform and appealing for a regular supply of information and funds. From its peculiar position in the metropolis of the British empire, it was stressed that the N.R.C. would satisfy the "long-felt requirement" of systematically bringing cases of injustice to the notice of the "supreme tribunal":

> "India has seen the formation of hundreds of Societies and Associations on her own soil; but the Indian Society has been the first attempt at a political organisation by the natives of India in the land of their rulers."[3]

It would therefore mark, the Circular prophesied, "a new and important epoch in the political history of India." Here was not just another

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1. O'Donnell, op.cit., pp.440-45.

2. Henceforth referred to as the N.R.C.

3. Indian Mirror, 17 March 1883; Bengalee, 24 March 1883; Hindoo Patriot, 2 April 1883.

sectional pressure group protecting the vested interests of a certain class or caste. The "interests and welfare of every Indian", whether prince or peasant, would be p omoted equally.

Within a few weeks the N.R.C. had established itself on an institutional basis. A Prospectus, which it issued in early April, set out in detail the provisions of a draft constitution. A "representative" Committee of nine was named,[1] the stimulation of public opinion in and out of Parliament defined as its function, and the means of attaining the redress of Indian grievances - its ultimate aim - formulated under five proposals:

> "I To open communication with such Associations as at present exist in India.
>
> II To organise new Associations in connection with themselves in all parts of India.
>
> III To collect from the above mentioned Associations, and all other authentic sources, information and facts regarding the grievances of the people of India.
>
> IV To communicate the information and facts, so collected, to those Members of Parliament who will assist the Committee by frequently raising Indian questions in Parliament, and to watch the fate of those questions as they pass through Parliament.
>
> V To publish the results obtained from Parliament, and take such other steps in England, as well as in India in furtherance of Indian reforms as may be expedient or necessary."

While most of these arrangements were already known in outline, some new provisions emerged. A complete report on grievances concerning

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1. Chairman: Raja Rampal Singh; Vice-Chairman: Hamid Ali Khan; Hon. Secretary: Dr. Rajani K. Sen; Assistant Secretary: Satya Prasad Sinha; Auditor: Jitendra Nath Bannerji; Co-Members: Ayalam Govindan, Adhar Sing Gour, C. Venkata Narasu, Radnikaram Dhekial Phukan.

Administration, Municipal government, Taxation and Expenditure, Education, Commerce and Trade, Indian States, and Law and Justice, was to be prepared monthly for public information. In addition, the N.R.C. contemplated starting a journal of its own, to contain among other things, a full account of its activities. Should it be found necessary in particular cases, the N.R.C. was prepared to send delegates to India to undertake investigations in person. The Prospectus concluded with a declaration of principles. The "general welfare of the Indian nation" would be promoted "always by legal and constitutional means." Partisanship of any kind was strongly disavowed. The N.R.C. promised to keep well clear of all party politics in England and all party interests in India:

> "It would welcome aid and sympathy from Members of Parliament whatever their party affiliation, and it would equally consult the interests of the entire Indian community."[1]

The germ of Congress had been planted; of this there can be little doubt. Indians much more than the Irish were prepared to listen to O'Donnell and to some extent to be coaxed by him. Since 1880 there had been several efforts to form a united organisation, and the tendency was growing stronger all the time to pursue activities at an all-India level. Whether the plant would have flowered under laboratory conditions, however, as it did under the stimulus of racial animosity, is another matter altogether. O'Donnell hoped to nurture Indian nationalism without fuss and without arousing suspicion that it was some vile Irish vegetation. The principle of "accessibility" was written into the constitution of the N.R.C. on his insistence. Yet, personally, just as he saw Home Rulers as the "natural spokesmen" of unrepresented nationalities, so he

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1. Indian Mirror, 7 April 1883; Bengalee, 14 April 1883.

believed they were also destined to be their political instructors. If Congress was to have a patron, better that he were an Irishman than an Englishman. What O'Donnell could not foresee, however, was the change of political atmosphere in India brought about by the "White Mutiny".

Chapter XI

Congress and the Irish Contribution

On 2 February 1883 the "Ilbert" Bill was published, which removed the race disqualification from Indian judges in the Mofussil, and gave them limited jurisdiction over Europeans. While the Bill affirmed no new principle and was not a blank cheque for Indians to sit in judgment over white men and white women, it unleashed a ferocious "Anglo-Indian" attack on the Viceroy and an hysterical outburst against the "Babus".[1] Not that European hostility was directed at this measure alone; it was merely the focus of the storm that lashed the whole of Ripon's liberalising policy.[2] For several years, the fear had been building up among the non-official classes that the Government had gone soft, that creeping indianisation threatened the stability of the Raj itself and foreshadowed their doom. The traumatic lessons of the Mutiny had evidently been forgotten or were being ignored. As J.H. Branson, one of the leaders of this agitation, put it, the Hindus were "a subject race with a profound hatred of their subjugators."[3] In ngland, James Fitzjames Stephen decried the utter folly of "shifting the foundations" on which the British Government of India rested. It was, he reminded the policy-makers, "essentially an absolute government, founded not on consent but on conquest." He could imagine no anomaly "more striking or so dangerous" as its administration by men who sought "to apologise for their own position" and who refused to uphold and support it.[4]

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1. ee Gopal, he Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, pp.113-166.

2. Ripon to imberley, 18 March 1883, Ri o Papers, B. . I. . 290/5, quoted in Seal, op.cit., p.168. Ripon suspected that the Bill was really just "the excuse for the pr sent outbreak of feeling, and not the main cause". ee Englishman, 28 April 1883.

3. Englishman, 1 March 1883.

4. See James Fitzjames Stephen's letter to Times, 1 March 1883.

Other critics of the Liberal policy in India portrayed Ripon and Ilbert as the pioneers of an Indian Home R le party. Lord Lytton decided that the "only intelligible motive" of his successor was to spread to India that "restless, dissatisfied, and intolerant spirit" called Radicalism.[1] The Viceroy's "ostentatious disavowal" that the improvement of administration was the main aim of his proposals and his expressed hope that "the small beginnings of independent political life" might be "fostered sedulously", were grasped by the Times as proof of sinister interest.[2] "If the object of the Government was to create a second Ireland", commented the St. James' Gazette, "they could hardly go more directly to their end."[3] A correspondent to the Englishman compared the "English garrison of loyal settlers" in Ireland, which had been shamefully treated, with the same class in India.[4]. In short, the European community was thoroughly alerted to the danger posed by the political advancement and combination of educated Indians.

In such a climate of suspicion and rodomontade, O'Donnell's sponsorship of the National Representative Committee was interpreted not as a brainless escapade, but as part of the general attempt to embarrass the European and possibly to dethrone him. A covering letter from O' onnell, Blake and Metge, appended to its Prospectus, did in fact promote the N.R.C. as a means of preserving and extending the reforming influence of Lord Ripon and other "upright and honest Englishmen", against the attacks of "a narrow-minded and intolerant class." Indians were no doubt aware, they said, that these "enemies

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1. Hansard, Vol.277, 9 April 1883, Col.1742.
2. Times, 10 April 1883.
3. Extract from St. James' Gazette in Pioneer, 7 March 1883.
4. Englishman, 26 March 1883.

of Indian constitutional rights" were determined to perpetuate "the system of unjust exclusion" and were bent on sabotage. Already they had launched an active campaign to poison British public opinion against ord Ripon's policy. The letter urged Indians to arm themselves against the barrage of insinuation by supplying their parliamentary friends with genuine information and facts.[1]

At first, the Times of India scoffed at "irritable novices" pouring out "a great deal of incoherent nonsense",[2] and the Pioneer spoke of O'Donnell wasting his energies and abilities in so "profitless" and de rading" a fashion.[3] he N.R.C. was put on a par with the debating club of St. George's Hospital in the influence it was likely to exert on the Government; no more than an academic side-show.[4] he Anglo-Indian press, however, was more disturbed by O'Donnell's encouragement to Indian political agitation than it cared to admit.[5] Indeed, it expended considerable effort run down the movement and to subject O'Donnell to vicious personal abuse. He was pilloried a the "least nglishman in the ouse of Commons" - a description 'Donnell would have endorsed wholeheartedly - as a "bumptio s vulg rian" who com ined the characters of "mendicant and bully."[6] . . Forster's stinging back-han er that he could not "conceive any sane ren, connected or bound together for any purpose, bad or good,

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1. See Indian Mirror, 7 April 1883; Hindoo Patriot, 16 April 1883.
2. Times of India, quoted in Indian Mirror, 18 March 1883.
3. Pioneer, 8 March 1883.
4. Ibid., 26 March 1883.
5. Ibid., 30 April 1883.
6. Ibid., 20 March 1883.

admitting the hon. Member [O'Donnell] into their counsels", was freely circulated.[1]

The India Office might regard O'Donnell as a harmless crank, but Anglo-Indians had observed how dangerous he could be. With imperfect information and without native alliance, he had by his incessant questions in Parliament shattered the repose of a comfortable bureaucracy. With Indian "connivance" his potential for interference was limitless; no institution could be fortified against an army of Irish locusts. That O'Donnell and his cohorts would exalt Indian rights over European privileges was automatically assumed. As a desperate resort the Pioneer fell back on the theory of personal vendetta, which it had always rejected; Pan-Indianism was simply the product of vindictiveness. "Not satisfied with the mischief he has already caused to Ireland", it declared, "his venomous spirit [was] seeking to conjure up trouble for India."[2] The Pioneer sought to warn the "unsuspecting" members of the Indian Society that the N.R.C. was programmed for purposes of Irish intrigue, that the "precise object" of O'Donnell and his friends was to become the "mouthpiece of Indian-grievance-mongers." It brushed aside as worthless the various assurances of the Committee that its offices were open to all parties. Had it not been received in the Conference room at estminster by certain Irish Members: by O'Donnell, by William O'Brien, "the latest accession to the most blackguardy section of the Irish party", by Philip Lalor, Edmund Leamy, Arthur O'Connor and Justin McCarthy - "not one of whom possessed the slightest weight of influence."

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1. See Hansard, Vol.276, 22 February 1883, Cols.619-20. Times of India, op.cit.; Pioneer, 20 March 1883.

2. Pioneer, 9 March 1883.

The Pioneer contended that the names of W.S. Caine, H.H. Fowler, and Joseph Cowen had been put forward as co-sympathisers simply as a screen. Everybody knew that O'Donnell "had a score to settle with the Government because of his brother."[1]

The mud-slinging succeeded in finding its mark. Doubts began to be voiced in native circles about the nature of the London initiative. The Indian Mirror reluctantly admitted that the "fault" with O'Donnell was his Irish nationality and membership of the Parnellite party, but was still hopeful that the movement would inspire respect and confidence with the accession of Liberals.[2] The Bengalee was vaguely disquieted despite the undertaking of the N.R.C. to "gladly accept help from any quarter."[3] O'Donnell's expectation that not merely ten or twenty but a hundred Members of Parliament would be glad to assist the cause of Indian reform, did not satisfy the Hindoo Patriot. While it recognised the "absolute necessity" for a London Association, it questioned whether a committee of students was the best organisation for this purpose.[4] The Indian Spectator suggested that it would be worthwhile to scrutinize again the constitution of the N.R.C., for so much depended on the way it was worked and the methods it employed:

> "it is possible that instead of being an unmitigated blessing to India, an association like this may prove a source of danger and discredit to the country."

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1. Pioneer, 16 March 1883.
2. Indian Mirror, 18 March 1883.
3. Bengalee, 14 April 1883.
4. Hindoo Patriot, 16 April 1883.

Theoretically, there was no harm in an inexperienced and youthful membership provided there was competent guidance at the top. Unfortunately, the Raja Rampal Singh[1] was thought to lack the essential qualities of patience and foresight needed. He had left India at an early age, had a very limited knowledge of India, and was not fitted by education to become a political leader. The Spectator feared that he would be no match for the Irish and that there was a "strong probability" that the N.R.C. would "play" into the hands of the Home Rule party. It recalled that Rampal Singh had on the advice of Parnell, O'Donnell and Finigan, announced himself as a candidate for parliamentary honours, only to withdraw after spending a little of his "superfluous cash."[2]

Clearly, the initial enthusiasm for O'Donnell's "Constitutional ssociation" had not only waned but had been replaced by suspicion. "It shames us to say", commented the Indian Mirror, "but in truth it must be said, that we furnish excellent practical illustrations of cheap patriotism." In spite of the powerful anti-Ilbert Bill lobby, Indians would "not stir a finger", still less open their purses to counteract its "baneful effects." Instead, patriotism was being selfishly squandered in the pursuit of titles and other personal claims. That the Mirror could find no "very marked indications of sympathy" for the "truly patriotic movement" of the N.R.C. was, it felt, a matter of grave reproach.[3]

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1. See Hindustan Review, May 1937, p.773; and C. Parekh (ed.), Eminent Indians in Indian Politics, with sketches of their lives, portraits and speeches, Bombay 1892.

2. Indian Spectator, 29 April 1883; see also Hindoo Patriot, 24 April, 3 July 1882.

3. Indian Mirror, 12 April 1883.

This was a turn of events that O'Donnell could not possibly have bargained for, although his connection with the N.R.C. always carried with it some risk of malicious construction. His position as sole channel of public relations was now exposed as a handicap, and not the advantage originally thought. Indeed, the very precautions that had been taken to avoid premature disclosure, enhanced rather than allayed the fear that the N.R.C. would operate in an unconstitutional and sectarian manner. William O'Brien confirmed that "scores of dusky students" were brought down to the House of Commons by O'Donnell "to tender their solemn allegiance to Mr. Parnell." It was O'Donnell's "grand passion in politics", he wrote, to set up "a confederation of all the discontented races of the Empire under the lead of the Irish party."[1] It was true that O'Donnell's schemes of pan-Indian union and party reorganisation were connected. Obviously, O'Donnell envisaged that Home Rulers would continue to take an important if not the most prominent part in agitating Indian questions in Parliament - had they not done this all along? Yet, if the arrangement between the Irish Parliamentary party and an Indian Congress was to be mutually beneficial, it was not, nor could it afford to be, mutually exclusive. The participation and concurrence of the Liberals was the sine qua non of native acceptance.[2]

As O'Donnell explained in A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, he was careful from the start to secure the assistance of Scottish and English politicians, such as J.W. Barclay (Forfarshire) and C.H. Hopwood (Stockport).[3] J.B. Firth (Chelsea) and R.T. Reid (Hereford)

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1. W. O'Brien, Recollections, p.247n.
2. Bengalee, 14 April 1883.
3. O'Donnell, History, ii, p.439.

accompanied him on the platform of the Indian Society on 28 April in support of the Ilbert Bill. At this meeting O'Donnell announced that he had been "authorised" by A. Arnold (Salford), S. Storey (Sunderland), W.E. Briggs (Blackburn) and Jesse Collings (Ipswich), to express their support for the N.R.C. and to convey their apologies for being unable to attend. They, like a good many other well-wishers, were being entertained at dinner by J.K. Cross in honour of his appointment as Under-Secretary of State for India. Henry Broadhurst (Stoke-on-Trent) and Thomas Burt (Morpeth) were also cited as sympathisers.[1] O'Donnell acclaimed the turn-out of four Members of Parliament a good omen for the success of the movement and hoped to secure the co-operation of many more, including John Bright. His overriding consideration in sponsoring the N.R.C. was, he claimed, always to act in the manner of an Indian patriot.[2]

Whether the "parliamentary friends of India" were prepared to have anything to do with O'Donnell, was quite another matter. Although he had "engaged" to organise a "Parliamentary Committee" to work directly with the N.R.C.,[3] and arranged a preliminary meeting in the Conference room of the House of Commons on 20 March, the "general feeling" was that it would be "better" not to organise the Committee "in any formal or permanent manner." Baxter, Burt, Dr. Cameron, Hopwood, Illingworth, Lawson, Pease, Potter, Reid and Wedderburn were agreed that it should "simply be used in the first instance" as "a medium for consultation" on ways to promote such

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1. Indian Mirror, 1 June 1883.
2. O'Donnell, op.cit., p.438.
3. Indian Mirror, 21 February 1883.

measures as seemed "most calculated to advance the interests of the natives."[1] If the Indian Mirror took heart that O'Donnell's predictions of one hundred Members of Parliament coming forward to identify with the "cause of India" were about to be fulfilled, it observed with relief that the Political Committee was "rather a non-Irish party than an Irish party."[2] Indeed, the Radical flavour of the new grouping was confirmed on 12 April when Sir Wilfred Lawson undertook to act as its President.[3] Initially, the Parliamentary Committee had a membership of approximately twenty-six of whom perhaps five at most were Home Rulers: Blake, McCarthy, A. O'Connor, Leamy and O'Donnell.[4] Yet it was expected that O'Donnell would continue to be "the chief confidant of Political Babus." While the N.R.C. offered at once to put itself at the service of the Committee,[5] the Pioneer understood that both it and the Indian Society were "largely worked by O'Donnell." It also noted that Surendranath Banerjea's brother had seceded from the Northbrook Club, exchanging Liberal for Irish mentors.[6]

On 11 May 1883, Sir Richard Temple advised Ripon that native Indians resident in London had been asked "to make common cause with Home Rulers." "The effect of this, so far as it goes," he wrote,

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1. Extracts from Daily News in Indian Mirror, 14 April 1883; Hindoo Patriot, 23 April 1883.
2. Ibid., 17, 19 April 1883.
3. Ibid., 5 May 1883; Bengalee, 12 May 1883.
4. Bengalee, 16 February 1884; Hindoo Patriot, 3 December 1883.
5. Indian Mirror, 5 May 1883; Bengalee, 19 May 1883.
6. Pioneer, 14 June 1883.

"is somewhat seditious."[1] Temple had been invited by the Indian Society to accompany it in support of the Ilbert Bill, but had declined as a friend of the Conservatives. Kynaston Cross, the Under-Secretary, agreed that O'Donnell was the "Chief Engineer" of the newly formed Association and thought it very likely that in the future he would have to trouble the Viceroy much more often with "telegrams respecting current events in India." Aided by a "certain" Raja Rampal Singh, who gave himself out to be "His Highness" and who was "in communication with a good many native press men in each of the Presidency towns", O'Donnell's object was "notoriety". This he had apparently decided to obtain by "pestering" the Government of India with every variety of question reflecting upon its administration and upon the "honesty and ability" of those who directed the local Governments. As a foretaste of what was to come, Cross had just been informed by O'Donnell to prepare for a "series of questions" on the Salt Revenue Laws in Madras, and had also been asked to verify the truth of current rumours about a "great increase" in cholera cases in Calcutta.[2]

The Irish tag was unhelpful, though not sufficient to torpedo the scheme of "Constitutional Association". Perhaps what ultimately took the wind out of O'Donnell's sails and helped scuttle the N.R.C. was the formation of a rival organisation, the British India Committee, sponsored by Anglo-Indians like Seymour Keay[3] and William Digby and by "respectable" philanthropists like F.W. Chesson, Hodgson Pratt and Martin Wood. While the function of the B.I.C. was exactly the

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1. Temple to Ripon, 11 May 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,633.
2. Cross to Ripon, 6 July 1883, ibid.
3. See D.N.B., Vol.III, 1912; Times, 29 June 1909.

same, to collect and disseminate "correct" information about Indian affairs, its immediate purpose was to counter the agitation begun in England by the opponents of the Ilbert Bill.[1] It was, as the Bengalee correctly surmised, the "direct product" of that "unrighteous" campaign.[2] As such, its inspiration was less the furtherance of Indian nationalist ambitions than the defence of Liberal policy in India. It answered the express needs of Ripon to have the "House of Commons at his back",[3] and to compensate for the "isolation" of his position in India. As he explained to John Bright the "fury" of his opponents had been *so intense of late that many moderate* men, inclined to go with him, were "intimidated and forced into silence."[4] Not only, therefore, did the British India Committee absorb Sir Wilfred Lawson's parliamentary contingent and many more Liberals less interested in India, but it began to take a toll on the Indian society as well. Raja Rampal Singh and J.N. Banerjea were both invited to become members of its provisional council.[5] Direct contact was also maintained with Lord Ripon.[6]

What began, then, as a carefully conceived Irish-Indian blueprint of nationalist organisation was perverted by the short-term

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1. Bengalee, 27 October 1883; Hindoo Patriot, 3 December 1883; Indian Mirror, 9 December 1883.

2. Bengalee, ibid.

3. Ripon to Kimberley, 18 March 1883, enclosed with Ripon to Northbrook, 19 March 1883, Northbrook Papers, Mss Eur. C.144, 3.

4. Ripon to Bright, 27 August 1883, Bright Papers, Add. Ms 43,389.

5. Indian Mirror, 21 October 1883.

6. See British India Committee to Ripon, 25 September 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,634.

specifications of Liberalism. The B.I.C. organised several political rallys in July and August in support of the Ilbert Bill,[1] and John Bright and others toured the country upholding the honour and integrity of Ripon as the delegate of "Her Majesty's Government."[2] W.E. Forster, who had refrained from joining the B.I.C. not knowing what it might do, was nonetheless glad to "seize the opportunity" of moving a resolution of confidence in the Viceroy's administration.[3] The result, if it meant a defeat in parliamentary terms for Stanhope and "fussy pretentious ridiculous" creatures like Ashmead-Bartlett,[4] was hardly an endorsement for Indian political unification. While Lawson warned against making do with "sham Liberalism"[5] and T.B. Potter talked of raising "natives to the position of free-men",[6] the B.I.C. was not established to make "common cause" with Indian Associations. According to a placard put about by Seymour Keay, "it had been formed to obtain the support of the English people to a policy of Equality before the Law", and to insure that Gladstone's Ministry did not abandon its Governor-General.[7] The "White Babus", as the Civil and Military Gazette called them, were "confessedly" less interested in the merits of the case than in strengthening "the hands of a

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1. Bengalee, 4, 18 August, 1 September 1883; Indian Mirror, 28 July, 3, 8, 10, 19, 26 August 1883; Times, 24 July, 2,29 August 1883; Freeman's Journal, 2 August 1883.

2. See Bright's speech at Birmingham, Bengalee, 15 July 1883; Indian Mirror, 20 July 1883.

3. Forster to Ripon, 10 August 1883, op.cit., Add. Ms 43,537.

4. Ibid. See Hansard, Vol.283, 22 August 1883, Cols. 1670-84.

5. Indian Mirror, 19 August 1883.

6. Bengalee, 21 April 1883.

7. Times, 24 July 1883.

Liberal Viceroy."[1] "The word [had] been passed to the Caucus to stump for Ripon."[2] Yet, as of old, Indians were thrown into alliance with the Liberals in the belief that a much wider policy was being defended; a definite "step" towards the "abolition" of British rule perhaps.[3] The Bengalee suddenly disavowed Irish methods of agitation and Banerjea advised that Indians must "do nothing which even remotely [had] the appearance of illegality about it." As their cause was "based on justice and truth", it was "bound to succeed in the long run."[4] To Northbrook, the "most satisfactory thing" about the whole business was the "moderation" of the native press and of native speeches, and he hoped that Lal Mohun Ghose would not "make a fool of himself in London."[5] Indeed, Ghose who again acted as the accredited "diplomat" of the Indian Association, made straight for the "respectable" company of the B.I.C. giving the more doubtful N.R.C. a wide bearth.[6]

It was only when it began to appear that Gladstone would "yield" to the unrelenting hostility of the Anglo-Indian Defence party[7] - despite the "overwhelming weight of authority" in favour of the Ilbert Bill[8] - that Hodgson Pratt, Major Evans Bell, Seymour Keay, William Digby and F.W. Chesson resolved to give the B.I.C. "a new

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1. Bengalee, 25 August 1883. See Northbrook to Ripon, 20 July 1883, Northbrook Papers, Mss Eur. C.144, 3.
2. Civil and Military Gazette quoted in Bengalee, ibid.
3. See Hansard, op.cit., Col. 1697.
4. Bengalee, 21 July 1883.
5. Northbrook to Ripon, 6 July 1883, Northbrook Papers, Mss Eur. C.144, 3.
6. Indian Mirror, 29 June, 28 July, 11 September 1883; Bengalee, 1 September 1883, 5 January 1884.
7. Muller to Ripon, 27 August 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,633.
8. Northbrook to Ripon, 2 March 1883, Northbrook Papers, Mss Eur. C.144, 3.

name and invest it with the elements of permanence." On 28 September it re-emerged as the "Indian Reform Association" charged to co-operate with the people of India in promoting their "political progress and material interests", but designed primarily to act as a counterweight to the apologists of unrestricted hegemony. "If history proves anything", its Prospectus read, "it proves that the welfare of the many can never in the long run be safely left to the arbitrement of the few, more especially when the latter represent a class or a race alien from the former." The "chief object" of the Reform Association, therefore, was to set up public opinion in England as a "Court of popular Appeal" to adjudicate on the vital issue of Indian representation, and to establish itself as the official intermediary between Parliament and "Native Associations" in India.[1] In short, it bid to usurp the position of the N.R.C., if not deliberately to outflank it, as the "permanent guardian in England" of Indian interests.[2]

At the very moment of breakthrough, Irish internationalism was short-circuited by the allure of "Party". The Radicals, anxious to defend Ripon, caught the Indians on the rebound and attempted to consummate the liaison. Asked to choose between a wealthy respectable suitor with sound prospects and one who offered little comfort and ceaseless struggle, India gravitated towards the former. "At the present time", commented the Samaya of Calcutta, "India [could] not help being dragged into the vortex of party politics" and following the fortunes of the Liberals who were most "likely to befriend her."[3] The Irish were left, therefore, if not in the lurch, at least for a

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1. Times, 28 September 1883; Bengalee, 27 October 1883; Hindoo Patriot, 29 October, 3 December 1883; Indian Mirror, 9 December 1883.

2. Bengalee, 27 October 1883.

3. Samaya, 17 September 1883, Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, I/E/15, Vol.9, 1883.

period unrequited. Not that they were without blame or of stainless character themselves.

O'Donnell made no secret of his "intense dissatisfaction" with the peremptory way in which his proposals for reorganising the party were dealt with. According to the Freeman's Journal he declined to act on the Sub-Committee on Foreign and Colonial Affairs almost immediately after its formation.[1] Announcing his resignation from the party on 25 June, he explained that he had never been happy with the policy "of subordinating the question of national independence" to so-called "practical reforms" - a policy that used to go by the designation of "Whig".[2] While he took the opportunity to secede over the issue of McCarthy's Viceroyalty Bill - substituting a Lord Lieutenant for a Secretary of State[3] - the real reason was probably the party's reluctance to throw itself unreservedly into the work of Indian agitation. If the Ilbert Bill was regarded in Ireland as "one of the soundest and justest and safest measures" to have been propounded since the "exposure of the Warren Hasting's regime",[4] Home Rulers did little positive to promote it. They neither rushed to join Lawson's Parliamentary Committee, nor attempted to infiltrate the B.I.C. The isolated appearances of Justin McCarthy, John Blake and John O'Connor Power under the aegis of the latter, represented not so much a take-over as token support for the Radical campaign. Parnellites were prepared to go along with O'Donnell in interrogating Cross about aspects of Indian administration, but as members of the Irish party and not as a coalition of India's "friends".

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1. Freeman's Journal, 26 June 1883.
2. Ibid., 25 June 1883; Nation, 30 June 1883.
3. Ibid., 10 July 1883; Irish World, 14 July 1883.
4. Ibid., 14 April, 12 September 1883.

Perhaps O'Donnell felt that he would render more effective service to both Ireland and India as a free-agent, as a man above party. Within it, he was clearly hamstrung by the unsympathetic attitude of lieutenants like Healy, O'Brien and T.P. O'Connor. His quarrel was less with Parnell, who apparently stepped forward to ask O'Donnell to reconsider his withdrawal.[1] O'Donnell was probably confronted, as O'Connor Power was soon to be, with the "base calumnies" and "cowardly intimidation" of the Healy clique.[2] His denunciation of the decision of the Leed's Convention on 29 September to place the direction of the National League of Great Britain in the hands of a central Executive, would suggest that he had been one of the victims squeezed out by this "select circle". The Executive was to consist of T.P. O'Connor as President, Biggar as Vice-President, John Redmond as Secretary, O'Kelly as Treasurer, and McCarthy, Sexton and Healy as additional members.[3] O'Donnell argued that an "oligarchy", though convenient in some respects, purchased "its efficiency at the expense of the independence and self-helpfulness of the community"; that a system of nominees, "though it might produce 'obsequious agents', sapped and demoralised the capacities of a country"; and that a "vigorous centralisation of popular authority" was in the long run "detrimental not only to the nation at large, but to the short-sighted centralisers themselves." He totally differed from the theory that Irish nationalists "ought to be kept on leading strings", and that the "perfection of political institutions [was] reached under a Tammany Hall dispensation in

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1. O'Donnell, op.cit., p.154.
2. See O'Connor Power's letter to Weekly Freeman, 9 February 1884.
3. Nation, 6, 13 October 1883.

which a Boss and his selected Sachems [did] all the thinking and arrange[d] all the action of a submissive and manipulated multitude."[1] The Nation's response was one of regret that such a "talent for sneers and sarcasm" would not be put to proper use - "what [was] the good of having a fine sting if nobody [was] punctured thereby?"[2] - but admitted that his colleagues would not grudge him "his interesting isolation and his splendid independence." O'Donnell, it admitted, would be happier in a party of one than he ever could be in a party of many:

> "Doubtless he will henceforth be regarded
> as the Fifth Party in the House."[3]

Was it coincidence that the news of O'Donnell's secession was received by the Indian Mirror as soon as it was announced, and treated less as a disaster than as a piece of good fortune? The hope was expressed "unfeignedly" that what was "a distinct loss" to Ireland would be "an equally distinct gain to India." Not only would O'Donnell have as a result "more ample leisure", but he would be able to make "his disinterested advocacy" of Indian rights and interests "more sustained, and therefore, more effective." "Arrangements" were being made, the Mirror advised, to supplement his already "very extensive and accurate information." Its editor, Narendranath Sen, one of Ganendra Mohun Tagore's contacts, was quite certain that O'Donnell's "unquestionable abilities and brilliant eloquence"

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1. See O'Donnell's letter, "Irish Organisation in England and Scotland", in Freeman's Journal, 9 October 1883. This letter can also be found in Police Reports 1848-1921, Proceedings of the Irish National League, Box 6, S.P.O.

2. Nation, 15 September 1883.

3. Ibid., 14 July 1883.

would be "a great addition of strength to any cause."[1] The Bengalee was subsequently pleased to note that O'Donnell showed no signs of giving the Government any rest,[2] and the Hindoo Patriot reported that the "running fire" of questions continued unabated.[3] Indeed, it was mainly because of O'Donnell that the India Office was compelled to overhaul the system of informal communication with the Government of India. On Cross's instructions, Calcutta was informed on 8 June that the old arrangement, whereby it took "no notice of Parliament except in special cases" and prevented London from asking for information on matters where it would "like to have it", could no longer be tolerated. Because "no information whatever" was received "without a telegram or a despatch", answers in Parliament were severely "limit[ed] and hamper[ed]." Both Kimberley and Cross, the Secretariat was told, would find it "easier to reply with confidence", particularly in the event of "loose charges" being brought against officials or "idle inquiries" made, if there was "some sort of rapport" with India. The recommendation was made, therefore, that answers given by them in the House of Commons were to be regularly transmitted to the Viceroy. This might give "some trouble", but the only danger foreseen was that "an improvement in answers [might] lead to an increase in questions." It was anyway "expected" that "some special treatment" would have to be adopted in O'Donnell's case.[4]

On 17 September 1883 the Hindoo Patriot announced that O'Donnell intended to visit India in the winter.[5] Lord Kimberley, who had

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1. Indian Mirror, 29 June 1883.
2. Bengalee, 14 July 1883.
3. Hindoo Patriot, 30 July 1883.
4. Ritchie to Primrose, 8 June 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,633.
5. Hindoo Patriot, 17 September 1883. See also Navavibhakar, 24 September 1883, Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, L/R/15, Vol.9, 1883. It was only from the labours of "independent M.P.s" and "liberal-hearted men" like O'Donnell, the Navavibhakar believed, that natives might "expect to reap any benefit."

heard a similar rumour but "nothing definite", "hardly [saw] what instruction" he could give Ripon about how to deal with the Home Ruler:

> "He would no doubt try to do all the mischief he can. It is difficult however until we know what line he takes, to form any judgment as to the best measure of frustrating his designs."[1]

O'Donnell had several possible reasons for wanting to undertake such a journey. First, and least sinister, was a natural desire to see the country on whose behalf he had devoted so much time and energy. As it happened, Charles James O'Donnell had again been in England on leave, and was returning to India with the personal assurance of Cross that his case would be reviewed. The Under-Secretary, in fact, was so impressed with the desire of the errant civil servant to "work comfortably in the Service" and to be "on good terms with his Superiors", that he asked Ripon to give him all the help he could. "I cannot help feeling" he wrote, "that he has been looked upon as rather too black a sheep; he is really a very clever man though perhaps somewhat plausible."[2] With Parliament in recess and Ireland quiet, Frank Hugh had little to keep him in London.

More important, however, while some of his colleagues had been unwilling to accommodate him, O'Donnell's work in promoting the growth of Indian nationalist organisation had still to be finished and was under attack from several quarters. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in the Nineteenth Century warned of the dangers of extending the principle of representation to a people unskilled in its application. Nationalism, as demonstrated by the Irish, was a disease,

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1. Kimberley to Ripon, 11 October 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,524.
2. Cross to Ripon, 2 November 1883, ibid., Add. Ms 43,634.

which if not contained in India would result in chaos and collapse:

> "Irish discontent has gone far to paralyse even the British Parliament. An Indian parliament or collection of Indian parliaments would produce undisguised, unqualified Anarchy."[1]

Ashmead-Bartlett put it slightly different. As he understood the argument of the Liberals, "if the Baboo agitators [were] not given their way" then Britain would be confronted with "another Ireland in India, with 250,000,000 instead of 8,000,000." He did not think this "fatal counsel", which had "convulsed Ireland with sedition and ruin", would be called to witness in the case of India.[2] Donald MacFarlane (Carlow) posed a more insidious threat. Not only had he become the "medium" in Parliament of Anglo-Indian propaganda,[3] but he went on a private "mission" to India as the "last trump card" of the opponents of the Ilbert Bill. His object was to induce the Bengal aristocracy, themselves at odds with the Government over the proposed tenancy reforms - the Rent Bill, for example, was labelled by the Hindoo Patriot as Ilbert Bill No.2[4] - and on icy terms with the "middle-class" politicians of the Indian Association, to join with the Europeans in completely destroying Ripon's legislative programme. MacFarlane was rebuffed, but not before some harsh words had been said about "unholy alliances."[5] The Nation, for its

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1. Bengalee, 3 November 1883. See J.F. Stephen, "Foundations of the Government of India", Nineteenth Century, Vol.14, 1883, p.557.
2. Hansard, Vol.283, 22 August 1883, Col. 1683.
3. Nation, 16 June 1883; see Times, 8 March 1883.
4. Nation, ibid.
5. Bengalee, 22 December 1883; Indian Mirror, 14, 23 December 1883; Bengal Public Opinion, in Voice of India, January 1884.

part, was horrified that a representative of a Nationalist constituency "should be audacious enough" to assist the "tyrant agents (Anglo-Indians) of a tyrant Government in their characteristic effort to keep intact their despotic power to rob and oppress."

> "Ireland revolts against being represented abroad as not merely a sympathiser with but a supporter of the policy of the Anglo-Indian harpies."[1]

Here was an invitation, if one were needed, to repair the damage to national honour.

It was the demise of the N.R.C. that really required O'Donnell's urgent consideration both as honorary member and as guardian. The struggle for survival with the "Indian Reform Association" was one the N.R.C. appeared to be losing. Although not cut-off from parliamentary access, it was not being sustained by information and life-giving funds from India. Its competitor, on the other hand, virtually self-sufficient, was bidding to capture the market completely. In October Mrs. Keay had been sent to India by the Reform Association to instal its own intelligence agencies,[2] and on 29 December her husband attended the "first session of the Indian Parliament"[3] - in reality a National Conference organised by the Indian Association. Instead of coming cap-in-hand as a penniless student, Seymour Keay presented his compliments as a well-to-do banker and potential benefactor. A subscription to the National Fund of Rs. 50, was held out "as a

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1. Nation, 26 January 1884.

2. Hindoo Patriot, 15 October 1883; Indian Spectator, 7 October 1883.

3. W.S. Blunt, India Under Ripon : A Private Diary, London 1909, p.118.

first instalment."[1] At the Calcutta Town Hall a week later, Keay urged Nationalists to do all in their power to present the "real facts" about Indian conditions before Parliament and the English people:

> "Inform them of the truth and you may rely on the great heart of the English nation granting you speedy and effective aid."[2]

His organisation was handily placed to perform the dual functions of interpreter and lobbyist.

A desperate appeal by the N.R.C. in the Bengalee on 16 February 1884, pressing its claims against those of the Indian Reform Association, was a sort of undergraduate valediction. Yet it also suggests that if Keay's offer was accepted, it was accepted with caution. The Indian Reform Association, the N.R.C. warned, consisted for the most part of Anglo-Indian gentlemen whose attention to Indian interests, now displayed by them, might not continue in the course of time. While it admitted standing at a "disadvantage" over such Associations in respect "of personnel and resources", the "infant Committee" enjoyed a "decided advantage" over all others:

> "As those whose interests require guarding can alone be presumed to feel an increasing desire for guarding them, none but a purely Indian agency can be expected to be at all times scrupulously careful of the interests of the Indian people."

With few friends in England and fewer still in India, the N.R.C. had already attained three objects. First, it had enlisted in aid

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1. Bengalee, 5 January 1884.
2. Ibid., 12 January 1884.

of Indian Reforms, more than twenty-five Members of Parliament, "being all independent of party politics" and "representing all the three nationalities of Great Britain and Ireland." Second, it had played host to the formation of the Parliamentary India Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Wilfrid Lawson. Third, it was "under the impression" that it had been one of the first to suggest the "National Fund" movement and the foundation of the Calcutta Committee. Despite such achievement, the N.R.C. "entirely depended for [its] success upon the firm belief that the natives of India would sooner or later, afford [it] hearty countenance and effectual support." That this had not yet happened was to be deplored.

The Bengalee gave no promise of help and sustenance, but was gratified that "the elite of their youth and manhood" looked forward to the success of the National Fund movement "as the means of placing their own Committee on a satisfactory footing." Once adhered to by all influential Indians, the Calcutta movement, it predicted, would form the "nucleus" of "future reform" and constitute "the inexhaustible fund" to supply the resources for all agitations, in India as well as in England. Until such unity was achieved, however, the N.R.C. would have to rely on its own "infantile struggles" to attain a state of "healthiness". Nonetheless, the Bengalee conceded that there was a "crying necessity" for a "purely native organisation in England." It appreciated that the Indian Reform Association, like the East India Association before it, consisted for the most part of Anglo-Indians to whose philanthropy it felt grateful, but in the continuity of whose work it could not place the same measure of confidence:

> "Spasmodic efforts are of no avail. They produce a temporary effect, but they lead to no substantial good. They bring us, so to speak, within the borders of the promised land; but the ideal is never attained; our cherished hopes are blasted almost at the very moment of their consummation."

By contrast, the N.R.C., although short of maturity and experience, consisted of Indians "whose visit to England at a very early age" was "the guarantee of their pluck and energy." The Bengalee, therefore, had not the same fear that its "youthful members" would lose interest in their own country or ever abandon the cause.[1]

This response was a reaction to the virtual surrender of Ripon over the principle of equality. In spite of the fact that John Bright had again emerged from the shadows to act as Chairman of "an informal Indian committee" of fifty Liberal parliamentarians,[2] expressions of solidarity and support in England could not off-set the threat of an Anglo-Indian 'U.D.I.'. Bright's campaign had in the end counted for nothing and the Ilbert Bill had been watered down to avoid the unpleasant necessity of having to quell a prejudiced though European minority. According to Wilfred Scawen Blunt, Surendranath Banerjea was "very angry at the compromise", and "let slip the gros mot of 'revolution' in regard to it."[3] This was a word he had scrupulously avoided at the inauguration of the National Fund on 17 July 1883. "We take our stand", he addressed the Conference then, "upon the broad and unassailable basis of the law and the constitution":

> "There we stand, and there we intend to remain. We shall not permit ourselves to be dislodged from it, or be provoked into quitting."

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1. Bengalee, 16 February 1884.

2. See W. Wedderburn, Allan Octavian Hume, London 1913, p.93. The same account appears in India, Vol. IV, new series, 1 August 1893, pp.241-2.

3. Blunt, op.cit., p.121.

Their "modus operandi", Banerjea reassured the Government, would not be that of Irish disruption but of Irish pleading. He could not forget that "Daniel O'Connell, the great Irish Liberator, was also the leader of the Bar, and Grattan and Flood were also distinguished barristers."[1] They, in short, rather than Parnell and Davitt, were the model agitators for the Calcutta Committee to emulate.

The absolute shock of defeat and "betrayal", however, persuaded Banerjea that like their opponents, the whole nationalist community would have to fight "as one man", obey "one organised body", and follow "one constituted chief."[2] They must adopt the methods of the enemy. It was no good wasting political power in "fitful and spasmodic energy." They had to have action that would rise above the local level. The "Fund", basically a Bengali affair[3] and boycotted by the Hindoo Patriot and the zemindar's association,[4] lacked the cradentials of a national movement. Banerjea, "the power of influencing Bengali public opinion" fast "slipping" into his hands,[5] proclaimed that sectional differences had to be buried in the work of unity:

> "We seem to be guiding a vessel without a chart or compass, trusting to the impulses of the moment, or perhaps what is more frequently the case, to motives of self-interest and aggrandizement."[6]

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1. Bengalee, 21 July 1883.
2. Ibid., 26 January 1884.
3. Blunt, op.cit., p.118.
4. Hindoo Patriot, 23 July, 20, 27 August 1883.
5. See Bayley to Primrose, 5 June 1883, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms 43,612.
6. Bengalee, 5 April 1884.

The "great lesson" had just been taught India by Gladstone, that her interests would "never be taken care of even by the most friendly or the most beneficent of rulers." Henceforth, declared the Bengalee, Indians must take care of themselves[1] - an old resolution but a new avowal of intent. As Allan Octavian Hume wrote to Ripon, there was among Indians "a deepseated growing belief that the existing form of Government [had] been weighed in the balance and found wanting."[2]

In April 1884 Colonel R.D. Osborne, on the committee of the Indian Reform Association, appealed to leading Indians in the three Presidences that they must establish a permanent organisation in India with an agreed programme of political reform. He "sympathised with their aspirations" but found it difficult to present India's case at Westminster when there was no recognisable body to speak for the country as a whole. A London-based group like the N.R.C., he argued, would not serve this purpose.[3] Although this was a protest against its pretension rather than against its impotence,[4] Osborne did have a point. All the schemes of nationalist organisation - including the Bengalee's[5] - had contained the same basic flaw that the establishment of a permanent delegation in London was stipulated as the starting point of Congress. Certainly, the N.R.C. was designed

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1. Bengalee, 1 March 1884.

2. Hume to Ripon, 4 March 1884, Ripon Papers, Add. Ms. 43,616.

3. Bengalee, 5 April 1884; Osborne to Mehta, 18 April 1884, Mehta Papers, quoted in Seal, op.cit., pp.262-3.

4. On 7 November 1885, with the N.R.C. safely out of the way, Osborne advocated the need for just such a native body in London. Bengalee, 7 November 1885.

5. See Chapter Nine, section two, p.460.

to act as the launching-pad of an all-India "Constitutional Association." Not only was the nationalist idea in short to be first nurtured in England then implanted in India, but Westminster had been considered by everyone to be the important theatre of agitation. It took the victory of Anglo-India to shatter that illusion. A London Committee could only successfully operate as the genuine offspring of an Indian parent body; it could not exist independently, unattached as it were to any umbilical cord. Until such time as India had first spoken plainly for herself, neither the N.R.C. nor the Indian Reform Association could claim to do so with any authority. In fact, the former did not see the year out and the latter failed to establish itself.[1] Bright's committee also fell into abeyance.

Yet if India was now seen by nationalists as their main battle-field, England was not lost sight of altogether. Indeed, as the Congress movement developed apace, the parliamentary interest in India was maintained until 1885, largely through the efforts of the Irish party. Between March and August 1884 Home Rulers dominated question-time on Indian affairs. O'Donnell intervened on eighteen occasions - eleven in March - McCarthy on eighteen and Biggar on fourteen. Even Healy got into the act. Perhaps because of this Irish agitation, O'Donnell decided in the end to forgo the journey to India. Many Home Rulers had observed MacFarlane's action "with more than regret" and a letter was sent to the Bengalee, possibly by T.D. Sullivan, enclosing the apologies of the Nation and wishing Indians "every success in all just and constitutional demands."[2]

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1. See B. Martin Jr., New India 1885. British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969. Lal Mohun Ghose was two years in London helping it (p.192).

2. Bengalee, 1 March 1884.

Besides in dying, the N.R.C. went out with a flourish. The party itself appeared to take up cudgels against the empire as O'Donnell had urged in the Commons on 15 March 1884. Wherever there was oppression, he said, there Home Rulers should "find allies, and they should take up an attitude of defence commensurate with the area of the tyranny":

> "English tyranny in Ireland was only part of that general system of exploitation of suffering humanity which made the British Empire a veritable slave empire."[1]

W.H.K. Redmond, for example, supported constitutional reform in Jamaica, because Irish members were "charged" to support "the principle of self-government", "not only in the case of their own country, but in the case of people all over the world who were asking that right."[2] J.J. O'Kelly reported on events in Egypt as special correspondent of the Daily News and followed the progress of the Madhi.[3] William O'Brien, through the medium of United Ireland and on National League platforms, took over from Patrick Ford as the British Empire's prophet of doom.[4] Parnell himself, interviewed by an Indian journalist about his attitude to Indian Home Rule, replied that he would have "all component parts of the empire manage their own internal affairs."[5]

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1. Hansard, Vol.285, 15 March 1884, Col.1766.

2. Ibid., Vol.287, 25 April 1884, Col.723.

3. Freeman's Journal, 22 January 1885. Police Reports 1848-1921, Biographical Notes on Nationalist M.P.s, Box No.9, S.P.O.

4. Police Reports 1848-1921, Proceedings of Speeches of Irish League and Irish National League Meetings, Box No.3, S.P.O.; see selection of speeches by O'Brien on 2 September, 30 October 1883; 8, 13 February, 12 April 1885.

5. Bengalee, November 1886 (p.543).

The party's internationalist stance, however, fell within Parnell's programme of "parliamentary pressure"; it did not signify a sudden adoption of O'Donnell's policy of "imperial power." Indeed, O'Donnell soon appealed to Parnell privately,[1] and from Westminster to the Irish people, to effect "a coalition with the oppressed natives of India and other British dependencies" on the basis of a common hatred of England.[2] The Irish movement to win through, he argued, had to make use of its significant position within the empire. A "Seesaw policy of trying to irritate the dominant English Party of the day into concessions", as merely one of "bluster"[3], could be no substitute. Ireland, he wrote to Tim Harrington, would be ruled on the Anglo-Indian system:

> "You are in the hands of the Paramount Officials of the British Empire, and your present tactics are as impotent against that mighty force as the squalling of an infant in arms."

ithout any among the "select-circle" "possessing the faintest knowledge of Imperial Policy", the Government had "taken [their] measure."[4] As an outsider O'Donnell was, if not ignored, almost inevitably now kept at arms length. "On not one single occasion", he complained to the Freeman's Journal, "did Mr. C.S. Parnell's influence allow me to be nominated on any special committee, no matter how important, which from time to tire dwelt with the concerns

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1. See O'Donnell to Redmond, 20 May 1904, Redmond Papers, Ms.15,216
2. Hansard, Vol.285, 15 March 1884, Col.1766.
3. O'Donnell to Redmond, 20 May 1904, op.cit.
4. O'Donnell to Harrington, n.d. (1885?), Harrington Papers, Ms. 8,576.

of the Indian peoples."[1] Although it was O'Donnell who made a study of the issue of railway development in India and the manner in which the system worked against native interests - an article he wrote in the British Trade Journal drew warm praise from the Bengalee[2] - it was Justin McCarthy who was appointed to a parliamentary select committee in March 1884 to look into the subject.[3] As O'Donnell recalled, he was "like a man of science under the Inquisition, silenced in [his] own land."[4]

Whether or not "Parnellism" showed "short-sighted contempt" for the "alliance of the millions of India",[5] the Irish influence in the movement of Indian nationalist union was pronounced all the same. Indirectly, nationalism involved a high degree of emulation. Although Dr. Seal has argued that it was not the product of imperialism,[6] it is "now generally agreed" that nationalism in Asia or Africa was a "reaction against European domination."[7] In its "unspoken premises" the Congress movement circa 1886 was European in doctrine and in culture. The Indians it attracted were convinced of the superiority of British civilisation over their own. The first impulse of these "marginal men",[8] separated by education from their past, was to rebel

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1. Freeman's Journal, 28 September 1885.
2. Bengalee, 3 May 1884.
3. Freeman's Journal, 29 May 1884.
4. O'Donnell to Redmond, 20 May 1904, op.cit.
5. Freeman's Journal, 28 September 1885.
6. Seal, op.cit., p.22.
7. See E. Kedourie, Nationalism in Asia and Africa, London 1970, pp.1-34.
8. Ibid., p.80.

against and to remould the customs of traditional society according to the teaching of the West. Here, the lessons of a country struggling to free itself from the colonial yoke were presented not by England but by Ireland. The Irish Home Rule agitation was the obvious and the closest point of reference for the anglicised middle-class élite to refer to. While the Bengalee, for example, understood that "each nation [had] to work out the problem of its political regeneration" according to "the conditions under which it [found] itself", it nevertheless noted down the Irish response as a possible solution:

> "Whether however the blessed consummation of the establishment of representative institutions takes place or not will depend very much on ourselves. If we make the demand for representative government with the earnestness and unanimity which the Irish have shown, we may depend upon it our demand will be complied with.* Liberty is a plant of slow growth - it must be the acquisition of years of arduous and incessant toil. Persistency and devotion we need. An undying faith must support us in the hour of trial and despair. It is under such conditions and such circumstances that the triumphs of liberty have been achieved in other parts of the world,* and it is under the same conditions and circumstances that they will be achieved here."[1]

It had no wish to attain to political power by the means resorted to by Parnell and his followers, but the choice depended on the Government. "The set of principles" which were held to be applicable to Ireland must also be enforced in relation to India. To hold that there could be one kind of policy for Ireland and another for India was, it declared, "absurd".[2]

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1. Bengalee, 15 May 1886. See article entitled: "Home Rule for Ireland and its Morals".

2. Ibid., 6 February, 10 April 1886.

* The underlining is the writer's.

Congress politicians, on the other hand, "anxious to make the right impression in England" stressed the moderate ambitions of the movement. They did not set out to destroy British rule only to change its machinery.[1] Naoroji explained in London that while he was "a warm Home Ruler for Ireland", neither he nor any other Indian was asking for such remedy.[2] Yet appearing alongside Davitt at an "open-air" meeting in Shaftesbury Avenue in his quest for a Liberal constituency, Naoroji said that the 250 millions whom he represented appealed to England "for very nearly the same redress which Ireland now demanded."[3] Davitt himself observed as far back as November 1883 that India was "profiting by the example of Canada and Australia", and was "encouraged by the recent efforts of Ireland" to strive against the "London rule of ruin." The National Fund agitation he looked on as the "forerunner of a movement that [would] demand Home Rule for India."[4] Indians "do not, just now go for revolution", commented the Nation, "but they do want, they mean to have, extended liberties":

> "They have suffered quite enough from Castle influence. They want to have an elective system in Indian councils, and so gradually to introduce some kind of Parliament."[5]

William O'Brien welcomed the emergence of "Young India", with its "native literature, its newspapers, its Land League branches", and

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1. Seal, op.cit., p.282.
2. Naoroji to Wilson, 23 September 1886, quoted in ibid., p.280.
3. Freeman's Journal, 26 June 1886.
4. Irish World, 10 November 1883.
5. Nation, 15 August 1885.

with "nothing but kind words for Mr. Parnell and his party ..."[1]

Both the Secretary of State and the Viceroy had mixed feelings about Congress, although differing in their opinion of its character. Kimberley was not inclined to believe that Congress was "traceable" to Irish events beyond being "quickened" by them "somewhat". Rather, he considered that it was the product of social and material changes, such as the spread of liberal education and the extension of railways and telegraphs. He expected that the agitation would "every year gain strength" but not become dangerous for a considerable time.[2] Dufferin, the Ulster peer, believed the Indian Secretary to be "mistaken".[3] Viewing the situation with growing alarm he held that the Irish crisis was having a quite profound influence on India. On 6 March 1886 he wrote to James Fitzjames Stephen:

> "... people must not suppose that such things can be said and done at home without them having their effect in this country. Already Associations after the fashion of O'Connell's have sprung into existence, the caucus has been naturalised, and all the arts of Radical agitation are coming into use in India. A Celtic Parliament is not likely to prove the home of either wisdom, justice, or moderation, but imagine a Baboo Parliament."[4]

For the time being, the Viceroy assured Northbrook, all was well. He could "safely say that however annoying [might] be the violence, childishness and perversity of the Bengalee press and of young Babu

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1. Hindoo Patriot, 29 April 1885; see extract from St. James's Gazette.

2. Kimberley to Dufferin, 22 April 1886, Dufferin Papers, Vol.19, Reel 517, I.O.L.

3. Dufferin to Northbrook, 23 June 1886, Northbrook Papers, Mss Eur. C.144, Vol.5.

4. Dufferin to Stephen, 6 March 1886, Dufferin Papers, Mss Eur. F.130, Vol.23 B .

politicians", their influence was as yet not very extensive.[1] The crucial question as he saw it, however, was how long an "autocratic" Government like that of India would be able to "stand the strain implied by the importation en bloc from England, or rather from Ireland, of the perfected machinery of modern democratic agitation."[2] "Troublesome" and "irritating" gentlemen like Banerjea scarcely knew their own minds or even what they wanted, but, he informed Kimberley, they were "possessed" with an "instinctive desire" to "ape the tactics and organisation of the Irish Revolutionists":

> "With this object they denounce the whole Indian Administration and its various services as brutally inimical to native interests. Every kind of lie and mis-representation is resorted to in order to propagate this impression, and recently they have reinforced the vituperation of their newspapers by an attempt to inaugurate monster meetings amongst the ryots."

India was not, he warned, "a country in which the machinery of European democratic agitation [could] be applied with impunity."[3] Nor did it follow that because the Indian caucus at present amounted to very little, that the "germ [might] not grow into a very formidable product."[4] Although Indians chiefly wanted "a larger share of the loaves and fishes",[5] Dufferin explained, they hoped all the same by "following Irish methods" to "obtain a less or greater measure of

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1. Dufferin to Northbrook, 23 June 1886, op.cit.
2. Dufferin to Kimberley, 21 March 1886, Dufferin Papers, Vol.19 Reel 517, I.O.L.
3. Dufferin to Kimberley, 26 April 1886, op.cit.
4. Dufferin to Northbrook, 23 June 1886, op.cit.
5. Dufferin to Kimberley, 26 April 1886, op.cit.

Home Rule in the end."[1] His private secretary, MacKenzie Wallace, summed up the position in which the British now found themselves, as "the beginning of a new chapter, possibly a new volume, in Indian history."[2] Much he felt depended on the outcome of the Irish Question: it was one of their "misfortunes" that *those* Cabinet questions, "in which India was nowise directly concerned, should have indirectly such a great importance on Indian affairs."[3]

In a direct sense, it would require the services of a detective to unravel the contributions made by individuals in promoting India's "organisation for freedom." As Dr. Seal has commented, it is more profitable historically, if not more correct, to view the genesis of Congress as belonging within "a framework of trial and error."[4] The modern party evolved from a number of starting-points; it neither developed from a single source nor owed its inspiration to a single person. O'Donnell's claim, therefore, that the Indian National Congress - the product of a merger between the National Congress of Bombay and the National Conference of Calcutta in December 1886 - was the fruition of the work begun by Ganendra Mohun Tagore and himself,[5] must be treated with caution. The same is true of those accounts which attribute the origin of Congress to more legendary figures, notably to Allan Octavian Hume and William

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1. Dufferin to Northbrook, 23 June 1886, op.cit.
2. Wallace to Godley, 23 March 1886, Dufferin Papers, Mss Eur. F.130, Vol.23A.
3. Wallace to Wodehouse (Kimberley's private secretary), 4 June 1886, ibid., Vol.23B.
4. Seal, op.cit., pp.276-7.
5. O'Donnell, op.cit., p.445.

Wedderburn.[1] The roles of all of them tend to be obscure and their motives are invariably complex.

O'Donnell was the first 'Briton' to openly encourage the growth of nationalism in India, his scheme of "Constitutional Association" in 1875 being the prototype perhaps of later experiments. "Congress" to him signified the Indian counterpart of the Irish Home Rule party; its purpose was not only to supplement British government, but eventually to supplant it. In O'Donnell's view Surendranath Banerjea and Dadabhai Naoroji, for whom he always had "the greatest admiration", were destined to become future Heads of State.[2] Hume, on the other hand, conceived Congress as a "safety valve of great and growing forces",[3] which if ignored or suppressed would erupt in "a most terrible revolution."[4] Instead, then, of being an assembly to house restless and impatient spirits, Congress was meant to act as a channel for the discharge of nationalist fervour. MacKenzie allace thought that Hume aspired to become "the Indian Parnell" and dreamed "of a House of Representatives in which he would be the leader of the Opposition."[5] Certainly as General Secretary of Congress

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1. See S.R. Mehrotra, India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929, London 1965, p.16; C. Nandalal, "The British Civilians in India and Indian Freedom", in Journal of Indian History, Ang. 1962, pp.288-9; A. Parel, "Hume, Dufferin and the Origins of the Indian National Congress, in Journal of Indian History, Dec. 1964.

2. See biographical sketch of O'Donnell by Dusé Mohamed Ali in Africa and Orient Review, March 1920, p.6.

3. Wedderburn, Hume, p.77.

4. Ibid., p.80.

5. Wallace to A. McKenzie, 11 May 1886, Dufferin Papers, Vol.37, Reel 525, I.O.L.

until 1906 Hume was a key figure in the movement and in its early stages at least a driving force.[1] But if he hoped to educate the Indian people "into a genuine parliamentary frame of mind",[2] the strategy and tactics he devised were more appropriate to a debating society than to a political party. Congress was to acquaint authorities with public opinion; nothing was said about wanting a share of power. It was sponsored by Hume as a means of consolidating the union between England and India,[3] more an aid than a foil to Government.

Here were two diverging concepts of Congress, one nationalist the other liberal. In its expressions of loyalty to the Crown and in its studious moderation, the early Congress came closer to fulfilling Hume's ideal as a safe outlet for political ambitions and as a registry of grievances. Until the turn of the century it lacked sufficient built-in strength to be other than liberal. In terms of composition as well as of objectives the movement was initially a middle-class affair. There was no popular programme to interest the peasantry, though there was apparently enough to repel landowners and aristocrats. The Congress leaders were led to believe that the British nation would be responsive to agitation, as long as it was conducted in an orderly and responsible manner, and provided their demands were reasonable. "We are all working for the consolidation of British supremacy in India in such a way", William Digby wrote to Lord Lansdowne's private secretary, "that supremacy may rest not as now on force but be carried on with the

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1. Seal, op.cit., pp.287-8.
2. Wedderburn, Hume, p.65.
3. Ibid., p.47.

consent and co-operation of the governed."[1] The rejection of the Irish Home Rule Bill in June 1886 was a pertinent warning against raising the cry of self-government for India. There was no sense, at least for the time being, either in alarming their rulers or in raising false hopes. Indeed, should persuasion fail, Congress lacked the will to meet the challenge by more frontal methods. Congressmen, in fact, were careful to avoid being too closely identified with Irish ferment. Although looking to strike a bargain with the Home Rule party, for example, Naoroji was cautioned from Bombay that "Dadabhai and Davitt[would] become synonymous, one for fomenting Indian and the other for Irish rebellion."[2] The Irish defeat, coupled with the electoral success of the Tory party, was capable of only one interpretation: Britain had emphatically declared itself "in favour of the unity of the Empire against Home Rule."[3]

O'Donnell's influence on Indian political development is more difficult to define. It was he who came up with the first concrete proposals of union in December 1882 and made a start with the N.R.C., well before the repercussions of the Ilbert crisis were felt. By putting the onus on India to build on this initiative, he sparked off a national discussion about the requirements and advantages of an all-India agitation; in fact before Hume began to lecture on the same theme and before Liberal politicians jumped on the 'bandwaggon'. But he could only advise from afar on the general outline, even if, as he claimed, he did so on a large scale:

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1. Digby to Col. J.G. Ardagh, 31 December, Lansdowne Correspondence, quoted in P. Narain, Press and Politics in India 1885-1905, Delhi 1968, p.46.

2. Wacha to Naoroji, 26 June 1888, Naoroji Papers, quoted in Seal, op.cit., p.284.

3. Queen Victoria to Dufferin, 16 July 1886, Dufferin Papers, Vol.26, Reel 516, I.O.L.

> "Three thousand, six thousand, letters every month carried my counsels into every town and townlet, into every court-house and durbar hall of fifty states and provinces."[1]

Most probably, because of the temporary resurgence of party interest in Indian affairs, O'Donnell was overshadowed by more respectable "friends of India", and his voice drowned out by the chorus of pro-Ripon sentiment. Whether he took the same interest in Congress after that may be doubted. O'Donnell, is nonetheless entitled to recognition, if not as one of Congress's founders, at least as one of the first expert consultants on national unification.

For twenty years or more the character and temper displayed by Congress belonged to that of men like Hume, Wedderburn and Digby; it exuded little of the "Celtic perverseness" that Dufferin had early on espied.[2] But once the British stopped looking under their beds for Indian Fenians, they also stopped treating Congress seriously. Soon it was being denounced for its timidity and lack of vision. A younger generation of "patriot" led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak was emerging, intolerant of the inability of their leaders to wrest concessions from the Government. By 1905 the classic split had occurred between "Moderates" and "Extremists", the latter repudiating the gradualist approach of their elders, and deriving their inspiration from sources other than Western liberalism. Like Home Rulers in 1878-1880, Congressmen were forced to think again about how to cure the Government of its indifference. "Swaraj" - self-government - was mooted in 1907. The "New Party", however, favoured the "methods of Irish Sinn Féin", preached the need for self reliance, non-

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1. O'Donnell, op.cit., p.444.

2. Dufferin to Kimberley, 3 February 1885, Dufferin Papers, Reel 517, I.O.L.

co-operation, and resistance to "unjust laws."[1] Under certain conditions it was even prepared to use terrorist methods borrowed from Europe.[2] The British had come face to face once again with the "separatist" challenge of nationalism.

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1. See Mehrotra, op.cit., p.35ff.

2. A. Besant, India and the Empire, London 1914, p.17.

3. O'Dwyer, India as I Knew it, pp.12, 15, 145; J.K. Hardie, India : Impressions and Suggestions, London 1909, pp.36-7; G.S. Clarke (Lord Sydenham), My Working Life, London 1927, pp.289-90.

Conclusion

Conclusion:

Frank Hugh O'Donnell withdrew from Irish politics in 1885 disillusioned, abused and unmourned. In India his retirement was recorded with sparing notices of regret,[1] and in Ireland was barely noted at all. Since 1883 his relations with the party had deteriorated to such an extent that there was little hope of contesting the general elections as an official Home Ruler. Dungarvan had anyway disappeared in the Redistribution Scheme and according to Sir Alfred Robbins, Parnell now "so deeply distrusted and disliked" O'Donnell that he would not include him in his list of candidates.[2] Friendless, apart from Arthur O'Connor and Edmund Leamy, and seriously ill,[3] he sought refuge on the Continent. "Suddenly, almost furtively", wrote T.P. O'Connor, "after the manner of his unsuccessful and embittered life", O'Donnell "slipped out of existence."[4]

Measured solely in terms of political attainment, O'Donnell's career must be reckoned a tragedy. As O'Connor maintained, "no man began life with a greater determination to succeed" or was "more endowed with many of the gifts that make for success. He loved power; he loved leadership; he loved to live in the eyes of men; and he had an absolute and inflexible self-confidence."[5] A large part of his failure can be traced to personal weaknesses. Holding as he did an inflated conception of his own intelligence, he was not

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1. See Bengalee, 12 December 1885.
2. Robbins, Parnell The Last Five Years, p.52.
3. Freeman's Journal, 2 July 1885.
4. T.P. O'Connor quoted in C.J. O'Donnell, The Lordship of the World, p.156.
5. T.P. O'Connor quoted in ibid.

only imperious in his views which he usually advanced as panaceas, but he was apt to be intolerant of the opinions of others. The qualities he brought to Irish public life did not make for harmony in the party. As a man of ideas, he possessed little political acumen. He was impatient, abrasive, and unpredictable, without ever inspiring popular loyalty. While standing very much apart from his colleagues he attempted by a mixture of cajolery and denunciation, to impose his thinking and his standards on them. The result was usually disastrous.

What ultimately brought about O'Donnell's downfall, however, was his inability to come to terms with the advancement of Parnell. Believing that it was he who had made Parnell, O'Donnell never understood why Ireland had preferred to honour the "pupil" rather than the teacher. Only in one sense was it true that he was defeated by the "squalid intrigues of men." The criticism that he cared more for "imperialism" than Home Rule was a gross distortion of his political philosophy, and was used against him although not seriously believed by his fellow parliamentarians. For the most part he defeated himself. Though damned in the eyes of Irish-Americans, he might still have become a leading figure in the nationalist movement, had he been willing to serve Ireland as a lieutenant. But if he preached discipline, he practised none, and was allergic to any kind of restraint. As the cleverest man in the party he assumed that everyone, including Parnell, would defer to him. When they did not, he pronounced them fools and knaves. Worse, he gave the impression that in criticising policy, O'Donnell was bent on damaging Parnell rather than on correcting him. The Bradlaugh incident was a case in point. Another was his opposition to the Land League. It is doubtful whether his devotion to a concept of Irish national

unity prevented him from endorsing a popular if sectarian grievance. Rather, the land issue propelled Parnell to "the top of the greasy pole"[1] at the very moment that O'Donnell was struggling to get there by means of Radical alliance and foreign politics. Had O'Donnell been asked to head the land movement instead of Parnell, would he have refused out of concern for the survival of landlords? O'Donnell's "feudalism" was the product not of background or entrenched belief - he was anything but a conservative in 1880 - but the rationalisation of personal impotence. Refusing to join the Land League, he feebly argued that as elected representatives of the people, it was the duty of Home Rulers to protect the interests of tenant-farmers, in Parliament where the battle for Irish land should be fought. When O'Donnell spoke of patriotism lying "prone" before the "backstairs" of an English party after the Kilmainham treaty, it was conveniently forgotten that he too had urged a policy of accommodation with the Liberals in 1880. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that O'Donnell's disagreement with the party on any occasion stemmed as much from a sense of continuing rivalry with Parnell as from conviction of error. Indeed, as he acknowledged in his farewell message to the Irish people, most of his views had been adopted in the course of time by both Parnell and machine.[2]

What, at the end of all, was O'Donnell's part in the Home Rule movement and his place in Irish history? Was he merely a defeated contender for political honours, an unstable dreamer, a fractious doctrinaire, a charlatan[3] best forgotten? Or was he a

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1. J. Lee, The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848-1918, Dublin 1973, p.76.

2. Freeman's Journal, 28 September 1885.

3. Henry to O'Neill Daunt, 23 April 1878, MacDonagh Papers, Ms 11,446. "O'Donnell is so thoroughly seen through that alone he could do nothing ...".

prophet scorned in his own land, a far-sighted genius who really did hold the "clues to a knowledge of some of the most important matters" determining "the immediate future of the empire",[1] a brilliant parliamentarian, an internationalist of rare distinction? What, apart from his "suspicious" involvement in the Parnell Special Commission and his jaundiced if sometimes "shrewd"[2] narrative of Irish Home Rule politics, would be missed had he never lived? What reconsideration, if any, does O'Donnell merit?

Not all these questions can be answered with confidence, but some possible replies emerge. As virtually no innovation or achievement is associated with O'Donnell's name that has not since been either ignored or decried, the task of correction is facilitated. A blank sheet invites emendation. O'Donnell might not have invented the "obstructive" policy, but it was he who realised its full potential as not merely a parliamentary irritant but a revolutionary force within the empire. It was he who commissioned and supervised the tactics that between 1877-1880 gave teeth to the Home Rule movement and developed an unsuspected or at least forgotten side of the nationalist character - a concern for humanity in addition to liberty. Parnell, it should be remembered, rose to prominence less as the scourge of Butt than as the advocate of justice to the Boers, the o ponent of the "Cat", and the enemy of imperialism; quite a feat for a man not noted for his breadth of knowledge or his sympathy.

The role of "guardians" of justice offered a party doomed to

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1. O'Donnell to Salisbury, 6 May 1885, Salisbury Papers, Misc. correspondence, Class I, Box 18.

2. C.C. O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, bibliography, p.361.

perpetual opposition not only consolation for frustrated talent but a means of promoting the cause of self-government. More than that, it took account of Ireland's special position in the empire. Whether Irishmen liked it or not, negotiations for Repeal, a Dublin parliament or even local-government boards, revolved round the bed-rock of imperial integrity. Home Rule, it was argued, implied not merely a simple readjustment of relations with England, it affected the status of Britain as a world power. It was O'Donnell who brilliantly showed how to turn the "domino theory" against its exponents, by exploiting the contradictions inherent in an advanced democratic nation attempting to govern a highly autocratic empire. By giving a voice at Westminster to unrepresented nationalities, Home Rulers stood to exert a power and an influence beyond the immediate situation of Ireland. As spokesmen for the enemies of autocracy, they would come to the bargaining table immeasurably strengthened, able perhaps in the long-term to call out the empire in a campaign of disruption against British rule. O'Donnell's solution to the Irish question, therefore, lay in the constitution of a Commonwealth; what price failure and a Republic? The horrors of "Dorking" did not defy enactment.

The virtue of this peace formula was that the concession of representative institutions could be advanced as a way of saving the empire instead of destroying it. In the circumstances, how realistic a policy was it? O'Donnell sought to maintain the connexion with England, to make it fairer, more flexible and more acceptable. So too did Parnell.[1] The ludicrous myth that he admired gun-boat

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1. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p.349.

diplomacy and sought to augment Britain's strength must be buried for good; it was put about and preserved by opponents to discredit him. O'Donnell and Parnell were in fact working towards the same goal but by different routes. Before the defeat of the Ilbert Bill, O'Donnell looked to the growth of nationalist forces within the empire to compel a change of attitude; after Kilmainham, Parnell relied on persuasion to convert liberal England to Home Rule. Obviously, Parnell's approach to settle with Gladstone privately, offered the more immediate chance of success, and the better safeguard to England. In return for moderate Home Rule, the Parnellite party would probably have functioned as a bulwark against disruption and serious bloodshed. J.L. Garvin's argument, however, that had the Liberals carried the day in 1886 Parnell "would have become at once an imperial force as strong as Mr. Rhodes", is rather too plausible.[1]

Since O'Donnell's plan of anti-imperial alliance was never put into operation, it cannot be known whether it would have proved any more effective. It depended of course, first on the understanding and the blessing of Parnell; and secondly on the willingness of an Indian Home Rule party to co-operate closely with the Irish in the work of agitation. The furthest, however, that Parnell was prepared to go in 1883 was to agree to the appointment of three sub-committees to share the load of parliamentary business. The proffer of "allegiance" of youthful India was not seriously considered and the N.R.C. was allowed to languish. In retrospect, the failure to set it on its feet must be seen as a missed opportunity. When a British Committee

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1. J.L. Garvin, "Parnell and His Power", in Fortnightly Review, Vol. LXIV, 1898, p.882.

of the Indian National Congress eventually filled the gap in 1889, it was substantially taken over by the Radical party. Not a single Home Ruler could be found on its list of members.

By 1893 Indian nationalists had shaken off their early timidity and seemed genuinely anxious to re-open the channels of communication with Ireland, certainly to develop the acquaintance. After the Lords had vetoed a Bill conceding the principle of simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service, Naoroji looked to "a powerful agitation all over India" as a suitable "counterblast". He assured Banerjea that they had the Irish with them and a portion of the Radicals.[1] Justin McCarthy, Swift MacNeill, Alfred Webb, John Dillon, Edward Blake and Michael Davitt, for their part, had joined a reconstituted parliamentary "Indian" group in 1893, not committed to particular measures, but "pledged to attend to Indian interests" and to "see that justice was done."[2] Yet, while the Irish party was disposed to help the Indian cause after the "Split", it lacked both the will and the ability to accord other than token solidarity. In 1894 Edward Blake declined to preside over the Madras Congress, although it was hoped that he might still "be secured", for the following year.[3] Naoroji then turned to Davitt[4], but he too refused the invitation, pointing out the risks and the drawbacks of his selection to the Congress movement. The Anglo-

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1. Naoroji to Banerjea, 16 June 1893, quoted in Masani, Dadabhai Naoroji, p.335.

2. See C. Cumpston, "Some early Indian Nationalists and their allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906", in English Historical Review, vol. LXXVI, 1961, p.296.

3. Westminster Gazette, 15 November 1894.

4. Ibid, 3 October 1894.

Indian press, he warned, would "howl", while the Times "would scarcely be able to write from indignation."[1] The third choice, Alfred Webb, went out to India,[2] in the words of Sir William Wedderburn, as "a messenger of peace and good will, a sort of dove from the ark." He returned with an "olive branch", having performed the "great service" of persuading Congress to work together not with the McCarthyites so much as with the "Indian Parliamentary Party."[3] In 1895 Naoroji again sought consolation from Ireland. Having lost Central Finsbury after the defeat of Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill, he approached Davitt for an Irish seat but was told there was no hope.[4] Because of problems of party unity which Parnell did not have to contend with, anything that might fan dissension was carefully avoided.

Even when the party was re-united in 1901, the same consideration applied. A suggestion, made interestingly enough by Charles James O'Donnell,[5] to find room for J.F.X. Merriman, the Boer delegate, was thought "worth discussing" by the new leader John Redmond, if in the end it fared little better. As Redmond wrote to William O'Brien, his own view was that the party "would gain by giving the voice of

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1. See entries in Davitt's Diary for 3, 4, 5 October and Naoroji to Davitt, 2 October 1894. I owe these references to Professor T.W. Moody, who very kindly presented me with his transcriptions of the relevant Davitt Papers in his possession.

2. Manchester Guardian, 3 April 1895, in Webb Papers, Ms 1746.

3. Manchester Guardian, 19 February 1895, in ibid.

4. Naoroji to Davitt, 15 January 1896, Davitt Papers (in possession of Professor T.W. Moody).

5. C.J. O'Donnell to Redmond, 16 March (?) 1901, Redmond Papers, Ms 15240.

the friends of the Boers in South Africa an opportunity of being heard [in Britain]", so long as it was made quite clear that the seat was not being given away, but loaned for a "short and definite time" to defeat the "design of Chamberlain and to strike a heavy blow against the Government." In return, Merriman would have to undertake to resign at once if asked to do so, to make a declaration in favour of Home Rule, and to generally support the party on Irish issues. John Dillon agreed with him that upon these strict conditions "it would be a good thing to do."[1] Finding a constituency was no problem. P.J. O'Brien had offered to give up North Tipperary,[2] and Cork had just lost one of its Members. However, Redmond and Dillon had stipulated in advance that unless "all" were in "cordial agreement", it would be undesirable to proceed with the idea. As William O'Brien had expressed certain reservations it was automatically dropped.[3]

In the field simply of individual endeavour, there can be no dispute that "intervention" was capable of serving the interests of the underprivileged and the downtrodden. As both William Digby and Lord Randolph Churchill testified, the influence wielded by a Member of Parliament, if he cared to exercise it, was "very great indeed."[4] On 6 August 1885, the Secretary of State for India paid O'Donnell a warm and rare tribute:

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1. Redmond to W. O'Brien, 24 April 1901, Redmond Papers, Ms 10496.
2. P.J. O'Brien to Redmond, 2 April 1901, ibid., Ms 15240.
3. Redmond to W. O'Brien, 30 April 1901, ibid., Ms 10496.
4. W. Digby, India's Interest in the British Ballot Box, London 1886, p.10.

> "If there has been as undoubtedly there has been, a great improvement in the management of Indian gaols, and if more humane methods have been introduced, it is entirely owing to the continual repetition of questions by the hon. member for Dungarvan. That is only one instance. I could cite others."[1]

Stanhope, Hartington and Cross also agreed that they had been compelled by O'Donnell's obstinacy to study Indian grievances to which their attention might not otherwise have been drawn. Only so much, however, could be done by isolated initiative.

A party, embodying the power to educate public opinion, could collectively accomplish much more. It suddenly dawned on T.P. O'Connor, observing the threatened revolt of many Liberals in 1884 against the Egyptian policy of their Front Bench, just "what a potent factor in the destinies of the British Empire the Irish Parliamentary vote had become."[2] Committed to the furtherance of the representative principle in all parts of the world, it might in time not only accustom the House to the presence of Home Rule but persuade it that this was a universal and irresistible phenomenon. Such, at any rate, was the "insight" O'Donnell derived from "unequalled sources of knowledge."[3] He was convinced that the Imperial Parliament, confronted by a well co-ordinated agitation for dominion status in Ireland, India and South Africa, could not muster sufficient force to restore the status quo. It might wave the big stick but not use it. He sensed instead that when the British came face to face

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1. Hansard, Vol.300, 6 August 1885, Cols.1313.
2. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs, i, p.332.
3. O'Donnell to Salisbury, 6 May 1885, Salisbury Papers, Misc. correspondence, Class M, Box 18.

with the logic of the "domino" theory, no matter how spurious, they would surrender gracefully and salvage what they could. As the argument went, once the demand for Home Rule spread beyond Ireland, there could be no turning it back. Dispersion, in short, represented defeat. The one hope left to a "United Empire" in this eventuality, suggested Charles James O'Donnell, was to sanction "a policy of Home Rule All Round, radiating from the centre of a really Imperial Parliament."[1] Neither O'Donnell believed that a military solution could successfully meet the challenge of extended nationalism; British resources had been taxed to the utmost quelling the Boers with ut placating them. "Keep on agitating and do so effectively", was Charles James' message to Surendranath Banerjea on 2 March 1906:

> "everything depends on you in India and remember a Whig does nothing unless pressed."[2]

While a large question mark must continue to hang over the efficacy of an internationalist policy - how much of it constituted the building of castles in the air? - issue can be taken with Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien's decision to catalogue the Irish Parliamentary party's influence "among the subject nations of the empire", as less an achievement than a "side effect".[3] On the contrary, Home Rulers became increasingly aware of the kind of effect their example was having overseas. The Irish orld, for example, never ceased to boast that the standard of the Land League was being raised

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1. C.J. O'Donnell, "Ireland and Conservatism" in Nineteenth Century, Vol.68, 1910, p.204.

2. C.J. O'Donnell to Banerjea, 2 March 1906, Morley Papers, cited in M.N. Das, India Under Morley and Minto; London 1964, pp.83-4.

3. C.C. O'Brien, op.cit., p.352.

all over the empire, primarily in India,[1] though also in Egypt, the Transvaal[2] and even among the far-flung Maoris of New Zealand.[3] Surendranath Banerjea, it claimed, not only received the Irish World each week but "redistribut[ed] [its] light" amongst his oppressed countrymen.[4] This is not to deny that more might have been done. Frank Hugh O'Donnell had looked to make intervention in the affairs of the empire an integral and a permanent aspect of Irish parliamentary policy. It really only became a stand-by when no Irish question demanded undivided attention. Still, under Parnell's direction, the Home Rule party had no rival as the most significant spokesman in the House of Commons for the forgotten classes within the empire. That it ceased to function as such after 1891 was the result not of abrogation but of the forfeiture of power and status signified in the abandonment of Parnell. In the harsh words of John Redmond, the anti-Parnellites became "part and parcel" of the English Liberals, a "kept" party rather than an ally.[5] The lost ground was never completely retrieved. Redmond tried on 1 January 1901, by reviving the system of distributing parliamentary work among eleven special sub-committees,[6] but independent opposition in its original form was an impossibility. Irish dependence upon Liberal help was still too obvious. As a result, the possibility of making

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1. Irish World, 17 December 1881.
2. Ibid., 26 March 1881.
3. Ibid., 17 December 1881.
4. Ibid., 18 August 1883.
5. Newspaper clipping, 5 September 1894, Redmond Papers, Ms 7420.
6. Redmond to W. O'Brien, 1 January 1901 (In the form of a circular letter), ibid., Ms 10496.

a self-governing Ireland the spearhead of an "imperial federation", also became more distant. C.J. O'Donnell partly confirmed this when he complained to Redmond that it was a "matter of regret" the party had not been more active in Indian affairs. The Indian people, he maintained, "would help us freely in our struggle, if we could only champion their cause."[1] In the presence of a much enlarged parliamentary "Indian grouping", estimated in 1906 at some two hundred Members, Home Rulers were looked to not as front-line protagonists but as "guerilla outposts" useful in "safeguarding" the flank of the Radicals, when all their "ammunition" had been expended.[2] As such, they were relegated to the position of uncertain auxiliaries.

Enough has been spoken about unfulfilled promise; it remains to complete the picture by mention of lasting achievement. The significance of Frank Hugh O'Donnell resides less in what he did than in what he represented - the personification of a style of nationalism unique in the 1870s. If O'Donnell belonged, as he claimed, to the school of O'Connell and Butt,[3] he outshone the one in his devotion to practical philanthropy and was not hampered like the other by his loyalty to federalism. Not only did he create a new terminology of relevance for Ireland in relation to the empire - more substantial than mere rhetoric - but he also helped form new habits of mind concerning national "duty" which persisted long after he had

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1. C.J. O'Donnell to Redmond, 12 July 1901, Redmond Papers, Ms 15240.
2. H.J.S. Cotton, Indian and Home Memories, London 1901, p.307.
3. O'Donnell to Salisbury, 28 December 1883, Salisbury Papers, Special correspondence, Class E.

chosen exile in Europe. He bequeathed many of the catch-phrases and most of the virtues of internationalism, though certain of its vices also persisted. "England's difficulty, Ireland's opportunity" continued to hold a strange fascination for many Home Rulers and remained as a significant rallying cry for action. Home Rulers, W.H.K. Redmond defined in 1885, "were a compact little body of men in the British House of Commons who were naturally delighted whenever they [heard] of England's disaster."[1]

Balance this, however, against the political testaments of a Home Ruler like Alfred Webb. "Is a man a whole man who thinks only of his own affairs?" he enquired of the Freeman's Journal on 26 December 1885:

> "Does his nature not become dwarfed and narrowed, and is not the world becoming more like one federation - one family with reciprocal rights and duties? And should we have any right knowingly to shut ourselves out from this communion."[2]

"I feel I am a soldier in political warfare", he addressed the Reception Committee of Congress in 1895, "ready to go to any land whenever ordered."[3] On another occasion he argued that Ireland, "peculiarly qualified" to "stand by against imperial tyranny", could not shirk its "very distinct duties to weaker peoples." In this sense, Webb was the embodiment of all that was "Christian" in the internationalist creed.[4] His attitude to India was also identical with O'Donnell's.

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1. Reported speech of W.H.K. Redmond on 12 April 1885, in Police Reports 1848-1921, Irish Land League and Irish National League Meetings, Box 3, S.P.O.

2. Extract from Freeman's Journal, 26 December 1885, Webb Papers, Ms 1745.

3. Speeches by Alfred Webb, Bombay 1895, in Webb Papers, Ms 1746.

4. See article: "The Duty of an Irishman", Freeman's Journal, 29 March 1880, in Webb Papers, Ms 1745.

The connection between the "vast continent" of India and their own "petty island", he addressed the Weekly Freeman on his return from India, "is now so close that if both do not rise both must fall together."[1]

The concept of Irishmen as the "natural representatives of unrepresented peoples" could legitimately stand as O'Donnell's epitaph. Instead, he was spoken of not as an extra-ordinary Irish patriot or as "a pioneer of civilisation" - accolades incidentally accorded James J. O'Kelly for his services to Egypt[2] - but was belittled as a "crank". Yet, this was perhaps less a criticism than a compliment. As Frank Sheehy Skeffington was in the habit of reminding his detractors, "a crank is a small instrument that makes revolutions."[3]

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1. See article: "England's Imperial Despotism : Indian Portents", Weekly Freeman, 17 July 1897, in Webb Papers, Ms 1747.

2. Reported speech of W.H.K. Redmond on 21 December 1884, in Police Reports 1848-1921, Box 3, S.P.O.

3. F. Sheehy Skeffington quoted in O.D. Edwards and F. Pyle (ed.), 1916 The Easter Rising, London 1968, p.137.

Appendix I

Biographical Sketch by Dusé Mohamed Ali*
of Frank Hugh O'Donnell

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*Dusé Mohamed Ali was an active figure in the Pan-Africanist Movement. Between 1912 and 1921, as editor of the African Times and Orient Review and African and Orient Review, and as a political campaigner and organiser in Britain, he did much to further the interests of the "darker races". It was in this capacity that he became acquainted with Frank Hugh O'Donnell and secured the Irishman's services in the work of establishing the League of Justice.

For a detailed analysis of Dusé Mohamed Ali's contribution to Pan-Africanism, and for further details of O'Donnell's involvement in the movement, see Ian Duffield, "Dusé Mohamed Ali and the Development of Pan-Africanism 1866-1942, 2 vols., (Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh 1971).

VIS-A-VIS.

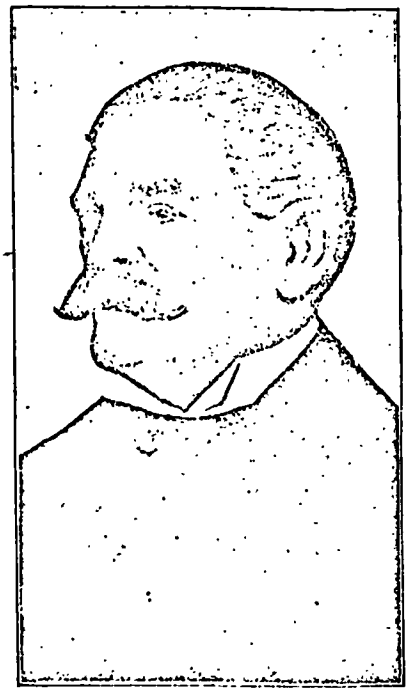
BY

DUSÉ MOHAMED ALI.

Being a series of Impressions of Important and other Personages I have met.

III. FRANK HUGH O'DONNELL, OF O'DONNELL.

IT was in the 'eighties. I was standing in the vestibule of the House of Commons waiting for Sir Charles Dilke, to whom I had a letter of introduction, when a man of courtly bearing, with a slight stoop, passed and looked in my direction. It was a hot day, and his hat rested on the back of his head, displaying a broad white forehead. A full drooping moustache all but covered a pair of firm lips, setting off a chin of breadth and determination. His eyes were blue and large, with a slight squint. He wore a monocle, which he dropped from his eye, and bowed to me. He paused, and seemed in the act of speaking when the division bell rang and another legislator hurried up, linked arms with him, and hustled him off to the division lobby.



The O'Donnell of O'Donnell.

I turned to the attendant and, pointing to the retreating form, inquired who he was.

"That," said the attendant in an awed whisper, "is the great Frank Hugh O'Donnell, the finest orator in the House, and a gentleman—every inch of him, and the best-dressed man in the Commons!"

The servitor stepped back and surveyed me from a distance, the better to judge the weight of his high pronouncement, when Sir Charles Dilke stepped up with the form I had sent him in his hand, and, as he at once led me to a secluded spot and engaged me in conversation, I was accorded no further opportunity of gathering wisdom from the Westminster sage.

The attendant was, however, correct in his estimate of Mr. O'Donnell, who was then Parnell's great rival in the House. He possessed the gift of oratory in a marked degree, and, being a master of incisive invective, I believe that even Gladstone feared him. He was very strong on the question of liberty for small nationalities, and, naturally, when the Egyptian Occupation was being discussed, he was one of Egypt's most doughty champions. It is curious that Mr. Blunt, in his "Secret History of Egypt," has never mentioned O'Donnell's work in the House in connection with the Occupation, but Mr. O'Donnell assured me that he was mainly instrumental in saving

Arabi Pasha from execution, which is proved by an unrefuted passage in a work of his which was published in 1914.

Shortly after I saw Mr. O'Donnell in the House of Commons, he retired from Parliament and went to the Continent, making his headquarters at Vienna, from whence he produced much excellent journalistic work. Hence I did not have the pleasure of meeting him until 1913. In the August of that year I held my Turkish Demonstration over Adrianople at Caxton Hall, Westminster, when the Hon. Colonel Aubrey Herbert kindly took the chair at my request, and Mr. O'Donnell supported Lords Newton and Leamington on the resolution then adopted.

It was on this occasion that Mr. Arthur Field, the untiring secretary of the Anglo-Ottoman Society, requested that the names of those interested in the integrity of the Turkish Empire should be sent into my office at as early a date as possible, with a view to the foundation of the Ottoman Committee. Mr. O'Donnell was one of the first to send in his name, accompanied by a most sympathetic letter. In due course he became one of the Vice-Presidents of the Anglo-Ottoman Society, and was actively identified with the movement until his death about two years ago.

He often visited my house, where we had some very interesting and, to me at least, profitable discussions. It was he who prompted me to write my letter to the English Press on the Kikuyu question in 1914, which letter was afterwards circulated in India as the work of the Muslim gentleman whom I had induced to sign the communication with me, but who never saw the letter until it appeared in print!

He was helpful in the organisation of earlier Indian efforts towards Home Rule, and much of its subsequent success was undoubtedly due to his advice. He had greater faith in the Hindoos than in the Mohammedans of India, as he claimed that the Hindoos were more thorough, more earnest, and less bothered by petty jealousies than the Mohammedans were. He had the greatest admiration for men like the Hon. Babu Surrendro Nath-Banerji, editor of the *Bengalee*, and Dadabi Noroji, often telling me that the future good government of India—when Home Rule came—rested with such men as these.

The O'Donnell was most anxious to establish a London clearing house for African and Oriental affairs. He held with me that much of the injustice done to coloured peoples by English officials was the result of bureaucratic rule, and that the English nation was not unjust—it was ignorant rather than vicious. Consequently a central bureau at the seat of the British Empire from whence reports of bureaucratic misrule could be disseminated, and which would serve the useful purpose of enlightenment, would bring political relief. To this end he aided me considerably with the League of Justice, which was formed by Mr. C. F. Ryder, of Leeds, and myself. The O'Donnell delivered the inaugural address and wrote several articles on the League's vital necessity in the weekly edition of the *African Times and Orient Review*.

He did not believe in the House of Commons as a place where justice might be obtained for subject nationalities. It was for this reason, he told me, that he never cared to enter its portals again, as it was filled with corruption and ignorance; that its members were, for the most part, insincere or self-seeking; that they were not particularly patriotic, except where their own personal interests were concerned; and that the Capitalists' interests had taken such a hold upon the two Party machines that it was hopeless to expect justice in any form from an assembly of gentlemen whose vision began in Westminster and ended in Downing Street. This was a rather sweeping assertion, and I do not necessarily endorse the whole of it. I am merely recording The O'Donnell's view—the conclusion must rest with Britons who profess to be better informed than myself.

Mr. O'Donnell told me how, whilst assisting certain revolutionaries in Europe, he lay hidden all night in a snowdrift. This was the means of saving his life, but it left its mark on a none too robust constitution, for he suffered the utmost bodily anguish until the day of his death.



A rather amusing incident occurred during Mohamed Farid Bey's visit to England in 1914. I had introduced The O'Donnell to Farid Bey at the Egyptian reception given in his honour at the Savoy Hotel, and it was there arranged that I should take the Bey to see him at his house in the Boltons on the Monday following. We arrived in due course, and The O'Donnell, out of courtesy to Farid Bey, had donned a fez for the occasion.

Now, as I have previously stated, Farid Bey knew little English, and The O'Donnell's French was not quite brilliant. In addition, the Bey had been kept on the move during his entire stay in London, so that he arrived at the Boltons quite worn out. The O'Donnell was inclined to be garrulous, and, his French being difficult, he became not only prosy but wearisome. In order to follow the trend of the conversation the late Bey's mentality was being taxed to the utmost. Observing that somnolence was fast overtaking him, I contributed a few interjectory remarks to liven things up a bit. But courtesy forbade that I should act as interpreter to my host's remarks. Nevertheless, I saw disaster impending. The O'Donnell prosed and Farid Bey was slowly but surely gliding into the land of peaceful slumber. I was seated too far away from the Bey to tread on his foot or tunnel him with a pin. So I pulled out my handkerchief and blew furiously. Farid Bey awoke with a start and quickly interjected, "*Oui, oui, oui!*"—I really think he should have said "*Non!*" The O'Donnell, paying slight heed to the interruption, continued, and the Bey was once more slipping back into disgrace. I stretched forth my hand to seize a book which lay within my reach on the table; before I could grasp the book the air was rent with a beautifully modulated, but stentorian, snore. As the novelists say, the Bey was covered with confusion, but he quickly tendered his most profuse apologies. The O'Donnell adjusted his gold-rimmed monocle and murmured in his iciest tone, "I fear I tire your Excellency."

At this juncture I boldly took up the running, explaining how the Bey was fatigued and exhausted because of the many meetings and receptions he had attended. The O'Donnell, who was the dearest, kindest soul, was quickly mollified, calm succeeding what might well have been a storm of the most unpleasant nature, because Mr. O'Donnell, although a gentleman in every sense of the term, was also an Irishman, with all the Irishman's fire and sensitiveness. Our host rang for tea; the Bey re-opened the conversation, and took good care that The O'Donnell did not get the mastery again.

I did not like to allude to the unpleasant incident, and Farid Bey was silent nearly all the way to his hotel, but just before the taxi drew up he turned to me and exclaimed, "Did I make a very great noise?"—at which we both laughed heartily.

A few days after, The O'Donnell was dining with me, and he remarked on the delight it gave him to entertain his Excellency and how charmed he would be to meet him again. He spoke with sincerity, and I knew he meant every word he uttered.

Although age had overtaken him, his mental powers were vigorous to the last. As our readers are aware, he was a frequent contributor to the *African Times and Orient Review*. He was also foreign editor of the *Outlook* until the outbreak of hostilities.

In the far off 'eighties the House of Commons attendant said that he was the finest orator in the House; and, although his oratorical powers were not perhaps as great as they were in the old days, even in the later time, if he was not pre-eminent, he could, at least, move an audience as few present-day orators are capable of doing.

He was well known to the Society of Codgers, where he was wont to betake himself on Saturday evenings to join in the debates of that ancient institution.

The before-mentioned attendant also said that The O'Donnell was a gentleman. He was a gentleman in the highest and noblest sense of the term, and nobleman to boot, for he was a descendant of the kings of Ireland. In him I have lost another of my few tried friends. I am indebted to him for many spontaneous acts of genuine kindness. I cherish his memory, and I pray that his soul may have peace.

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